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Can Action Research Evaluate and Enhance Policy Implementation ?

**Anne Kelly
2008**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**The Department of Applied Social Sciences
University of Wales, Swansea.**

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Summary of Thesis

This thesis aims to advance understanding of how to evaluate processes of policy implementation. It has been found that policy implementation may falter due to characteristics of interactions between parties responsible for its implementation. Yet, over simplification of interpretations of policy implementation appear to have produced a limited study of the process, and little theory regarding variations in implementation practice. Indeed, some believe that policy implementation is a 'black box' characterised by a 'black hole of understanding.

Interest in ways in which policy is implemented did not develop until the 1970s, when it became clear that many post war policies had not performed to plan. Until this time, policy analysis had been primarily concerned with the 'front end' of policy processes, that is, the rationality of policy decisions. Burgeoning interest in poor policy performance led to an interest in the delivery end of the policy process. This interest has grown in direct proportion to tighter fiscal situations and a need to demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness in relation to government investment.

Systems frameworks are most commonly used for policy evaluation, but there is debate about their ability to provide a clear picture of outcomes, as there is no methodology for linking service outputs to outcomes of policy implementation. This is particularly the case, when policy is expected to bring about behavioural change, as in recent child and family policy in the UK. This debate has resulted in a consensus view that a more eclectic approach to policy implementation analysis should be adopted. Some conclude that policy implementation should be analysed by deconstructing the process, others, that barriers to policy implementation should be identified. There is growing support for the need of learning from the implementation process, as this reveals more about policy outcomes. Consequently, a number of policy implementation theorists suggest action research as a means of evaluation.

This study tests the use of action research in evaluating the implementation of recent changes in child and family policy, as there are criticisms that the policy is poorly implemented. In Wales, policy has been devolved from the Welsh Assembly, with the express intention of it being implemented by local authorities. The policy, however, consists of a 'volte face' on the part of the government from traditional minimalist libertarian family policy, to a form of interventionist policy not previously used in the UK. 'New' policy has therefore placed heavy demands upon local authorities expected to reduce child poverty through processes of community and social development.

Action research has been described as a means of understanding people and engaging them in a process of planned change, thus people can be empowered to work collaboratively and become involved in processes of democratic development. In short it is a process of combining research with social action. In the case of this study the use of action research revealed that there were many barriers to policy implementation at the micro-level of management. The use of action research assisted in identifying barriers, engaging policy implementers in a process of overcoming them, and devising a model of policy implementation which increased understanding and improved implementation of the broad thrusts of policy. Potentially, this improved the policy outcomes for children and their families and stemmed a waste of resources resulting from poor policy implementation.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the study

Recent concerns for ensuring the aims of policy are achieved have resulted in renewal of interest in the policy implementation process [Pestieau, 2003:11]. It is claimed that paying attention to this process may reveal reasons for achievement, or non-achievement of policy outcomes. Similar arguments were put forward over thirty years ago [Anderson, 1975:98; Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975:98] and have been re-visited at intervals [Hogwood and Gunn 1984:43; Massey, 1993:2]. However, it is claimed that there is still insufficient regard for the importance of the interplay between policy development and its implementation, a process described by Anderson [1975:98] in the following way,

“Policy is being made as it is being administered and administered as it is being made”.

In the light of these observations, it would appear that public policy analysis should be concerned not only with how matters of public concern are defined and placed on the public agenda, but also, with how policy is implemented and outcomes achieved [Heidemheimar et al, 1990]. Nagel [1990:440] suggests that especially where policy implementation is not proceeding to plan analysis of the process requires a wide focus. A variety of methods are recommended for all disciplines experiencing problems with the process. Wildavsky [1970:15] advised that the process of policy analysis cannot be contained within specific disciplinary boundaries. The complexity of the process requires a degree of flexibility to adopt methods appropriate to the circumstances, time and nature of the implementation problem. Laswell [1951, 1968, 1970, and 1971], in a substantial number of commentaries, suggested that the process of policy implementation analysis should be:-

- Multi –method.
- Multi- disciplinary.
- Problem focused.
- Concerned to map the context of the policy process, policy options and policy outcomes.
- Should be focused on the goal of integrating knowledge into an overarching discipline in order to analyse public choices and decision making, thereby contributing to the democratisation of society.

This study is concerned with the effectiveness of the implementation of recent changes in child and family policy [CYPU, 2000; DoH, 1998]. Although programmes set up as a result of changes in policy appear to be benefiting children, there is criticism of their failure to achieve wider policy agendas [Harris et al, 2003]. These agendas are concerned with reducing child poverty, social exclusion, economic and community development. Strategies to implement ‘new’ policy

are perceived as important means of meeting the wider agenda for the rights of children [UNCRC, 1989]. In Wales, devolved responsibilities from Westminster Government have increased concern of the Welsh Assembly Government for effectiveness of the policy implementation process. This has led to recommendations for its evaluation, preferably using an action research approach. The rationale for this recommendation is that action research allows the results of evaluation to be fed back into the delivery of the policy process [WAG, 2002:29]. Action research is described as a means of making explicit the interplay between policy development and its implementation [Pestieau, 2003:2]. It is a facilitative tool for increasing the transparency of the policy implementation process and has the capacity to accommodate the broad range of factors necessary for its analysis [Laswell, 1971; Cheetham et al, 1997:5; Pestieau, 2003:2]. The principal aim of this study is to determine the effectiveness of action research as a tool for evaluation of the policy implementation process.

The concern of this study is not policy formulation, it is to review and evaluate a process of policy implementation recently adopted by one Local Authority in Wales, in accordance with a national policy strategy for the introduction of changes in child and family policy [Children and Young People's Unit [CYPU], 2000]. It is claimed that action research is an evaluation process best suited to enhancement of the policy implementation process and any necessary organisational or staff development processes required. Such development should assist policy implementers to adopt an autonomous, emancipative form of policy implementation, which it is thought may be preferable to an automatic response to formulated policy [Zuber-Skerrit, 1996; Morgan, 1986]. Following the recommendations of Laswell [1971], outlined above, the study will draw on a number of different methods and disciplines for analysis of policy implementation, within the overall discipline of action research. This is in order to focus on the problems of how various agencies involved in this area of policy making have identified required changes, defined aims, set agendas, made decisions and evaluated policy implementation processes. It is suggested that action research methods will facilitate policy implementers to initiate policy change, achieve policy goals and evaluate their achievement in accordance with the policy implementation goals defined by government [Zuber-Skerrit, 1996].

To prepare the ground for evaluation of the policy implementation process, the literature review will address the overlapping components of factors involved, policy, policy implementation analysis strategies, methods of evaluation and action research. This is in order to identify arguments to support the choice of action research as an evaluative tool for this study. The literature review for this study was based on a thorough search of policy literature dating from the

1940's onwards and a variety of data bases such as Assia, HMIC: DH data, the King's Fund data base, Social Service abstracts, and Sociological abstracts. In all 398 articles were reviewed, all related to some aspect of health, social care, policy implementation, action research or management. In this first chapter the policy background to the study will be explored, historical concepts of the family and family policy will be examined and 'change drivers' identified and analysed. Finally the context of the study will be explained and the policy strategy for Wales reviewed. In summary the aims and objectives of the study will be examined in context.

1.2 Policy background to the study

According to Daniel and Ivatts [1998:4], until very recently in the United Kingdom, public policy on children and families has been more implicit than explicit. Although throughout the 80s and 90s there was a drive to improve the protection of children [DoH, 1989; DoH, 1998], public responsibility for children's welfare has been scattered and fragmented and the public profile of children's issues very low. In the absence of any explicit framework of aims and principles, it appears that policy towards children developed according to a set of assumptions and values [Wasoff and Dey, 2000]. For four decades, these appear to have been embedded in wider concerns, such as the relationship between the state, the family and the future of the nation [Lash, 1977; Rogers and Clements, 1985, and Mc Kay, 1989]. Criticism suggests that the concern of the state to support the family was in reality distinct from the primacy of its concern for supporting family responsibilities. Particularly, such criticisms are a feature of several feminist analyses of the issue [Wilson, 1977; Pascal, 1986 and Williams, 1989].

This situation in the UK appears to be in marked contrast with situations existing in a number of other countries that have developed more explicit child and family policy frameworks. For example, Denmark has a 'social frameworks' law defining social contracts and since the early 1990's has developed explicit policy frameworks and stimulated wide public debate about children and their needs [Daniel and Ivatts, 1998:4]. Quoting Vilien [1993], Daniel and Ivatts show how in Denmark,

"The government appointed a permanent committee of civil servants from thirteen ministries, delegating to members responsibility for following all matters relating to the conditions affecting children's lives. Public debate has been very active and engaged... all in order to give children a high priority".

Similarly, in Norway, according to Flekkoy [1995], policy has prioritised the interests of children. Following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [1989], The Children Act, [1989], and the World Summit of 1990, there have been some developmental changes in UK policy towards children [Lansdowne, 1992; Commission on Social Justice, 1994:311]. However,

Newell [1995:196], Sanders [2004:148-150], and Thomas [2004:118] suggest that the UK still has far to go to comply with the principal elements of the UN Convention, which states that children should be explicitly visible and central in policy. Such rationale is based on the following considerations,

- Children are people with inalienable human rights.
- Children have a right to special assistance.
- Children's own views should be given due weight.
- A greater emphasis on state rather than family responsibility is required.
[Daniel and Ivatts, 1998:17].

However, as Thomas [2004:11] points out in respect of the Children Act 1989 [Article 12], it is only children whose upbringing is being considered before a court, or who are being looked after by a Local Authority, who have a right to express an opinion and have that opinion taken into account. Children living in their own families do not have this right, unless they live in Scotland where The Children [Scotland] Act [1995] places a duty on parents to take account of children's wishes in any decisions affecting them. Pawlick and Stroick [2004:31] also criticise child policy implemented before 1999 for its propensity to ignore the effects of family poverty on children. This was also a view expressed by the Report of the Child Poverty Task Group [2004:1] as follows,

"Children who are born poor, are in danger of staying poor' and are 'at increased risk of unemployment, poor health and low-income".

Although in the UK, it appears that since 1990, the volume of legislation and policy initiatives concerned with the welfare of children has ensured that children enjoy a higher priority, for many years a number of researchers have argued that legislation enacted in the name of children may arise from concerns about issues that have little to do with children's needs [Challis, 1990; Daniel and Ivatts, 1998:5; Jackson, 2004:92]. It is suggested that the language of social policy has been more 'family' than 'child-centred', a fact that is evidenced by such legislation as the Child Support Act [DSS, 1999]. In the guise of improving children's welfare this act sought to reinforce parental responsibility, increase work incentives and thereby cut public expenditure. As was pointed out in The Report of the Child Poverty Task Group, [2004:1], in no way did such legislation address the fact that,

"Poverty is not just about income. The opportunities and quality of life of children and young people are also shaped by their education, their access to quality health services, by decent housing, by the security and environment of where they live and by their opportunity to participate".

Therefore, in reality many children may not have benefited from previous legislation [Daniel and Burgess, 1994]. Arguably, it may be the case that obfuscation of children's needs in the wider concerns of the state to regulate families has created a situation in which children may have become 'socially invisible'. Consequently their rights as individuals may have become secondary considerations in both policy formulation and its implementation. Indeed, it has been argued by Hendrick [1994] and Brown [1998:116] that although the 'family' is a dominant theme in the social policy of the UK, the individual rights of children may have often been overlooked for three particular reasons. Firstly, children have been seen as "threats" and characterized as creating "a danger on our streets"; secondly, they may have been characterized as "victims", thereby stimulating concerns for more vigorous policing of 'child abuse' and thirdly, they may have been characterized as "investments", in respect of state concerns.

As "investment" children are seen as the "saviours of tomorrow's economy" and perceived as requiring more concern [Commission on Social Justice, 1994:311]. It is this last perspective that currently appears to be primarily influencing policy, but the existence of the other historical perspectives of the child, together with previous concerns for maintaining family responsibilities may confuse those attempting to understand new policy intentions [Daniel and Ivatts, 1998:5]. It is contended that similar confusion may exist in respect of changing concepts of the family.

1.3 Historical perspectives of the concept of the family

The term family was described by Haralambos [1980: 325] as,

"The cornerstone of Society, the basic unit of social organisation. Although the composition of the family varies, such differences can be seen as minor variations on a basic theme".

Wasoff and Dey [2000:2], point out that the character of families has a duality,

"On the one side, we have the simple and appealing image of the ideal family — on the other there are the complex realities of family life, with its dark secrets of conflict, exploitation and abuses".

Davies et al [1993:1] pointed out that descriptions, such as those above, refer to the monogamous nuclear family. In today's society the structure of the family is becoming so complex that increasing numbers of children no longer experience their primary socialisation in such a family unit. As a consequence the social problems of today's society may be blamed on changes in family form. However, Davies and colleagues argue that problems related to families and children are not so much related to variants in family form as to factors related to state intervention, market forces, and policy shifts from collectivism to individualism. This is the view of the current societal position of the family adopted in this study. It is a view based on the

findings of 'The Report of the Child Poverty Task Group Consultation' [WAG 2004p.16]. As was shown in the previous section, various interpretations of the concept of the child, together with various constructs of 'family', may create difficulties for policy implementers attempting to reach a consensus of opinion regarding the most appropriate means of providing family support.

In a Welfare Reform Green Paper 'Supporting Families' [DSS, 1998: 13], it was stated that,

"The family is the bedrock of a decent, civilised and stable society".

but to add to the potential for confusion discussed above, this view has not always been universal [Wasoff and Dey, 2000:11]. Himmelfarb [1995:8] for example, showed how historically the notion of the family has often changed. This author claims that Plato,

"Utterly rejected the very idea of the family: His ideal state of 'communism' was a community that shared not only property, but women and children as well".

Yet Aristotle repudiated Plato's views and asserted that the family was,

"The first community' and 'therefore a natural part of the state', and 'necessary for the sake of a properly ordered state",

In medieval and Elizabethan times the extended nuclear family became the dominant form of social grouping [Laslett and Walls, 1972], but by the nineteenth century Beer [1995:28-9] showed how Marx and Engels castigated the way in which marriage reduced relationships into the mere exploitation of women and children for private gain. It was the view of these authors that,

"The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production".

A criticism which Beer maintained, would gain much contemporary support from radical feminists.

Despite the diversity of views on family life, Himmelfarb [1995:53] claims that support for the concept of the family came into its own in Victorian times. Disraeli, for example [Hanham, 1969], extolled the virtues of the family, particularly in respect of the salutary influence that it was perceived to exercise over the nation. Others, such as Burke [World's Classics [eds], [1950]; Ruskin [1956]; Lord Shaftesbury [Wohl, 1978] and Briggs [1983] were also renowned for their support of the concept of family. Despite the fact that there was dissent from their views, the protestations of the dissidents were not taken seriously [Himmelfarb, 1995:58]. Feminist texts, such as those of Roberts [1984] and Perkin [1989] also supported the view that family life was revered and valued amongst both middle and working classes well into the first half of the twentieth century.

However, since the 1970s family breakdown has become a characteristic of modern day society [Morgan, 1995; Murray, 1996]. Some believe that the nature and scale of family change is a

matter of serious concern. Family breakdown is criticised for the fact that increasing numbers of children no longer experience their primary socialisation within a traditional family unit [Davies, 1993, vi]. Others point out that the traditional family may be a historical and transient phenomenon, born of male usurpation of patrial ties and children for the purpose of inheritance [Morgan, 1995:152]. However, this same author argues that families without fathers are likely to face problems of 'cohesion and control', inadequate adult supervision, compromised security, fewer adult role models and less intergenerational relationships [Morgan 1995:1-26]. David [1998:7] criticises Morgan's viewpoint, on the grounds that her opinion is biased by her neo-conservative views. In contrast to Morgan's perspectives on the family [Morgan, 1998:65-82], others such as Segal [1980], Bjornberg, [1992] and Kiernan [1998:51-64] acclaim the emerging diversity in family form as liberating, a crucial political choice which constitutes an important development of an 'oppositional culture'. Proponents of such views welcome the new diversity in family forms and applaud the fact that families are changing rather than breaking down. They argue that those who criticise new family forms may be projecting an old ideal on to the real world [Kiernan, 2002:64]. Whatever the merits of changes in family form and attitudes towards marriage as a stable base for child rearing, statistics showed that in 2001:-

- 59% of households consist of married/ couples with dependent children
 - 11% of households consist of cohabiting with no children or non-dependent children
 - 22 % of households consist of lone parents with dependent or non-dependent children
- [OPCS 2001].

Between 1971 and 1991, the number of lone-parent households more than doubled [from 570,000 to 1,300,000], as did the number of children living in those households [from one million to 2.2 million]. As a percentage of the whole population, those living in such households increased fourfold [Social Trends, 24]. Lister and colleagues [1996] showed that up to 1984, nearly three-quarters of the increase in lone-parent families was due to a rise in divorced and separated mothers. Today it appears that lone-parenthood is increasingly the result of a huge growth in never-married people. Births outside marriage increased from 1/10 in the 1970s, to 3/10 by the early 1990s and from a rate of 31% in 1992 they have continued to rise by two percentage points a year. The rate stood at 55.5 % of all births in 2001 [OPCS, 2001]. Among women under twenty, the rate of lone parenthood was 84%, whilst a fifth of all births to women over thirty five were outside marriage [OPCS, 1991]. Although three quarters of these births were registered by both parents, a substantial minority occurred to mothers of single status and less than three quarters of joint registrations involved the same address [Lister et al, 1996]. Currently, the proportion of all people living in 'traditional' family households of married couples with dependent children has

fallen from 52% in 1971 to 37% in 2007. In 2006, nearly a quarter of all children lived with only one parent and nine out of ten of those households were headed by lone mothers [Social Trends, 2007]. It may be concluded from these observations that diversity in family life is a feature of the twenty first century. Therefore views of 'the family' based solely on marriage may be outdated. As Kiernan [1998:64] suggests, parenthood rather than marriage contracts and the welfare of all children should be the primary policy focus.

In this section we have seen that lack of universality in relation to concepts of family form and its relationship to child welfare has been the subject of debate for many centuries. However, in the last few years the debate has become even more intense as changes in family form have escalated and become more disparate in terms of demographic and economic diversity [Kiernan, 2002:5]. It is therefore contended that the policy agenda of the Labour government since 1997, which places the family at the heart of its proposals, may serve to confuse those who observe that alternative family forms are construed as problems to the welfare state [David, 1998:2]. To deal with such 'problems' a more intrusive style of family policy has emerged which is very different from historical forms of policy representing, as it does, a shift in emphasis in respect of the responsibilities of the family and the state.

1.4 An historical overview of family policy in Britain

Prior to the policy changes made by the 'New Labour' government elected in 1997, the objectives of family policy were already changing. The reasons for change were the need for redistribution of resources and elimination of differences in standards of living for households with and without children [Pawlick and Stroick, 2006:33]. Since 1997 the government's objectives have been aimed at extending opportunities for all, in order to spread opportunity to every family. Not all agree with this view, there is criticism of policy objectives for the way in which they construe some alternative family forms as a drain on the 'public purse' and seek to rely on intrusive forms of policy to encourage 'partnerships' to address this issue [David 1998:3]. Whatever the merits of policy change, there has certainly been a departure from traditional policy traits [Daniel and Ivatts 1998:232-235]. Historical perspectives of child and family policy reveal that recent policy is a new turn. Wasoff and Dey [2000: 4] argue that previously Britain did not have a robust national family policy. Prior to family policy strategies introduced since 1998 government actions and policies were not specifically or primarily addressed to the family, although families may have felt the indirect consequences of policies related, for example, to housing, health, education and employment. As a consequence, since the end of the second World War, the income gap between

families with and without children widened considerably. Although issues of child poverty and child abuse focused attention on the needs and rights of children, it was not until 1998 that a Ministerial Group was set up to investigate family issues, such as those referred to above. This Group, headed by Jack Straw, then Home Secretary, in its discussion document 'Supporting Families' [Home Office /Ministerial Group on the Family, 1998] clearly outlined the need for an overall approach to family issues. This approach was to span a number of ministerial briefs in order to re-dress some of the effects of 'new' family forms, such as co-habiting families, one parent families, step-families or re-constituted families, on the welfare of the child. This discussion document clearly signalled the Labour Government's intention to adopt a collaborative approach to problems relating to child care and family responsibility. Though it was not clear whether this development was a fore-runner of a national family policy which would change the state's role in this policy arena.

Since 1998, changes in national child and family policy have signalled a departure from the previous role of the state in family life. Traditionally, perceptions of this role appear to have had two dimensions, which provided competing agendas for policy formulation. The first dimension of the role of the state in family life constituted an "authoritarian" position, from which the state identified, clearly defined and rigidly enforced objectives for families to achieve. The second dimension was a 'libertarian, minimalist or laissez-faire' perspective, from which the family was seen as a private arena beyond the scope of state concern [Harding, 1996: 56]. From the 'authoritarian' perspective it was perceived that the state had a right to enforce certain behaviours and to prohibit others. For example, policies that are common to most developed countries are those made to lower or raise fertility rates, thereby influencing population growth [Beveridge, 1942, para. 117]. At the same time, connections between secular and religious authority may shape attitudes to issues such as contraception, abortion, divorce and parenting styles [Wasoff and Dey, 2000:16]. Additionally, the state has regulated behaviour through law and inculcated values via the media and education [Harding, 1996:177].

Although 'authoritarian' views may have embraced an interventionist approach on the part of the State, it is not until recent times that child and family policy has sought to be more intrusive in family matters [Wasoff and Dey, 2000: 21]. As a result, the state has supported policies which have introduced parental control or responsibility orders, allowing parents of 'delinquents' to be fined, imprisoned, tagged or trained in their parental role [Crime and Disorder 2002 Act, 1998]. Intrusion has also extended to the establishment of a 'work' culture in order to reduce child poverty and increase children's life chances [David, 1998:2].

Prior to recent changes a 'libertarian' perspective prevailed [Wasoff and Dey, 2000:21], this was a dominant value that the privacy of the family is sacrosanct. This view argues that in principle there should be no legal regulation of the family in respect of marriage, parenthood, patterns of living and support, or reproduction. From this stand-point the state is judged to have no moral authority to regulate parenting [Daniel and Ivatts, 1998:214]. The stand-point goes further to question the credibility of the state in respect of its own track record in 'parenting' children, arguing that child abuse scandals in residential homes hardly endow the state with the moral authority to question the standards of 'others' parenting. 'Libertarians' also point out that no 'model' of parenting has been imposed by recent policy and that it would be difficult to identify such a model, in view of the fact that child rearing strategies are often a matter of fashion. As fashion changes quickly there can be little agreement on what constitutes 'good parenting' [Daniel and Ivatts, 1998:214]. According to Cannan [1992] the libertarian view is that only abusive or problem families need interventionist services. It is claimed by Daniel and Ivatts [1998:15] and Thomas [2004:118] that this view is epitomised by the Children Act [1989], which is described as a piece of 'minimalist' legislation. The reason being that although the act makes it clear that children's welfare is a 'paramount' it also indicates that children's welfare is best served by non-intervention in family matters.

Spanning these two extreme viewpoints Harding [1996:117] identified a continuum of positions which are dependent on enforcement through regulation, incentives, or the force of tacit assumptions. It was his view that the position adopted is dependent on the extent to which family policy is proactive [pursuing its own agenda], or reactive. Supporters of proactive regulation are said to be more likely to adopt an interventionist perspective. However, views on the legitimacy of intervention tend to be subjective. When aims are approved the legitimacy of intervention is applauded, but dissent over the aims of intervention brings about criticism and condemnation of action. Millar [1998:123] further refined Harding's theory of a continuum of positions between the two extremes of 'authoritarianism' and 'libertarianism' by identifying positions on the continuum that could be represented by 'traditionalist', 'egalitarian' or 'pragmatic' perspectives.

'Traditionalists' represent themselves as major defenders of the family as an institution, describing it as,

- A bulwark of freedom - a countervailing force to powers of bureaucracy.
- A seat of Authority - especially paternal authority which fosters stability and effective socialisation to counteract social disorganisation arising from industrialisation and urbanisation.

- A source of community - intimacy and social cohesion rooted in social roles rather than rights.
- A means of reproduction - of workers, citizens and entrepreneurs on whom the future of society and the nation may depend.

Traditionalists therefore embrace an authoritarian viewpoint [Morgan, 1998:71], which categorises the traditional family as the maintainer of social order. This perspective recognises the obligations between adults and children and condemns the process of 'de-regulation of the conjugal nuclear family', which it perceives as the outcome of formalisation of alternative 'family structures'.

'Egalitarian perspectives' of the family tend to be more ambivalent [Wasoff and Dey, 2000:18]. They are said to value the family as a counterpoint to market forces, yet criticise it as a means of perpetuating and reducing social inequalities. Thus a range of different approaches may be seen to be encompassed by the egalitarian perspective, depending on whether emphasis is placed on social divisions such as class, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. In respect of class, Wasoff and Dey [2000:18] claim the egalitarian approach is concerned for the way in which the family reproduces class inequalities through inheritance and privileged access to goods and services. Thereby promoting advantage for some children at the expense of others. Thus there is concern for the marginalisation or exclusion of some families from full participation in society. In such instances, the role of the government is seen as instrumental in,

"Ensuring that families can meet the needs of their children, or, to be prepared to 'step in' when they cannot"
[Coote, 1995:27].

Wasoff and Dey [2000:18] suggest that this approach appears to be more liberalist than the traditionalist authoritarian perspective.

From a "feminist" perspective, there is interest in how the family contributes to gender inequalities in the public sphere. As a consequence some feminists have described the family as 'a pivot of oppressive socialisation' [Craven et al, 1982: 62], an institution that traps women in limited roles, sexual divisions of labour and unequal distribution of resources. This is a viewpoint that has argued for policies that will encourage changes to the traditional view of the role of the family. It seeks legitimacy for new family patterns, not necessarily based on marriage or heterosexual relationships. Wasoff and Dey [2000:19] suggest that this is a truly liberalist perspective. They also note how the liberalist egalitarian perspective is concerned that the racial dimension of family policy is rarely made explicit. It is their view that variance in ethnicity can create inequalities between families. Family roles and obligations are subject to cultural stereotypes which may cause erroneous assumptions regarding the extent of family support and access to

services. Differences in family patterns across ethnic groups also render some people more vulnerable to reductions in state welfare, such as the recent cuts in lone-parent benefits [Wasoff and Dey, 2000:19]. This was a factor also noted in respect of US policy by Lister et al [1996: 24].

The “egalitarian” perspective of policy has also raised the issues of equal rights in respect of family formation and reproduction, a fact which demands serious consideration in terms of the need for non-discriminatory policy for those who are disabled or have an alternative sexual orientation. To this end, the disability movements and the gay and lesbian movements have pressed for equal rights with regard to family formation and reproduction. More recently ‘egalitarian’ perspectives have shown concern for the plight of immigrants and asylum seekers [Daniel and Ivatts, 1998]. Consequently the states decision to disrupt and divide families, as well as to deny them decent minimum living standards, as a deterrent to ‘undesirable’ immigration has been condemned. Wasoff and Dey [2000] suggest that pragmatic perspectives of family policy appear to be more forward looking than ‘traditional’ or ‘egalitarian’ perspectives. They embrace the notion of adapting to change, using policy as a means of promoting the positive aspects of change and mitigating its worst consequences. It is the contention of ‘pragmatists’ that the state has little power to regulate behaviour [such as reluctance to marry or divorce] in the face of economic and social conditions which foster new lifestyles. This type of pragmatism is demonstrated on an international level by Gauthier’s [1996] typology of family policy, which identifies four classifications of policy applicable to different European countries. These policies may be catalogued as:

- Pro natalist - [concerned with sustaining fertility e.g. France].
- Pro-traditional - [concerned with the promotion of supporting traditional family roles and functions eg. Germany].
- Pro-egalitarian - [concerned with the promotion of equality in family life e.g. Sweden and Denmark].
- Pro-family - [but selectively interventionist on the part of families with identified needs eg. UK and USA].

