

Voluntary Sector Led Research

facing the challenge

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Necessity or Nuisance?

aim

- to further the understanding between the voluntary sector, the research community and service users.
- to introduce voluntary sector led research as a possible framework for governance of inclusive high quality research.

dividing forces

- researchers can be suspicious of interference
- voluntary and community sector organisations might be wary of researchers
- some service users might not trust the systems



pulling forces

- community engagement
- requirement of evidence base
- demand for service user involvement

voluntary sector led research

- National Lottery Charities Board (1994)
- 1996 / 1999 / 2001 to 2005
- £ 47 million for medical and social research

voluntary sector led research

previous rationale

giving the voluntary sector a greater voice in determining which research is done, how it is carried out, how its findings are disseminated and potentially taken forward into policy development and practice.

voluntary sector led research

definition

research in which a voluntary sector organisation takes the leading role within the project right from the development of its aims all the way through to the dissemination of results.

voluntary sector led research

key underlying principles:

- the voluntary sector organisation involves the community it serves and the beneficiaries of the research in a manner that makes a difference to the way the research is undertaken
- the research is of a quality that is recognised and accepted by peers

added value

- high quality enquiry within voluntary sector
- appropriate user involvement
- picking up forgotten or unpopular subjects
- stronger influence on policy makers
- effective dissemination

problems

- requirement for additional time and resource
- requirement to increase mutual understanding
- requirement for mutual acceptance of participating parties' needs

rationale for further development

- capacity building within parts of the voluntary sector which do not yet have any capacity
- engagement of previously unengaged researchers with their research subjects
- inclusion of service users who are currently under represented
- framework for inclusive high quality research

good practice

- identify and accept participants' needs
- accept plurality of research methods
- collaborative binding agreement for governance
- continuous dialogue across the sectors
- evaluate

evaluation

- recognisable effects on the lives of people
- needs of partners have been met
- peer review of results
- dissemination to all concerned

Summary

- nuisance – yes
- necessity – probably
- expensive – certainly

- good idea – maybe
as a framework for governance of
inclusive high quality research

thank you

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