Using a realist approach to understanding Alliancing

Sam Redgate

What do we mean by 'Alliancing'?

- Delivery approach
- Collaborative working
- 'Whole system' focus

Research Aims

To identify how alliancing can be successfully operationalised in the commissioning of public health and social care related services in Local Government

What are the features of successful alliances in health and social care settings?

1. What mechanisms facilitate or constrict the use of alliances?
2. In which contexts do these mechanisms apply?
3. What outcomes are produced?

The Realist Approach

Ideas and assumptions underlying **_how, why and in what circumstances_** interventions work

Three steps:
1. Develop programme theories
2. Test programme theories using data
3. Refine and consolidate programme theories
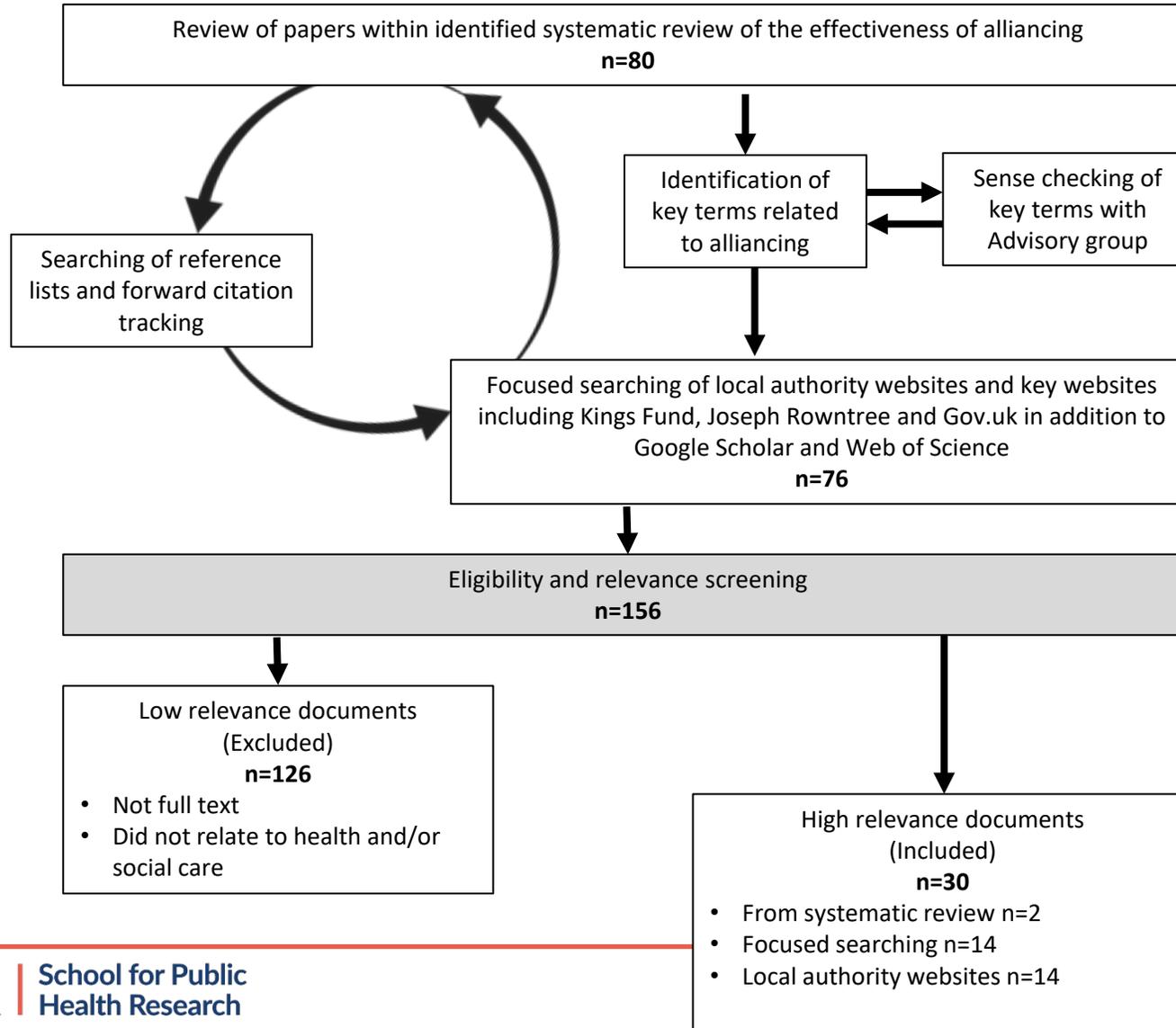

So, what is a Programme theory?

It's just how and why you think the intervention will work.

