



DARTINGTON
SERVICE
DESIGN LAB

The Dartington Service Design Lab

Centre for Social Policy

Fellows Meeting

Wednesday 19th and Thursday 20th June 2019

Dartington Service Design Lab Offices

Higher Mills

Buckfast Abbey

PROGRAMME

Speakers:

Patrick Diamond

Queen Mary, London University

Martin Knapp

London School of Economics

Tim Hobbs

CEO Dartington Service Design Lab

Liz Burns

Family and Systemic Psychotherapist and CSP fellow

Day 1

Wednesday 19th June 2019

1.00pm Lunch at Buckfast Abbey

2.00pm

Patrick Diamond

Associate Professor of Public Policy, Queen Mary, London University

Evidence and expertise in an era of 'post-truth' democracy

This talk will examine what it means to be an expert or evidence-led practitioner in an age of 'post-truth' democracy. It will take stock of the current state of evidence-based policy in UK social policy, examining current challenges and dilemmas in the use of evidence. Recent developments that appear to have strengthened the role of the social sciences in the development of social policy will be discussed, indicating scope for optimism as well as pessimism about the role of expertise. Finally, the ways in which experts can re-imagine their role in an era of epistemological challenges to 'truth' and evidence will be assessed.

3.30pm Tea break

4.00pm

Tim Hobbs and Colleagues

Dartington Service Design Lab

The Dartington Service Design Lab Achievements and future plans

The Dartington Service Design Lab has evolved from the Boarding Schools Research Unit at King's College, Cambridge (1963-8) and the Dartington Social Research Unit (1968-2017). This history can be seen on the Lab's website www.dartington.org.uk in the Our History section. The Lab was a radical innovation in terms of focusing on system reform, service design and information design, underpinned by fusing science-based and user-centred design principles and in having a team distributed across the UK, working flexibly and remotely from Devon, London, Manchester and Glasgow, supported by a growing team of associates across the UK and abroad. Details of its work and organisation are available on the website mentioned above.

As the Lab has now been operating for two years, the Lab staff would welcome observations, criticisms and suggestions from fellows on its achievements and future plans at this stage of its development.

6.00pm

Drinks reception – Dartington Lab Offices

7.30pm

**Dinner and overnight accommodation –
Buckfast Abbey**

**(The Benedictine monks sing Compline in the
Abbey at 8.15)**

Day 2

Thursday 20th June 2019

9.00am

Martin Knapp

London School of Economics

The dementia challenge - the role of economics

With rapid population ageing and the strong and growing correlation between age and incidence of dementia, many countries in the world are already facing quite a substantial 'challenge' in relation to how to respond appropriately to the needs of people with dementia, their families and other carers. That challenge is substantial already in high-income countries, is beginning to show itself quite noticeably in middle-income countries and will become very evident in low-income countries in the next few decades. The 'challenge' stems from the very nature of the various conditions collectively known as 'dementia', given the often very profound impacts that the condition can have on the person living with it and other people. There is (as yet) no cure. The risk of developing dementia can be reduced but takes many decades to show change, and care systems are increasingly challenged by under-resourcing, in this country at least. I will discuss how we as a society might respond to these challenges given the intrinsic tension between economics and welfare. There are never enough resources to fund what practitioners want and governments hold firm to their responsibility to ensure that taxpayers' money is spent fairly and effectively. In addition, there are moral issues about deserving and non-deserving cases and limits to what should be spent in unpromising situations. Methodological questions also arise in attempts to determine the economic value of social interventions and individual therapies.

10.30 am Coffee

11.00 am

Liz Burns

Family and Systemic Psychotherapist and CSP fellow

Reflecting on Judgment, life, death and 'the pattern which connects...' (Bateson, 1979)

Nearly 30 years have passed since the Children Act 1989 made explicit the principle that the welfare of the child should be paramount. Should we, therefore, in 2019, expect the benefits of this enlightened sentiment to be discernible, not only in legal judgments concerning children and families, but also in the ways in which society behaves? Has the passage of time and usage enabled us to refine and develop this principle and, if so, how can we tell? The social scene in 2019 is characterised by ever-increasing complexity (as well as more awareness of how complex systems work) and some serious contradictions. Unprecedented amounts of information are freely available but much of it of such uncertain status that it can be a problem to know how to position ourselves in relation to it. We can navigate the internet but the fundamental question remains: What does it all mean for us and the values which guide our actions?

It is hoped that a discussion of these reflections will generate new ideas on how to support processes set up by good intentions and legal processes. For example:

- How might we better understand the relational needs of children and young people, including the ones we once were?

- How can we establish understanding of these needs as a part of professional education and development of a wider variety of professionals?
- What resources are needed to support judgments, especially where they involve complex social systems and vulnerable people?
- How can these be accepted as part of social policy, whether top down or bottom up?
- How can we learn better to challenge assertions of austerity and competing priorities?

NB Liz's paper will be circulated in advance of the seminar.

12.30 Lunch and depart

Biographies of contributors

Patrick Diamond is Associate Professor of Public Policy at Queen Mary, University of London. He was formally Research Fellow in the Department of Politics at the University of Manchester, and Gwilym Gibbon Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford. He is a Visiting Fellow at Kellogg College, University of Oxford and an Associate Member of Nuffield College. Patrick is a trustee of the Dartington Service Design Lab and the Prisoners' Education Trust (PET). He is also on the Board of the Campaign for Social Science. He is Chair of the think-tank *Policy Network*, and sits on the Scientific Council of the *Foundation for European Progressive Studies*. Patrick held a number of senior posts in British central government between 2000 and 2010, and was formally Head of Policy Planning in 10 Downing Street. He was a Local Councillor in the London Borough of Southwark from 2010 to 2014, and he has been a trustee of the Bromley by Bow Centre, a pioneering voluntary organisation led by the local community in East London.

Martin Knapp is Professor of Social Policy and Director of the Personal Social Services Research Unit at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). He has also been Director of the NIHR School for Social Care Research since 2009. He has been working for many years in the fields of long-term care, social care, and mental health policy and practice. His current research emphases are primarily dementia, child and adult mental health, autism and long-term social care. Much of his work has an economic focus, and in all of it he seeks to tease out the policy and practice implications.

Liz Burns

Liz's social work training came in two halves, the first a Diploma in Social Administration at the University of Liverpool and the second a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work at Bedford College, London. I was briefly a generic social worker and although I was employed by SSDs until the mid 1990s, I worked in what is now called CAMHS from 1972 in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and, currently, West Cornwall. Following a year at the Maudsley, on the Social Work in Mental Health course, Liz went on to the Institute of Family Therapy where she qualified as a family therapist in 1991. Systems theory, as applied to human processes, emphasises circular patterns, so what it was natural for her to do further research on a PhD topic associated with her first love – English literature and language. This work sought to link social science and psychology with poetry and drama and although often tough was always joyful.

Tim Hobbs is director of the Dartington Service Design Lab and CEO of the Warren House Group. He joined the Dartington Social Research Unit in 2004, later becoming Head of Data and Analytics. He was appointed as the first Director of the Dartington Service Design Lab in April 2017. He holds a first-class BSc in Psychology and Criminology and a PhD in Social and Policy Sciences. Alongside Nick Axford, Tim received the Kammerman and Khan Award from the International Society of Child Indicators and is a 2016 Clore Social

Fellow. Tim's spare time is mostly taken up by his family commitments but he enjoys camping and surfing whenever possible and reading a mixture of high-brow literature and dubious quality Sci-Fi.