

SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP

ALCOHOL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



BACKGROUND

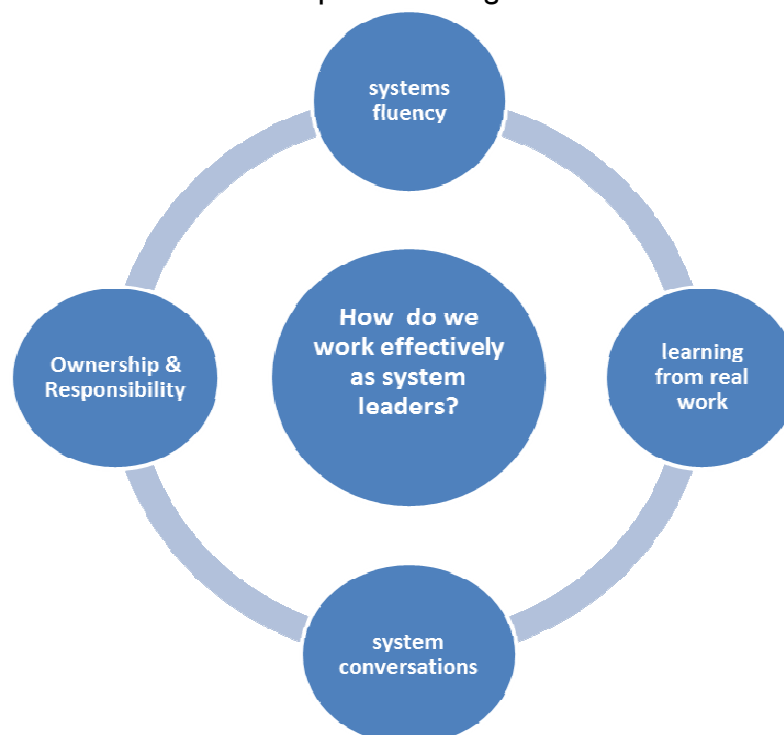
Plymouth signed up to be one of eight pilots for the System Leadership exercise at the Health and Wellbeing Board in February 2013. This national prototype is funded through the Department of Health and Local Government Association. The exercise aims to develop better place-based collaborative leadership around a local wicked issue.

SETTING THE SCOPE IN PLYMOUTH

The Health and Wellbeing Board identified the Alcohol Plan as the area that would benefit from this approach. Through the learning process all members of the Health and Wellbeing Board will –

- Develop an understanding how the alcohol plan can work for the whole city
- Explore how system leaders can perturb the system
- Utilise collaborative practice to develop group and individual communication skills
- Plan collectively how the alcohol plan should be communicated across the system and broader environment

During the systems learning session on the 24 June 2013 the Board defined the core question to be asked of the system and to learn about through the Pilot. The question ‘How do we work effectively as systems leaders?’ will be explored through a model described below –



At the core of the model is the question we wish to ask the system. The Board will discover how we can work effectively as system leaders across Plymouth and build on what we have already discovered about the challenges to effective system leadership. These challenges include-

- the tensions created by a growth agenda which is dependent on alcohol in the night-time economy, alongside the need to promote more responsible drinking and health and wellbeing in our communities;
- the ownership and responsibility for system issues (eg alcohol) when these are not at the top of our individual organisational agendas. Whilst alcohol is a priority shared issue for all of us, it is not owned by anyone of us;
- how to embed shared leadership across our system and not just at senior level. To find a way of using systems ideas to create a shared language and aspiration for addressing system rather than individual challenges.

The model will build familiarity and confidence with systems ideas and tools. This will be achieved through one to one conversations and work in small groups. Our aim is to build familiarity and fluency with systems ideas and practices in order to develop a shared way of making sense of our system.

THE ALCOHOL PLAN AND THE PEER CONSULTING APPROACH

In Plymouth our focus is on learning about system leadership right across the system not just at senior level and we want to embed this in real work across our organisations and community. The peer consulting approach will enable people to bring their different challenges in relation to leading the Alcohol Plan to an integrated, shared problem solving group. It will also develop the practices needed to work as system peers regardless of positions in different hierarchies. eg making connections, asking powerful question, sense making, giving and receiving feedback.

The learning from these groups will be fed into the wider leadership community as a resource for learning about the Plymouth system and what might need to be different to change and embed shared leadership of system challenges across the City.

To achieve this we will take a slice across the system, creating groups of senior and middle managers and frontline staff to explore the system and the patterns and principles which exist, what works and where there are blockages. The intention behind the approach is to build connections and relationships in the context of real work.

We want to use the pilot to strengthen our relationships with each other as system players, to learn about what needs to be different in relation to leading shared priorities and to build ownership and responsibility for shared issues. We are particularly keen to develop the capability to have the kinds of conversations which will help us shift into a system leadership paradigm rather than an organisational paradigm.

We are beginning to recognise that the capabilities needed for shared leadership are different to the capabilities needed for individual leadership. We hope that the pilot will enable us to develop these capabilities further and discover an answer to our key question 'how do we lead effectively as system leaders?'

NEXT STEPS

Our facilitator, Allison Trimble, has already led three sessions with members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to begin to build familiarity and confidence with systems ideas and tools. Systems

Conversations and one to one coaching will continue during the course of the programme with this group.

Since the formal adoption of the Alcohol Plan in August work has begun on bringing together the officers most concerned with the implementation of the Alcohol Plan into Systems Learning Groups (SLG). The groups will –

- generate learning about how we can work effectively as system leaders in relation to the shared priority of Alcohol in Plymouth. This will include an understanding of key themes and patterns which impact on shared leadership of Alcohol as a shared issue;
- build peer leadership practice and support relationships across different organisations in the system with responsibility for delivery of the Alcohol plan;
- identify what is working well and what are the obstacles in relation to delivery of the Alcohol Plan;
- make progress on delivery of the Alcohol plan;
- test the SLG peer learning model as an approach to supporting and developing system leadership.

Learning from the Systems Learning Groups will be available in March of 2014.