This categorisation closely resembles Millar’s [1998] refinement of the continuum between authoritarian and libertarian perspectives of family policy namely, the ‘traditional’, ‘egalitarian’ and ‘pragmatist’ standpoints which clarify the foci of each approach.

According to Wasoff and Dey [2000], the UK currently favours a ‘pragmatist’ approach to family policy, a view which supports that of Gauthier [1996]. It is contended that far from having a ‘traditional’ perspective of family policy, [the view proffered by Hantrais and Letablier [1996], based on the assumption that the UK was a strong advocate of the family as a private domain],

family policy in the UK now leans heavily towards a pragmatic approach. This has developed as a result of a shift from traditional policy stances towards a 'third way' [Giddens, 1998:94] in policy-making. This is a form of family policy embraced by 'New Labour'. It combines both 'traditionalist' and 'egalitarian' perspectives of the continuum and 'egalitarian' perspectives continuum between 'authoritarian/interventionist' and 'libertarian' policy perspectives to form the pragmatic view that,

"What families - all families- have a right to expect from government is support, it is not for the state to decide whether people marry or stay together".

[Home Office/Ministerial Group on the Family, 1998:2].

However, within the same report this view was mediated by a more traditionalist viewpoint,

"Marriage is still the surest foundation for raising children and remains the choice of the majority of people in Britain. We want to strengthen the institution of marriage to help more marriages to succeed".

[Home Office /Ministerial Group on the Family, 1998:4]

and

"This government believes that marriage provides a strong foundation for stable relationships".

[Home Office/Ministerial Group on the Family, 1998:30]

Thus the 'third way' of 'New Labour' appears to adopt an 'iron fist in a velvet glove' approach to the problem of combining traditional and modern ways of thinking and adjusting to 'progressive' family lifestyles. It is a way that has been criticised for side-stepping the issues of whether family policy should be maximalist or minimalist and for making less than a rational and comprehensive appraisal of alternatives, by simply opting for an incremental response to immediate problems [Morgan, 1998:65-82]. Sceptics take an even more critical view, claiming that recent family policy strategies advocated by the government may merely be devices to exploit opportunities for political advantage [Wasoff and Dey, 2000: 22].

Whatever the viewpoint adopted in respect of the motives for current government thinking and strategy in respect of family policy, there can be little doubt that the family is a dominant theme in UK policy [Daniel and Ivatts, 1998]. The reason for this lies in concerns about social and moral values and changes in conventional assumptions of society [Wasoff and Dey, 2000:21]. These concerns are heightened by anxiety and arguments over the social and financial costs of coping with change. Debate around these issues characterises the family as a problem for society. The problem being conceptualised as the growth of one-parent families, an increased incidence of family breakdown, failures in family socialisation, failures in the family's capacity to care for

older members and women's increasing participation in the labour market. The emphasis on crisis in the family has been criticised by Daniel and Ivatts [1998:6] for the way in which it perpetuates the 'invisibility' of children within the family unit. It is their view that failure to recognise the distinction between children and their families is a process of 'familialisation' of childhood that obfuscates the real needs of children. As a result of this obfuscation any impetus towards the development of 'child centred' policy is choked. Nevertheless, Franklin [1989], put forward the view that since the United Nations Convention on The Rights of The Child [1989] and the World Summit [1990], the rights of the child have figured more prominently as an influencing factor in family policy.

Specifically, the Convention appears to have affirmed the importance of the family to children's welfare and has brought about a shift in emphasis regarding the respective responsibilities of family and state. In particular, the concept of the family as a private institution has been dispelled and the role of the state in supporting families to care for children has been emphasised. The outcome of the debate on crisis in the family points to the fact that social change has impacted on the way that families manage their responsibilities, causing failures in reproduction, socialisation, care work and distribution [Phillips, 2002]. The argument has become polarised between the need to control the cost haemorrhage caused by family breakdown, in terms of poorer health, educational progress, drug misuse, delinquency crime and absenteeism of fathers and mothers and the need to uphold the rights of children. Dobson and Moyes [1996] suggested that the cost of family breakdown to the taxpayer is somewhere in the region of £4 billion a year in lost tax, legal and health bills. They concluded that the costs of obfuscating the rights of children are instability, poverty and conflict. Government has perceived that these factors may lead to young people exhibiting behavioural problems, suffering from ill health, youth offending and being more liable to experiencing breakdown in their own relationships [Children and Young Peoples Unit, 2000]. Thus the twin concerns of reducing the cost of family breakdown and the need to fulfill the needs of children have been merged into a modernising agenda which emphasises the need of social reform to enhance citizenship. This discourse of 'citizenship',

- emphasises duties rather than rights and the idea of citizen participation.
- stresses equality of status and opportunity, rather than equality of outcomes for both families and children. The stress on parenthood, rather than partnership, reflects a focus on children.

As Giddens [1998:94] pointed out,

"The protection and care of children is the single most important thread that should guide family policy"

Family policies to support this agenda are grounded in concepts of equal rights and responsibilities for fathers [irrespective of marital status or residence], contractual parental commitment to children, social inclusion and social justice.

The concept of social inclusion is characterised by three discourses. Firstly, discourses of 'citizenship', 'social rights' and 'social justice' characterise the main objectives. Secondly, there is an emphasis on individual behaviour and values and the need to reduce dependency on the state. Thirdly, social cohesion is seen as the main objective, indicating that government is committed to some measure of vertical redistribution and the reduction of poverty and inequality. According to Wasoff and Dey [2000:140], it is this last discourse which best describes the 'New Labour' approach. Examination of policy shows that it is informed by elements of several discourses. In the 1999 budget, although all social groups had income gains those at the bottom gained most, whilst those at the top of the income scale gained only marginally. These authors suggest this means that New Labour is committed to measures of vertical redistribution. Even though this is a discourse which does not appear in the current government's vocabulary the Treasury, for its part, has made a commitment to the reduction of poverty and inequality.

'New Labour' has also adopted a moral stance evidenced by a commitment to hold parents responsible for bad behaviour in children as young as three, young offenders, school truancy and the monitoring of homework, as well as imposing curfews on young people, [Sunday Times, June 12th 2005: 6.]. In addition, the government has signalled its intention to end the 'dependency culture' by threatening to withdraw benefits from lone parents who refuse to attend 'job seekers' interviews and to enforce the financial obligations of non-resident parents [CYPU, 2000].

It is increasingly apparent that welfare policies instituted by the Labour Government are fuelled by the idea of the [paid] work ethic, which is seen as the means to bring about social inclusion and economic security. Families relying on benefit are therefore faced with the need to adopt the mantra that work is rewarding and to realise that even lone-parents may face penalties for relying on benefit. The idea of 'welfare to work' has been introduced as a means to increase participation in the labour force and as a result there has emerged a series of 'New Deals' targeted at different population groups [Hutton, 2002:214]. Other measures, such as Working Families Tax Credit, Child-care Tax Credit, a National Minimum Wage and a 10p income tax band, as well as a National Child-care Strategy have all combined to provide evidence of New Labour's pragmatic approach to the problems of "social exclusion", "inequality" and "poverty" which disadvantage children [Prescott, 2002]. These three concepts are defined respectively as:-

Social exclusion - *“Is the exclusion of the very poorest from rapidly rising living standards and a hardening of public attitudes [against] an ‘underclass’ separated from the rest of society in terms of income, life chances and political aspirations – the loss of a comprehensive approach to citizenship”.* [Murray, 1996].

Inequality - *Is the lack of opportunity to attain full potential”.* [Whitehead, 1992:433].

Poverty - *“Is not only about shortage of money. It is about rights and relationships, about how people are treated and how they themselves, about powerlessness, exclusion and loss of dignity. Yet the lack of an adequate income is at its heart”.*
[Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Commission on Urban Priority Areas, 1985].

Consideration of the recent changes in family policy through a spectrum of ‘authoritarian’, ‘libertarian’ and ‘pragmatic’ policy perspectives clearly shows that the government’s agenda for the family, as set out by the Deputy Prime-Minister in his speech to the Fabian Society, 15th January, 2002, is focused on the need to ensure equal opportunity; to foster a sense of citizenship based on responsibilities rather than rights; to encourage a strong work ethic; to reduce child poverty and to ensure social inclusion. Thus family policy has become more pragmatically explicit and the state’s role in supporting the family is more obvious. The complexity of progressive changes that have taken place in relation to ‘constructs’ of the child and family within policy may be confusing for policy implementers. Further, as the implementation of policy is dependant upon an eclectic use of wide ranging strategies, based on ‘joined up’ thinking and working by the statutory and voluntary agencies, there is no guarantee that policy implementers have the necessary experience, skills or knowledge to engender change. For policy implementation to work, it appears there must be commitment to ‘joined up’ working and the attainment of a common vision within all agencies. Thereby, a common understanding of the aims of policy for the eradication of child poverty and social exclusion may be achieved.

1.5 Observations on the current focus of child and family policy implementation strategies

In the UK Government has made a high investment in services for children and young people. It is intended that this investment improves the lives of children by supporting families and ensuring that,

“Even those children facing the greatest challenges can grow up to play a full and vigorous role in society”

[CYPU, 2000:1].

In Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government has formulated a range of policies aimed to meet policy goals [WAG, 2000-2004]. Underlying these aims is the perceived lack of progress in tackling the problem of child poverty in the UK. The Child Poverty Action Group [CPAG] [2006], defines child poverty as,

“Living in households with less than 60 percent of median income, where median is taken to mean the mid-point of the income range” [CPAG, 2006].

There are two measures, one before, and one after housing costs are taken into account. Current figures show that in 2004/05,

- 2.4 million children in Great Britain lived in poverty on a ‘before housing costs’ basis –a fall of 700,000 or 23% since 1998/99, but 100,000 short of the 25% target for child poverty reduction.
- 3.4 million children lived in poverty on an ‘after’ housing costs’ basis-a fall of 700,000 or 17% since 1998/99, but 300,000 short of the 25% target .

[CPAG, 2006][www.cpag.org.uk]

Abrahams [2006] commented that,

“In a country as rich as ours, it’s a scandal that millions of children still grow up below the poverty line”.

In a speech to the Fabian Society on the 15th of January 2002, [www.social exclusion.govuk/news], the deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, explained why the problem of tackling child poverty remained intractable. The cause of continuing poverty was said to be ‘social exclusion’, defined by the Social Exclusion Unit [SEU, 2006] [www.socialexclusion.gov.uk] as,

“More than income poverty, exclusion happens when people or place suffer from a series of problems such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, ill health and family breakdown. When such problems combine they can create a vicious cycle”.

In particular, it was noted that,

“Social exclusion can happen as a result of problems that face one person in their life. But it can also start from birth. Being born into poverty, or to parents with low skills, still has a major influence on future life chances”.

[SEU, 2006]

Mr. Prescott [2002] stated that the Government intended to play a key role in leading the policy agenda against social exclusion and poverty. However, it was expected that voluntary and community sectors would contribute to policy implementation. ‘Joined up’ action was perceived as the best means of addressing the complicated causes and effects of poverty and the ‘Connections between poverty and social problems’ [SEU, 2006]. To enhance the value of ‘joined up’ working, locally-led services were advocated as a ‘means of making change work’. The ‘new’ approach to policy implementation was declared to be a means of leading to higher commitment and achievement for all. Consequently, policy which addresses the problems of poverty and social exclusion has been implemented throughout the United Kingdom [UK]. Labour Government has increased direct financial support to families with children; initiated a Child Trust Fund to encourage families to save for children’s future needs; created financial incentives for unemployed parents, as well as provided a range of other benefits, including early

education and childcare schemes. Policies are aimed at eradicating child poverty by 2020, they encourage parents to choose work as a route out of poverty, thereby improving health and reducing crime [Pawlick and Stroick, 2004: 31-32]. The strategy is part of 'the new deal' for the 21st century [Perry, 2000: 45]. It is introduced as a component of New Labour's 'Third Way' [Pawlick and Stroick, 2006:22; Giddens,1998: 94]. This 'Third Way' was defined by Perry [2000:44-45] as,

"The maintenance of a broad safety net, active support to provide opportunities for the unemployed, some compulsion for the unemployed, and support to enable individuals to be responsible in taking opportunities for self-reliance".

Pawlick and Stroick [2006:23] suggest that 'Third Way' policy is a form of social contract intended to provide state support in return for participation in employment. Communities are expected to play a large part in this strategy via partnerships between government, voluntary sector organisations and employers. Public, private and voluntary sector organisations are expected to provide skill up-grading services and work experience in order to facilitate community development. Yet, policy implementers, used to the traditional and historical ways of working with families, may lack the skills required for the implementation of recent child and family policy. The lack of skills to bring about social inclusion and ensure community development, for the purpose of improving family prosperity, may be a further barrier to successful policy implementation. [Clarke, 1998:133]. Sceptics are not convinced that the government's strategies for the abolition of child poverty and social exclusion will work. Pointing to the American experiences of the 1960s, Lister [1996: 49] showed that elimination of the effects of social exclusion is not easily achieved. It is their contention that governments may be powerless to deal with an underclass once it exists. Throwing money at the problem is not the answer, what is required is the capability to socially engineer a way out. This again raises the question of whether policy implementers possess the necessary skills to implement 'new' policy? [Clarke, 1998:133].

Albeit, in November 2000 the Labour government launched the Children's and Young Peoples Unit to drive forward their investment in services for children and young people. At the heart of this venture was recognition of the need to have high expectations for every child and for all children to have an equal opportunity for development [CYPU, 2000]. In order to provide new preventive services for children, through innovative local schemes based on statutory, community and voluntary partnerships, £450 million pounds was invested by government in the Children's Fund. The rationale underpinning this investment was that a significant minority of the 12 million children and young people in Britain currently face a combination of problems which,

“Limit their prospects and make any child vulnerable to social exclusion.”

[Children’s and Young people’s Unit, 2000:2].

The challenge for government, with its partners, was identified as the need to maximise the help and support offered to families. This strategy was seen as essential for combating the facts that,

- By the time they reach 16, one in four children is likely to have experienced the divorce of their parents.
- One in five children lives in lone parent families.
- Between 1977 and 1997 the proportion of no-earner households, and the proportion of children in workless households have more than doubled.
- Three out of five children in every classroom are estimated to have witnessed domestic violence.
- Over 58,000 children live in care.

All of these factors are seen to result in some young people developing behavioural problems, ill-health and becoming involved in crime [CYPU, 2000]. In particular, the government has sought to provide all children and young people with a framework of services through which they might flourish. It was recognized that such services should be of a sufficiently high quality and breadth to cater for individual need and to provide particular support for those with a combination of problems, in order that they might achieve their full potential. The result of this initiative has been a proliferation of services across all age ranges of a child’s development.

Examination of the policy paper ‘Tomorrow’s Future ‘Building a Strategy for Children and Young People [CYPU, 2000], shows how the government planned that the early years of a child’s life might be improved by,

- expanding affordable childcare and early education through Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships .
- increasing maternity pay paid maternity leave, and introducing paternity leave.
- expanding the National Child - care Strategy to provide, Neighbourhood Nurseries, out of school hours child-care places and child-minders guaranteeing free education places for all children aged four, and steadily increasing the numbers for all three year olds by 2004.
- building a foundation stage into the National Curriculum in order to recognise this critical period of child development.
- defining what the majority of children should achieve by the end of their reception year.
- developing Early Excellence Centres to provide high quality education, care and family support.
- providing 150 new Toy Libraries for children living in deprived neighbourhoods.

Central to developments aimed at young children living in disadvantaged communities are ‘Sure Start’ programmes. These programmes are aimed at transforming the life chances of younger children through the provision of better access to family support, improved parenting, health

services, early education, and providing pathways out of poverty to ensure that children are ready to thrive when they get to school [Jackson, 2004:92].

For 5-13 year olds, the government has emphasised the need for educational reform by raising standards in literacy and numeracy, reducing class sizes, and reducing truancy and school exclusions. In addition, a children's fund has been set up as a key measure of providing preventive services for this age group.

For 13 to 19 year olds, the government is committed to enhancing the diversity of secondary education, improving performance in the early secondary years, providing greater choice of vocational and work-based routes and increasing the support available to schools in challenging circumstances. Specific measures have been set up to tackle truancy, teenage pregnancy, youth crime, and poor parenting. Also there have been special efforts to improve services for vulnerable children, such as improved adoption services, services to help young people avoid drugs, to improve mental health, and to reduce health inequalities, such as,

- A Healthy Schools' programme.
- National Healthy Schools' standards.
- Health Visitor and School Nurse Development Programmes.
- A National School Fruit Scheme.
- A Welfare Foods Scheme.
- A new Personal, Social and Health Education framework.
- Health Action Zones.

In addition, commitment was made to improving housing, providing better transport, improving access to sport, culture and play and valuing diversity. These developments illustrate the form of pragmatic intervention which currently typifies Government policy change drivers [Williamson 2005:11-27].

1.6 Change Drivers

As has been discussed above, British policy making has been characterised by a reluctance to be concerned about children in their own rights throughout the post-war period [Hantrais and Letablier, 1996:143]. Archard [1993] suggested that this is a situation which might be criticised for its failure to depart from 'liberal standards' and to put the interests of the child first. However, almost as it were, in response to such criticisms, a new UK policy agenda has emerged [HO/Ministerial Group on the Family, 1998]. According to Wasoff and Dey [2000:21], this new policy agenda strengthens the role of the state and policy frameworks for developing childcare strategies. Such strategies aim to tackle child poverty through economic development and improve the balance between work and family life. It is these strategies that are intended to

improve children's lives and, more importantly, rescue them from threats of poverty and social exclusion. There are a number of change drivers underlying the strategy.

Jackson [2004:92-95] shows that the strategies for these aims are interlinked, having emerged from a variety of Westminster Government publications such as, The Green Paper, "Meeting the Childcare Challenge" [1998]; the Pre-Budget Report [2001], "Tackling Child Poverty : giving children the best possible start in life", and "Balancing Work and Family Life", [DTI, 2003]. The express purpose of these integrated strategies is to 'halve child poverty by 2010, and to eradicate it within a generation'. The intended outcomes of new policy frameworks include the formulation of 'cross cutting policies', such as: the NHS Plan [England] [2000]; the Careers and Disabled Children Act [2000]; the Health and Social Care Act [2001]; The Children [Leaving Care] Act [2000]; Quality Protects [Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families [2000] and the National Service Framework for Children [England] [2001]. In addition, other innovations have included the appointment of a Children's Rights Director [England], in accordance with the [Care Standards Act [2000], establishing The Connexions Service [2000], [a personal advice service for 13-19 year old underachievers] and The National Childcare Strategy [1998], which aimed to ensure the availability in every neighbourhood of good quality affordable childcare for children aged 0-14 years, consisting of play groups, out of school clubs, child-minders and support for informal care given by friends and relatives. Also, the Strategy was concerned to implement the 'Sure Start' programme, which was aimed at improving the overall development of 0-3 year olds.

'Sure Start', is the largest component of the Childcare Strategy. It was initiated by the Treasury as a means of reducing child poverty by enabling mothers, in particular, mothers without a partner, to enter paid employment thereby supposedly enhancing the life chances of small children [DOWP, 2003; Jackson, 2004: 92]. In England, the main delivery agent of the 'Sure Start' strategy is the Department for Education and Skills. In Scotland, the Children and Families Division of the Scottish Executive is responsible. Northern Ireland has a 'Sure Start' scheme which is administered through the Education and Library Boards. In Wales, 'Sure Start' was amalgamated with the Children and Youth Partnership Fund and the Childcare Strategy, to form the Children and Youth Support Fund 'Cymorth'. Cymorth is administered from the Welsh Assembly Government through local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships [EYDCPs], within each local authority [www.dfes.gov.uk/childcare]. 'Sure Start' is, therefore, a major UK Government programme which aims to ensure that children are ready to benefit from education when they start school. It is an area based initiative which provides funds for a variety

of childcare schemes, such as teaching parenting skills, providing early education and family support schemes. It is intended that such schemes should encourage workforce participation on the part of parents and also facilitate community development programmes, for the purpose of improving economic opportunity and education. The scheme builds on early intervention research, mainly from the USA, such as 'Headstart', 'Welfare to Work' and 'High/Scope programmes' [Sylva, 2000: 2]. Research on nursery education and ideas about community development and ownership have also contributed to the rationale of introducing a scheme such as 'Sure Start'. New Zealand, for example developed a curriculum for deprived children built on Maori culture. The scheme, known as "Te Whariki", takes a holistic view of the child in the community. In accordance with this approach 'early years' development is viewed as a 'tapestry', rather than a ladder, and there is a strong emphasis on play and discovery. Thereby children from impoverished backgrounds are facilitated to develop at their own pace [Carr and May, 2000:11]. Another influence on the development of the 'Sure Start' scheme has been an Italian 'early years' education system, founded on the twin concepts of children being active agents in their own learning and the benefits of involving the community in children's education. According to Abbot and Brown [2001], these twin concepts were enthusiastically adopted by the Thomas Coram Early Childhood Centre in London and have influenced UK Government. However, such schemes have been criticised for not directly addressing formidable problems related to the existence of an 'underclass of poverty and anti-social behaviours' [Lister et al, 1996: 24]. Moss [2001:30-50] claims that a better model for 'Sure Start' programmes is the childhood provision in the Nordic countries, which integrates employment legislation, childcare services, early education, family support, training and development. It is the view of Moss that this model provides a 'gold standard' framework upon which the United Kingdom can draw to design policy and services aimed at ensuring that the well-being of children is the most important policy consideration.

In the UK 'Sure Start' schemes have been locally based and typically they serve 400-800 children. 'Sure Start' multi-agency partnership schemes, costing over £1 billion in total [DoH 1998], were planned for 500 deprived areas between 1999 and 2004 and these were expected to reach one third of children, under 5 years, who lived in poverty [www.surestart.gov.uk]. Generally, 'Sure Start' has come to be regarded as one of the major successes of the childcare strategy. Evaluation of the programme by Harris et al [2003] showed that it has brought about small, but significant, improvements in outcomes for children, particularly in respect of language development and reduction of parental anxiety. However, as was seen previously, Harris et al

criticise the programme for the facts that it is not a universal provision and that the services provided are fragmented rather than 'joined up'. That being the case there are fears that the 'Sure Start' programme may be in danger of failing to meet agendas for other government strategies for the abolition of child poverty and social exclusion. These are strategies such as 'welfare to work' and community development for economic investment [Harris et al, 2003].

Since the devolution of UK Government, responsibility for children's policy outside England [with the exception of tax and benefits policy], has been transferred to the Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies and the Scottish Parliament. This development has been viewed by The Child Poverty Task Group [2004] as an opportunity to take policy making closer to communities, to align policy making with specific needs and thereby to make policy implementation more effective. In Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government has ensured implementation of policy through mandates for Local Strategic Partnerships, [LSPs] [NafW, 2001], which were intended to provide guidance for services on the creation of an umbrella organisation at local level. Partnerships would function as a new form of governance to ensure the delivery of the Government's programme for reducing inequalities of health and education and for tackling social deprivation. LSPs were expected to bring together the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in order to provide a single overarching local coordination framework within which other, more specific, local partnerships might operate [www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/lsp/guidance]. However, in the light of the criticisms of Harris et al [2003], outlined above in respect of the implementation of child and family policy, there may be a need to determine whether a lack of universality and fragmentation of the aims of policy exists. If this is the case, the policy implementation process may not be proceeding in line with Government aims for 'joined up' working, community development, social inclusion and the abolition of child poverty.

1.7 Child and family policy implementation in Wales -The Context of the Study

In accordance with devolved responsibilities from the British Government the Welsh Assembly Government [WAG] has integrated national child and family policy frameworks, discussed above, into their agenda. It has set its own objectives to address the specific problems of local people and communities [NAfW, 2000]. In December 2000 the WAG set out a strategy for securing the well-being of children in Wales, its actions culminated in the "The Childcare Action Plan" [WAG, 2002]. This was the Welsh response to the proliferation of principles, regarding child welfare, enshrined in international and national policy [UNCRC, 1987; HO/ MGF, 1998] and adopted by Westminster Government [NAfW, 2000]. The strategy adopted in Wales was

specifically aimed at protecting children from all forms of harm, including the adverse effects of poverty and ensuring that the developmental needs of all children were responded to appropriately. The policy framework was particularly appropriate in Wales as in 1999 a Welsh Index of Multiple deprivation, commissioned by the Assembly in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association, had shown that 38% of children in Wales lived in households experiencing poverty and claiming benefits [SEU,1998] [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu]. The most deprived lived in urban areas which were run down, more prone to crime and isolated from the labour market. In response to these findings and mindful of its devolved responsibility for policy implementation, the National Assembly for Wales set out to develop major policy strategies to tackle the root causes of poverty and social exclusion. The intention was to respond to the serious and multi-faceted problems that these factors create for children and their families. [Report of the Child Poverty Task Group Consultation,2004].The strategies identified by WAG, in response to their devolved responsibilities, were aimed at encouraging and promoting preventive and early intervention to help reduce the scale of problems affecting child welfare and to tackle them before they became entrenched [NAW, 2001: vii].

The Children and Young People's Unit [CYPU] of the WAG [NAfW, 2000] confirmed a commitment to children's welfare and to ensuring a system of collaborative working between agencies. It was intended to develop parent support services that would eliminate problems affecting child welfare. In particular, to address those problems related to poverty and the effects of social exclusion, definitions of which were outlined earlier in this chapter. The Children and Young People's Unit advised that in order for policy implementation to be achieved all agencies should work collaboratively, as the problems facing families are often interlinked [NAfW, 2000]. Successful policy implementation was described as being dependent on the proper co-ordination and integration of service frameworks and delivery strategies. As a consequence of this advice those agencies concerned with the planning and delivery of children's services were challenged by WAG to form Local Strategic Partnerships [consisting of statutory and voluntary children's services]. A remit was identification of the broad range and level of children's needs in all areas. Agencies were requested to develop corporate, inter-agency community based action plans for a network of supportive services for children and their families [NAfW, 2000]. This challenge posed a considerable task for policy implementers as WAG estimated that of the 671,000 children in Wales, at any one time, 255,000 could be classified as vulnerable [at risk of health, physical, social or emotional deficits] [Hall and Elliman, 2002]. 20,000 were classified as being 'in need', 3,000 were in care, and a further 2,400 had their names on the Child Protection Register

[Stationery Office, 2000]. Thus the child and family policy adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government was clearly set out and the strategies for policy implementation identified. Thereby the Local Strategic Partnerships expected to implement policy were given a clear 'steer' as to what was expected of them.

1.8 The Policy Implementation Strategy in Wales

In Wales, the Children First Programme [estimated funding £66.4 million over 1999-2004] became the Welsh counterpart of the Quality Protects Programme [England]. The key elements of the Children First Programme were:-

- All Wales objectives for children's services and associated performance indicators, related to clear outcomes for children. [Targets for achieving these objectives were to be set either across Wales, or locally against each of the indicators for improving child services identified by WAG in the Children First Programme].
- Partnerships between central and local government
- An important role for elected members in ensuring delivery of the programme and ensuring as the corporate parents of children looked after, that children should receive services of the highest quality.
- An annual evaluation of local authority Children First Management Action Plans which set out how they intend to improve their services.

