



CHALLENGES FACING THE R&I PROFESSION

including

a review of co-production

Interim results and key messages

(May 2014)



Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

www.laria.org.uk



www.pmnet.co.uk

Introduction

People Matters Network (PMNet) is pleased to provide some interim results from its 2014 survey into the challenges facing those who work in research, intelligence and engagement across the public sector.

The survey will remain open to 20th May and a final report will be produced and circulated to all participants in June.

The interim results provide some valuable insights into new and emerging challenges for the profession and we have drawn out some key messages for professional bodies, employers of research and engagement professionals and those looking to get the very best from those working in the profession.

Our final report will be based on the views of between 200 and 300 research and engagement professionals working across a number of different agencies. Of particular interest will be the similarities and differences that we uncover.

If you have yet to participate and give your views, please follow the link to the survey [here](#).

Profile of respondents

These interim results are based on 102 R&I professionals from local authorities who had responded to the survey by the time of the Laria Conference. Over 60% of these are members of Laria.

10% hold senior management/director positions, 46% are heads of departments/line managers and 44% are officers/team members.

41% have been in post for up to 5 years, 25% in post for between 6 and 10 years, and 34% for over 10 years.

Key messages so far

What follows are some key messages drawn from an interim examination of the results so far. A full report will follow in June 2014.

Changes R&I professionals believe would help make their role more effective can be categorised as either 'personal' or 'employer dependent'.

For over half of R&I professionals, a major challenge they believe they face over the coming 12 months is 'convincing colleagues as to the value of research'.

The profession is keen to continue learning, with customer insights and community empowerment being topics of particular interest.

Topics of collaboration interest include: methods of building evidence; engagement and empowerment; co-production in service design; and acquiring new skills.

Local authorities are considered good/very good at consulting with the public but not as effective at collaborating with agencies and feeding back on evidence collected.

The word considered by R&I professionals to best describe the working relationship between local agencies when it comes to the delivery of local services is "improving".

The knowledge that research is valued by the organisation and that there is a commitment to use evidence to shape policy would together contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the R&I role.

Given the need to influence and convince colleagues, communication and leadership are important skills for an R&I professional to possess.

95% of R&I professionals are keen to collaborate with peers.

A high proportion of R&I professionals continue to feel pressured and, whilst operating in a uncertain world, many consider this to be challenging. For a growing number, it's an exciting time for the profession.

The profession holds mixed opinions as to the practical implementation of co-production with 71% calling for more independent evidence about co-production in practice.

Whilst 2 in 5 R&I professionals believe there is both a political and a financial willingness to make co-production work, almost the same number are unsure about this level of support.

Interim findings

Topic: Changes that would make R&I role more effective within organisation

<u>Changes dependent on employer</u>	%	<u>Changes specific to individual</u>	%
Knowing that my research is being valued	48	Better career prospects/opportunities	38
Commitment of the organisation To use evidence to shape policy	41	More training and gaining new skills	28
Better planning/clearer prioritisation	41	A support network to bounce ideas off	22
More time to consult and collect evidence for decision making	39	<u>Other changes</u>	%
Better understanding of how role sits with organisation strategy	37	Additional resources	45
Better strategic direction/leadership	34	Integrated structure/joined up IT/systems	26
Access to more available intelligence across partnership	23	Greater variety of work	18
		Less administration	16

Topic: Words used by R&I profession to describe feelings (2011-14)

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %	2011 %
“Challenging”	68	70	66	58
“Uncertain”	56	54	55	55
“Pressured”	41	42	40	42
“Vulnerable”	24	25	25	43
“Insecure”	19	20	21	34
“Exciting”	24	18	18	16

Topic: Challenges to be faced over coming 12 months

	%
Trying to achieve more with less	72
Convincing colleagues of the value of research	54
Working with partners and sharing more	48
Getting the most out of new and emerging technology (incl. social media)	47
Introducing insights as a way of understanding customers	35

Topic: Collaboration interests expressed by R&I professionals

	%
Interested in collaborating with colleagues	95
<u>Topics of particular interest :</u>	
Methods of searching and building evidence	54
Engagement/consultation/communication	49
Cross profession challenges and skills	42
Service design and co-production	40

Topic: Areas in which R&I professionals are most interested in learning more

	%		%
Customer Insight and data	39	Stakeholder engagement	22
Community empowerment	37	GIS/IS	21
Economics/econometrics	28	Consultation	20
Demography	23	Market research	18
Measuring performance	23	No learning interests	3

Topic: Rating given to employer's performance in selected areas of research and engagement

	Very poor/poor %	Fair %	Very good/good %	DK %
Using evidence internally	23	42	34	1
Sharing evidence with partners	28	38	33	1
Engaging with the public	15	41	39	5
Consulting the public	17	31	45	6
Evidence gathered by collaborating with agencies	32	40	27	1
Collecting evidence quickly and efficiently	32	30	35	2
Acting on evidence collected	31	38	27	4
Feeding back findings from engagements	33	33	32	2

Topic: Trends in methods used to engage with the public (more/less/same over the past 12 months)

	More %	Less %	Same %	DK/NA %
One-way flow of information	35	7	36	22
Co-production	34	8	34	24
Two-way flow of information	33	10	44	13
Two-way discussion and involvement	29	13	34	24

Topic: Opinions held by R&I profession towards co-production

	Agree %	Disagree %	No Comment %
“Co-production is nothing new, its just a different word for how we already engage with the public and our communities.”	31	43	26
“There needs to be more independent evidence made available about co-production in practice.”	71	6	23
“It is unrealistic to expect that co-production can be achieved with the cuts in resources the public sector has to work with.”	29	48	23
“Co-production can be an effective way of managing with limited budgets.”	40	35	25
“The majority of the public as service users would rather see decisions taken by others.”	40	35	25

Topic: Words considered by R&I professionals that best describe the working relationship between local agencies when it comes to the delivery of local services

	%
Improving	65
Effective	29
Ineffective	16
Poor	7
Excellent	6
Non-existent	2
Other words	9

Topic: Willingness to make co-production work effectively within the organisation

	Yes %	No %	Unsure %	No Comment %
Political willingness	39	7	41	13
Financial willingness	40	11	36	13
Willingness amongst officers and management	43	7	35	15

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we make the difference

For further information on the survey or details on PMNet's suite of engagement and collaboration tools - Togetherwecan, contact :

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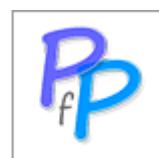
Collaborative WorkSpace



Engagement Hubs



Communities of Influence



Points for Participation



Tea-Breaks & Insights