

# The Enabling State in Scotland

Key issues raised at our Scotland *Enabling State* roundtable on 30 January 2013 at Andrew Carnegie House, Dunfermline

The UK and the Republic of Ireland have experienced huge improvements in wellbeing in the last 100 years, however a number of complex social problems persist. Could a new relationship between the State and individuals hold the key to solving these difficult social problems?

The Carnegie UK Trust believes we are at the beginning of a fundamental shift toward more empowered citizens and communities and a more Enabling State. With the help of Carnegie Fellow Sir John Elvidge we are engaging with key stakeholders across the UK and Republic of Ireland to better understand this movement and what this would mean for public service delivery. We will be looking for opportunities for shared learning as we go.

This report summarises the issues raised at our round table discussion on the Enabling State in Scotland at Andrew Carnegie House in Dunfermline on the 30 January 2013. Roundtable discussions were also held in Cardiff, Dublin, Newcastle, Belfast and London during December 2012 – February 2013.

We hope you find the report of interest and we would be pleased to hear your views. Please contact Jenny Brotchie, Policy Officer at [jenny@carnegieuk.org](mailto:jenny@carnegieuk.org) or on 01383 749757. You can find our discussion paper [here](#).



## 1. The Scottish Context

Prior to devolution a significant amount of the legislation governing public services in Scotland was separate from that governing England and Wales. Health, education and legal systems were all legislated for through Scotland-specific legislation albeit under the auspices of the UK Parliament. This differentiation allowed for policy divergence prior to devolution which impacted to a greater and lesser extent across the public services. The NHS in Scotland, for example, closely resembled the NHS in England and Wales until the market-making policies of the 1990s. On the other hand, a distinctive Scottish approach to the welfare of children and young people who offend or who are offended against developed in the 1960s. Housing policy also had a distinctive ‘flavour’ favouring community housing models.

Devolution has allowed Scotland to legislate more frequently and respond more quickly than was previously the case but the notion of a Scottish-approach to public services was already well-established. The analysis in the Enabling State discussion paper was heavily influenced by policy developments in Scotland over the past 5 years. The discussion and debate in Dunfermline therefore focused heavily on the success of the ‘Scottish model’ and the extent to which it has provided a ‘different way’ of working across public services and with communities.

In the early years of devolution, the Scottish approach was characterised by a noticeably collectivist approach to public services. The re-birth of the Scottish Parliament led to a confidence that ‘anything was possible’. Fuelled