RAMESESPROJECT.ORG

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Searching for Evidence

Review of papers within identified systematic review of the effectiveness of alliancing
n=80

Identification of key terms related to alliancing

Sense checking of key terms with Advisory group

Searching of reference lists and forward citation tracking

Focused searching of local authority websites and key websites including Kings Fund, Joseph Rowntree and Gov.uk in addition to Google Scholar and Web of Science
n=76

Eligibility and relevance screening
n=156

Low relevance documents
(Excluded)
n=126
- Not full text
- Did not relate to health and/or social care

High relevance documents
(Included)
n=30
- From systematic review n=2
- Focused searching n=14
- Local authority websites n=14

Findings: Key Mechanisms

Systems thinking

Focus on outcomes

Locality/place-based approach

Culture shift

Successful alliance approach

Trust

Innovation

Links to local population

Increased efficiency

Collaborative working

High quality workforce

Commitment from partners

Commitment from senior leaders

Clarity of partnership objectives

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Findings: Core Alliance Features

Achieving a system level approach

Placing local populations at the heart of the system

Creating a cultural shift

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Middle range programme theory	**PT A: Systems level** Alliances use a **whole systems approach** by <u>integrating interventions/services</u> through the formation of <u>common goals</u>, this **reduces system fragmentation** and provides services which **meet local population need**
Component programme theory	*IPT 1: Complex interventions for local needs* There is a requirement for complex interventions to address local health and social care need (Context). The use of an alliance approach (Mechanism, resource) formalises common goals and integration between services (Mechanism, reasoning) in effectively delivering interventions, which are able to meet identified local complex needs (Outcome). *IPT 2: Whole systems approach* By taking a whole systems approach (Context), cross-sector services can be brought together through an alliance (Mechanism, resource) to promote more holistic and joined up working focusing on shared outcomes (Mechanism, reasoning) to reduce system fragmentation (Outcome I) and increase access for service users (outcome II).

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Middle range programme theory	**IPT B: LOCAL FOCUS** **Alliances** build on <u>local capacity</u> to <u>tailor services to meet local need</u>, thus <u>influencing change</u> at the local level which promotes a **better service user experience**	
Component programme theory	***IPT 3: Local approach to change*** Following the national shift to 'locality' approaches (Context), alliances build on local confidence, capacity and connectedness assets (Mechanism, resource) to tailor services to meet local need (Mechanism, reasoning) to influence change at the local level (Outcome).	***IPT 4: Alignment and shared focus*** Within an alliance (Context), shared focus between the services involved (Mechanism, resource) enables the aligning of priorities through the notion of trust and a common aim (Mechanism, reasoning), which promotes better service user experience (Outcome I) through the adding of value to the services delivered (Outcome II).

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Middle range programme theory	**IPT C: CULTURE** **Alliances** enable <u>cultural shifts</u> through <u>commitment and trust</u> (at all levels) <u>to transformation,</u> which facilitates **innovation** and **collaborative working** across services within the alliance	
Component programme theory	***IPT 5: Innovation leading system change*** Innovative approaches to meet local service delivery requirements (Mechanism, resource) are promoted within cultures ready for change (Context) through the use of an alliance approach (Mechanism, reasoning), enabling systemic change and supporting new ways of working (Outcome).	***IPT 2: Senior commitment to collaborative arrangements*** In order for alliances to deliver relevant interventions to meet local need (Outcome), there needs to be a buy-in and commitment from senior leaders across services (Mechanism, resource) within the alliance (Context) to facilitate collaborative working arrangements (Mechanism, reasoning).

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| Middle range programme theory	**IPT C: CULTURE** **Alliances** enable <u>cultural shifts</u> through <u>commitment and trust</u> (at all levels) <u>to transformation,</u> which facilitates **innovation** and **collaborative working** across services within the alliance
Component programme theory	***IPT 7: Drive for systematic change*** An alliance (Context) enables underpinning cultural shifts within the services involved (Mechanism, resource I) through a commitment to transformation (Mechanism, resource II) in allowing for change within normal practices (Mechanism, reasoning) in order to deliver and drive forward systematic change (outcome).

Key Recommendations

- View the alliance as both the context for, and mechanism to, influence transformative change
- Facilitate and develop an understanding within the alliance about how services are delivered across boundaries through purposeful strategies such as meetings and events
- Promote cross-system awareness raising at all levels

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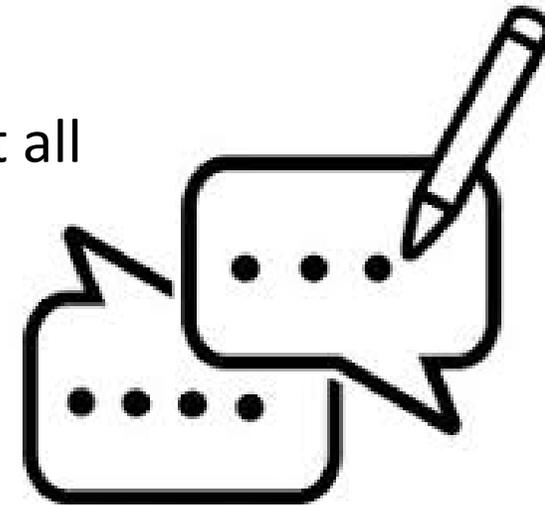
Key Recommendations Cont.

- Encourage co-creation of shared outcomes and goals across the alliance
- Context must promote core values of the alliance.
- Senior level involvement is required to provide strategic and political steer
- Include formal orchestration of shared working and relationship building within the alliance