[www.childrenfirst.wales.gov.uk]

As a result of a consultation exercise [NAfW, 2001] on the needs of children and their families, the Welsh Assembly established 'Cymorth - the Children and Youth Support Fund' in December 2003. This was for the purpose of providing a network of targeted support within a framework of universal provision. The purpose of the Cymorth scheme was identified as a means to improve the life chances of children and young people from disadvantaged families throughout Wales. It was intended that the policy frameworks for children and young people would subsume and build on existing established programmes, such as 'Sure Start', Children and Youth Partnerships, National Child Care Strategies, Youth Access Initiatives and Play Grant Schemes [NAW, 2000], already implemented, mostly by voluntary organisations. The key features of the Cymorth plan were to implement,

- a children's partnership to make more detailed plans for children aged 1-10 years.
- a young people's partnership to make detailed plans for young people aged 11-25 years.
- to facilitate partnership working and user involvement.
- to implement early preventive intervention across the age ranges in order to reduce the need for crisis intervention.
- to institute integrated centres in order to bring together a range of services needed by children and their families, such as child-care, pre-school learning, family support, health promotion, play and community training.
- to ensure 'inclusion', so that children and young people facing potential barriers due to race, culture, gender, disability or sexual orientation are properly served.

- to ensure evidence based practice so that policy guidance arrangements can be evaluated and subjected to governance.
[NAW, 2001]

1.9 The Key Themes of the Cymorth Plan

In order to make the key policy thrusts of the Cymorth Scheme more explicit and to ensure their implementation, the WAG set out themes for activity along with key indicators for attainment of the aims of each theme. [See Appendix 3] The themes identified were,

- Family support
- Health Improvement
- Play, Leisure and Enrichment
- Empowerment, Participation and active Citizenship
- Community Development
- Training Mentoring and Information
- Building Child Care Provision

they were intended to assist ‘partnerships’ formed between agencies to formulate a base-line of need, a broad vision of the services required, aims and objectives to achieve the theme and measurable outcomes for evaluation of the success of policy. It can be seen that the intention of these themes was to maximise the support provided to families by the services charged with policy implementation. The actions signified the intention of the WAG to adopt the “pragmatic” policy strategies implemented by Parliament [CYPU, 2000:24] and thereby to strengthen family policy and inculcate new family values [CYPU, 2000:24]. Thus child care policy in Wales was brought more into line with child policy in other European countries and international objectives based on the UN Convention on The Rights of the Child [1989]. As a consequence it was perceived that families living in poverty would be strengthened and the lot of children improved by the introduction of the Cymorth Scheme in Wales.

1.10 Aims and Objectives of the study in context

The purpose of this study is to investigate and evaluate the ways in which Child and Family policy has been implemented in one County Borough in Wales. It is the policy implementation process and its likely impact on policy outcomes, rather than the policy per se, that will be the subject of the study. Thereby, it is hoped to determine whether or not there are ‘gaps’ in the policy implementation process, and if so, whether the policy implementation process can be improved. At the outset the limitations of the study are recognised, as the study is constrained to evaluating the process of child and family policy in only one County Borough’s Local Strategic Partnership [LSP]. To date evaluation of child and family policy reforms appears to be

inconclusive. Although evaluation of policy strategies for early education, childcare, health and family support has shown that services are enhancing the development of children [Sylva et al, 1997-2004], critics emphasise the fact that implementation of policy falls short of the government's aim for universal services. Particularly in respect of 'joined-up' service provision to help parents, through employment, to improve the lives of children [Harris et al, 2003]. In order to identify any weaknesses in the policy implementation process the Welsh Assembly Government [WAG, 2002:29], which since devolution has held the prerogative to develop its own territorially 'tailored' policies [Keating, 2007] has recommended external evaluation of the Cymorth scheme using action research methods.

This study will attempt to identify whether the use of an action research methodology can increase the transparency of the policy implementation process and better engage policy implementers in identifying the nature and cause of any 'gaps' in the policy implementation process. If so, the means of overcoming such gaps and of identifying a framework or model to continuously monitor evaluation of policy implementation processes and service outcomes will be sought. The primary concern of the study is not the efficacy of the policy strategy per se, but how the effectiveness and extensiveness of its implementation can best be monitored, evaluated, and if necessary improved. This is to ensure that the far reaching demands of 'new deal' policy are met. In short, the main concerns of the study are:-

- Whether using an action research methodology it can be established that the County Borough concerned has clearly interpreted and implemented the policy objectives presented by WAG?
- Whether the purposes and aims and objectives of the policy are clearly understood?
- Whether those appointed to implement the policy have the necessary skills and commitment?
- Whether time and resources for policy implementation are adequate?
- Whether there is sufficient support and collaboration from and between key players charged with implementing policy programmes?
- Whether communication between agencies is sufficiently adequate to ensure attainment of the broader policy thrusts?
- Whether resistance to policy implementation exists. If so, can it be modified by the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation tool which simplifies the aims and objectives of policy and measures the outcomes of policy implementation and adherence to policy directives?

These questions were perceived to be of great importance, not only for the Borough concerned, but also for the Welsh Assembly and the UK Government, as there was found to be a paucity of evaluation of the implementation of UK and Welsh Assembly policy strategies for children and families [Jackson, 2004:93]. In order to find answers to these questions, the operational question of the study was:-

Whether an action research methodology can enhance the process of evaluating policy implementation, specifically the Cymorth scheme [WAG 2002], for children and young people? The study was carried out between 2000 and 2004 within the geographical boundaries of a Local Borough Council. The area has a number of wards that have been identified as deprived areas by the Welsh Assembly Government and classified as in need of 'Agenda 21' funding [UN 1992]. Specifically, research was carried out on the implementation of a children and youth strategy [The Cymorth Scheme] [WAG, 2000], intended to strengthen and support families in their parenting activities [HO, 1998]. Throughout this chapter the purpose of recent child and family policy has been discussed and its complexity, in terms of changing constructs of the importance of children and of family form, has been noted. These factors are further complicated by the need for policy implementers to work with communities rather than individuals, as has been the tradition within social care services. Further, traditionally services have been delivered by hierarchical and bureaucratic structures, the like of which may not be conducive to the delivery of devolved policy [Ledwith 2005:2].

Conversion of policy into practice that is praxis [Ledwith, 2005:2] through the use of devolution is essentially based upon a process of subsidiarity – a flat structured approach. This is designed to allow for a degree of autonomy and independence of action to meet local needs and develop local communities [Parsons, 1995]. According to Parsons [1995:469], there is little evidence that government, either central or local, has any real experience of this. However, Hill [1980:252-3] noted that in 1968 the government developed a devolved 'urban programme' to combat pockets of deprivation, based on a largely undigested American model of intervention. As a result of these programmes local authorities could seek central government support for three-quarters of the cost of a variety of policy initiatives. According to Hill [1980:253], a number of community development [CDP] 'action research' projects were set up to improve social conditions in small local authority areas. However, it appears that there was much uncertainty about the aims of these programmes. The CDP experiment ended when the findings of these projects showed that solutions based on local action were limited, because of the wider determinants of social welfare. However, Lonely [1983] contends that failure of local community development strategies was more to do with power conflict at local authority level, than with wider determinants. The question raised by Hill [1980:253] is whether 'partnership' schemes between government and local authorities, for the purpose of re-generation, can work when economic factors remain outside of local control? Another question raised is whether the level of local authority is the critical level for policy co-ordination? These questions appears to have great significance if

power conflict at a local level can disrupt the best government plans. Thus the intention of the research study is to search for strengths and weaknesses in the devolved child and family policy implementation process, and following Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43], to find the most appropriate ways of ensuring that the expected outcomes of policy are achieved.

1.11 Conclusion

The above discussion has illustrated the complexity of issues informing policy concerned with the eradication of child poverty and social exclusion. These are not 'stand alone' issues as they are informed and influenced by wider concerns for the responsibilities of the family and the need for family stability, as well as issues related to the need for economic development, adjusting the 'work-life' balance and developing communities. Critics of current child and family policy, such as Daniel and Ivatts [1998], suggest that the policy may arise more from concerns for the latter issues than for the welfare of children. In addition the discussion shows that interpretation of government policy may be reliant upon the spectrum of policy positions which may exist in relation to the concept of the family. In respect of policy most suited to improving the circumstances of children these positions range from 'authoritarian to liberalist' and from 'traditionalist', 'egalitarian' to 'pragmatic' [Harding, 1996]. According to Wasoff and Dey [2000], the current UK government has adopted a pragmatic policy perspective which aims to encourage children to flourish and transform their life chances.

It is the initial contention of this study that against an historical perspective of minimalist, libertarian child and family policy the current volte face in policy may be poorly understood by policy implementers. Even more difficult to understand may be the pragmatic view of government that child and family policy needs to be closely integrated with strategies for achieving economic security, community development and social inclusion. This being the case it may be difficult for policy implementers to appreciate that 'New Labour's' modernising agenda requires 'joined up' working strategies, 'partnerships' and community development skills to carry out family interventions aimed at making the 'new deal' work in communities. Especially if communities are underprivileged. These factors have a potential to create a number of imponderables in relation to the implementation of new policy, especially when they are considered against the background of failure of previous community development policies in the UK. However, in Wales, there have been vigorous policy responses to the problem of instituting more 'libertarian' policies in order to protect children from all kinds of harm and to lessen the adverse effects of poverty.

Lonely [1983]; Hill [1980] and Hogwood and Gunn [1984:42-44] have suggested that in examining the process of policy implementation, writers such as Hood [1976] and Gunn [1978] have adopted the thesis of Pressman and Wildavsky [1973]. It states that provided the system responsible for implementation of policy has clear lines of authority and responsibility [as does the Welsh Assembly Government], policy implementation should proceed to plan. However, it was pointed out by Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] that there are certain prerequisites for perfect implementation of policy, namely,

- clear objectives need to be provided.
- there must be no ambiguity about the purpose of policy.
- those expected to implement the policy must have the necessary commitment and skills.
- the policy must have the support of key interest groups.
- sufficient time and resources must be made available.
- there must be few links in the implementation chain.
- communication between all parties must be excellent.
- there should be no resistance to the policy.

The authors summarised their conditions for perfect implementation under the headings of:-

- Change** - has the extent of change been made clear and accepted by all powerful and interested groups affected?
- Control** - can policy-makers control the resources required to implement the policy and also control and, if necessary, direct all participating groups and agencies?
- Compliance** - does the top level of decision making have confidence that those people who have the task of putting policy into effect will do so without resistance?

Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43], pointed out that there could be two anticipated ambivalent outcomes of applying this model,

1. Those charged with policy implementation will behave like automatons. Provided that there is clarity regarding the extent of change, sufficient resources and direction, participating groups or agencies will act according to plan.
2. People may apply their own discretion to the way in which they perceive policy and implement strategy or services.

This situation raises the questions of how policy implementation may best be achieved when the nature of policy may cut across established values of policy implementers possibly based on previous strategies. Also the question must be raised of whether the implementation of the broader thrusts of 'new' policy can be achieved in the absence of tacit strategies for community development and social inclusion [Ledwith, 2005:2]? Lister et al [1996:49] were dubious on this issue, claiming that no amount of money or innovative programmes can engender individual change or social inclusion. In their view, such changes require social engineering to ensure

community development. Commenting on the process of implementing policy, Hupe [1993] suggested that it is not sufficient to rely on the belief that new policy is automatically adopted. It is contended that the process needs thorough examination and analysis, if shortfalls in implementation are to be identified. Hupe further argues that when a belief in rational actors is widespread, a parallel belief is that policy is made at the top and implemented at the bottom. However, the intervention of the 'human dimension', as was pointed out by Hogwood and Gunn [1984], may introduce practices such as a 'policy discretion' and 'street-level bureaucracy'. These practices are said to be the characteristics of interactions between those responsible for policy implementation and their clients. As a result the policy implementation process may falter. This likelihood was also noted by Lipsky [1976].

This study will evaluate the extent to which child and family policy implementation is proceeding in accordance with policy goals within one Local Borough Council area in Wales. According to Cohen and colleagues [2004], throughout the UK despite progress in policy formulation, there is still a long way to go before the goals of abolishing child poverty and ending social exclusion can be achieved. This is possibly due to the fact that the complexities of relieving child poverty and social exclusion, as well as ensuring community development are extensive and require multifaceted interagency interventions, the like of which are not usually directly contemplated as an integral part of policy implementation [Pestieau, 2003:2].

1.12 The Significance of the study

To date, there have been few evaluations of the implementation of current child and family policy. It is hoped that this study will provide an impetus and model for more in depth analysis of what happens to policy when it is devolved from government to local authorities. Thereby the study may provide a means of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation processes and achieving policy outcomes. In the following chapter literature on the process of policy implementation will be reviewed.

Chapter Two

Policy and its implementation

2.1 Introduction - Focus of the Study

The previous chapter showed how 'new' child and family policy constituted a 'volte face' in respect of government strategy. Less liberal and more pragmatic forms of child and family policy may have been confusing for policy implementers, even though the key themes of policy were adequately communicated in various policy documents. The implementation of 'new' policy required different perceptions, skills and new ways of working. Hutton [2002:94-95], described previous policy as the "Hayekian approach". It was characterised as reducing state activity and ensuring 'adequacy' of family provision in order to promote capitalism. Marshall [1975:203] claimed that this "Hayekian approach" has gradually given way to a more "Titmussesque approach", in which the concept of the state as 'a safety net' to ensure 'adequacy', has shifted to a notion of the need for 'equity'.

Marshall [1975:203] defined 'equity' as conformity to principles of social justice. It was Marshall's view that 'equity' results in the provision of different awards for persons of similar needs, because of contextual differences. To achieve equity, Labour's 'new deal' for families requires 'joined up' working within individual communities [Hutton, 2002:94-95]. Thereby social inclusion, economic stability and community development is thought to be achievable. In discussing the challenges involved in implementing 'new' policy, Ledwith [2005: 2] explains that difficulties in its execution may be due to policy implementers having little experience of the challenge of working together for community regeneration. Previously, they may have been used only to working with individual families and within individual agencies. A requirement of 'new' policy implementation is 'partnership' work. It is premised on joint commissioning, joint investment and improved coordination between public agencies involved in service delivery [Ling 2000:84]. These strategies require change in organisational form, as well as conceptual understanding of policy and skill development. Thus the implementation of 'new' child and family policy may be extremely challenging.

From the very first meeting with the Local Borough Council 'Partnership' concerned with the need for evaluation of their child and family policy implementation process, the researcher learned that there was a fear of not fully implementing policy. At the 'partnership' level it was recognised that personnel putting policy into practice may have had insufficient understanding of the exact nature of 'new' policy and the implementation and organisational strategies suitable for

achieving policy goals. It was perceived that if this was the case, there might be a lack of effectiveness in establishing programmes based on the broader thrusts of policy and in achieving necessary organisational changes. As a result there might be a deficit of meaningful outcomes for service users and a real potential for wasting resources and de-motivating workers. The 'partnership' representatives conveyed [to the researcher] their concerns that policy implementers' knowledge of policy and their policy implementation skills needed to be nurtured, within an appropriate organisational framework, if the desired policy outcomes were to be achieved.

In this chapter it is intended to discuss why changes in policy require departure from previous policy implementation processes and methods of evaluation. A brief overview of social policy implementation in the UK will lay the foundations for discussion of the economic, social, and administrative factors which create the need of organisational change to accommodate new policy discourses. In particular, the discourse of partnership as a means of reducing poverty, achieving social inclusion and regeneration will be discussed. This discussion will lead to a consideration of forms of policy implementation evaluation capable of identifying barriers to change.

2.2 A brief overview of social policy implementation in the UK from the post-war period to the present.

It may be difficult to understand the importance of policy implementation processes without a thorough understanding of the nature of the policy required to be implemented. The intention of this section is to review the historical process of policy formulation, particularly policy concerned with the family and children. It is intended to review how current policy has emerged and how changing ideologies may impact on the implementation process. This review will address economic, social, organisational and administrative considerations as well as the changes in policy resulting from perceived crises in welfare, outcomes of policy change and current policy strategies.

Social policy was defined simply as 'welfare' by Marshall [1970], but Hill [1980:8] defined the concept as being concerned with the distribution of resources. However, Marshall [1975:201] describes how the three principal goals of policy are indeed concerned with the redistribution of resources for the purpose of reducing poverty, maximising welfare for all and translating political philosophies into action. It was Marshall's view that in the first phase of the Welfare State, from the end of the nineteenth century to the twentieth century, policy pursued the elimination of

poverty. A new attitude to social problems was engendered through recognition of the likelihood that poverty and social exclusion were the result of institutional, rather than individual moral weakness. During the inter-war years of the first half of the twentieth century it was realised that to overcome extremes of poverty, social policy needed to be allied to the general economic policy. Indeed, in 1942 Beveridge concluded there could be no effective system of social security without a policy of full employment.

Marshall [1975: 83] showed how, following the end of the Second World War, the principles of 'pooling and sharing' which characterised the emergency measures of war, influenced the growth of the Welfare State. The Beveridge Report [1942] introduced a new social order described as 'a British Revolution' [Marshall, 1975:84]. Changes introduced by the report identified the responsibility of the state for the welfare of its people. They were characterised by the provision of benefits to cover all needs. Such needs were described as being caused by loss of income due to death, industrial injury, marriage, old-age and retirement. Provisions such as dependants' allowance and children's or family allowances, beginning with the second child, were made to fill the gaps in pre-war benefits. In addition, education, housing and health services were made available to all. However, by the 1970's, the pursuit of equality engendered concerns that the welfare state had 'carried social policy very near to its permissible limits', though Titmuss argued that 'adequacy' rather than 'equity' was achieved [Marshall, 1975:202 -3].

Critics of the system claimed that the State had become too intrusive; it undertook interventions best left to other agencies; bureaucracy was out of control and that government policy lacked consistency in terms of its values and the complexity of its activities. Hill [1980: 240] showed that by 1979 public expenditure amounted to 42% of the Gross National product and there was a growing perspective that the welfare state was undesirable. Principally this was attributed to the increasing propensity of the intrusive state to undermine individual initiative. According to Clarke and Newman [1997:9], weakness of the British economy during the 1970's led to pressures for retrenchment of the social welfare system and stemming of the drain on competitive viability of individuals, corporations and nations. In reviews of British policy since this time, Johnson [1990] and Mishra [1990] show how notions of crisis within the 'welfare state' have changed the ideological process of policy formation over the last four decades. Clarke and Newman [1997:9] claim that these notions of crisis have been blamed on costs, the effects of state welfare and problems of the welfare state itself. Hay [1996: 44] suggested that such crises typically have an effect on relationships between the state, the economy, civil society and the public. Such notions may lead to changes in the type of policy formulated and the ways in which

it is expected to be implemented. This claim will be investigated by examining the various economic, social and organisational factors blamed for the notion of perceived crisis in the welfare state. The examination will hopefully increase understanding of the current policy climate, changes in its value base and the need for change in the organisational form of agencies responsible for policy implementation.

2.3 Economic, social, administrative and organisational considerations of post-war policy

Hay [1996: 44] claims that in respect of the economy tensions appear to exist around the need for,

- compromises between capitalism [the free market] and socialism [public provision through the state]
- compromises between the principles of inequality [market driven] and equality [state guaranteed citizenship]

According to Marshall [1975:201], the aims of policy should be focused on the elimination of poverty, the maximisation of welfare and the pursuit of equality. The first concentrates on the lowest socio-economic section of society, the second, the welfare of all in order to attain optimum security, whilst the third has far reaching possibilities. It is Marshall's view that these aims are not mutually exclusive and conflicts may arise over state intrusion, overspending and increased bureaucracy. Clarke and Newman [1997:9] argue that such conflicts have heightened interest in the need to restrain welfare costs to enhance profitability, cut taxation costs, free labour markets and remove the burdens of regulation from corporate capitalism. These factors have all influenced policies, to support a free market and break up consensus politics favoured by right wing governments. Rao [1996:179-80] suggested that this policy shift towards a more neo-liberalist view occurred as a result of policy restructuring introduced by the New Right during the 'Thatcherite regime'. This shift brought about a new relationship between the state and welfare based on a shift from bureaucratic welfare towards a meritocracy which favoured business interests, cuts in funding on education and increases in income tax. Goldby [2001] criticised this form of liberalism for increasing the influence of business and upper classes. Rao considers the policy to be irreversible. However, there are those who see the labour approach to neo-liberalism as being characterised by policy such as the more recent 'pragmatic' approach to child policy described in Chapter One. This approach appears to be underpinned by a 'welfare pluralism' that involves multiple sectors linked by contracting mechanisms. It forms the basis of a new consensus aimed at increasing the responsibility of communities and families for the provision of care [Hutton, 2002:367]. Marshall [1975:201] argues that change represents a shift towards a 'Titmussesque' rather than 'Hayekian' ideology. The 'Titmussesque' approach has been defined

by Ebenstein [2001:128] as a desire to make institutions work for the benefit of the 'poor' rather than for a 'market order'.

Hay [1996: 44- 54] describes the change as a revival of 'managerial politics', that is competition between political parties over the best means of managing British capitalism. Clarke and Newman [1997:143] argue that the term 'managerialised politics' has come to mean the use of managerial technologies for the re-engineering of the delivery of welfare benefits to those perceived eligible. It has resulted in strategies such as setting standards for school pupils' achievements, league tables for schools and hospitals and 'purchaser/ provider splits' in the NHS. "The Wanless Report" [DoH 2002], provides a prime example of how 'managerial politics' have invaded the relationship between state and welfare. It is concerned with how reforms are needed to use health care resources more efficiently. Characteristics are enjoiners for better productivity and resource use; a well engaged public; rigorous audit and review; greater cooperation between public and private institutions; financial incentives and standard setting. The aim is to ensure the public recognises limitations on provision and the need of reinforcement of public accountability for resource use. Whereas post-war economic policy concerns over economic crisis led to a more liberal stance, recent concerns over the need for equity and promotion of children 'rights', have led to welfare pluralism [Lippel, 1998]. To ensure individual and community participation in a new form of policy, managerial politics appear to have been engaged as 'agents of change'. Thus the Cymorth Scheme adopted by WAG [Chapter One], is underpinned by what Hill [1980: 253] describes as a form of policy implementation different from the largely 'top-down' character of previous processes. Current policy is concerned with building organisational systems for improved welfare distribution. It is the view of Hill [1980: 253] that to action current policy discourses concerned with banishing poverty, social inclusion and community development, 'flatter' organisational structures are required. Thereby previous causes of failure of the CDP strategies of the 1970's will not be repeated. To achieve this end the WAG has introduced the concept of 'Partnership' between agencies [WAG 2002].

Social considerations of post-war policy

According to Clarke and Newman [1997:2-8], the notion of society had an important influence on the growth of the post-war welfare state. Underpinning the vision of a welfare state was the assumption that full male-employment was a necessary prerogative to fund welfare. It was perceived that the majority of needs would be met through the income of a male head of household. Thus, unless unemployment was prevalent, the state would be exonerated from serious financial cost obligations. It was therefore in the State's interest to ensure maintenance of

full male employment so that welfare could be funded by contributions from the economically active. Thereby it was expected to achieve 'adequacy' for all.

Feminist perspectives of this issue [Land, 1995; Williams, 1994; Finch, 1987] have decried the way in which these concepts reinforced heterosexual and patriarchal assumptions about the family and sexual divisions of labour within the private and public spheres. Langan and Clarke [1993] also noted how assumptions were based on notions of indigenous family forms [see previous chapter], characterised by wage earning males with a set of dependent relatives, segregated by age, gender, infirmity and race. It was the view of these commentators that the post-war welfare state catered only for a singular set of patterns of life, values and needs. Therefore an erroneous view of universalism in respect of the family may have existed. Over the passage of time this view has raised many questions about the notion of citizenship as a highly conditioned universalism that presumes a family-based social and economic structure [Langam and Clarke, 1993:28]. It was pointed out by Clarke and Newman [1997:10] that this notion of 'citizenship' was increasingly thwarted by growing numbers of married women in paid employment; the rise of divorce and re-marriage producing serial families; the rise in lone-parent families; and the spread of alternative family forms such as communal living and gay or lesbian households. These changes have questioned previous assumptions about the nature of family form and exposed weaknesses in welfare distribution. Similar challenges to welfare distribution have been noted in respect of 'race and gender', as well as disability. Therefore, as was shown in the last chapter, universal forms of family structure no longer appear to exist. There has been a decline in traditional family forms and although such decline is applauded by some [Wasoff and Dey, 2000:13], it has been described as a threat of increased poverty and a means of undermining society, social inclusion and economic stability [Roseneil and Mann, 1996; Morgan, 1995:27; Davies et. al, 1993]. For these reasons the 'Titmussesque' notion of the need for 'equity' rather than 'adequacy' appears to have gained ground [Hutton, 2002:368]. However, against a changing background it may be the case that legacies of conditioning regarding the universality of family form and the distribution of welfare, together with the 'Hayekian' ideas of the Thatcherite era [Hutton, 2002:94] are continuing to influence the working practices of policy implementers.

Administrative and Organisational considerations of post-war policy

Initially, the organisation of welfare arrangements called for new modes of administration. Hoggett [1994] and Cousins [1987] identified two forms of administration developed to construct the notion of a public service ethos incorporating codes of behaviour, sets of values and forms of practice. The first mode of administration, as identified by Hall [1984], was that of bureaucratic

administration. Based on the nineteenth century model of 'public administration', the principles of bureaucratic administration emphasised the application of rules and regulations, routinised processes and predictable outcomes, all of which were intended to embody the concept of fairness for all individuals. Clarke and Newman [1997:65] claim that bureaucratic administration was intended to be seen as socially, politically and personally neutral, guaranteeing departure from a previous corrupt and oppressive system in which patronage, nepotism and corruption were endemic. A system emerged in which impartiality was nurtured and each member of the public was treated according to need, rather than their social status, wealth or social networks as was the case under arrangements for administration of the Poor Law. Hill [1993: 40] and Mintzberg [1983] claim that this system was bureaucratically administered and viewed as a means of ensuring fairness and de-personalisation of decision making. In theory it was intended that bureaucratic administration should separate policy from its implementation, but in practice policy implementation was often subject to procedural control and the undermining of central initiatives at a local level.

According to Clarke and Newman [1997: 6] a second form of administration developed from the need to 'inject' expertise into the system of bureaucratic administration of welfare. Specifically, distinctive knowledge and skills were needed to solve social problems. 'Professional administration' evolved as a means of providing expert advice on matters of health, education and social problems. Cousins [1987: chapter 5] argues that bureaucratic administration needed to be tempered by 'forms of expertise', that were more than administrative competence. Such expertise was described as being able to draw on distinctive bodies of knowledge and skills about the causes and solutions of social problems.