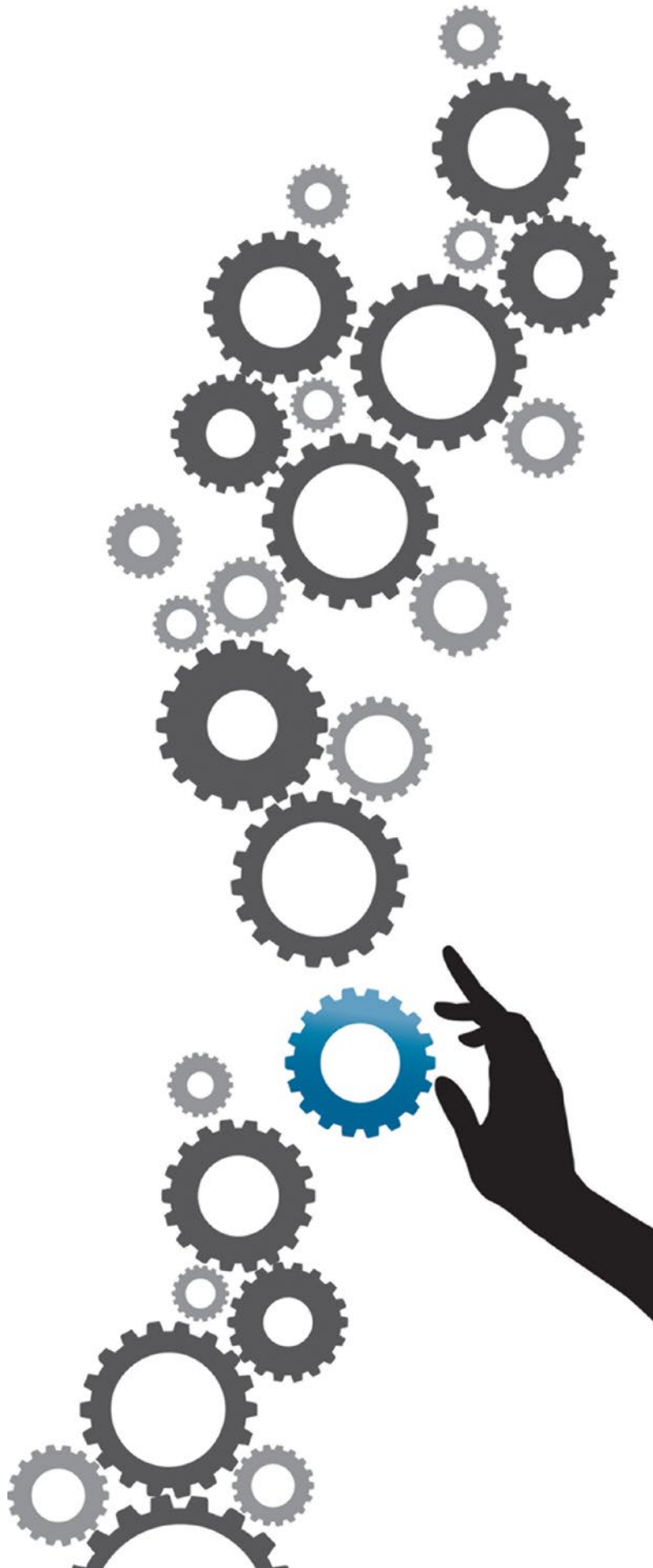


Discussion in Dunfermline

by rising public sector budgets, the Scottish Parliament legislated for free personal care for the elderly, abolished tuition fees and the phasing out of prescription charges.

In 2010 the Scottish Government established The Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, known as the Christie Commission to provide a longer-term view, against the backdrop of reduced public spending and an ageing population. The Christie Commission identified co-production, preventative action, and integration of services around need as crucial elements of Scotland's future public service model, underpinned by outcomes based performance management. Their recommendations were welcomed by the SNP Government and received broad cross-party support.

Recent developments in Scotland include the establishment of Change Funds to encourage joint preventative action around adult social care, early years and tackling re-offending, integration of health and social care and the proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill which aims to extend rights of community ownership and management of community assets.



## 2. Key Themes

The broad analysis of the ‘Scottish model’ in the discussion paper was accepted by the participants but they drew attention to the fact that deep inequalities continue to exist in Scotland. While supportive of the current framework, they were not convinced that it would deliver the scale of change required. As with discussions in other jurisdictions, there was a sense that the reality was not yet matching the rhetoric on integration, preventative spend and participation.

Three key themes emerged from the Scotland roundtable:

- Equality and community empowerment
- Professionalism, skills and the role of the State
- Trust, responsibility and risk

The issues covered within these themes are expanded upon in sections 2.1-2.3.

### 2.1 Equality and community empowerment

Participants had a broadly positive view on enabling more community engagement in delivering services. They felt that social connectedness has a strong impact on wellbeing and this could be further developed in Scotland.

However, a number of participants were concerned about how best to help people living in deprived communities access the opportunities provided

by a more Enabling State. There was seen to be a significant risk that a more Enabling State will simply allow well-resourced communities to flex their ‘middle class elbows’ and access more resources. The group discussed whether power was necessarily a ‘zero-sum game’ whereby for some communities to gain power, others would have to give up power. While no conclusions were drawn, there was a sense that community empowerment could be tokenistic and was not yet sufficiently embedded in Scottish public services.

It was argued strongly that the focus of a progressive Enabling State had to be on helping ‘low capacity’ communities access better services. In particular it was felt important to build on indigenous capacity rather than parachuting in expert ‘capacity building’ programmes. This was especially the case for those participants who stressed the need to re-energise local democracy. There was concern that some communities, and groups like young people, were not voters and had little influence over policy decisions; greater civic engagement should be a key aim of community empowerment and regeneration.

But while there was a desire to build on activity at a community level, and a recognition that there is far more community level action than is generally recognised, the participants noted how embedded a deficit model approach is within the Scottish psyche. Some communities will have to be convinced that their own action will be more successful, and sustainable, than the traditional ‘call the council’ approach.

Building local community capacity, and focusing heavily on deprived communities to balance inequalities, will lead to variable rather than universal services as communities focus on actions that are most relevant to their needs. There was an acceptance that this would lead to post-code lotteries but a feeling that diversity should be viewed as a positive.



Sir John Elvidge (centre) sums up discussions in Scotland

## 2.2 Challenging professional models of public service delivery

The ‘Scottish model’ of an outcomes focus and preventative interventions was seen as very positive but there was a view that this requires holistic and joined up working, which is very difficult to do across professional boundaries. There were queries raised about the extent to which this approach was filtering down to a local level.

There was an acceptance that public sector professional groups in Scotland had a significant level of influence on politicians and public services but have little accountability to the broader community. In keeping with the general theme of power in communities, queries were raised as to whether professional groups were able and willing to move from a ‘doing to’ model of public services to a ‘doing with’ coproduction model.

While there was agreement that the rhetoric on empowerment and prevention was welcome, there was less evidence of this filtering down to the local level. Examples were provided where individuals or local community groups had obstacles put in place by their first contact with public services, both health and local councils. Rather than explore ways of reaching shared objectives, barriers were put in place which could put people off pursuing coproduction or community development activities further. It is important to note that these obstacles are not necessarily being created by front-line workers to thwart individual or community endeavours, but rather that the overall culture of public services in Scotland could be seen as disempowering.

