

POSTER ABSTRACT

Exploring Collaborative Working Among Stakeholders in a Scottish Integration Joint Board: Key Factors Supporting a Strong and Inclusive Workforce.

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Synopsis: This research utilises a case study approach to explore collaborative working between all stakeholders including health, local council, independent, third sector and community representatives within a Scottish Integration Joint Board.

Background: Members of the independent and third sectors strengthen health and care workforce capacity and provide many of the health and care services in local communities (The King's Fund, 2022). However, knowledge and understanding of their contribution to collaborative working within health and social care partnerships is insufficiently recognised and understood (Nelson, Saragosa and Miller, 2024). This research aimed to explore the views and experiences of collaborative working among all stakeholders, including independent and third sector partners, within an Integration Joint Board in Scotland.

Approach: This study utilised a qualitative, case study approach (Stake, 2010). Data were collected via twenty semi-structured interviews with participants, document review, and non-participant observation. This data offered insights into the involvement and experiences of stakeholders at Integration Joint Board level. The participants included six representatives from the independent sector, third sector, carers, and community representatives as well as fourteen health service and local council members.

Stakeholder engagement was observed at two Integration Joint Board meetings and relevant documents were reviewed to facilitate a deeper understanding of the processes which contributed to collaborative working in integration. The Rainbow Model of Integrated Care was used to provide a conceptual framework to guide the study (Valentijn et al. 2013). Data analysis identified patterns and meaning.

Results: Findings: included: (1) a wide and varied membership contributed to a positive learning environment; (2) cross-sector partnerships contributed to collaborative working; (3) independent, third sector and community representatives often felt excluded from decision-making and

indicated there must be transparency and an equal opportunity to collaborate; and (4) the majority of participants indicated that unequal voting status among members reflected the value of their role, and was not conducive to collaboration.

Implications: This research offers a detailed and holistic understanding of the factors that enable or hinder collaborative working within a Scottish Integration Joint Board, and how these contribute to the broader goal of integrating health and care services. It provides valuable insights for both the workforce and policymakers, particularly around the need for inclusive approaches that recognise the voices and contributions of all involved.

Together, the research findings present a compelling picture of the complexity of collaboration within the Integration Joint Board. They highlight how collaborative working, and a shared sense of partnership identity are closely linked. This suggests that strong partnership identity not only supports, but actively enables, more effective and meaningful collaboration across the integrated health and care system.

The findings have relevance both nationally and internationally. They reinforce the importance of ensuring all stakeholders, across all sectors and roles, are fully included and valued as equal partners in health and care planning and delivery.

Further research could build on these findings by replicating the study and exploring several cases through collective case study.