These two forms of administration were never happy bedfellows, if only because they had different value systems. Harrison and Pollitt [1994: Chapter 3] and Mintzberg [1983] explain this dichotomy of interests in the following way. Whereas bureaucratic administration operates through standardisation, predictability and the creation of stability, professional administration focuses on the indeterminacy of the social state and therefore, the need to tailor policy to meet local needs. According to this assumption, expert knowledge and judgments are needed to construct the nature of problems and their likely solutions. Commenting on this argument, Clarke and Newman [1997:5] suggest that whereas bureaucracy endeavours to standardise skills, professionalism is standardised by training and codes of conduct. Harrison and Pollitt [1994: Chapter 6], show how 'professional administration' lays claim to a personal form of autonomy which enables it to develop a fiduciary relationship with the members of the public it serves. It is

their view that administration of the welfare state requires mediation between bureaucracy and professionalism. Harrison and Pollitt [1994:137], claim that mediation between bureaucratic and professional forms of administration should be perceived as an essential aspect of social reconstruction and social progress. These together, bureaucratic and professional forms of administration are perceived as the perfect engine for mobilising public policy and representing public interest. It was the view of these commentators that this combination of powers represents a relationship between the state and the people, all focused on the public good. However, Clarke and Newman [1997:18] show that continuing dichotomies between bureaucracy and professionalism over 'Hayekian' shifts from growth to restraint in welfare services during the 1970's, eventually led to the disciplining of professional autonomy and the de-stabilisation of bureaucratic and professional relationships. Clarke [1991: chapter 6] shows how a rising interest in 'Hayekian' liberal ideals on the part of neo-conservatives criticised the de-moralising effects of welfare provision. In particular, bureaucrats were blamed for building empires at the expense of providing services and professionals were blamed for an excess of self-interest and the wielding of power over people who were thus deprived of choice. It appears that such dichotomies fuelled a need for policy change to address the perceived crises in welfare. As long as three decades ago, it was the contention of Marshall [1975:210], that professional discrimination and 'partnership' building are necessary adjuncts to the equitable distribution of welfare. However, it can be seen that a number of economic, social, and administrative factors appear to have influenced policy change and inevitably these will impinge upon current organisational arrangements and structure.

2.4 Changes in Policy following a perceived crisis in Welfare Provision

Clarke and Newman [1997:16] claim that during the 1980's the rise of neo-conservatism addressed the institutions and alliances of the post-war state as problems. The welfare state was blamed for a crisis in the organisational regime as well as 'the crisis in welfare'. Pollitt [1993: vi] claimed that to correct the 'crisis' a new organisational regime was introduced. The New Right introduced the concept of managerialism to transform, re-invent and change a system previously governed by bureau-professionalism. According to Clarke and Newman [1997:37] the advent of managerialism replaced bureau-professional arrangements with notions of more 'effective service delivery' and 'improved customer responsiveness'. As a result, the distribution of power between organisations [statutory and voluntary, national and local] has become realigned. Changes that followed identification of a 'crisis' in welfare consisted of 'Hayekian', minimalist direct provision on the part of the state and the dispersal of welfare services to other agencies. According to Ranson and Stewart [1994:254] although the state withdrew, its powers were

extended by their dispersal across a range of statutory, voluntary and private 'sites'. Thereby, collectivist ideals were modified. The dispersal of power across a range of state and non-state bodies broke up the institutional embodiments of a social democratic public, diminished the role of elected government and reduced the powers of local government.

In the late 1990's 'New Labour' introduced the 'Titmussesque' political ideology of communitarianism, defined by Putnam [2000: 25] as a means of "*bolstering social capital and the institutions of civil society*". The purpose according to Clarke and Newman [1997:131] was to overcome the failures of the old statist system and the shortfalls of the neo-conservative emphases on the merits of the market and individualism. It was intended that the notion would explore the roles that both the state and the market have to play in social life, but that primary interests should lie elsewhere, particularly within the local community. Stewart [1989:240] suggests that as a result interest in local authorities' concerns for issues faced by local communities has intensified. Devolved responsibility for community government has resulted in concerns to promote 'equity'. Consequently the proper role for the state is seen as that of an enabler, investor or empowerer in local authorities' endeavours to govern their local communities. Clarke and Newman [1997:135] suggest that the role of government is now purely strategic. This appears to be the Welsh Assembly Government's policy stance in respect of the Cymorth scheme [WAG, 2000]. As a result, local authorities now bear the burden of ensuring that policy strategies for the relief of child and family poverty, social inclusion and community development, as well as others related to 'joined-up' working, citizenship and empowerment, are instituted. Thus although current policy such as the Cymorth Scheme [WAG 2000] adheres to some of the neo-liberalist views which began the movement away from welfare state provision, its primary concern appears to be the 'Titmussesque' aim to create 'equity' for all children. It is contended that these views may not be clearly comprehended by policy implementers who have 'grown up' in bureaucratic or bureau-professional regimes. Neo-liberal forms of policy now appear to prevail.

In a comparative review of welfare reform in three countries, [the UK, America and Australia], Pawlick and Stroick [2004] found that all have adopted more pragmatic ideologies. Although all three countries previously adopted liberal ideologies and a strong adherence to market policy, now they appear to place an emphasis on employment orientated policies. Consequently welfare resources are directed towards financial incentives that encourage work, or make work pay. Discourses on the value of work appear to permeate policy and are rationalised in terms of economic and moral advantage. These discourses are applied to all genders, cultures, ethnic groups, and new immigrants, the disabled and older age groups. Thus the option of a

'dependency' identity ceases to be an option for many groups and is fast disappearing for others, who may have taken it for granted. In the UK, the Treasury [2000: 2], stated that,

"Worklessness is the most common cause of poverty among working age people and their children. Moving into employment is the surest route out of poverty".

Moving individuals towards self sufficiency, especially in terms of employability, appears to be a paramount goal in all three developed countries examined by Pawlick and Stroick [2004: v]. However, within this discourse there are three distinct interpretations of neo-liberalist policy which serve to project different aspects of policy implementation [Myles, 1996:116]. The United States continues to view the market as its primary source of welfare. Australia remains a 'wage earners welfare', that is, it primarily uses wage regulation as a form of social protection [Pawlick and Stroick, 2004:37]. However, at the same time Australia is attempting to build social coalitions that encourage individual self determination, both in economic and social terms. The country is also investing in individuals, through partnerships with communities. As has already been discussed, the UK is also attempting to use a 'third way' to deal with the problems that characterise its shift to neo-liberal policy. According to Giddens [2001: 45] this 'third way' deals with the problems that characterise a shift towards neo-liberal or pragmatic policy. The market is constructed as a dominant source of welfare, but the necessity of the state maintaining a wide safety net is seen as important in encouraging stronger roles and responsibilities for families and communities. The Cymorth Scheme [WAG 2002] adheres to such principles and as a consequence policy implementers in all agencies have to work within a new policy framework.

2.5 Perceived outcomes of current policy developments in the United Kingdom

As has already been discussed, the welfare state in the UK has taken three major philosophical re-orientations in its development. Until the 1970s the welfare system was not construed as a disincentive to work and individuals were exonerated of any responsibility for dependency. This was because unemployment was construed as the result of economic dysfunction and class disadvantage. The 'Thatcherite' regime of the Conservative Government, which came to power in 1979, constructed the welfare system as a major disincentive for individual adequacy. Although McCarthy [1989:26] suggested that previous Labour Prime Ministers and their Chancellors had previously established their place in the 'Hall of Villainy' associated with destruction of the sanctity and inviolability of the Welfare State. Consequently benefits were reduced and subjected to means tests, thereby limiting access to welfare. Developments in neo-liberal policy resulted in

major reforms such as changes in pensions, public housing provision and health care [Schmidt, 2000:188- 9]. According to Hemerijck and Schludi [2000:191 -2], these reforms were achieved

“By destroying the power resources of the trade unions and undermining middle class support for the welfare state, by making public programmes residual while expanding options for exit into private scheme”.

It was the view of Hemerijck and Schludi [2000: 191-2] that all that survived this onslaught on welfare systems was the National Health Service and public education, though these too, were severely constrained by the introduction of competitive markets and contracting strategies. With the coming of ‘New Labour’ there was a new policy thrust, its strident discourse advocated inclusion of those who had previously been banished to the outer-world of society by extremes of neo-liberalism. Murray [1996:1-32] noted the problems of a growing underclass, whilst Hutton [1995:193] identified the problems of growing inequality and the emergence of the ‘30/30/40’ society. This was defined as 30% of the population who lived below the official poverty line, the next 30% who were in low paid work and reliant on ‘top up’ benefits and the top 40%, who were in relatively secure and well paid employment. Evidence from the Rowntree Foundation [Goodman and Webb, 1994], also confirmed an inordinate rise in the numbers of people living in households with below half of the national average income. This rise consisted of a 27% increase from 3 million in the 1970s to more than 11 million [1.5 of the population] by 1991, with regional inequality characterising the distribution of wealth. Blunkett [2000:3] observed that there was an urgent need to nurture social coherence if the damage caused by extreme neo-liberalism was to be eradicated. In order to eradicate the unjustness of impoverished communities and generate an economic vibrancy, the rallying cry became ‘social inclusion’ and ‘security for all’ [Blunkett, 2000:2].

New Labour attempted to be more distributive in respect of its social policy for the very poor. Specifically, the levels of social assistance were raised and a minimum wage instituted. However, the resultant poverty traps, caused by the neo-liberal years, appeared to have taken their toll on determinants of health and social structures [Smeeding, 2002]. In 1998, 4.2 million children [33%] were still living in relative poverty, as opposed to only 1.7 million, or 14.5 %, in 1979 [Brewer and Gregg, 2001]. To remedy such problems Blair’s government adopted a ‘Third Way’ or pragmatic approach to welfare, described as the maintenance of a broad ‘safety-net’, active support to enable individuals *“ to be responsible in taking opportunities for self reliance”*, the provision of employment opportunities and constraints on the unemployed [Perry, 2000 :44-

5]. Perry, [2000: 45] showed how in a pledge to lift people out of poverty an emphasis was placed on,

“Rebuilding the work ethic and Christian family values, the negative role of passive welfare in perpetuating an underclass, and the social evil of welfare dependency amongst able bodied people”.

Thus it appears that under the regime of New Labour a ‘New Deal’ emerged for welfare [DSS Green Paper 1998].

Perry [2000] shows how the new emphasis is on state support for participation in employment, expanding the labour market through tax incentives, employment bonuses, ‘in-work’ benefits and individual support to increase employability among the unemployed and low wage earners. Community partnerships between the government, voluntary sector organisations and employers are advocated as a means of increasing employability and employers are given incentives for hiring and providing in-work training. The private, public and voluntary sector organisations are charged with the responsibility to provide skills upgrading, and work experience placements for young people. New Deal employment and training programmes have been made available to all those who claim Jobseeker’s Allowance, including lone parents, the disabled and people over fifty years of age. Partners of benefit seekers are also encouraged [though not compelled], to become Jobseekers in order to access a variety of programmes designed to make work pay. Young people are strongly urged to apply for Jobseekers’s Allowance and to participate in employability programmes to take advantage of the ‘New Deal’ [www.new.deal.gov.uk].

2.6 New Deal ‘all kinds of people, all kinds of jobs’

Pawlick and Stroick [2004:25] show how exemplified by the above slogan, the ‘New Deal’ programme had five objectives for welfare reform:-

- **Enabling** - *to ensure the welfare state and Government can be an enabling force in the lives of men and women, barriers are removed and people helped to overcome the fear of change. Thus risk may be minimised and communities may seize the opportunities of the new economy for themselves.*
- **Employability** - *to ensure the welfare state serves as a provider of skills for the economy, individuals and communities are to be helped to develop capacity and ensure they have the skills that employers need.*
- **Reforming** - *The welfare state is positioned at the heart of the economy by increasing the flexibility of both in-work and transitional benefits, as well as the traditional safety net, to take account of substantial changes in the labour market, working patterns and globalisation.*
- **Maximising potential** - *this is to be achieved by ensuring that the productive capacity, talent and well-being of every individual is unleashed. It includes taking a closer look at the patterns of people’s working and family lives and the balance between the*

responsibilities of individuals, the family and the state .

•Hand-ups - not Hand-outs *this involves reviewing the role of welfare as a safety net, and ensuring that people have access to the assets they need to be self-reliant and invest in their education and well-being.*

As a result of these strategies the main aims of the 'New Deal' appear to be making work pay; effective targeting to ensure redistribution of financial support; 'something for all, but more for the poorest'; progressive universalism and the eradication of child poverty. Brewer and Gregg [2001: abstract] show how this strategy is specifically aimed at ending child poverty by the year 2020. The strategy is particularly apposite in Wales where 38% of children live in households experiencing poverty [SEU, 1998] It has resulted in:-

- increased direct financial support to families with children.
- a Child Trust Fund, which through a matching grant system encourages families to save for children's future needs.
- financial incentives for employed parents.
- intensive case management of the welfare caseload of 'troubled families'.

Other benefits include Statutory Maternity Pay, a 'Sure Start' Maternity Grant of £500 for low-income new parents, in receipt of income assistance benefits and the Sure-Start/ Cymorth children's programme. The latter provides free early education and child-care for children living in disadvantaged areas. [See previous chapter]. These benefits became universal in March 2004. All of the developments constitute a backdrop to the demand for organisational change in the delivery of new policy strategies.

2.7 Organisational change resulting from policy change

In the late 1990's 'New Labour' introduced the political ideology of 'Communitarianism'. It was perceived as a means of overcoming the failures of the statist system and the shortfalls of the neo-conservative emphasis on the merits of the market and individualism [Clarke and Newman, 1997:13]. Emergent strategies were founded upon arguments such as those of Amitai Etzioni [1961], who claimed that economic liberalism had not provided any effective response to parenting problems. It was the view of Etzioni that commitment to parenting was increasingly undermined by the labour market which made the moral act of parenting more difficult. The primary purpose of 'Communitarianism' was to explore the role that local communities might play in improving the social life and economic stability of inhabitants. Resultant change has

increased local authorities' responsibilities for facing up to and dealing with issues related to children and families. In particular, issues of poverty, social exclusion and the need for community development have intensified a process of devolution of authority from government to 'Partnerships' between statutory and voluntary sectors at a local level. [Etzioni, 1994:60-64] Clarke and Newman [1997:135] described this development as a marked change in the role of government. Specifically, the role of government is now 'steering not rowing'.

"With the ship of state's bridge full of captains and navigators, communities are increasingly expected to provide the galley slaves who will do the rowing".

It is now Local Authorities, such as the subject of this study, that bear the burden of ensuring policy strategies are instituted.

'Partnerships' between statutory and voluntary agencies appear to be considered as the preferred way of putting policy into action [Glendinning et al 2002:7-10; Balloch and Taylor 2001:53]. Such partnerships are premised on joint commissioning, the removal of the internal market, joint investment, improved co-ordination between different public agencies in the delivery of services and pooled budgets. Potential partners are considered to have a 'duty of partnership' which should be formalised [DoH, 1998]. However, it might be that the quality of partnerships will vary according to whether they are built on trusting relationships, reciprocity and a sense of joint achievement, or on the notion of competition which prevailed prior to the election of 'New Labour' [Ling, 2000:84]. Variance might also occur as a result of whether 'Partnerships' are based on 'flatter' organisational forms capable of facilitating flexible forms of work within and between agencies, or on short term alliances typified by lead agencies and bureaucratic organisational forms which perpetuate hierarchical structures.

It is Ling's [2000:84] contention that the perpetuation of traditional hierarchies in organisations is stifling progress towards achieving implementation of new strategies. To overcome the problems incurred by persistent adherence to traditional organisational forms, [characterised by inherent power struggles between various agencies which ought to be concerned with working in partnership], there needs to be a move away from the process of governance or managerial politics. According to Ling [2000:89] and Powell and Glendinning [2002:1] the governance narrative, [which asserts that networks are inter-dependent and are characterised by a significant degree of autonomy from the state] has characterised the neo-liberalist peculiar obsession with markets. This strategy appears to have failed because of the inability of private partners to sacrifice their own interests for the public good. As a consequence, the steerage capacity of the state may be disrupted [Ling, 2000:89]. This was a view adopted by the Audit Commission also

[Audit Commission,1998:6]. The 'ingredient' of successful 'Partnerships' is claimed to be 'governmentality', defined by Rhodes [1997:57],

"As a concept of governance concerned with the self-organisation of inter-organisational networks, in order to achieve participation of all agencies and service users in the new strategic policy arenas".

This is a definition concurred with by Evans and Killoran [2000:125-40] and Powell et al [2001:34]. In order to demonstrate 'partnerships' and 'participation' Ling [2000:84] suggests that all agencies should be focused on the outcomes of their work. According to Ling [2000:88] this constitutes 'governmentality', a process concerned with engaging 'hard to reach groups' and transforming them into compliant collaborators in the creation of a more inclusive communitarian society. According to the Department of Health [1998], in order to build a system of 'integrated' care provision for communities, the following strategies are essential,

- joint working of various agencies at different levels of organisations
- strategic planning
- joint service commissioning
- joint service provision

According to Ling [2000:88] the complexity of the task involved in building a more inclusive society cannot be achieved without the application of 'governmentality'. 'Governmentality' is expected to overcome the problems of aligning the values and cultures of partner organisations and to implement joined up strategies for the attainment of shared goals. Specifically, the goal is to find new responses to the fundamental dilemmas of failing British welfare systems. In short, it appears that there has been a shift towards 'systems thinking' described by Handy [1993:22] as recognition that,

"Everything affects everything else, everything is part of something bigger and nothing can stand on its own, or be understood on its own."

Handy [1993:365] argues that 'systems thinking' requires a 'shift' away from de-centralisation, the delegation of power from the all-powerful centre of government, towards 'Federalism'. 'Federalism' being defined as,

"A situation in which the power resides with the constituent parts".

In respect of child and family policy, constituent parts are the Local Authority agencies that will cede part of their power to the centre. 'Partnership' is therefore for the benefit of all. According to Handy [1993], organisations consisting of 'partnerships' will rely on a small 'nerve' centre coordinating a range of autonomous operations, perhaps widely dispersed. Unlike traditional forms of hierarchical, bureaucratic structures, stakeholders and the community may well take ownership of the 'federal' operations. This will create a 'shift' in power which makes the centre

truly the servant of the whole, not the master of it. However, this model of working may currently be alien to community based organisations. It is a model which presents a challenge to both statutory and voluntary organisations concerned with policy implementation. This is because it demands new, less bureaucratic ways of working [Handy, 1990:161]. Handy contends [1990:159] that 'flatter' organisational forms create an opportunity for building a more caring inclusive society, a society which may be more capable of supporting children and their families. Policy implementation systems based on bureaucratic power systems, professional administration and governance appear to be outdated. Successful 'Partnerships' for the implementation of child and family policy appear to require a process of 'Governmentality'. The process is represented by a 'flatter' organisational structure concerned with the promotion of citizenship, participation in employment, education and training. 'Flatter' organisations are seen as a means of combating poverty, maximising child and family potential and making people self-reliant. [Etzioni, 1993]. The goal of WAG policy is to place upon agencies concerned with family policy implementation, the responsibility for creating a more inclusive society through processes of community development.

In its strategic agenda, "Wales-A Better Country" [WAG 2003:1], the Welsh Assembly Government set out its vision for a fairer, healthier and better educated country. In order to achieve this vision the Assembly stated that they intended to put sustainable health and wealth creation at the heart of policy making. Thus ensuring that,

"Children and future generations enjoy better prospects in life, and are not landed with a legacy of problems bequeathed by us".

The strategy for delivering this commitment was laid out in 'Frameworks for Partnership'[WAG, 2004: iii]. This document gives guidance on the setting up of local 'Partnerships' to ensure that policy formulation and service provision are appropriate to need, receive due priority and are delivered in a coordinated and focused way. Progress to date is described in 'Children and Young People : Rights to Action' [WAG, 2004], but whilst this document is strong on 'governance' arrangements in terms of the appointment of leadership and the consultation of children, it appears less robust in terms of 'governmentality' issues. That is, how 'top down' policy action may be replaced by 'bottom up' policy initiatives focused on the creation of a more inclusive society, through social inclusion and community development strategies. The question then is the extent to which the rhetoric of policy is matched by appropriate organisational implementation strategies? In particular, whether at Local Authority level the aims of government policy have been sufficiently integrated into considerations of the importance of the organisational style and

culture required to implement 'Partnerships' and processes of 'Governmentality' [Powell and Exworthy 2002:19]. Also the question of whether these aims have in turn been communicated and understood by those responsible for policy implementation is raised?

2.8 Possible reasons for 'Partnership' failure

It is argued by some that partnership working may fail. Firstly because it is a process which has tended to take place at the margins of organisations concerned with special initiatives, or with the use of specific monies for particular objectives, rather than transformation of service delivery methods, or the transformation of public service cultures [Balloch and Taylor, 2000:7; Glendinning et al, 2002:6]. In such instances it is usually not the central focus of participating agencies. Secondly, reasons for the failure of partnerships are said to be a persistence of existing power relationships between agencies, failure to engage communities and service users in partnership working; uneven resource and the fragile infrastructures of smaller agencies. To bring about change and transformation for successful 'partnerships' there is a need for incentives to spread knowledge, work with diversity and conflict and manage risk. Thirdly, partnerships present major structural, technical and managerial challenges which require new forms of information and communication systems, new budgeting systems and new approaches to handling complex and multiple accountabilities [Balloch and Taylor, 2001:8]. All of these factors appear to be difficult to achieve because, as was seen above, in the past public service organisations have not been required to work in this way and public service workers have not been rewarded for partnership skills. As a result, difficulties may arise from introducing new ways of working, and transforming existing cultures. Time and investment may therefore be required for achievement of successful policy outcomes [Williamson, 2001].

To further complicate issues boundaries between 'partners' often lack co-terminosity, thereby hampering the pooling of information, knowledge, skills and resources. Technical factors such as being sited in different buildings, the use of different computer systems and concerns over the protection of data systems, for prevention of breaches in confidentiality, may also add to communication problems. Thus it appears that to facilitate 'new' forms of policy implementation the quality and functioning of 'partnerships' is an important aspect of organisational structure. Therefore, the quality of 'partnership' working should be seen as an important aspect of the evaluation of Cymorth policy implementation.

2.9 Considerations of the effect of change on Public Policy Implementation

The literature on public policy implementation is littered with debate and controversy over the way in which paternalism, professionalism, entrepreneurship, managerialism, de-politicisation, and power dispersal can influence policy implementation [Hill, 1993; Clarke and Newman, 1997]. Yet, as was noted at the end of the previous chapter, studies of the policy implementation process may sometimes ignore the fact that successful outcomes depend on an absence of ambiguity, clear objectives, commitment and skill. According to Pawlick and Stroick [2004:1], encouraging individual self-sufficiency and the efficacy of investing in people through community partnerships, have become important additional criteria to be considered when examining policy implementation processes. Thus the whole process of current policy analysis may be complicated by a multitude of new factors, each of which requires consideration. Against a background of literature that purports the actual process of policy implementation is diverse, sometimes confusing and often over-simplified [Scheiber et al, 1991; Poullier, 1987; Raffel, 1984], analysis or evaluation may encounter more difficulties. According to Hill [1993:59], the over-simplification of interpretations of policy implementation has produced but a limited study of the process in relation to its validity. This has resulted in generating a limited body of theory, or insight into the identification of problems related to variations in practice. Agreeing with this viewpoint, Ham and Hill [1984:88] decried the failure to understand 'the black box' of policy implementation. They claim that this resulted in a 'black hole' of understanding of the links between power distribution and the beliefs and actions of those responsible for putting policy into practice.

An illustration of the problem of over simplification of the policy implementation process is the classic account of the implementation of National Health Service policy [Porter, 1997:652-653]. This relates how Beveridge's plan [HMSO, 1942] to remove social determinants of ill-health fell into a 'black hole' because of the medical profession's power and influence over Aneurin Bevan's intention to revolutionise health care. Instead of revolutionising medicine through the strengthening of public health functions and preventive care, the introduction of the NHS served only to perpetuate old divisions between hospital consultants, public health specialists and general practitioners. Hill [1993] suggests that lessons that might have been drawn from this experience of poor policy implementation have been slow to permeate practice, as have similar lessons from the interpretation and application of other policies. For example, the experiments in Community Development Planning carried out in the 1970's, to alleviate urban deprivation [Hill, 1980:253]. Parsons [1995:457] suggests that failure to draw lessons from such experiences may be due to the fact that there was little interest in policy implementation until the 1970's. Interest

burgeoned only when it became apparent that many post-war policies and programmes in both the UK and the USA had not performed as well as intended. According to some commentators this may have been due to received knowledge that,

"The implementation problem is assumed to be a series of mundane decisions and interactions unworthy of the attention of scholars seeking the heady stuff of politics. Implementation is deceptively simple: it does not appear to involve great issues".

[Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975:450].

Such views did not hold complete sway as there were others who perceived that policy making does not end with the production of a White Paper. Anderson [1975: 98] for example, suggested that administration must take over where policy ends.

"Policy is being made as it is being administered and administered as it is being made".

It was Anderson's view that discounting the importance of the total process of policy making may result in failure to identify the factors which create a 'black hole', [or lack of transparency], in the policy implementation process. Hill [1980:80-81] claims that although demarcation has existed between policy making and administration, the process of how policy formulated by decision makers is carried out by service providers, is surely of interest if the outcomes of policy are to be determined. If the interplay and interactions between these levels are allowed to become a 'missing link' in the process of policy implementation it may be harder to achieve intended policy outcomes. Anderson [1975:98] also pointed out the importance of understanding how policy formulated at government level is transferred through bureaucrats and carried out by service providers. It was his view that failure to understand the interplay and interaction between politicians, administrators and service providers creates a 'missing link' in the policy process. Massey [1993:200-1] argued that bureaucrats are not just neutral servants of a regime, they too have ideas, values, beliefs and interests which they use to shape policy. Therefore, to distinguish between policy as politics and administration as implementation is unwise. Laswell [1948], for example, protested the importance of studying the way in which values, at all levels of organisations, can impact on policy outcomes. It was his view that failure to engage in this process may create a hiatus in respect of the availability of specific knowledge of factors which impede the application of policy. It was the possibility of such a hiatus in relation to Cymorth policy [WAG, 2000] that became the focus of this study.

Nearly three decades ago Hill [1980:80] claimed the study of policy implementation requires knowledge of the characteristics of policy and of the organisations responsible for its implementation. Agreeing with this view, both Hupe [1993] and Le Grand [1994] emphasised that a lack of clarity and consensus on the meanings and thrusts of political aims can undermine the policy implementation process. Taking heed of this advice this chapter began with an overview of the characteristics of policy leading up to current policy direction. This will now be followed by a critical account of policy implementation studies and their approaches and an analysis of why policy implementation may not be as straightforward a process as was described by Van Meter and Van Horn [1975:445-88]. Finally, there will be a brief review of methodologies used to study the implementation of family policy. It is hoped that this will provide a rationale for the choice of a suitable research methodology for the study and a set of criteria against which methods and standards of policy implementation can be judged.

2.10 Policy implementation analysis

Parsons [1995] argues that until the 1970's policy analysis was primarily concerned with the 'front end' of the policy process, that is the rationality and fairness of policy decision making and how it might be improved. During the 1970s a burgeoning interest in reasons for poor welfare policy performance led to an interest in the 'delivery end' of policy processes. At first this interest focused on 'top-down' models of policy analysis which concentrated, rather simplistically, on the series of decisions and interactions required to implement policy. This approach was characterised by Easton's 'black box' model of policy systems [1965: 110], a model that had been previously criticised by the work of others. Laswell [1951] for example, was concerned with identifying methods by which the policy process could be investigated and improved. He perceived that implementation processes were far more complex than 'hierarchical', 'top-down' approaches to the study of policy implementation revealed [Hill, 1993:2]. Thus, frameworks for the analysis of policy implementation became more concerned with the importance of determining how policy and services were implemented, the cost effectiveness of the process, ways of improving human resource management and the monitoring and evaluation of policy outcomes [OECD, 1993]. In this section of the literature review, the journey from the early days of analysis of policy implementation to current encounters with the problems of identifying suitable models for evaluating policy based on 'partnerships' 'governmentality' and regeneration will be explored.

2.11 The Rationale for change in the process of Policy Implementation Analysis

Osbourne and Gaebler [1992] claimed the bureaucratic approach to analysis of public policy implementation was ill-suited to problems created by the de-centralisation processes of 20th century governments. This opinion was far removed from that of Van Meter and Van Horn [1975:450], which took the view that policy implementation was a simple process not involving great issues. A growing belief that policy making was a continuous process involving implementation, administration and evaluation of outcomes therefore led to an increasing interest in alternatives to 'top down' processes of policy implementation such as systems analysis.

