

Preface from Andrew Cozens

IDeA (now Local Government Improvement and Development) commissioned Common Purpose to conduct four pilot *Collab* courses for Children's Services in Wigan, Sheffield, Hastings and Reading. We agreed with them and a number of directors of children's services that a new look at partnership working might be invigorating.

The aim of the pilot courses was to encourage greater collaboration and understanding between all the different agencies and organisations – private, statutory and not for profit- who are involved either formally or informally in working with children, young people and their families at a local level.

All four pilots were very successful and exceeded the expectations of the four Directors of Children's Services (who were the local commissioners). There were a number of factors that contributed to this success;

- The diversity of individuals and organisations that Common Purpose brought to each event which allowed for new connections and collaborations to be made.
- The event was about doing and not about theory. This made the event very practical reflected in the very high scores on value for time in all 4 pilots.
- Through the collaborations and connections that were made at these events new approaches and ways of working have been explored and duplication identified and challenged.

Common Purpose is a highly regarded independent organisation which has over 21 years experience bringing together diverse groups of people to understand and practice how to work together. The report recognises that the facilitators are very skilled and adept at managing the competing priorities of stakeholders. The pilot was delivered over a nine month time frame during which the coalition government came into power; with that, the public sector landscape changed considerably. Common Purpose was able to respond fast to the changing environment and despite all the pressure bring these diverse groups together.

I would recommend the *Collab* process, run with Common Purpose, as it brings together and networks a more diverse group of organisations who have an interest in improving the safety and well being of children, young people and their families. The model has helped local partners identify new ways of working and create new collaborations.

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