

Developing programme theories of leadership for integrated health and social care teams and systems: a realist synthesis

Ruth Harris,^{1*} Simon Fletcher,² Sarah Sims,¹
Fiona Ross,² Sally Brearley² and Jill Manthorpe³

¹Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Palliative Care, King's College London, London, UK

²Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education, Kingston University and St George's University London, London, UK

³National Institute for Health Research Policy Research Unit in Health and Social Care Workforce, King's Policy Institute, King's College London, London, UK

*Corresponding author ruth.harris@kcl.ac.uk

Disclosure of interests of authors: Ruth Harris is a member of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Trainees Coordinating Centre Doctoral Research Fellowship Panel (TCCDRF) (2015 to present). Fiona Ross is a former Chairperson of Trustees of Princess Alice Hospice (2011–21), an Independent Governor at Westminster University (2019 to present) and a member of the Research Excellence Framework England Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel (2017 to present). Jill Manthorpe was Panel Q5 Chairperson of the NIHR Policy Research Programme (PRP) (2015–21); co-chairperson of three panels for NIHR PRP Covid Response (Renew, Reset, Recover) (2020–21); a reviewer for the Health & Social Care Research & Development Division of the Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland) (2017–18); a reviewer for the Leverhulme Trust (2017–21); a panel member of the Norwegian Research Council (2021); a panel member and chairperson of the Guy's and St Thomas Charitable Trust Long Term Conditions panel (2021); a panel member of NIHR Long COVID (2021); a panel member of NIHR Research for Patient Benefit, Mental Health North (2021); and a member of the Advisory Group (appointed by NIHR) for the Dementia Personalised Care Team (D-PACT), University of Plymouth (2020–21). Jill Manthorpe is currently a reviewer for the NIHR PRP (2002 to present); a panel member and reviewer for NIHR Research for Social Care (2018 to present); a panel member of and reviewer for the NIHR Academy Senior Fellowships (2018 to present); a member of the NIHR Strategy Board (2019 to present); a member of the Chief Social Worker for Adult Research Reference Group, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) (2019 to present); a member of the Adult Social Care Strategy Forum, DHSC (2020 to present); a member of the NIHR Multiple Long-term Conditions Oversight Group (2020 to present); a member of the NIHR Policy Research Unit Older People and Frailty Advisory Group (2020 to present); a member of the Growing Older, Planning Ahead Advisory Group, University of Oxford/Open University/NIHR Health and Social Care Delivery Research (2020 to present); a member of the NIHR Dementia Strategy Advisory Group (2021 to present); chairperson of the UK Research and Innovation OSCAR study advisory group, Cardiff University (2021 to present); a member of the Steering Group (appointed by NIHR) for Experts 11, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (2021 to present); a member of the Advisory Group for the Advanced Care Research Centre, University of Edinburgh (2021 to present); a member of the Advisory Group for ExChange Wales, University of Cardiff (2021 to present); a board member of the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) South London (2020 to present); and a member of the NIHR National Priority Area Social Care and Social Work Applied Research Collaboration (2020 to present).

Dedication: This project was originally conceived and developed with the late Professor Scott Reeves, who died unexpectedly in May 2018. Scott, a global research leader, was first and foremost a sociologist and ethnographer. He brought his sociological lens to the study of challenging problems of health and social care professional relationships, in their learning and their work. His original ideas and considerable expertise in interprofessional health-care research were instrumental in the formation of this study and the research team dedicate this project to his memory.

Published March 2022

DOI: 10.3310/WPNG1013

Plain English summary

Programme theories of leadership

Health and Social Care Delivery Research 2022; Vol. 10: No. 7

DOI: 10.3310/WPNG1013

NIHR Journals Library www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk

Plain English summary

The organisation of health and social care in England is moving increasingly towards integrated models of working. Close collaboration is encouraged between the NHS, social care, local authorities and communities. However, we know little about how to develop integrated care teams and systems, including how to support their leaders. This review explored theories around the leadership of integrated care teams and systems to identify what works about their leadership, for whom and in what circumstances. It did this by examining both research literature and the experiences of key stakeholders in integrated care. We explored the literature on leading integrated teams and systems that we found in research databases and information sources, such as government reports and policy documents. Our stakeholder group, consisting of integrated service managers, researchers and patient/service user and carer representatives, was also closely consulted and they helped shape the overall findings.