Systems analysis was defined by Quade and Boucher, [1968:2], as a

"Systematic approach to helping a decision maker choose a course of action, by investigating the problem and searching out objectives and alternatives and comparing them in the light of their consequences".

It is not to be confused with 'Systems Theory', which Handy [1990:27] defined as,

"Finding explanations of the patterns of functioning of organisations in terms of inputs, outputs and transformations, encompassing a variety of social, psychological and technical variables. The most popular current variant being 'contingency theory', which deals with designing the appropriate structures of co-ordination and control to fit different environments".

Although 'systems theory' has a bearing upon the outcomes of this study it is the process of policy implementation analysis that is the concern of this chapter. Studies of policy, involving operational research or systems analysis published in 1972 by Derthick and in 1973 by Pressman and Wildavsky, brought to an end the neglect of the process of policy implementation. Systems analysis is characterised by a bias for action and improvement, rationality and efficiency, quantification and examination of all variables involved in the policy implementation process. Dror [1989: 237] identified the importance of recognising a causal chain of links between the conception and outcomes of policy if the successes or failures of policy are to be recognised. The later work of Dunsire [1978], Gunn [1978] and Hood [1976] explored the question of what a perfect policy implementation model might look like. However, these approaches were criticised for placing too great an emphasis on the definition of policy goals at the strategic level, rather than on the roles of the implementers of policy at the level of service delivery. According to Parsons [1995:467], the approach does not recognise that the process of policy implementation also involves policy making by those who are involved in putting policy into action. Therefore, sole concentration on the process of defining policy goals and bureaucratic administration

processes may overlook intricacies involved in translating strategy into action. It appears that the 'implementation process' may seriously affect policy design [Hill, 1993: Chapter 4]. It is Hill's contention that policy implementation may be affected by existing policies, some of which may be precedents, some conditional for new policy implementation and some in conflict with change. Finance and resource restrictions may also be factors in policy implementation failure, either because government does not recognise the true cost of policy, or because there is a resistance from within government to ensuring policy effectiveness. These factors may influence the provision of resources for policy adoption.

Another important source of policy implementation problems identified by Hill is the failure to express policy goals in clear terms. It is his contention that family policy, in particular, falls into this category. This is because policy-makers may be unclear about what they really want, or there may be lack of political consensus. As a result policy may be obscure on key points of implementation and there may be a lack of consensus among the implementers regarding what is expected of them. Consequently, there may be wide variations in practice and conflict between agencies regarding implementation processes. It is for these reasons that Plummer [2000:25-85] argued the need for a strong, strategic steer in all policy implementation processes. Bardach [1977] claimed that policy implementers may seek to delay, alter, or deflect policy if they are not committed to its aims. Lipsky [1976] also showed how policy implementation could be disrupted by 'street-level' bureaucrats, who temper government policy with their own views and ideas of how policy should be applied at the service end of an organisation. Elmore [1985] suggested that such criticisms have eventually led to acceptance of the view that policy is best implemented through a process of 'backward chaining' of events that create successful implementation. This view led to appreciation of the value of 'bottom-up' approaches to policy making.

The 'bottom-up' model of policy implementation is one that relies on analysis of the processes of negotiation and consensus building. It stresses the importance of realising that implementers of policy can, and do, exercise their own discretion in the application of policy. As a consequence, the implementers of policy may play an important role in shaping new policy. Lewis and Flynn [1978] contended that both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' models of policy implementation are too simplistic to characterise the complexities of the process. These commentators eventually produced a behavioural model of policy implementation, as the result of a study of how urban and rural policy was put into practice. It was their contention that as policy implementers inhabit a world which bears little resemblance to the ideal situation, policy objectives may not be the principal sources of guides to action. Agreeing with this view Barrett and Fudge [1981] argued

that interactive and negotiative processes are continuously taking place between those who wish to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends. Therefore, policy implementation is reliant on bargaining processes, power relationships, values, interests, motivation and behaviour. Thus policy implementation may evolve from the education, training and the intelligence of policy implementers.

It therefore becomes apparent that the process of policy implementation is dynamic and possibly unstable. Far from being reliant on top-down instructions for its implementation, or 'bottom-up' petitions regarding the need for change, it is more likely to be influenced by the ways in which organisations responsible for policy implementation and service providers interpret policy and apply it to everyday situations [Majone and Wildavsky, 1984]. This is a view previously posited by Lipsky [1980] and supported by Hudson [1989]. However, as Ringeling [1978] predicted, it is difficult to open the 'black-box' of street level bureaucratic interactions with clients in order to examine the process of policy implementation. Hill [Ed] [1993:141] suggests that this is a process which is only accomplished by possessing some knowledge of the management of outcomes of commercial service delivery. Indeed, management literature has produced a body of knowledge focused on policy implementation.

2.12 Management Literature and Policy Implementation

Management literature appears to rely on analyses of the processes of operational, corporate and personnel management, when it seeks to investigate the process of policy implementation. Parsons [1995:474] suggests that most of the literature on operational processes relies on 'critical pathways' explanations [CPM], or 'project evaluation and review techniques' [PERT], as the 'ideal type' methods of analysing policy implementation. 'Critical path' methods identify those activities which are essential to projects based on policy, whereas PERT methods examine the indeterminacy of project implementation. Both methods are described by Parsons [1995:474] as being employed in managing large-scale projects in terms of networks. Consequently, they have become known as forms of 'network' analyses. By controlling the network of activities and events which compose the stages of policy implementation. The aims of both CPM and PERT are to 'control' the execution of a project. Parsons claims that systems analysis is also a means of examining bottom-up implementation problems, as factors that disrupt policy implementation may occur in the delivery of public goods or services. Such analyses examine activity sequences, inputs, outputs, and information flows. The model is dependent on a cyclical process of defining objectives, constructing and monitoring a plan, analysing implementation of the plan and

monitoring progress. It identifies what has happened if the outcomes are different from initial aims and objectives set out in policy. Through the evaluation of outcomes this approach seeks to identify and implement change strategies, in order to prevent future untoward incidents.

At the corporate level there is an emphasis on defining policy objectives, planning, organising, directing and controlling resources in order to implement policy. Foster [1993] suggests that this is an approach which provides those at the operational level of policy with a means of examining the parts that structure and culture play in implementing new policy. Literature on personnel management focuses on how people, who work in the public sector, respond to policy objectives and incorporate them into practice. In general two techniques are relied on for this process, performance appraisal [Anderson, 1992] and management by objectives [Drucker, 1989, McGregor, 1960]. Such processes have been described by Osborne and Gaebler [1993] as suitable for changing cultures and capable of creating environments in which both managers and implementers of policy, at service level, can modify or adapt their behaviour. These researchers showed how performance appraisal was a means of ensuring implementation of decentralisation processes, such as those required for the process of governance, described above.

Many researchers have been interested in the question of whether policy implementation is related to the type of policy and the factors that may impinge on the implementation programme [Etherington, 1999; Huxam and Vangen, 1996 and Chase, 1979]. In the case of policy calling for inter-organisational activity, 'partnerships' or 'governmentality' [terms previously explained] such as the Cymorth Scheme, much appears to depend on power relationships between the agencies concerned [Goddard and Mannion, 1998] and the extent of organisational exchange required [Hall, 1998]. Hjerm and Porter [1981] cautioned that if a policy programme is reliant on the involvement of a multiplicity of organisations there will be a complex pattern of interactions that are difficult to analyse using a 'top-down', or 'bottom-up' model of analysis. Taking up this stance Sabatier [1986] proposed a synthesis of the two approaches, in order to create the opportunity for analysis of the ways in which policy learning takes place, especially among agency coalitions. Thereby, it may be possible to identify the institutional conditions which are most appropriate and conducive to change. Agreeing with this view, Morgan [1986:4] went further to suggest that the complexities of policy implementation can only be examined through an eclectic approach to policy analysis. Such an approach involves 'mapping' of the problems encountered in their context, gaining an understanding of the underlying knowledge, beliefs and power systems and finally working at the meta-level of meanings and values. Morgan draws on Laswell's [1948] idea of the need for contextual mapping of participants/stakeholders

perspectives, values, strategies and desired outcomes, as a means of exploring the phenomenon of policy implementation. Ledwith [2005:2] also comments on the importance of ‘problem posing’ or ‘problematizing’, as a means of gaining a critical understanding of the policy implementation process. This was an idea gleaned from the work of Friere [1972]. These ideas suggest the possibility that de-construction may be a means of analysing policy implementation processes.

2.13 Current considerations in the analysis of policy implementation

Diverse inter-governmental and inter-organisational forms of policy relating to children and the family are increasingly based on intergovernmental and inter-organisational networks, or ‘partnerships’ for the delivery of services. As was suggested by Self [1993:121],

“The provision of welfare can be regarded as a complex mixture of contributions from four sources: government, market, voluntary organisations and individual households.”

Thus any analysis of policy implementation may need to take account of the complexity and diversity of delivery ‘mixes’ involved in the process. Parsons [1995] suggested that to unravel this complexity those concerned with analysis of policy implementation need to consider governmental strategies for the delivery of policy. These strategies may include relationships between the public, private and voluntary services, the nature of the voluntary services contribution and the community as an alternative to the market. All are now stakeholders in the process of policy implementation. This is a view which accords with the characteristics of current child and family policy described by Pawlick and Stroick [2004], earlier in this chapter. It illustrates that in reality a consideration of Systems Theory is an important aspect of policy implementation analysis if governmental strategy is to be understood, but it may not be sufficient to unravel the intricacies of ‘partnership networks’ [Pestieau 2003:5].

2.14 Governmental strategy

According to Parsons [1995] an analysis of policy implementation must concern itself with systems theory [defined above] in order to identify what part, or level of government is responsible for the delivery of a programme. The mix of levels will, of course, be influenced by political and constitutional traditions and levels of decentralisation within specific policy arenas [OECD, 1993]. In the UK, decentralisation has become an important aspect of policy, especially so in the cases of Scotland and Wales, where devolved administration has been instituted.

Quoting Hoggett [1987], Parsons [1995] suggests that this change in the mode of service delivery is the result of a 'shift' away from Weberian / Taylorist and Fordist means of hierarchical control, towards a 'post-fordist', adhocratic, more fragmented and post-modern structure. This structure replaces complicated hierarchies and bureaucratic forms of organisation with one level of administration, dependent on the networking of agencies. Patterns of interaction and power relationships between agencies are therefore complex and diverse. Current patterns of centralisation, [in terms of the formulation of policy] and decentralisation, [in terms of policy implementation] are means of stimulating competition in relation to the achievement of policy outcomes. Therefore, according to Pestieau [2003:5], complete reliance upon a systems theory approach to policy implementation analysis may not be the very best way forward. This factor was given due consideration when determining a method of policy implementation analysis. Parsons [1995] also suggested that examination of policy implementation is incomplete if the relationships between the public, private and voluntary sectors are overlooked. This advice may now be more significant than ever, in the light of Hill's claim that a shift towards 'partnership' and 'governmentality' has increased the importance of relationships between agencies. Others [Thompson and McHugh, 1990: 27] claim that appropriate structures for co-ordination and control should be studied using a 'contingency 'theory' variant of systems theory. This was defined by Parsons [1995:582-584] as "accepting that there is no common pattern or type of organisation and that environmental conditions are external to organisations". Thus the aim of policy analysis should be to create a 'better fit' between activities of the organisation and the environment. This may be accomplished by achieving a better understanding of relationships between all agencies involved in the implementation process.

2.15 Relationships between the public, private and voluntary sectors

Relationships between the public, private and voluntary sectors have undergone considerable changes since the beginning of the 1990s. Means and Smith [1998:326] claim that all agencies, public, private and voluntary are now considered to be part of a 'mixed economy of welfare'. Typically these changes are also characterised by complexity. Examples of public-private partnerships exist in a number of policy areas relating to health, education, community regeneration, infrastructure development and environmental concerns. Such partnerships offer the possibility of securing additional funds and expertise for the public sector whilst, as a result of demonstrating values based on ethical concerns for social responsibilities, the private sector may gain in terms of profit, opportunities and status.

The position of the voluntary sector is somewhat more controversial. Butler and Wilson [1990] claim that historically voluntary organisations have been of great importance to the welfare state. Prior to its emergence charitable institutions were the principal providers of social services, education and health care. Since the recognition of a 'crisis in welfare', as a result of the state not being able to provide the range of services expected [Parsons, 1995], the voluntary sector has once more come into its own. Osborne and Gaebler [1992] suggest that the 'rise' in importance of the voluntary sector and its increasing responsibility for service provision means that, to all intents and purposes, it has become a 'third sector' [DHSS, 1989]. A situation predicted by Streeck and Schmitter [1985] who warned of the dangers of the voluntary sector becoming private agents of public policy. Yet voluntary organisations are now employing people on a permanent basis and are concerned with 'making money' to maintain financial viability. Knight [1993] comments that the close relationships which now exist between state and voluntary organisations may, in the longer term, have a damaging effect on the latter's independence. In their eagerness to comply with state and private ventures for the reward of funding, voluntary organisations may lose their direction and *raison d'être*. Agreeing with this view, but from a slightly different perspective, 'communitarians' such as Willetts [1994] express the fear that as the private agents of public policy voluntary organisations can no longer maintain their role as mediators of any oppressive state policy. Consequently, ideals of citizenship, empowerment and social learning may well be thwarted by diminished public support from voluntary agencies.

2.16 Relationships with the Community

According to Parsons [1985] community is an important component of sectoral delivery 'mix'. In terms of 'new labour' policy it has replaced the concept of the 'market' as a means of improving economic standing. The notion of 'building community' as a means of regenerating economic stability has resulted in a multiplicity of schemes embracing a range of interpretations of the concept of community. Glen [1993] suggests that the emphasis on community policy can be divided into three major approaches:-

- **Community development** - helping the community to help itself.
- **Community service** - improving the relationship between the needs of service users and outputs of services. That is making services more responsive to need and thereby increasing community participation in service provision .
- **Community action** - campaigning for the interests of those excluded from the political agenda process.

Butcher and Mullard [1993] suggest that the notion of community policy may be based on three different interpretations of 'citizenship'. The first notion emphasises the rational judgement, rights, and obligations of the public citizen. In this case community policy is seen as a means of enhancing democratic participation, extending democracy and devolving power to the people, thus encouraging public participation in decision making. Secondly, notions of the entitled citizen emphasise the need for a more equitable distribution of outcomes. As a result, there is a focus on the need to increase social and economic justice by empowering weaker members of society. According to this viewpoint, the community is seen as an agent of social change and reform - a vehicle for defending the interests and rights of individuals and groups threatened by bureaucracy, capitalism and professionals. Thirdly, a notion of 'the dutiful citizen' upholds the values of order, tradition and the organic nature of society. The aim of community strategies is to strengthen intermediate organisations and bodies in society and to strengthen traditional social institutions, as an alternative to state intervention. Giddens [1998:89] suggests that although traditionally favoured by the conservative right, this is a framework which also informs 'New Labour' policy. The aim of policy is the encouragement of a sense of civic and public duty, community service, mutual aid, self-help and voluntary work. Butcher et al [1993] propose a synthesis of these frameworks as a basis for analysing community policy. Review of current policy literature demonstrates the extent to which an eclectic version of these frameworks has been integrated into community policy for health and social care, community policing, community development, economic development, neighbourhood renewal and race relations [Clarke et al, 2000].

However, it is the contention of Clarke, [Clarke et al, 2002:52] that the aim to strengthen social institutions and organisations within society, as an alternative to state intervention, is unlikely to take place in a vacuum. Social, economic and political change requires communities to play an active role in the process of change. Such a role was described by the National Assembly for Wales in a document entitled 'Community Development' which was part of an agreement for a co-operation process between the Assembly government and the voluntary sector. Community development is defined by Clarke [op. cit: 57] as a,

"Process of putting the 'community' into the development process".

It involves engaging people in the process of achieving the objectives of change. It is a process of community development, as opposed to engendering a process of 'social action' [the organising of disadvantaged sections of a community to make demands on the community at large]; or a 'social planning' approach, where objectives for change are identified by technocrats and the

community. In both of the latter processes participation is not a core ingredient [Rothman, 1995:28-33]. Yet as was shown earlier, the strategy of policy implementation for children and their families appears to have been premised on a process of 'social planning' for its institution [DoH, 1998]. Rothman concludes [Rothman,1995:60] that it may be necessary to interweave the three identified modes of community intervention into a flexible form of policy implementation. It is the view of Rothman that such action may create a 'contingency formulation' of intervention components capable of addressing situational factors critical to strategy development.

2.17 Current evaluation of policy implementation

The review of the nature of current policy illustrates its complexity and the likely limitations of 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' models of policy analysis to analyse problems related to the process of policy implementation. Also evident are the limitations of relying on any one means of community intervention analysis of policy implementation [Rothman,1995:60]. It appears therefore, that there could be some value in returning to an examination of the views of commentators, such as Morgan [1986:4], who suggests that the application of an eclectic model of policy implementation evaluation is needed to de-construct and understand the complexities of putting modern policy into practice. Morgan advocates the mapping of various barriers or 'metaphors', defined as ways of 'thinking or seeing', which impede policy implementation. It is his view that these 'metaphors' represent a postmodernist or constructivist approach to analysis of the complexity of the process of policy implementation. According to Symonds [1998:7], constructionism is based on a belief that 'reality of the world' and 'life experiences' are constructed from ideologies. Individuals are then socialised into a system of norms and values that reflect such ideologies. Bergman and Luckman [1984:35] also forwarded this view, arguing that,

"Reality par excellence... is the reality of everyday life".

Such reasoning suggests that it is important to understand what really goes on during the policy implementation process. Morgan [1986:4] argues that the synthesis of 'top down' and 'bottom up' methods of policy implementation is far too simplistic an approach to understanding the complexity of modern policy implementation. He contends that only a constructivist approach can provide insight into the complexity and reality of policy implementation. Agreeing with this argument Pestieau [2003] identifies the need of sound policy implementation research, to

challenge the accepted wisdom that policy implementation is a natural progression from policy formation. It is Pestieau's contention [2003:12] that it is essential to evaluate the policy implementation process, if we wish to identify whether policy outcomes add value to service provision. This is claimed to be 'best done' using qualitative, as well as a quantitative approaches. The argument appears to be particularly relevant if it is accepted that community development is an essential element of the current 'Titmussesque' child and family policy being implemented in Wales. Particularly when the strengthening of social institutions and organisations is an essential element of the withdrawal of state intervention.

An examination of the current literature on the implementation of family support policy provided interesting accounts of the setting up and evaluation of Sure-Start programmes [www.HFAC4.com], Parenting Programmes [Pugh et. al., 1994; Grimshaw and Mc Guire, 1998], Parent Training programmes, [Scott, 2003]; The Bristol Child Development Programme [www.ecdc.org.uk];Newpin,[www.newpin.org.uk.] and School Readiness Programmes [www.HFAC4.org], [Jack, 2001], but none of these studies analysed the actual implementation process of current child and family policy. Similar findings were elicited from a review of the implementation of a number of health and social care community programmes [Harris, 2003; Iliffe and Lenihan, 2003, Kurtz, 2003; Cook, 2002]. It was only Harris' study [2003] which noted that current policy programmes reached only a third of children in poverty and that services were fragmented rather than 'joined-up'. These findings confirmed the need for a study of the implementation of current child and family policy and led to a re-consideration of the methodology to be used in this study.

Initially the methodology of choice for this study was that of evaluation, since this was an approach previously documented by a number of researchers [Layell and Graffy, 1998; Corner and Fraser, 1998]. The methodology was also favoured by management literature [Mullins, 1991]. However, due consideration of the above literature on policy implementation analyses clearly showed that an evaluation methodology, based on analysis of 'top down' or 'bottom up' policy implementation processes, was likely to result in over simplification. That led the researcher to consider the need for a more appropriate means of investigating the problem of how implementation of current policy for children and their families could be evaluated and improved. This consideration was substantiated by the arguments of Pestieau [2003:5] that although evaluation concepts and methodologies have become increasingly sophisticated, by combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches and distinguishing outputs from outcomes, the methodology often 'misses' some important factors. In particular, Pestieau [2003:5] noted the

importance of learning during and from the implementation process, the necessity of analysing relationships between agencies and clients involved in programme implementation and of identifying how programme objectives may be changed or modified by those delivering the service. Pestieau [2003:5] observed that because of a tendency to overlook the importance of these factors governments in the United States, New Zealand, Australia, as well as the UK, are wrestling with the problem of how best to evaluate policy implementation processes. It was her contention that what happens in the course of implementing a policy programme can reveal more about its outcomes than a set of standardised indicators, usually identified for the purpose of evaluation. Pestieau [2003:11] concludes that analysis of the implementation process can reveal paths to achieve outcomes, or results that are different from those hypothesised when the programme was developed or even outcomes that are different from, but equally as desirable, as those originally intended. Further examination of literature on evaluation methodology led to the discovery of arguments provided by Cheetham and colleagues [1997:38]; Barrett and Fudge [1981]; Ham and Hill [1984] and Lewis and Flynn [1978], that analysis of social care policy implementation cannot be forced into traditional models of evaluation. Similarly, Rothman et al [1995:60] argued that community intervention strategies cannot be reliant upon one model of action. It was therefore decided that for the purpose of this study an alternative methodology would be sought for analysing and evaluating the policy implementation process. Cheetham and colleagues [1997:35], like Pestieau [2003:5] and Morgan [1986:4], suggested that a pluralist methodology was the best means of identifying how mediation and judgement might interfere with policy priorities and that the best means of undertaking evaluative strategy was an action research approach. Ledwith [2005:2] too, claims that action research is a means of building theory from reflection on experience.

The remainder of the literature review [Chapter 3] will therefore be directed to an examination of this methodology as a suitable means of investigating the problem of analysing the implementation of current family and child policy. This decision was strengthened by the fact that WAG [WAG 2002] had also recommended the use of an action research methodology for the purpose of external evaluation of the Cymorth programme. The rationale provided was the propensity of action research to feed the results of evaluation back into programme delivery and thereby stimulate action.

2.18 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the study of the process of policy implementation may be as crucial an exercise as understanding the purpose of policy itself. Far from consisting of a mundane series of decisions, policy implementation may be beset by many adverse factors which involve bureaucratic administration processes, organisational structures, the knowledge skills and attitudes of policy implementers, bargaining processes, power relationships, values and interests, as well as the motivation and behaviour involved in putting strategy into action. Furthermore, even when the policy implementation process results from a public perception of a need for change, it may be dependent upon negotiation, consensus building and an understanding of the need to involve people and the community in processes of development. When community intervention is paramount, as is the case in relation to the current forms of child and family policy represented by the Cymorth scheme [WAG 2000], it appears that no one model of community intervention may provide a suitable strategy.

For these reasons both 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches to policy implementation analysis appear to lack robustness. Success in policy implementation analysis appears to depend on the perceived extent of change involved and the degree of coercion and compliance necessary to introduce and sustain new policy. Where inter-organisational activity is a necessary part of policy implementation, as is the case in respect of current child and family intervention, the process may become even more fraught with difficulties. This is because inter-organisational activity may involve alterations in power relationships and power struggles between the agencies involved. The character or nature of the policy itself is an obvious factor underlying all of the above issues. As has been seen in the above discussion, current child and family policy represents a volte face in thinking, in respect of the state's provision of welfare and of the position of the state in respect of its relationship with children and families. Recent policy is characterised by withdrawal of the state from welfare provision and a more 'pragmatic' view of state responsibility to support families to become more self-reliant and self-sufficient. Moreover, families have been urged to accept that employment is the key to moving out of poverty. To facilitate this notion policy implementers have been expected to strengthen individual and social organisations and thereby lessen the need for state intervention. To encourage policy implementation, a 'mixed economy' of welfare provision, consisting of public, private and voluntary service provision, has been evolved. This means in theory resources, other than those of the state, can be targeted for implementation of the aims and objectives of policy.

To accomplish withdrawal of the 'welfare state', the government initially adopted the process of 'systems thinking' which relied on a centrist approach to policy formation and the distancing of

responsibility for policy implementation through devolution to regional centres. This was a process controlled by a form of managerialist policy, a bureaucratic approach which made both administration and professionals more accountable to the state. In an effort to further remove the state from welfare provision 'New Labour' introduced what was termed the 'Third Way'.

This strategy was premised on a belief that a more inclusive society could be created through strengthening communities and social systems. The purpose of this strategy is to engage 'hard to reach' groups, at the level of their own communities, in the elimination of poverty through inclusion and economic stability. To accomplish change a further move away from centralisation has occurred. De-centralised systems are 'federalised', thus placing more demands upon local authorities to ensure policy implementation. 'Federalisation' requires a less bureaucratic and 'flatter' form of organisational control. It has the potential to afford more autonomy to local authorities and to provide services specific to the needs of individual communities, using a 'mixed economy' of care. Thereby, it is expected that processes of community development, community service and community action will result from engaging people in the process of change. Positive constructions of this devolution of power claim that a shift in power 'makes government a servant of the whole'. This claim is challenged on several counts. 'New policy' has placed heavy demands upon local authorities in the UK, as a result they have faced general difficulties concerning the resourcing of services. Legislative responsibilities and uncertainties about the future roles of local authorities, as democratically elected bodies accountable to local constituencies, places further strains on commitment to policy implementation. Attitudes and roles born out of the experience of working in traditional bureaucratic hierarchies may be difficult to discard. Last, but not least, there is little precedent for what local authorities are now being asked to do. Previous 'experiments' in community development, which took place in the 1970s, were not sustained by government. The lack of precedent may challenge visions of the extent to which 'power' can be ceded to the periphery.

The reality of current strategy has been premised on processes of 'social planning', yet the rhetoric of policy favours community development processes as the means of lifting people out of poverty. This appears to be a situation which might be responsible for the perceived shortfalls in current child and family policy implementation described by Harries [2003]. However, as Rothman and colleagues [1997:60] argued, it may be too naïve to conclude that any one model of community intervention can facilitate policy implementation. In reality more flexibility may be required, thus the importance of organisational structures and cultures should not be overlooked in any evaluation of policy implementation. This consideration, in conjunction with the changes

that have occurred in philosophies, ideologies, structures, organisation and shifts in theoretical approaches to policy implementation, encompassing systems analysis, systems theory and more latterly 'contingency' theory and constructivism, may make the questions of why and how, policy implementation should be evaluated more apposite?

Restructuring of public policy, especially in relation to child and family policy, has engendered broad shifts in objectives, institutional arrangements, working practices and expectations of public participation. Also, it has re-allocated roles and functions among agencies drawn from public, private and voluntary sectors and created fundamental changes in ideology about the nature of state-society relationships and the extent of government intervention. Restructuring has therefore engendered a marked shift in both policy-making and implementation. This raises the question of whether reforms have brought about fundamental changes in both policy making and practice. The complexity of current policy and its implementation strategies appears to have consolidated a belief that 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' approaches to the analysis or evaluation of policy implementation are inadequate. In relation to both methods of policy implementation, analysis of authoritative decisions to pursue policy objectives through the process of evaluation, might indicate intentions, strategies and outcomes, but these indications may at best be non-transparent, or at worse erroneous in the light of implementers activities, interpretations custom and practice.

In the light of such reasoning and the need for extensive economic, social, administrative and organisational changes, there appears to be an emergent view that policy implementation is best analysed and evaluated using an 'action' approach. Potentially this enables examination of the content and operation of policy within and between organisations and allows these processes to be located within a broader analysis of state policy and structures. In the following chapter the concept of an 'action' approach to evaluation of policy implementation will be examined prior to discussion of the methodology of the study.