Any Enabling State model must therefore work hard to remove barriers for communities and individuals at the interface where people interact with the State or public services. While culture change seems vital to this process, participants were unsure of how such a shift in culture and practice could be achieved.

## 2.3 Trust, responsibility and risk

Some participants queried the notion, given in the introduction, that Scottish citizens have an inherent trust of public sector institutions. Many felt that a greater sense of trust needs to be built between citizens and the State, particularly for those living in deprived neighbourhoods. The profile of individuals who are stopped and searched by the police, for example, reveals the State’s prejudice and lack of trust in certain communities. As a result these members of society do not see the State as force for good and get little out of their interaction with their State. An Enabling State means placing more faith in individual’s own capacity and judgement and changing the ‘we know best’ attitude of the State. Another participant spoke about a need to shift away from the perspective of having to ‘fix’ or ‘change’ people.

A parallel point is that there is a need to move investment away from managing risk (with little accrued benefit) to investing in trust. It is also affected by a risk-averse approach to public services; we spend a lot of time talking about the risks of an alternative approach but don’t calculate the opportunity-cost of focusing on mitigating risk in all our public services. We need to recognise how much energy we waste managing risk out of the system compared to how much we invest in building trust in both staff and citizens.

While agreeing in general that people should take more responsibility for their actions, some participants were concerned about a prevalent culture of blame. As an example of the limits of individual responsibility, it was felt that young people were being blamed individually for unemployment which is actually caused by a systems failure in the economy. Individual responsibility is important in Scotland, but not to the extent that we ignore the collective responsibility for macro-economic policy failures.



### 3. What does an Enabling State mean in Scotland?

There was recognition throughout the discussion that the broad direction of travel in Scotland was the right one; that prevention, partnership and coproduction were part of a coherent narrative on the Scottish approach that had a history stretching back to before devolution. What was less clear was whether the current debates and discussions signal a fundamental shift in this direction or are just ‘tweaking at the edges’ of public services.

The strong focus in the discussion on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups highlighted the challenges facing an Enabling State approach which seeks to empower individuals and groups in society who are not currently well-served by the

dominant model of public service delivery. Is it possible to do this in a way that does not further exacerbate inequalities? Many of the initiatives discussed are at a very early stage and therefore at the present time, there is simply not enough evidence to know whether this new approach will reduce or further entrench inequalities.

This analysis provided the Enabling State team with an interesting juxtaposition to our discussions in other jurisdictions. The experience in Scotland tells us that better frameworks are a necessary part of building an Enabling State; but they are not sufficient. To be truly enabling, the model needs to consider how to disperse power and challenge the prevailing culture of public services.

## 4. Next Steps

Our engagement with stakeholders in each jurisdiction is now complete. We are now carrying out an extensive literature review and seeking out practical examples of an Enabling State in action.

Our findings will inform our final Enabling State project outputs which we will publish later in 2013.

You can keep up to date with our progress by visiting our enabling state [project page](#) and by following @CarnegieUKTrust, #enablingstate on Twitter.

To sign up to our Enabling State newsletter please get in touch with Jenny Brothie, Policy Officer at [jenny@carnegieuk.org](mailto:jenny@carnegieuk.org).

### Scotland Roundtable Attendees

Duncan Dunlop, Who Cares? Scotland  
 Paul Gray, Government & Communities, Scottish Government  
 Shelley Gray, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland  
 Martin Johnstone, Faith in the Community  
 Richard Kerley, Queen Margaret University  
 Jackie Killeen, Big Lottery Fund Scotland  
 Graham Leicester, International Futures Forum  
 Karyn McCluskey, Violence Reduction Unit  
 Jackie McKenzie, Nesta  
 Des McNulty, University of Glasgow  
 Andy Milne, Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum  
 Nicola Munro, Consumer Focus Scotland  
 Peter Peacock, Community Land Scotland  
 Martin Sime, SCVO  
 George Thomson, Volunteer Development Scotland  
 Keith Wimbles, Voluntary Action Fund  
 Sir John Elvidge, Carnegie Fellow  
 Jennifer Wallace, Carnegie UK Trust  
 Jenny Brothie, Carnegie UK Trust



The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913 and we are delighted to be celebrating our centenary in 2013. Please see our website for further information on our centenary plans.

**Andrew Carnegie House**  
**Pittencrieff Street**  
**Dunfermline**  
**KY12 8AW**

**Tel: +44 (0)1383 721445**  
**Fax: +44 (0)1383 749799**  
**Email: [info@carnegieuk.org](mailto:info@carnegieuk.org)**  
**[www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk](http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk)**

**Written by Jennifer Wallace, Policy Manager**

**July 2013**



Carnegie United Kingdom Trust  
Scottish charity SC 012799 operating in the UK and Ireland  
Incorporated by Royal Charter 1917