We found 36 papers that were relevant to our research questions. These papers, along with the contributions of the stakeholder group, generated evidence for seven potentially important components of leadership in integrated care teams and systems, called 'mechanisms'. These seven were: 'inspiring intent to work together'; 'creating the conditions to work together'; 'balancing multiple perspectives'; 'working with power'; 'taking a wider view'; 'a commitment to learning and development' and 'clarifying complexity'. No research evidence was found for an eighth mechanism, 'fostering resilience', although our stakeholders felt that this was potentially an important, long-term component of leadership. We concluded that research into the leadership of integrated care teams and systems is limited and underdeveloped, with ideas often based on outdated assumptions. By making explicit some of these assumptions, this review has generated new perspectives, which can be built on, developed and tested further.

Health and Social Care Delivery Research

ISSN 2755-0060 (Print)

ISSN 2755-0079 (Online)

This journal is a member of and subscribes to the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (www.publicationethics.org/).

Editorial contact: journals.library@nihr.ac.uk

This journal was previously published as *Health Services and Delivery Research* (Volumes 1–9); ISSN 2050-4349 (print), ISSN 2050-4357 (online)

The full HSDR archive is freely available to view online at www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/hsdr. Print-on-demand copies can be purchased from the report pages of the NIHR Journals Library website: www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk

Criteria for inclusion in the *Health and Social Care Delivery Research* journal

Reports are published in *Health and Social Care Delivery Research* (HSDR) if (1) they have resulted from work for the HSDR programme, and (2) they are of a sufficiently high scientific quality as assessed by the reviewers and editors.

HSDR programme

The HSDR programme funds research to produce evidence to impact on the quality, accessibility and organisation of health and social care services. This includes evaluations of how the NHS and social care might improve delivery of services.

For more information about the HSDR programme please visit the website at <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/funding-programmes/health-and-social-care-delivery-research.htm>

This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HSDR programme or one of its preceding programmes as project number 18/01/06. The contractual start date was in April 2019. The final report began editorial review in November 2020 and was accepted for publication in August 2021. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HSDR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

This report presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The views and opinions expressed by authors in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HSDR programme or the Department of Health and Social Care. If there are verbatim quotations included in this publication the views and opinions expressed by the interviewees are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect those of the authors, those of the NHS, the NIHR, NETSCC, the HSDR programme or the Department of Health and Social Care.

Copyright © 2022 Harris *et al.* This work was produced by Harris *et al.* under the terms of a commissioning contract issued by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. This is an Open Access publication distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 4.0 licence, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, reproduction and adaptation in any medium and for any purpose provided that it is properly attributed. See: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. For attribution the title, original author(s), the publication source – NIHR Journals Library, and the DOI of the publication must be cited.

Published by the NIHR Journals Library (www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk), produced by Prepress Projects Ltd, Perth, Scotland (www.prepress-projects.co.uk).

NIHR Journals Library Editor-in-Chief

Professor Ken Stein Professor of Public Health, University of Exeter Medical School, UK

NIHR Journals Library Editors

Professor John Powell Chair of HTA and EME Editorial Board and Editor-in-Chief of HTA and EME journals. Consultant Clinical Adviser, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), UK, and Professor of Digital Health Care, Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford, UK

Professor Andrée Le May Chair of NIHR Journals Library Editorial Group (HSDR, PGfAR, PHR journals) and Editor-in-Chief of HSDR, PGfAR, PHR journals

Professor Matthias Beck Professor of Management, Cork University Business School, Department of Management and Marketing, University College Cork, Ireland

Dr Tessa Crilly Director, Crystal Blue Consulting Ltd, UK

Dr Eugenia Cronin Consultant in Public Health, Delta Public Health Consulting Ltd, UK

Dr Peter Davidson Consultant Advisor, Wessex Institute, University of Southampton, UK

Ms Tara Lamont Senior Adviser, Wessex Institute, University of Southampton, UK

Dr Catriona McDaid Reader in Trials, Department of Health Sciences, University of York, UK

Professor William McGuire Professor of Child Health, Hull York Medical School, University of York, UK

Professor Geoffrey Meads Emeritus Professor of Wellbeing Research, University of Winchester, UK

Professor James Raftery Professor of Health Technology Assessment, Wessex Institute, Faculty of Medicine, University of Southampton, UK

Dr Rob Riemsma Reviews Manager, Kleijnen Systematic Reviews Ltd, UK

Professor Helen Roberts Professor of Child Health Research, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Palliative Care and Paediatrics Unit, Population Policy and Practice Programme, UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, London, UK

Professor Jonathan Ross Professor of Sexual Health and HIV, University Hospital Birmingham, UK

Professor Helen Snooks Professor of Health Services Research, Institute of Life Science, College of Medicine, Swansea University, UK

Professor Ken Stein Professor of Public Health, University of Exeter Medical School, UK

Professor Jim Thornton Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Nottingham, UK

Please visit the website for a list of editors: www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/about/editors

Editorial contact: journals.library@nihr.ac.uk