Chapter Three

Action Research -The Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

As was seen at the conclusion of the previous chapter an ‘action research’ approach to policy implementation analysis has been advocated by a number of researchers [Ham and Hill, 1984; Barrett and Fudge, 1981 and Ham, 1981]. The method is said to enable the examination of the content and operation of policy within and between organisations and to locate these processes within a broader analysis of state and power structures. Action research was also the method of external evaluation advocated by the Welsh Assembly Government in respect of the Cymorth Scheme [WAG, 2002:29]. The rationale for this recommendation was that action research is a means of feeding the results of evaluation back into programme delivery. It was perceived that it allowed action to be taken and it was capable of providing a model which might be applied more widely. This chapter will review historical aspects of the development of action research and contemporary thinking; it will also discuss critical perspectives and applications of the methodology. The review will be followed by a discussion of action research as a means of evaluating policy implementation and its merits, as opposed to other, more traditional means of evaluation. In particular, the merits of action research as a means of evaluating the Cymorth scheme will be addressed and the proposed framework of this evaluative study explained. Finally, the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed methodology will be revisited and conclusions drawn.

Hart and Bond [1995:12] claim that action research appears to have its roots in attempts to construe improved methods of social management. It is appropriately used for analysis of social change, such as that sought through implementation of the Cymorth scheme. Elden and Chisholm [1993:121] claim that action research dates back to the early post Second World War period. It can be perceived as a method of understanding the general principles of group activity and diagnosing the needs of groups in specific situations [Lewin, 1946:204]. It was Lewin who identified the term “action research” for the process of generating knowledge about a social system, in order to bring about planned changes within the system. Motivated by a strong social

conscience and left-wing views, Lewin proposed action research as a means of 'reforming' and 'humanising' the factory system. In his paper 'Action Research and Minority Problems' [1946:205 -6], Lewin, like Elden and Chisholm, described a form of research which could combine experimental research with social action, in order to solve major social problems. Unfortunately, Lewin died before he was able to confirm that 'action research' was a suitable means of bringing about change. Nevertheless he, as later researchers [Ham and Hill, 1964; Barret and Fudge, 1981; and Hart and Bond, 1995], was able to confirm that the process of examination of a problem in relation to the means available for solving that problem, [identification of objectives for change, planning, executing, fact finding and re-evaluation], was a necessary step to execute change based on social action. The process suggested is one which proceeds in a,

"Spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact finding about the result of the action,

[Lewin 1946:206].

It is a process known in education as a 'learning cycle' and it has been used extensively in curriculum planning [Nicholls, 1972].

3.2 Historical Considerations

There are some commentators who dispute the fact that Lewin was the 'founding father' of this form of enquiry. For example, Hodgkinson [1957] proposed that the origins of action research can be traced to a 1926 text by Buckingham. Corey [1953] attributed the approach to the work of Collier, which took place in North America between 1933 and 1945. Despite these claims, the consensus view is that Lewin is most likely to be the founder of action research, having developed the approach and used the term 'action research' from 1944 onwards. It was Lewin [1946:202] who defined action research as a form of evaluation based on 'fact-finding' about the results of action - a means of establishing whether or not action leads to improvement. In Lewin's own words,

"If we cannot judge whether or not action has led forward or backward, if we have no criteria for evaluating the relation between effort and achievement, there is nothing to prevent us from making the wrong conclusions."

[Lewin, 1946:202].

It was his view that change could not be directed by subjectivity. Using the analogy of captaining a ship, he commented that,

"If, on realising that a ship has veered too far to the right, the captain turns the steering wheel sharply to the left and then happily goes to dinner the ship will be left to go round in circles".

[Lewin, 1946:206].

Lewin contended that successful change was dependent on the translation of social research into social action, that is the integration of theory and empirical research with direct application of the findings. Using this approach, Lewin was able to transfer the experimental methods of the natural sciences to the social sciences. In so-doing he was able to use 'change experiments' to understand pressing social problems, such as the growth of authoritarianism, anti-Semitism, and low morale among the military forces engaged in World War Two [Allport,1948 xii -xiii]. As a result Cartwright claimed that Lewin was able to apply experimental methods to important social problems that had previously been amenable only to descriptive, rather than analytical study [Cartwright, 1948:333]. Cartwright also recognised how using 'action research' social groups could be objectively observed and studied experimentally. Both he and Hodgkinson [1957: 64], applauded Lewin's early experiments into group behaviour, as these showed the importance of the power of various groups in promoting changes in attitudes and behaviour in the community, factory or training workshops. They believed these findings greatly influenced work on action research. Hodgkinson observed that in an era of concern to use the social sciences as a means of achieving democratic change, Lewin was able to bring,

"Science and sociability together in order to determine when they reached their maximum productivity".

According to Hart and Bond [1995:16], this approach constituted a significant 'shift' in thinking, away from the contemporary given wisdom that social psychology could only be applied to theoretical problems of science. It was the view of Hart and Bond that Lewin's work showed that the implementation of policies concerned with education, industry and the community, was dependent upon a scientific understanding of social problems. In their opinion, practical problems require conceptual analysis, research and the application of 'change experiments' in order to establish new attitudes, ways of behaving and working. Hart and Bond [1995: 17] concluded that Lewin moved the concept of action research away from processes of social planning, towards the concept of increased participation. A strategy, which was described in the last chapter as being essential to implementing current child and family policy ideologies and strategies.

Although Lewin's death interfered with the completion of his work, his followers, in a well controlled 'real life' action research study known as the "Harwood Experiment", showed that active worker participation improved output. This experiment was carried out with three groups of workers whose participation in work processes ranged from no participation, to full group participation. It resulted in the conclusive demonstration of a relationship between the degree of

democratic participation and the level of job satisfaction, morale and output. Coch and French [1948:512] argued that this experiment showed how worker participation could overcome problems of manager / worker conflict and result in sustained improvements in levels of job satisfaction, output and morale. It was concluded that democratic participation was seen as being far preferable to the practice of autocratic coercion associated with scientific management theory. However, Adelman [1993:10] comments that although the findings of this experiment appeared to show, unequivocally, that democratic participation was the key to successful and sustained change. Little account was taken of the need to develop structures that might influence the process of change, such as power-bases or social roles. According to Adelman, this oversight assumed that management goals were rational and unquestionable and that it was not unethical to manipulate workers into the acceptance of this fact. Similarly, Rothman [1995:31] contended that a rational planning approach to change may fail. In his view, this is because it is based on an assumption that problems are easily definable, well-bounded and responsive to professional intervention. Rothman [1995:30-32] delineated three approaches to community intervention processes covering a spectrum of 'top-down' to 'bottom-up' approaches in order to take account of power bases and social roles. In this delineation Social Planning was defined as,

'A technical process of problem solving which does not include community participation as a core ingredient'.

A second mode of intervention was defined as 'Social Action'. This pre-supposes the existence of an aggrieved community group that requires organisation for the purpose of making demands, or fundamental changes in order to redistribute power or resources. Generally, social action intervention is described as seeking to change legislation.

Thirdly, Rothman defined a process of locality or community development, akin to the requirements of the Cymorth scheme, which pre-supposes that community change should be pursued through participation involving a wide spectrum of people. They would participate in identifying goals, planning action and evaluating outcomes. It is a process which has a potential to influence or mediate policy implementation processes. Rothman argues that it is this approach which is most appropriate to ensuring sustainable change. Appropriateness is based on a contention that,

"Contemporary problems may be 'wicked' in nature, unique, intractable, intermeshed with others and situated in a constantly changing and turbulent environment".

For these reasons Rothman [1995:32], suggests there may be several constraints on the use of action research as a means of increasing participation merely to impose a process of 'top down' rational planning. Firstly, an intensification of constituency politics may view planning as contentious and claim that interest groups should have a part to play in the pluralistic processes through which decisions are made. Secondly, it was the view of Rothman that contentious community planning may be based on an 'optimizing' stance, which allows only a 'get by' level of participation to exist, this questions the utility of 'top down' social planning approaches. Rothman concluded [1995:60] that the complexity of policy implementation is such that a flexible use of all three methods of community intervention may be required to implement policy. In this case, contingency should be based on 'in-depth' understanding of situational factors. In terms of the perceived utility of action research to provide analysis, evaluation and a means of understanding policy implementation processes these views were given serious consideration by the researcher. If, as Adelman [1993:10] and Rothman [1995] suggested, action research might be construed as unethical, because of its reliance on a social planning, rather than a community development approach, it might not be suited to the process of analysing policy. Especially a type of 'Titmussesque' policy based on an ideology of participative community development [see Chapter 2], such as the Cymorth child and family policy implementation process being investigated. If however, as was Lewin's contention, successful change was dependent on the translation of social research into social action, that is the integration of theory and empirical research with direct application of the findings using a community development approach, action research could be a suitable and ethical methodology for the analysis of policy implementation.

This speculation was considered further in the light of Hart and Bond's [1995:19], argument that Lewin's writings [Lewin,1947:7] had recognised the potential of action research to be manipulative, if it was combined with a social planning approach. However, it was Lewin's contention that if the use of action research was grounded in a belief in democracy and development, it was a valid means of studying social factors relating to social development processes. It was Lewin's view that effective means of engineering social change could only be found in the social sciences and that the development of his ideas was the natural remedy for preventing the social consequences of the natural sciences unleashing humanity's destructive capacities. A conclusion that he had reached following the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. [Lewin, 1947]. These contentions rather belie Adelman's [1993] criticisms of Lewin's work. Primarily, criticisms suggest that Lewin's ideas on participation in the workplace

were undermined by a failure to critique the wider society, in respect of economic relations between capital and labour. Hart and Bond [1995: 20] comment that Adelman's criticisms may have been based on the fact that he lacked insight into post-war reactions to autocracy and the fact that at this time, concepts of capital and labour may have been differently constructed in the USA. It may be worth noting, however, that most of the people that worked with Lewin were, like him German, often Jewish, inter-war migrants, who may have held different interpretations of words and concepts such as democracy. The researcher found these repudiations helpful and therefore considered it useful to turn to contemporary views of action research to consider the appropriateness of the methodology as a means of analysing current policy implementation processes.

3.3 Contemporary Thinking

Contemporary exponents of action research such as Hart and Bond [1995]; Carr and Kemmis, [1986], and Susman and Everard [1978], appear to have focused criticisms of Lewin's work on three main areas.

- **Firstly**, group decision-making is judged to be an important principle, rather than a technique. As a consequence it is seen not only as an effective means of facilitating social change, but also as an authentic means of ensuring commitment to social action. This appears to be a school of thought adhered to by Hyde [1989] and Freire [1974], in relation respectively, to development of the 'Feminist movement' and the empowerment of repressed societies.

- **Secondly**, contemporary exponents of action research object to the notion of using the methodology to lead participants to more democratic forms of behaviour. It is now the commonly held view that action research should not be perceived as a technique for bringing about democracy. Rather it should be seen as the embodiment of democratic principles in the process. Thus participants can be allowed to influence and determine the conditions of their own lives and work collaboratively developing critiques of social conditions which promote dependence, inequality or exploitation. Rothman et al [1995:51] show how this approach may be used in the process of community development.

- **Thirdly**, the contemporary view is that the language used by Lewin to describe the theoretical aims and methods of social science is positivistic and incompatible with the aims and methods of postmodernist viewpoints. However, Rothman et al [1995:52-53], claim that a certain degree of the language and methods of positivistic planning may not be antagonistic to participation in social planning.

Hart and Bond [1995:21] claim that post-modern support for action research is based on a need to find ways for policy implementers, researchers and practitioners to work collaboratively with the

communities they serve in order to effect participative community development. It is the view of these researchers that contemporary viewpoints reject the concept of the need for action research to identify universal laws of human behaviour, which can be measured in an attempt to engineer social change. Nor do they perceive action research as a form of re-education for social engineering. The emphasis appears not to be on the social scientist setting an agenda for the purpose of social engineering, but rather, the importance of action research instilling democratic principles into processes of policy implementation. In particular, action research is described by Hart and Bond as a means of awareness raising and empowerment in order that those responsible for policy making, those responsible for policy implementation and those who will be affected by policy outcomes, can work collaboratively. Thereby, problems related to policy implementation can be identified and rectified by all parties. Based on these observations it was perceived by the researcher that action research might be a useful medium for engaging those responsible for policy implementation of the Cymorth scheme, in the policy implementation process. However, at this stage the need for further investigation of criticisms of the approach was recognised.

3.4 Critical perspectives of Action Research

Revival of interest in action research methodology has gained momentum as a by-product of the increasing criticism of quasi-positivist approaches to social science, which attempt to reflect the natural sciences in processes of evaluation. An argument for the appropriateness of action research as a means of influencing the process of change, in order to solve organisational problems, was forwarded by Susman and Everard [1978:582], when they asserted that,

“As research methods and techniques are becoming more sophisticated, research is becoming relatively less useful for the purposes of organisational problem solving”.

They argued that,

“So great is the gap between theory and utility, there is a crisis”.

Supposedly, this crisis is rooted in the inappropriateness of positivist science for the study of human organisations, for which action research is ideally placed to provide a much needed corrective. They further argued that action research is capable of being validated as a science, rather than judged by a set of criteria drawn from positivist science. It was the view of Susman and Everard [1978:582] that more appropriate criteria, from a different philosophical tradition, should be adduced to the process of action research. This is in order to overcome the influences of positivist science, which is described as ahistorical and ignoring the role of the observer in the production of knowledge, although this in itself is a product of the human mind.

Marsden and Oakley [1990:138 -156] also rejected an instrumental or technocratic approach for the purpose of objectively evaluating any form of social development. It was their view that attempts to apply methods of quantitative practice into any aspect of social development reinforces functionalist traditions, emphasises managerial control and is based on a systems approach to the analysis of organisations. The assumption is that more effective coordination and increased control can be achieved by progressive 'fine tuning' of the technical instruments used in evaluations. In this context evaluation can be best understood as a tool of management, essential for the effective implementation of policy and for the organisation of institutions. Marsden and Oakley [1990: 143] suggest that when it comes to measuring the impact of social development programmes, which often have indistinct or abstract objectives such as citizen participation or inclusion, as is the case in child and family policy, it is difficult to identify specific evaluation criteria using a functionalist tradition. They therefore advocate the use of an interpretive form of evaluation capable of 'standing established explanations on their heads' and 'providing valuable insights'. It is argued that interpretive evaluation helps in understanding the complexities of a development process and the most appropriate strategies for intervention. As such it is a contrast to quantitative and traditional forms of evaluation, then approach is described as reflecting the complex interactions between policy, practice, reflection and action.

Writing in a similar vein, Susman and Everard [1978: 584] suggest that the cyclic process of action research has characteristics which make it appropriate to the needs of organisations wishing to overcome the limitations of positivism. Action research is described as having the ability to deal with the practical concerns of people, such as their goals and intentions, and it can be closely linked to the planning process. Actions can be jointly planned by the researchers and their clients, taking the values of each into consideration. These researchers see action research as a means of enhancing problem solving, improving communication and enabling an organisation to adapt to new environments. Therefore, at one and the same time, action research is seen as having the properties for alleviating problems and generating new knowledge of a system. The role of the researcher is seen as having an ability to act as a catalyst, to help members of an organisation to define a problem, or to provide new ways of thinking about an old problem. This suggests that action research is a means of assisting members of an organisation to understand policy and explore the means by which it might be implemented. It is the view of Susman and Everard that action research is a non-positivist form of social research, suited to the needs of complex organisations. As a consequence it is appropriate where quantitative methods are not.

Agreeing with this argument Eden and Huxman [1993] and Gummerson [1991] suggested that when research is for the purpose of problem solving, or when it involves the investigation of relationships that are influenced by perceptions, there is a need for scepticism in respect of positivist science. It is the view of Susman and Everard, that action research should be commended for the purpose of problem solving, or for the investigation of actions and relationships influenced by perceptions which might be overlooked by positivist science.

3.5 Applications of Action Research

A review of the literature on the implementation of action research reveals that there is an array of literature dating from the early 1940's that clearly categorises the applications of action research into five different areas, namely organisational research, [Lewin,1948; Kahn and Boulding, 1964; Rappaport, 1970 and Gill and Johnson, 1991]. Community development research [Halsey, 1978; Mayo, 1975; Town, 1978:161-2; Green and Chapman, 1991:56]. Education research, [Kemmis et al, 1982:17; McNiff,1988:19; Carr, 1989:85; Mc Kernan, 1991; Stenhouse, 1975] and Nursing research, [Elliot, 1991and Adelman, 1993].

Organisational Action Research

As has already been shown, Lewin [1948] used action research methodology to investigate organisational problems related to productivity, absenteeism, morale in the workplace and industrial disputes. By the late 1950's and early 1960's, such studies gained in importance in both the USA and the UK because of an escalation in workplace issues related to power and conflict between workers and management. However, in the UK, the nomenclature 'action research' was not favoured until the 1960's. Instead the term 'organisational consultancy' appears to have been used in an effort to describe the processes applied to problem solving and change enhancing processes [Gill and Johnson, 1991; Rappaport, 1970]. In the UK, definitive studies in the field of 'organisational consultancy' were carried out by the Tavistock Institute [Payne et al, 1981] which promoted the provision of psychological expertise to industry. There were close links between the Tavistock Institute and Lewin's followers in the USA [Rose, 1978], especially through the National Training Laboratory at Bethel, Maine. However, there were certain epistemological differences in their approach. Whilst Lewin's approach appears to have been grounded in social and experimental psychology [Holter and Schwarz-Barcott,1993], the Tavistock researchers appeared to favour an approach grounded in the simultaneous use of psycho-analysis and social, [later 'organisational'] psychology. Gill and Johnson [1991] described the psycho-analytical

approach as one in which the client is confronted with the researcher's perception of what is actually happening. According to Hart and Bond [1995:23], the approach is still a feature in work concerned with organisational change, though now the emphasis is more on joint inquiry into problems related to labour management relationships that are not amenable to traditional forms of research.

During the decades which span the 1940's to the millennium, action research has involved anthropologists, psychologists, physiologists and psychoanalytically-orientated psychiatrists in a multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving in organisational and personnel environments. In particular, action research application appears to have been favoured as an approach to resolving conflict by means of a therapeutic process, based on action research methodology. Accounts provide evidence of its success. Jacques [1951], for example, in the 'Glacier Metals' study, combined Lewin's field theory with psycho-analytical theory in a widely respected attempt to determine the nature of the problems prevalent in British industry. Menzies [1960] applied the psychoanalytical approach to the nursing profession's anxieties over task-centred work routines, concluding that these were a product of social systems. Holter and Schwartz-Barcott [1993] suggested that these studies illustrated the extent to which Lewinian theory and the approach of the Tavistock Institute complemented each other and provided a model that was adopted on a global scale.

Developments in the process of action research in the USA were aptly demonstrated in a study by Pasmore and Friedlander [1982]. These researchers carried out a multi-methods study into the problem of repetitive strain injury, in a large electronics corporation employing 335, mostly female staff. This study, which involved employee participation in solving a problem which badly affected productivity, identified that the problem was representative of a broad range of labour management issues that had not been amenable, or transparent, to more traditional research methods. Specifically, a third of all employees were suffering from tenosynovitis, a problem that had worsened despite the involvement of technical and medical experts. To try and solve the problem workers and experts were encouraged to join managers in a joint enquiry. This approach provided both workers and managers with an experience of new ways of working together. Consequently, top level managers became more responsive to the views of workers. In commenting on this work, Pasmore and Friedlander [1982] made the observation that action researchers need to be aware of their responsibility to cushion managers from the shock of dealing with the criticisms of empowered employees.

There has been a considerable development of the study of participation in more recent applications of action research. Whyte [1991] refers to such models as 'participatory action research'. Participatory action research was successfully demonstrated in studies carried out in the Xerox Corporation of New York and the Mondragon Co-operative of the Basque region of Spain. Participatory action research [PAR] was defined by Whyte [1991:20], as a process in which,

"Some of the people in an organisation or community participate with professional researchers throughout the research process, from the initial design to the final presentation of results and discussion of their action implications. PAR thus contrasts sharply with the conventional model of pure research in which members of communities are treated as passive subjects, with some of them participating only to the extent of authorising the project, being its subjects and receiving the results. In PAR organisations /communities are actively engaged in the quest for information and ideas to guide their future actions".

Thus participative action research diverges from conventional models of research in which participants have a passive role. Far from being an elitist process, in which researchers function as professional experts, in participative action research organisation members are actively engaged in identifying problems, exploring alternative actions, gathering information, solving problems, measuring outcomes and evaluating progress. It is a process resembling what Rothman [1995:59] described as 'action planning'. Whyte [1991] asserts that action research contributes simultaneously to problem solving and theory building. In addition, it emphasises the expediency of researchers working collaboratively with participants, a notion identified by Lewin in the early days of action research development. However, it does not support the notion of 'practitioner action research' where the roles of researcher and practitioner are merged, as this is a process that has been accused of individualising and subjectifying the change process.

Action Research and Community Development

As this study was to take place in a community setting, it appeared that the action research methodology might be used for investigating and improving the implementation processes of policies intended for improving the 'lot' of children and their families living within deprived communities. It was therefore decided to further investigate the use of action research in processes of Community Development. The process of Community Development in the UK has its roots in the sociological analyses of the 're-discovery of poverty' which emerged during the 1970's [Joseph, 1976; Halsey 1972; Townsend, 1979; Commission on Urban Priority Areas, 1985; CPAG, 1994; Rowntree Foundation, 1995]. Reports on this issue included accounts of homelessness, inadequate housing, failing education, urban deprivation and the existence of relative poverty. It was the contention of those advocating community development, to allay the

effects of poverty, that the 'individual pathology' approach to deprivation sometimes adhered to by government is obfuscation of institutional causes of poverty. For example, the Joseph Rowntree Inquiry into Income and Wealth [1995] laid the blame for poverty on the fact that policy makers refused to recognise that substantial minorities of the population lagged behind, in terms of wealth. As a result, this inquiry laid at the feet of government social problems associated with poverty and blamed government for a lack of responsibility in respect of the ineffectiveness of welfare services.

Town [1978:161] describes how Community Development Projects [CDPs] were set up by the Home Office in 1969. At this time the projects were regarded as a social experiment for concentrating resources on the greatest areas of need, in order to combat poverty. Project teams were set up in twelve areas with the aim of experimenting with new ways of tackling social problems and monitoring the results. Green and Chapman [1991:56] described the CDPs as being unique as they were premised on the importance of community work. It was the view of these writers that the action research framework, upon which CDPs were built, was an attempt to use research for the benefit of action. Agreeing with this view Payne et al [1981:163] described the action research approach taken by the projects as a 'special case' of policy research. These projects were influenced by a number of developments, such as the American Anti-Poverty Programme and the Educational Priority Areas [EPA] initiative led by Halsey [1972]. They were designed to reduce the worse effects of urban deprivation and the 'cycle of deprivation' which was blamed for the transmission of social problems throughout successive generations. Town [1978] comments that these initiatives resulted in the emergence of new forms of practice, in particular, interdependence between researchers and community workers which had the potential to enlighten and create new social policy. The success of the projects was said, by Town, to lie in the fact that they identified that poverty resulted from inequalities in social and economic systems, rather than individual failure.

Hart and Bond [1995:26] claim that the action research methodology used in the CDPs, described above, is an ideal medium for the application of social science knowledge and research techniques to the solution of social problems. Further [1995:28], they describe how community development teams [CDTs] were successful in dealing with major issues within communities, such as the need for re-development, planning and the clearing of demolition sites. Agreeing with this view Mayo [1975:50] argues that the outcomes of the CDP projects highlighted the inadequacy of 'reformist' approaches to poverty, previously adopted by governments. However, it also emphasised the potential of CDPs to function as pressure groups. According to Hart and

Bond, it was as a result of the increasing power of CDPs and the communities they served that government bureaucrats made a tactical withdrawal from the programmes, thereby leaving project teams with little central support. Green and Chapman [1991:57] claim that although the CDPs did not survive into the 1980s, their work unequivocally showed that poverty arose from inequalities inherent in a social and economic system based on differences in class and power. It was concluded the CDPs left a legacy for later community development work in health and health promotion. Hart and Bond [1995:29] claim that the work of CDPs in tackling issues related to poverty illustrates how action research is a problem focused approach for ensuring change. In particular, it is contended that through an action research approach community development programmes can develop local initiatives and promote fundamental socio-economic change at a national level.

More recently, the concept of CDPs has re-emerged as a perceived response to health and social inequalities [Conway, 2000; Arblaster and Hawtin, 1993]. As a result policy strategies based on concepts of participation, collaboration and equity are emerging in response to current flaws in traditional service provision [WAG, 2001; WAG, 2000; DoH, 1998]. Rothman [1995: 28-61], clearly showed how the process of Community Development has been defined in United Nations publications [UN, 1995], as a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community, with its active participation and the fullest possible reliance on the community's initiative. In particular, Rothman perceived that community development is concerned with the process of empowerment that is ensuring that communities gain competence and the skills to make decisions that can be agreed and enacted upon collaboratively. He also notes how community development can create a sense of personal mastery within community members and enable individual growth and community building.

Hart and Bond [1995:35] suggest that the propensity of action research to enhance collaboration between participants makes it an ideal vehicle for use in any project that requires an empowering approach, such as that required in any process of community development. Agreeing with this viewpoint Kemmis et al [1982:14] claim that action research is the ideal method for examining problem situations, such as those which may be created by the implementation of a new form of policy. These findings appear to suggest that action research is an ideal methodology for evaluation of the current policy strategies described in the previous chapters, especially when the community in question is concerned over the economic, social and environmental well-being of families in the area.

Action Research in Education

In education, action research was embraced from the earliest developments of Lewin's work. The most acclaimed example is that of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute at Columbia University, which adopted action research as a means of the social reconstruction of schools, during the 40s and early 50s. After Lewin's death, Corey [1953] acclaimed action research as a means of improving school practice. However, Corey's work was highly criticised for its lack of rigour and for 'being all things to all men', [probably as a result of a backlash action to stem the popularity of action research, which was being used to lobby for an increase in teacher training places] [Kemmis et al, 1982:17]. In Britain, action research in education appears to be a product of the late 80s, when an interest in the approach appears to have been sparked by disillusionment with decreasing funding and top-down research processes that excluded practitioners in the field of day to day teaching activities. Mc Niff [1988:20] argues that Stenhouse's "Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development" [1975], is generally acclaimed as the motivator for challenging orthodox research methodologies in education. According to Griffin [1984: 125], Stenhouse's work was premised on a belief in the desirability of a planned social system that could alleviate, if not eliminate, the handicaps and hardships of social and economic inequality. Carr [1989: 85] however, claims that it was Elliot in an article 'What is action research' [1978], which put action research 'on the educational map'. This article introduced to Britain a research paradigm which had been developed in the USA. The paradigm was seen as a radical alternative to orthodox approaches to educational research, as according to Carr, up until this time there had been a dominance of positivist theory which perpetuated an institutionalised division between teachers in the field and researchers, who were perceived as an academic elite.

Dissatisfaction on the part of teachers with the interference of 'outside' research 'experts', led them to become involved in action research, which afforded a more democratic and participative role in change processes related to curriculum content. This form of action research was described by Kemmis [1982:6] as a process of,

"Self reflection, in which aims can be tested, practice can be regarded strategically and experimentally and under which practitioners can organise as a critical community, committed to the improvement of their work and their understanding of it".

According to McKernan [1991] and Elliot [1991], consequently the development of an educational action research programme has resulted in the methodology becoming a vehicle for professionalisation in education [McKernan,1991]. Kemmis et al [1982:6] argued that action research in education should be seen as a means of closing the 'theory-practice gap' and informing the development of reflective practice, a strategy for integrating theory and practice in

order to distil theory. More recently, Adelman [1993] has argued that action research is a way of uniting individual reflection [Schon, 1983] and organisational development. It is Adelman's contention that improvements in education are dependent on the amalgamation of organisational change, group processes and individual reflection into a methodological framework of participatory or action research.

Action Research in Nursing

According to Lathlean and Farnish [1984:34], the use of action research in nursing has lagged behind its development in education, although in the past decade Sparrow and Robinson [1994] claim that a 'catching up' process has been observed. Hart and Bond [1995: 32] argue that as early as 1974 its use was recommended by Hockey [1974] and that there are many examples of the use of action research, based on Lewin's change theory, to re-organise nursing services. Sparrow and Robinson speculate that disregard of Hockey's recommendation was due to the fact that nurse researchers were pre-occupied with establishing nursing as an academic discipline, in a context dominated by the positivist paradigm of medicine. This was claimed to have militated against the use of the methodology and thereby, a democratisation of both nursing and participative processes of patient care. In a summary of the various ways that action research has been increasingly used in nursing, Webb [1989] pointed out that the methodology offers a means of analysing nursing practice, devising action plans to improve standards of care, evaluating the implementation of plans and facilitating change. According to Webb, action research has come to be seen as a way of enabling staff to gain sufficient authority to determine their own roles and organise their work more effectively. More importantly, the use of action research has been seen as a means of facilitating and supporting patients to participate in care.

Consequently, the approach has been used in several studies of nursing education and strategies [Owen 1993; Pearson 1992; and Lathlean, 1984]. In 1993, a four year action research study of the development of patient-centred nursing, undertaken at the John Radcliffe Hospital Oxford, unravelled the complex processes involved in bringing about a process of democratic change in care processes [Titchen and Binnie, 1993:858]. Hart and Bond [1995:32] claim that the main attraction of action research for nurse researchers is the possibility it affords for working with people in a non-hierarchical and non-exploitative way. Thus it can be used to make changes in practice and close the theory/practice gap [Webb, 1990]. In agreeing with this argument, Greenwood [1994:13] claims that in nursing a growing interest in action research reflects recognition of the fact that,

“Nursing is a social practice, the central purpose of which is to bring about positive change in the health status of individuals and communities”.

Sparrow and Robinson [1994:45] conclude that although there are still some criticisms of the efficacy of an action research approach within a constantly changing and unstable NHS and a fear that the use of emancipatory change strategies may increase professional autonomy, there is still a growing interest in the methodology. Meyer [1993] contends that this interest is based on perceptions that the methodology addresses unequal power relationships between researchers and researched subjects. This is a process which Clarke [1998:125-135] recommended to community nurses as a means of improving their practice in the aftermath of the NHS and Community Care Act [1990]. Specifically, Clarke recommended the redress of unequal power relationships between nurses and the communities they served through processes of community development. This involved,

- Constructing people as citizens, and not objects of a health or curative strategy and realising that individuals have a freedom to engage or disengage.
- Targeting groups, communities, common circumstances or interests.
- Ensuring change, rather than defending the status quo.
- Empowering people to engage in their own analysis, planning and delivery of services or activities.
- Ceding control of the process of change through application of skilled intervention and supportive techniques so that communities can bring about their own preferred arrangement of available resources.

It was the contention of Clarke that a community development approach would provide community nurses with an opportunity to develop partnerships with the communities they serve, but to accomplish this they would have to make the necessary moves to force change upon the system. Thereby, the process of community development would benefit both nurses and their clients. Agreeing with this view, Hart and Bond [1995:34] recommend the vehicle of action research as a means of empowering people to act on their own behalf and take an active part in processes of change.

Decrying criticisms that a collaborative approach may be a subtle form of exploitation, which may use friendship to mask the true nature of relationships and oblige those being researched to participate, Hart and Bond, [1995:34] emphasise the argument of Kemmis et al [1982:14]. This claims that action research is essentially an expression of a democratic spirit in social research. The claim demonstrates Lewin’s contention that successful change is dependent on processes of translating social research into social action. It may therefore be the ‘ideal’ means of evaluating

policy based on an ideology of 'Communitarianism' and of exploring the role that local communities might play in improving social life and economic stability. In particular, it may increase the transparency of how the local authority involved in this study is facing up to responsibilities to deal with issues related to children and families, issues of poverty, social exclusion and the need for community development. A responsibility which has been intensified by a process of devolution of authority from government to 'Partnerships' between statutory and voluntary sectors at the local level. Clarke and Newman [1997:135] described this development as a marked change in the role of local government.

3.6 Current perspectives of Action Research methodology as a means of evaluating policy implementation?

As has already been seen Lewin [1946:206] defined action research as, 'a way of generating knowledge about a social system, while, at the same time attempting to change it'. It was his view that each step of a social planning exercise such as policy implementation,

"Is composed of a circle of planning, executing and reconnaissance or fact-finding for the purpose of evaluating the results of the second step, for preparing the rational basis for planning the third step, and for perhaps modifying again the overall plan".

Rational social management therefore,

"Proceeds in a spiral of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact finding about the result of the action".

However, Kalleberg [1990] argued that there is great conceptual confusion over the meaning of action research and that much of this confusion has been carried over into application of the methodology, without any attempt being made to identify its core characteristics or debate its meaning. Lathlean [1994] suggests that action research has three distinctive features:-

- It always involves an intervention.
- It is context specific.
- Generalisation of findings is theoretical rather than statistical.

Eden and Huxham [1993:5] claimed that action research demands a concern with theory as well as a practical orientation. Holter and Schwartz-Barcott [1993:299] identified four characteristics of action research,

- collaboration between researcher/s, practitioners and the public.
- solution of practical problems.
- changes in practice.

- development of theory.

Hart and Bond [1995:37] claiming to base their assertions upon a wide reading of the literature on action research and their experience, suggested that there are seven criteria to distinguish different types of action research. They argue that these seven criteria clearly distinguish action research from other methodologies. In their view action research,

- is founded on a research relationship in which those involved are participants in the change process.
- is educative.
- deals with individuals as members of social groups.
- is problem focused, context -specific and future orientated.
- involves a change intervention.
- aims at improvement and involvement.
- involves a cyclic process in which research, action and evaluation are interlinked.

Hart and Bond [1995] claim that these criteria function as a framework for an action research typology built on the broad traditions of action research identified in the literature. Namely, an experimental approach which can be used to identify 'gaps' in processes or service provision and identify the need for organisational change, community development, or education. At each stage of a policy implementation process the use of action research has the potential to allow participants to be engaged in a process which progresses from coercion to empowerment [Hart and Bond: 38]. This is achieved through analysis of action at each level of application of a model of policy implementation.

It was concluded, therefore, that if action research was to be chosen as the methodology for this study it would have to be ensured that each level of the policy implementation framework would be addressed and that the framework for the study would encompass the broad traditions of the methodology. The rationale for this decision was based on the fact that as the broad scope of the project, that is an evaluation of the implementation of the various thrusts of policy involved in current family programmes, covers a range of interventions, it will probably necessitate the use of all components of the framework and the breadth of criteria identified by the various supporters of the methodology, to analyse the policy implementation process and identify a model to ensure a sustainable policy evaluation culture and strategy [Hart and Bond,1995; Holter and Schwartz-Barcott, 1993:299; Huxham,1993]. For clarity Hart and Bond [1995:39-44] categorise the components of action research as a typology of :-

'experimental, organisational, professionalising, and empowering approaches'.

It is their contention that the typology constitutes a spectrum in which the experimental and empowering types of interventions are polar opposites, but progress can be made from one end of the spectrum to the other. Thus, using the process of action research those participating in the 'experiment' can be enabled to identify problems and determine the necessary strategies required to overcome them. At the same time, they can involve themselves in the processes of identifying necessary organisational change and any consequent need for education and professional development of staff involved in the delivery of the programme. The goal is to enable the work force to become autonomous in the process of policy implementation and in the monitoring of the effectiveness of policy outcomes. Hart and Bond [1995:44] conclude that the action research typology can be interpreted as a developmental process in which movement occurs from a scientific approach ['top down' model] of social change, to a more qualitative and social constructivist methodology. The framework is based on a binary opposition between rational social management, assuming, on the one hand a consensus view of society and on the other, a structural change and conflict model. For these reasons, action research methodology may reflect the wide distinctions found in the social sciences defined by Robottom and Colquhoun [1993:50] as representing traditional positivist research [on other people], interpretive and enlightening research [for other people] and collaborative/action research [with other people].

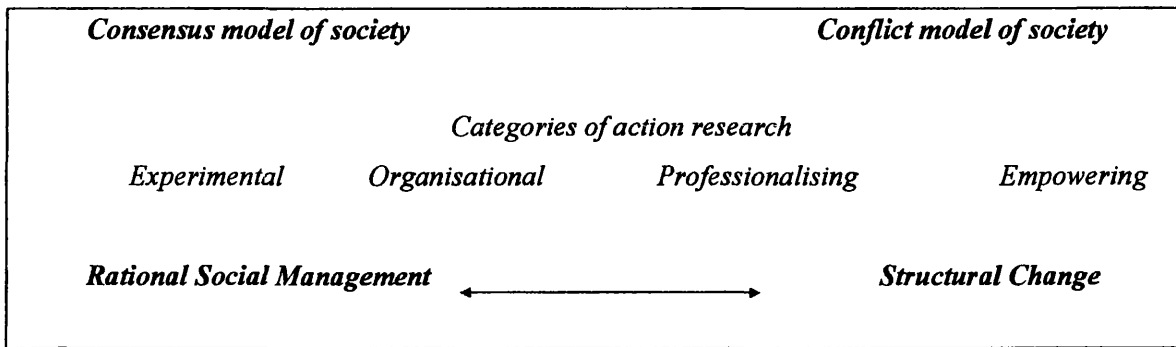
Influenced largely by the work of Hart and Bond [1995], the researcher came to the conclusion that in order to analyse the policy implementation process and to devise a model for continuous monitoring and evaluation of policy outcomes, practitioners would need to be facilitated to work across the spectrum of action research traditions. Thus practitioners would be enabled to change and ground practice within the principles and philosophies of 'new policy' [See Figure 3]. In this way it might be possible to build a culture of empowerment and evaluation into the various programmes involved in the implementation of the Cymorth scheme. Thus programme workers could be enabled to identify, for themselves, a means of sustainable evaluation, capable of reflecting and measuring the effectiveness of policy outcomes. In particular, the extent to which social inclusion and community development are achieved.

Hart and Bond [1995:204] suggest that to achieve a shift in culture and to ensure that the evaluation process becomes a part of everyday practice, researchers need to facilitate the identification of 'gaps' [in this case in policy implementation strategies and process]; accomplish structural change to overcome such gaps; determine needs for professional development; and reflect on professional attainment, in order to develop levels of autonomous activity, which will

ensure ownership of the task in hand. In this study, the task being to improve the policy implementation process.

To illustrate the capacity of the action research process, Hart and Bond [1995: 49] suggest taking as an example the criterion of the educative base of action research, which can be used to develop practitioners and at the same time empower service users.

Fig 1. The breadth and direction of change desired from the research intervention An illustration of the action research typology.



[Adapted from Hart and Bond, 1995:40]

In the experimental type of action research, education is defined in behaviourist terms, as bringing about a measurable change in what an individual can do and /or, a measurable change in individual perception. In the organisational type, the social psychological approach to changing behaviour and perception is still evident in the emphasis on education and training, as a means of bringing about change. This may encompass a strong social psychological dimension, in which re-education is aimed at overcoming resistance in situations where individuals or groups feel threatened. In the professionalising type, the concept of education takes the form of reflective practice, in which the practitioner develops by grounding knowledge and action in his/her every day experience of professional work. In the empowering type, education shifts from behaviorist concepts of re-education and takes the form of consciousness raising, a process advocated by Friere [1972] and adopted by Mies [1993], in which education is rooted in the everyday experience of vulnerable groups, rather than validated by abstract theoretical knowledge. Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia, [1995:257-258] argue that ‘consciousness raising’ promotes and utilises human resources, leading to the empowerment of individuals and communities, so that they can understand and solve their problems and create new circumstances for their livelihood.

Acclaiming the work of Friere [1974], Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia show how 'consciousness-raising' facilitates the general well-being of the population by enhancing relationships between individuals and society. The view of these researchers is that any social movement should start from, and respond to, the felt needs of the population, in other words their real consciousness. Despite the apparent conclusiveness of the above evidence on the efficacy of action research as a means of developing a workforce or community, as well as evaluating policy implementation, the researcher decided to examine further other tried and tested methods of evaluation in order to contrast them with the likely efficacy of action research. Thereby it was hoped to form a balanced judgement on the broader merits of action research.

3.7 Evaluation

Phillips et al [1994] defined evaluation as,

"The process of judging merit against some yardstick".

However, Rothman et al [1995:14] in a review of strategies of community intervention, described evaluation as,

"An interplay during which differences in interests and values are discussed and judgments made about the facts of the situation and viability of courses of action."

Clarke [2000:242] explains that discrepancies between definitions of evaluation may be due to the fact that processes of evaluation can differ according to the ideological purpose of the exercise. It is pointed out that since the advent of managerialism, defined as the means through which more rigorous discipline could be introduced to the public sector to produce more cost-effective services [and thus limit public spending] [Clarke and Newman, 1997], the process of evaluation has become more concerned with the extent to which outcomes of policy implementation meet the goals of those in positions of power, rather than the extent to which the real needs of service users are met.

Agreeing with this view, Uphoff [1995:7] claims that the process of evaluation may have become self serving. As such, it is decreasingly sensitive to the needs and wishes of service beneficiaries [page: 21]. Realisation of the fact that there may be ideological differences in expectations of the process of evaluation, suggests that it may be important to ensure that any evaluation of policy implementation should have regard for the ideological aims of the policy concerned. [See Chapters 1 and 2]. Barr et al [1996: 10] argued that any method of evaluation used for the purpose of monitoring community development projects, [one of the aims of the Cymorth scheme], should empower the community to make a sustained impact on its environment and

engage in self support and maintenance. The following section seeks to describe different approaches to the process of evaluation used both in policy implementation analyses and also in strategies of community intervention.

Technical approaches based on scientific surveys and the measurement of quantity

According to Phillips et al [1994], the process of evaluation involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data representing the achievement of organisational goals and programme objectives. Specifically, such processes of evaluation attempt to measure the extent to which certain organisational outputs and outcomes can be validly correlated with service inputs. The ultimate goal of this activity is to establish whether there is a cause-effect relationship between what is put into the service, in terms of new policy directives and resources, and what emerges in terms of expected benefits for service users. This activity may require changed ways of working in order to improve service delivery. Clarke [2000:246] argues that this is a model in which the main concern is to 'develop' a community through direct intervention. An emphasis is placed on the provision of an efficient and accountable programme for achieving centrally approved service improvements and social change. Outcomes are measured against baseline data or throughput activity, resulting from the introduction of a new facility or social/economic formation.

Cusworth and Franks [1993] claim that in such evaluative processes development is planned around a 'project-cycle'. Thus evaluation procedures are pre-determined and progress is measured against pre-set targets. However, targets may be set at a basic level and ease of measurement is often a priority [Casley and Kumar, 1987]. Clarke [2000:246] concludes that in such a process change is not predicated upon active human involvement. Copeland and Wexler [1995:51-67] also criticise this approach to evaluation on the grounds that policy goals and objectives stated in legislation may be changed as they filter down through the bureaucratic structure of an implementing organisation and are acted upon by workers at various levels of the organisation. For this reason, in reality policy outcomes may differ considerably from the expected outcomes that were outlined in original policy. That being the case, Copeland and Wexler [1995:51-67] note the importance of a policy evaluation process which is based on a framework capable of evaluating what transpires during the implementation process. That is a framework possessing the capability of identifying positive or negative aspects of the implementation process.

This is a view which concurs with that of Pestieau [2003]. Clarke [2000:249] also argues that in order to be effective evaluation needs to be a continuous, flexible process, capable of providing meaningful information to all stakeholders involved in the development process. It is contended

by Clarke, that evaluation processes should be adaptable to change as the process unfolds and that the evaluation process should represent,

“A circle of learning and action which admits monitoring, reflection and evaluation processes”.

To facilitate this argument, Clarke [2000:249] and Copeland and Wexler [1995:51-67], like Pestieau [2003], and Cheetham et al. [1997], advocate a more participatory model of evaluation.

Appraisal, rapid appraisal and participatory methods

This is a method of evaluation based on a planned appraisal of the context in which policy is to be implemented, carried out at the formulation stage of an evaluation process. As a result of appraisal indicators for the measurement of change caused by policy implementation can be identified. Information is then collected and analysed and this allows for further planning and modification of the implementation process, if necessary. Clarke [2000:249] recommends that at the formulation stage of a project, it is necessary for all parties involved to investigate the social/cultural, financial, economic and geo-environmental context of a programme, in order that its feasibility can be assessed and the need for intervention or policy change agreed. This is a process which facilitates identification of the changes needed and the way in which changes can be integrated and prioritised in an agency's policy. According to Clarke, it is at this time that a model of evaluation should be chosen and decisions made in respect of resource distribution, management and accountability structures and guidelines necessary for the scale of activity. Following the completion of formulation, projects should graduate to a planned appraisal stage. Appraisal involves the identification of indicators capable of measuring changes that occur as a result of intervention. Ideally these should illustrate the quality of change that takes place. Carley [1987] indicates the pitfalls of failing to pay attention to the importance of formulation and appraisal, it is his view that such an omission may lead to a guaranteed mismatch between policy and intervention goals.

Chambers [1993] suggests that omission is likely to occur because of the perceived costs in terms of time and money. However, Clarke [2000:251] insists that the processes of formulation and appraisal are essential constituents of a 'good practice' framework for evaluation, as these provide baseline information, operations and evaluation systems from which progress of a project can be measured. A framework built upon collaborative processes of formulation and appraisal is likely, according to Clarke, to be far more acceptable and informative than a 'conventional top-down' model of policy implementation or community intervention, which may serve to increase the distance between policy planners and service beneficiaries. Chambers [1993] and Edwards

[1994] suggest that the need for replacing 'top-down' technical approaches to evaluation with more participatory methods was recognised during the 1970's, but time and cost considerations resulted in participatory approaches becoming molded into a technique known as Rapid Rural Appraisal [RRA]. Chambers [1993] comments that although this technique allows for the collection of qualitatively different data from that relied on in 'traditional' surveys, it remains a 'top down' approach. This is because RRA gathers the most accessible data in the shortest possible time and analyses it to provide a rough picture, or framework, for policy implementation. The perceived intention is to ensure that policies will 'fit' current circumstances, rather than to acknowledge the likelihood of 'gaps' between desired and actual outcomes caused by circumstantial factors. Cornwall et al [1994:108] suggest that the continued use of RRA illustrates the divisions between values represented by centralist, managerial schools of community development and participatory schools, who hold the opinion that development projects must be people-centred and relevant to local communities.

People-centred, participatory models of development, monitoring and evaluation

According to Dudley [1993] and Chambers [1986], the perceived lack of relevance of 'technical top-down' development projects to local communities has led operational workers to develop a 'more people-centred development strategy'. This has resulted in the emergence of a model known as Participatory Project Appraisal [PPA]. It involves both professionals and service recipients becoming involved in the development process and its evaluation. Goals are agreed and outcomes assessed collectively. Mikkelsen [1995] comments that whereas RRA is achieved through didactic 'top down' approaches, PPA provides an 'experiential' medium for participants. Whilst in PRA participants are subjected to 'formal mechanisms', PPA allows participants to forge a development process through the exigencies of their social situation. Through the identification of appraisal indicators they can monitor the progress of programmes. Thereby, Mikkelsen contends workers conscious of the duality of their role in the evaluation process and their duty to represent the interests of both funders and participants, can abstract information from both levels. Consequently, workers may influence decision making and anticipate policy outcomes through the monitoring of progress.

Monitoring allows for programme adjustment during the course of a programme, in particular between points of evaluation. It also indicates the effectiveness of the design of the programme and its appropriateness. Marsden and colleagues [1994:109] emphasise the importance of identifying suitable indicators to measure and monitor developmental progress and of keeping

these in focus. Clarke [2001: 263] emphasises the importance of choosing a suitably integrated model for programme evaluation, in the light of 'new' policy and the shift towards governmentality. It is argued that only when a suitable framework is identified that 'partnership' responsibilities for programme inputs, throughputs and outcomes can be evaluated. It is contended by Clarke, and supported by Harding [1991] and Marsden et al [1994], that a framework for programme evaluation should introduce the agency of the 'project' as the focus for inputs and planning of strategies. It should then identify expected outcomes at each level of the intervention process, as these may be seen as 'stepping stones' towards the overall aims of the developmental process. [see Fig.3]. This is an argument concurred with by Pestieau [2003], Cheetham et al [1997] and several others in their contentions that occurrences during the implementation process may reveal much more about policy outcomes than a set of standardised indicators, identified solely for the purpose of evaluation. In the case of this study the 'agency' responsible for the 'Cymorth' policy was the Welsh Assembly Government, it was the body which interpreted child and family policy and identified a linear framework for policy implementation and indicators in the form of key features and themes for the expected outcomes of the project [see Chapter 1]. The main aims of the project being to achieve the policy goals of *improving the life chances of children through,*

- eradication of child poverty.
- social inclusion.
- 'welfare to work' strategies.
- community development.

However, a linear framework of policy implementation evaluation did not appear to be sufficiently adequate for capturing the complexity of the process. [Fig.2]. Whereas the framework model identified by Clarke [2000:265] is capable of 'tracking' the integrated process of policy implementation throughout its trajectory from policy formulation to community outcomes [see figure 2] and identifies relevant dimensions of existing features and expected changes throughout the process of policy implementation The framework provided initially by WAG [WAG, 2002] was merely concerned to measure linear inputs, outputs and outcomes of the project and their definition was left to policy implementers.

Copeland and Wexler [1995:57] [Figure 3], also propose the need for a framework for studying policy implementation. claiming that as yet there is no accepted theory which provides guidance for research on policy implementation. These researchers identified a framework based upon a review of various conceptual frameworks used in implementation analyses carried out by several researchers such as Glass [1990]; Pressman and Wildavsky [1973]; Maxmanian and Sabatier

[1983] and Chambers [1986]. Building upon prior studies the proposed framework incorporates the following domains:-

- Enabling legislation
- Federal regulations
- Organisational structure
- Organisational process
- Programme performance

Fig. 2 An integrated systems model for collaborative programme evaluation

[Clarke 2000:265]

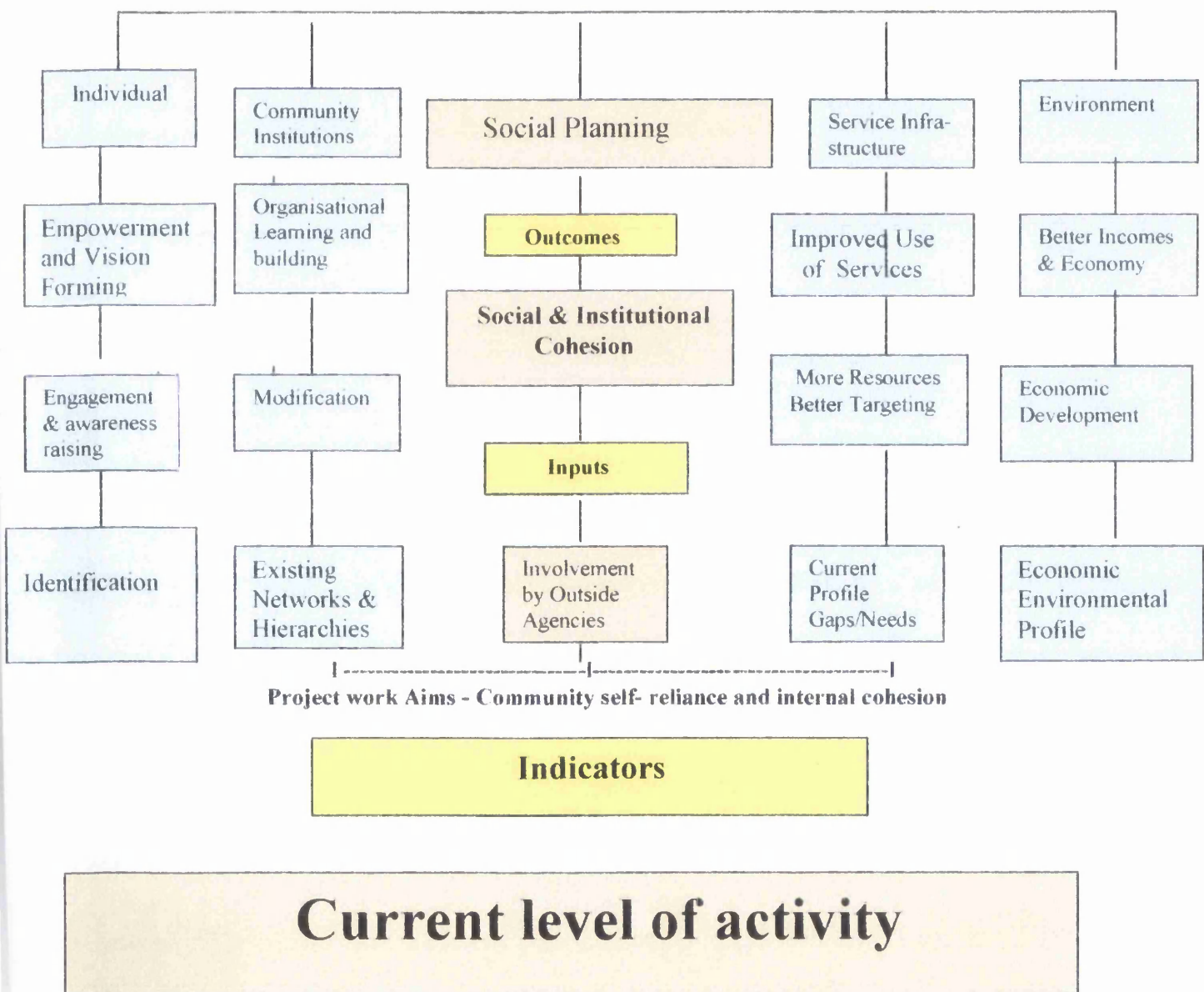


Fig. 3 A Framework for policy implementation [Copeland and Wexler, 1995:57]

Enabling Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy goals and objectives Target population Fiscal arrangements Major provisions Eligibility Guidelines Federal Administrator State Administrator Rules of entitlement Benefits
Federal Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisions which implement policy Sanctions for compliance Target populations Eligibility requirements Financing and administration
Organisational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing agency Federal bureaucracy /state bureaucracy/local agency Mission of agency Implementing officials: Professional orientation / Educational training/ previous experience
Organisational Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication patterns: Top- down/ bottom -up Internal decision making: Centralised /decentralised Resource allocation
Programme Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who governs How funds are used Who benefits Extent of goal/objective achievement Activities contributing to success/failure Mechanisms to revise failures

Enabling legislation and federal regulations are said to address the legal contract between federal and state government whereas the legislation is the actual law mandating policy decisions. Regulations contain the provisions authorising the implementation of policy including rewards or sanctions for compliance or non-compliance. Organisational structure is defined as the degree to which implementing organisations represent complexity, formalisation and centralisation. Organisational process is defined as the way in which functional activities, such as decision making, are affected by the administrative procedures necessary for complying with new policy.

Finally, programme performance involves the actual outcome or results of the implementation process.

The framework is not incompatible with that identified by Clarke [200:265] [Fig 4.], though it is not so self explicit in terms of outlining integrated pathways. Like Clarke, Copeland and Wexler [1995] assert that guidelines for implementation often do not address responsibilities for monitoring task completion, or for how monitoring is to occur. Consequently, each level of government involved in policy implementation may develop separate and potentially conflicting systems of accountability. Nevertheless, both of these models have a propensity to meet Pestieau's, [Appendix 4a] criteria for ensuring that frameworks of policy analyses can reveal paths to achieving policy outcomes, or to identifying results or outcomes which are different from those originally hypothesised.

Thus it is concluded from the above discussion that it is important that policy implementation analyses are concerned with the outcomes of policy [Phillips et al, 1994]. Cheetham et al [1997] point out that not all evaluation strategies are concerned with outcomes [defined as the impact of services upon intended beneficiaries]. As has already been pointed out in the discussion on action research, the process of evaluation may be concerned only with technical measures of quantity, rather than the quality of outcomes and the degree of people centred development achieved. Cheetham et al [1997] argue that in social and health care it is common to pay attention only to service inputs, throughputs and outputs, as these are quantifiable indicators of performance which may provide evidence for managers of the extent to which the goals or objectives of services are met. Unfortunately, these are measures which fail to identify the extent to which service users benefit from the process and outcomes of services based on new policy strategies. Clarke [2000:247], in a criticism of such evaluatory frameworks concludes that this is a form of evaluation that separates social and physical development and ignores the human element of development processes.. A people-centred method of evaluation is therefore more desirable.

Agreeing with this view Cheetham et al [1997:5] suggest that evaluation of inputs, throughputs, outputs and outcomes is necessary, if the effectiveness of health and social care policy strategies is to be thoroughly monitored. Like Clarke [2000] and Pestieau [2003], whose arguments are addressed above, it is the opinion of these writers that the evaluation of events at each of these stages of policy implementation processes can greatly improve task-centred work. This is because of the fact that evaluation improves clarity about whether goals can, or cannot be achieved. Also it may distinguish whose needs are best served by highlighting, in some instances, differences between the objectives of service providers and service users. It is also the view of Cheetham and

colleagues [1997] that if task-centred work is properly monitored, evaluated and recorded at each stage of input, throughput, output and outcome, policy makers, policy programme managers, service deliverers and service users can all review what has been achieved. In addition, from time to time, through the adoption of such an approach the adequacy and relevance of policy and programme objectives can be re-assessed. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the framework of evaluation adopted resembles those described by Clarke [2000] and Copeland and Wexler [1995]. These address the whole trajectory of the policy implementation process and [in the case of the latter] are evolved from an amalgam of requisites for successful policy implementation derived from previous studies [Glass 1990; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973; Morgan, 1986; and Pestieau, 2003]. However, within that framework, in the light of the findings from the literature review on action research, it was judged that an interpretive approach, such as action research might better capture the actions and behaviour of policy implementers' working practices.

3.8 Evaluation of the Cymorth Programme

Although the WAG had recommended the use of action research as a means of evaluating the Cymorth Scheme [WAG, 202:29], local authorities responsible for policy implementation were provided with a monitoring system [NAfW, 2003] [appendix 2]. The monitoring template could best be described as resembling a scientific survey and measurement of quantity model. At best it could be said to contain some of the elements of the appraisal and participatory model. The template was specifically designed for the measurement of 'Inputs and Funding' and the task orientated objectives or 'targets' [collectively referred to as 'Outputs' in the monitoring template], chosen by individual projects, to achieve the key themes of the Cymorth Plan. It appeared to have been assumed that the County Borough involved in implementing the scheme would have little difficulty in assisting individual programme providers to choose appropriate objectives for meeting the specific policy aims. Also there appeared to be an assumption that the evaluation of service inputs, throughputs and outputs would be a straightforward process, capable of revealing the extent to which new policy was being implemented. However, initial scrutiny by the researcher of available documentation from each of the projects involved in the scheme, showed that workers were confused as to the nature and purpose of the 'new' policy, the relevance of the policy implementation aims identified by WAG, and the nature of the service objectives that they were required to identify in order to implement the aims of the Cymorth Scheme. [Chapter 1].

As a result of the broadness of policy aims identified by the WAG and an apparent lack of clarification of these aims by the County Borough, programme planners and service providers appeared to be experiencing great difficulties in identifying programmes specifically suited to representing the breadth and complexity of new policy aims. Even more difficulty was being experienced in converting these aims into service objectives. There appeared to be some confusion over what constituted inputs, outputs and outcomes. In particular, conceptions of the need to achieve participatory outcomes to fulfill the policy aims of improving children's lives through processes of poverty reduction, social inclusion, increasing work opportunities and developing communities, were weak. Therefore, to all intents and purposes, the Cymorth themes appeared to exist within somewhat of a policy vacuum. The Scheme was primarily assumed to have been implemented by the WAG in a 'top down' manner and the Local Borough was concerned merely with providing proof of the scheme's implementation. Little attention appeared to have been given to the processes of formulation and appraisal discussed above, or indeed to the need for, or means of evaluating the policy implementation process. Indeed, the question of evaluation of the implementation of the Cymorth Scheme did not appear to have received much attention from the Local Authority concerned until this need was imposed by WAG in its planning guidance "Children and Young People's Framework" [2002:8].

Thus, at the preliminary stages of the study it was observed that the only measures of effectiveness applied to programmes set up for the purpose of implementing the 'Cymorth Scheme', were measures to evaluate quantifiable service inputs. For example, the numbers of service users seen, or the numbers of interventions planned. In fact these were the only monitoring requirements required for the electronic monitoring template. No consideration had been given to the need for identifying throughput or outcome measures, which could assist in the evaluation of the extent that policy aims were being translated into service objectives. Neither had consideration been paid to measurement of the extent to which the programmes set up by the various programme providers were meeting the policy objectives of eliminating child poverty and its long term effects, or the extent to which the programme objectives underpinning services were benefiting service recipients, and assisting them to become participative citizens.

Seemingly, because of a lack of clarity and understanding of how the key features and themes of the Cymorth scheme related to the broader aims of policy and the need for organisational change, service providers appeared to be unaware of the importance of more qualitative documentation of the processes and achievements of the programmes they were delivering. Also because they were required merely to record general tasks carried out in respect of specific Cymorth themes,

programme providers were only involved in 'compliance reporting' of activities. The majority of service providers, in particular those employed by statutory agencies, did not appear to have identified any innovative, integrated or 'stretching' aims and objectives, in order to facilitate child welfare and the elimination of child poverty, in line with the ideologies of 'new' policy. An exception however, was seen in some of the programmes provided by the voluntary sector.

In the main therefore, it appeared that potential inputs for achieving policy outcomes were being overlooked and the extent of policy implementation goals included in 'new' programmes not properly evaluated. Moreover, most programme workers were unable to demonstrate possible ways in which services could, more appropriately, enable the County Borough to achieve strategic policy aims; the ways in which programme objectives targeted and matched policy aims; the extent to which programmes benefited service users, or the extent to which programme outcomes should make a difference to the lives of service users and the work patterns of service providers. Thus it appeared that old ways of working and old patterns of service were being replicated and new policy requirements were, at best overlooked. In addition, there appeared to have been little reflection on the adequacy of the monitoring process to capture the processes of professional work, or the outcomes of service implementation for service users and their communities.

To ensure that strategic goals could be achieved it was decided by the researcher, in agreement with the Borough Council, that a properly structured evaluation process needed to be implemented. In particular the Borough Council wished to use an evaluative strategy, that was easily understood by those delivering the programme; incorporated the aims of policy and ensured that its broader thrusts were attained; facilitated professional development and increased the transparency of the scheme. The researcher therefore returned to a consideration of the arguments of Pestieau [2003:12], that when carrying out the process of evaluation it was important to capture the interactive actions and behaviours of policy implementers, as well as measuring inputs, outputs and outcomes. As was seen earlier in this chapter, in the review of literature on action research and other evaluation methods, it was argued also by Cheetham et al [1997:35] and Smith and Cantley [1985], that a pluralist methodology that involves some process of mediation or judgement and which determines priorities among differing respondents, is the best means of undertaking an evaluative strategy. Thus the process of action research methodology, as proposed by the WAG [2002], was re-considered as a means of evaluating the total process of policy implementation within frameworks, such as those described by Clarke, [2000 :265] and Copeland and Wexler [1995:57].

As has been discussed by Hart and Bond [1995], an action research methodology is capable of achieving solutions to problems, changes in practice and theory development through collaboration between researchers and practitioners. As the aim of this research was to identify a process of improving, as well as evaluating policy implementation, the claims made in support of an action research methodology appeared worthy of further robust investigation. In the case of this study, it was rationalised that to ensure policy implementation and the wider aims of child and family policy, the providers of services needed to be afforded the opportunity of a process of self development in policy implementation strategy and a means whereby they might engage service users in influencing the policy implementation process. To ensure transparency in the policy implementation process throughout all of the levels of the evaluation frameworks identified by Clarke [2000] and Copeland and Wexler [1995], it was decided to adopt all typologies of action research, a process which Hart and Bond [1993: 58] suggest is necessary to attain practical solutions to the problems of particular contexts and phases of development in the policy implementation process. In this way, it was reasoned that any progression which might occur from 'top-down' to 'bottom-up' processes of policy implementation strategy might be identified [See Fig 4].

3.9 The Framework and Methodology of the study.

During the preliminary stage of this study it had virtually been decided that an evaluation methodology based on a systems approach should be employed. The decision was based on the fact that several previous evaluations of similar programmes had used such a method [Jack, 2001; Layell and Graffy, 1998] However, at this time, there were no published evaluations of the Cymorth Scheme's implementation in any part of Wales. Note was taken of the Welsh Assembly Government's recommendation of the use of action research as an appropriate evaluation methodology [WAG 2002]. In addition, the literature review revealed that current forms of policy may be best evaluated by means of an 'action' approach. This form of evaluation is said to be capable of identifying the operation of policy within and between agencies and the communities they serve [Pestieau, 2003; Cheetham et al, 1997; Morgan, 1993]. Pestieau [2003:9] for example, argues that although recently developed evaluation frameworks for policy analysis, such as the Results-based Management and Accountability Framework [2001], designed by the Treasury Board Secretariat of the Canadian Government, is a major improvement on traditional forms of evaluation, because it distinguishes outputs from outcomes, it still fails to analyse the policy implementation process. Although this is a method that is presented in a linear manner,

recognises the need for feed back between various steps of the policy implementation process and attempts to investigate the effectiveness of a programme, thereby allowing service recipients to hold government to account, it still misses important factors because it relies on ‘compliance reporting’. Important factors identified as missing, are learning from success or failure, relationships between people involved in implementation and tensions in the way relationships are, or are not, resolved. Agreeing with this view Cheetham et al [1997:38] concluded that analysis of social policy implementation cannot be forced into traditional models of evaluation. It was argued by Cheetham and colleagues that to analyse policy implementation, a pluralist methodology such as action research was the best means of identifying factors that might impede the implementation process.

In the remainder of this chapter action research methodology will be discussed and typologies identified, together with advantages and disadvantages of the methodology. Cheetham [1997] emphasised the need to analyse what steps occur in the process of policy implementation if the exact nature of outcomes is to be revealed [See appendix 4a]. Clarke, [2000 :265] and Copeland and Wexler, [1995:57] emphasised that any monitoring framework should capture the whole process of integrated policy implementation, that is its structure, process, inputs, outputs and outcomes. In fact, Cheetham et al [1997:38] stated that,

“Social care cannot be forced into traditional models of evaluation and that a more pluralistic means of evaluation is necessary when consensus is absent”.

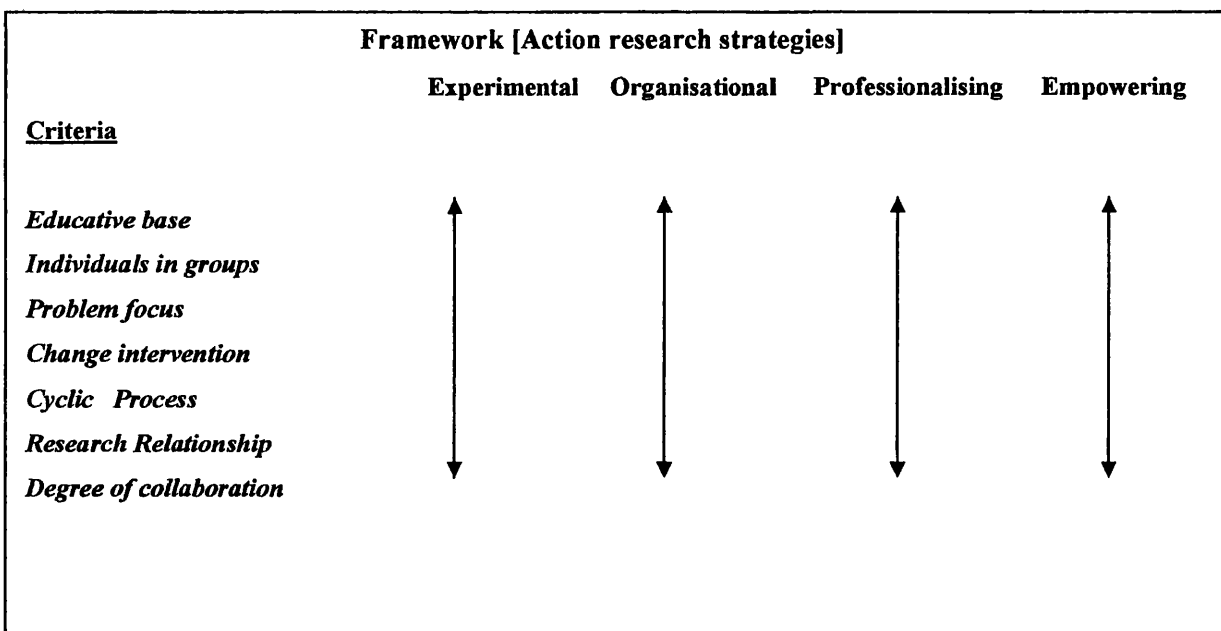
Thus, the intended framework for this action research study can best be illustrated pictorially, [see Fig.4.below]. This framework can be interpreted as a ‘two-dimensional’ matrix in which, on one dimension lies the span of strategies required and on the other, the list of criteria for formulation and planning of the action research strategy. When originally devised by Hart and Bond, this model was intended to represent a developmental process which characterised the shift in research thinking away from the “scientific” approach to a more “qualitative” and social constructionist methodology, arguably more suited to the process of enabling social change. Whereas it is standard practice to distinguish between different types and models of action research, it is argued that the broad scope of this study requires that all approaches must be used simultaneously.

Implementing new policy needs both a strong research base, in order to identify supportive and restraining factors and an action focus, in order to bring about changes in organisational and professional practice and the creation of a climate of subsidiarity, in which practitioners can tailor

their practice to suit the needs and culture of the people and communities with which they work. Thereby policy implementers can comply with the demands of the ‘Titmussesque’ policy strategies discussed in chapter 2. Adelman [1993], Chisholm and Elden [1993], and Holter and Schwartz-Barcott [1993] all agree with the notion of simultaneously combining the various approaches or types of action research in order to improve practice and bring about organisational and cultural change.

The frame-work chosen for the study therefore consisted of a horizontal axis made up of a spectrum of experimental, organisational, professionalizing and empowering criteria, representing the shift required from experimental modes of policy implementation, usually based on ad hoc methods of ‘top down’ policy implementation, [a sort of ‘try it and see’ approach], or at best a form of ‘benchmarking’ based on a premise that ‘what works in other places must work here’, towards a participative and empowering mode of intervention.

Fig.4 The framework of the study [Hart and Bond, 1995]



The vertical axis of the framework adopted for this study represents the criteria which distinguish action research from other methodologies.

Criteria on the vertical axis stipulate that the research process must be:-

• educative	-	capable of improving the cognitive skills of participants in respect of understanding policy.
• collectively orientated	-	capable of dealing with social groups rather than individuals –bringing about collective change.
• problem focused		capable of dealing with problems that emerge within a context specific setting, and is future as well as present orientated.
• change orientated	-	capable of increasing awareness of the need for change, and the means by which change can be achieved.
• a continuous cycle of development	-	not merely a ‘one off’ project, but an ongoing process of improvement and involvement of participants.
• a cyclic process of research, action and evaluation	-	a process which can be fed back directly into practice.
• a research relationship	-	a relationship should be developed between the researcher and the participants .

Thus the methodological process for the study based on the criteria shown on both the horizontal and vertical axes of Fig 4. characterises the three approaches to action research described by Zuber-Skerritt [1996:4-5]. The methodological process was:-

- **technical** - in that it aimed to improve the effectiveness of policy implementation.
- **practical** - in that, in addition to effectiveness it was aimed at increasing practitioner understanding and professional development through encouraging deliberation and self reflection on service delivery.
- **emancipating** - in that it was aimed not only at technical and practical improvement, and increasing participant’s understanding, but also at transformation and change within the existing boundaries and conditions of the participant’s employment contracts, and at changing the system itself through removal of system or organisational barriers to policy implementation.

The extent to which these approaches are achieved can be evaluated against the second or horizontal axis of Hart and Bond’s [1995] framework for action research, described above. This is an approach which may be ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom- up’ depending on the goals of the organisation that has identified a policy strategy and supported its implementation.

The ultimate aim of the methodology is to determine whether, through an action research approach a process of complex policy implementation can be enhanced and aligned with a process of organisational and staff development. This would represent a shift from an automatic response orientation, to an autonomous emancipative form of policy implementation. It was reasoned that such a development could influence as well as implement policy. Also it was hoped that the application of the two axes framework of Hart and Bond [1995] would provide a suitable framework for this venture, as well as illustrate the complexity of policy implementation analysis described by Morgan [1986]. If the outcomes of using this methodological approach proved to be successful they should achieve the criteria of Zuber-Skerritt [1996], namely that the research should enhance policy implementation in a practical and emancipating way. The basic contention was that analysis of the implementation of the Cymorth policy using the two axis framework could demonstrate the art of planned policy implementation in the context in which it occurred. In so-doing, it was also hoped that reasons for policy implementation failure, such as those identified as 'metaphors' by Morgan [1986:4] would be recognised at each stage of the process. That is, in relation to the structure, process, outputs and outcomes of programmes implemented to attain the goals of the Cymorth scheme.

As in the context of this study, the researcher was working alongside colleagues, users, providers, as well as politically influenced persons; the flexibility of action research appeared to be exactly what the research needed. Furthermore, over the course of the study it was planned that it would shift from being process-led to outcome-led and from being weighted towards research to being weighted towards action. Thus it needed to demonstrate a shift from rational social management to a structural change framework which could be used to engage with participants and enable them to bring about change, and empower service users.

3.10 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Action Research Methodology

Denscombe [1998] extols how action research methodology addresses problems in a positive way, feeding the results of research directly back into practice. He describes the methodology as having personal benefits for the practitioner because its findings may contribute to professional self-development. Also, the approach is claimed to entail a continuous cycle of development and change via on-site research in the workplace, a feature which has benefits for the organisation in terms of improving practice and resolving problems. Finally, action research is said to involve practitioners in the research process, an advantage which democratises the research process and values practitioner knowledge and experience.



In contrast, Denscombe [1998] identifies a number of disadvantages of action research. These are described as limitations on the scope and scale of the research, because of the involvement of practitioners; limitations on the representativeness of the findings and the extent to which generalisations can be made on the basis of the results, because of the 'work site' approach; limits on the feasibility of exercising controls over factors relevant to the research, because of integration of research with practice; problems of manipulating variables or implementing controls as the research is conducted as part of routine activity, rather than alongside routine activity; the nature of the research is constrained by what is permissible and ethical within the workplace setting; ownership of the research is contestable within the framework of the partnership relationship between practitioner and researcher and it involves an extra burden of work for practitioners, particularly at the earlier stages when benefits have not been fed back into improving effectiveness. Finally, it is difficult for action researchers to be detached and impartial. Therefore action research is markedly contrasted with a more positivist methodology in which there is a better chance of the researcher being impartial, in accord with the classic image of science. However, it is concluded by Denscombe [1998] and Susman and Everard [1978] that an action research methodology is clearly geared towards resolving problems which confront practitioners in their everyday activity. For this reason it was decided to employ an action research methodology for evaluation of the process of implementation of the Cymorth scheme.

3.11 Conclusions

This chapter has shown that generally evaluation strategies fall into two categories. Differences between these categories are attributed to the underlying ideologies governing the evaluation process. In the first category, concerns were seen to be focused on ensuring that policy outcomes met the goals of those in power, rather than the needs of service recipients, which was the concern of the second category – a situation comparable to differences in 'Hayekian' and 'Titmussesque' ideological positions. Traditionally, the process of evaluation appears to have been seen as technical and quantitative – concerned with measuring whether service outputs could be correlated with resource inputs and emphasizing pre-set indicators, thereby ignoring the effects of human involvement. As a result, this model of evaluation has been described as likely to produce a view of policy outcomes that may differ considerably from those expected. In particular, this model has been criticised for not evaluating what transpires during the policy implementation process. Pestieau [2003] in particular, criticised such models for not capturing the interactive actions and behaviours of policy implementers. To rectify shortfalls, action research

has been recommended as a vehicle for understanding the exigencies of implementing a new policy process. It is hoped that it will prove to be effective in evaluating policy based on changes in ideological perspectives, which are concerned with lifting children and their families out of poverty and ensuring their social inclusion through processes of economic improvement and development. The review of literature for this chapter has ranged widely over historical aspects of action research, contemporary thinking, applications and the merits of evaluation based on action research, as opposed to other forms of evaluation more commonly employed for assessing policy implementation.

The chapter has illustrated how action research has been used in attempts to improve social management, through attempting to understand groups of people within their own environments. Although critics have claimed that action research is a manipulative process of behaviour change [Hyde, 1989], it is now accepted [Kemmis et al, 1982:14], that it is a form of research grounded in a belief in democracy and development. It is a valid means of studying social factors related to social development processes and essentially an expression of the democratic spirit in social research. Action research can therefore be seen as a means of generating knowledge about social systems and combining research with social action. Thereby, it can be considered as a vehicle for executing planned change in a way which dispenses with bureaucratic strategies and prevents unfocused action resulting imposed from 'top down' policy objectives.

In line with 'Titmussesque' ideas [Chapter 2], action research has been shown to be an approach which can engage people and communities in studying problems, identifying objectives for change, planning, executing, evaluating and re-evaluating in order to create change. Moreover, it is seen as a means of developing conceptual structures that are capable of taking explicit account of power bases that define social roles and thereby have a potential to impede change. Thus action research is capable of offering a critique of wider society in respect of economic relations and does not seek to identify with universal laws of human behaviour, in order to engineer social change. On the contrary, the approach appears to show that in terms of social policy implementation processes 'one size may not fit all'. Therefore, the use of action research as a means of evaluating policy implementation appears to be in line with the shifts towards 'pluralism' in policy making. It is a tool for discerning gaps and undesirable outcomes in processes of policy delivery and implementation [Cheetham et al, 1997] and an appropriate means of determining the needs of complex organisations where quantitative methods are not [Susman and Everard, 1978:14].

Thus it was concluded that action research has the propensity to supersede technocratic and positivistic research processes with an interpretive form of evaluation, capable of providing valuable insights into the complexities of a developmental systems of policy implementation. Current applications of the process reveal that far from being an elitist process, action research is a process in which people can engage in identifying problems, exploring alternatives actions, gathering information, solving problems, measuring outcomes and evaluating progress. Further, it may contribute to problem solving and theory building and it is a means of emphasizing the expediency of researchers working collaboratively with policy implementers and the people to whom policy changes apply.

Chapter Four - The Research Context

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research, as has been explained, was to evaluate the policy implementation process of the Children and Youth Partnership projects, known as 'The Cymorth Scheme'. This scheme was being implemented in a Local County Borough which has a population of over one hundred and thirty thousand people and it is twice as densely populated as Wales as a whole. [www.assemblywales.org]. Although seven in ten of the working age population are economically active and 2.7% claim Job-Seekers allowance, as compared to 2.3% in Wales as a whole, an above average proportion of areas within the Local Authority fall into the 10% most deprived areas in Wales. Furthermore, the majority of these areas are more deprived than the Wales Average [Welsh Index of Deprivation 2005].

The Local Authority, in accordance with the statutory duty placed upon it by the Welsh Assembly Government, has a duty to develop community leadership and act in partnership with the community to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area, through social inclusion and community development [NAfW,2000]. Given the extent of deprivation identified in this borough these Local Authority's responsibilities weigh heavily. At the commencement of the study, the researcher found that the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership [EYDCP], which was responsible for policy implementation, had updated its plans for the implementation of children's programmes in line with the planning guidance issued by the National Assembly for Wales [NAfW, Welsh Circular, 7/99 8th February 1999] and amendments to these plans contained in additional information, set out in a letter of the 13th March, 2000 [Childcare Plan, 2000-2003, June 2000] [Appendix 1]. These plans also met the requirements of Flexibilities for Joint Working between Health and Local Government, laid down by the NAfW/ WAG, under Section 31[6] of the Health Act 1999, to assist agencies in implementing partnership arrangements. The presentation of these plans ensured that the 'stage was set' for improving children's services, subject to the application of 'good governance' criteria [NAfW, 2000], which included, accountability and performance management, best value, clinical governance, service and human resource planning, standard raising, professional supervision and shared training and development.

The aim of the child care plan was to strengthen the previous efforts of WAG to raise awareness of the benefits and long term importance of family friendly policies, across all sectors, and to incorporate these policies within appropriate strategies. This was in order to develop the care, education, and development and play experiences of all children, aged 0-14 years. [WAG,

2002:4]. The first three years of the plan, 1999–2001 had seen the successful establishment of a number of ‘Sure-Start’, ‘Youth partnership’, play-schemes and youth access projects, developed by the EYDCP partnerships in response to locally defined aims and objectives. However, few steps had been taken to monitor the outcomes of these projects following guidelines set out by the NAFW [WAG, 2002], although the role of the EYDCP was to support and assist the development of new initiatives and devise effective monitoring and evaluation systems. However, at this time, no specific method of evaluation had been recommended by the WAG. The electronic monitoring framework, discussed in the previous chapter, did not emerge until 2003. According to middle managers charged with both the responsibilities for overseeing the setting up of programmes and monitoring of outcomes, little progress had been made in developing effective monitoring and evaluation systems. Despite this assertion, the researcher discovered that a quantitative analysis of the ‘Sure-Start’ programmes had previously been commissioned by the local authority in response to normative guidance provided by the WAG [WAG, 2002]. This evaluation had been undertaken by an external evaluator [see appendix 4]. However, whereas the report revealed input and some output factors, it provided little meaningful information about the outcomes of the programmes. It was also discovered that the need for ‘good governance’, a requirement of WAG’s Planning Guidance [2002] could have been strengthened. In particular, issues of accountability, performance management, best value, clinical governance, human resource planning, standard raising and the provision of professional supervision and development required addressing.

In an attempt to remedy this deficit middle-managers had drawn up a programme of existing projects and had charged project leaders with the responsibility of specifying their project’s aims and objectives [within the framework of the Cymorth themes]. Also programmes were requested to identify target groups, targets, partners and outcomes for their programmes, in accordance with normative directives from Welsh Assembly Government. This directive was issued in October 2001, but it was not accompanied by a strategic plan for evaluation. The directive merely specified that objectives, timed targets and measurable outcomes should be identified. In a further effort to comply with directions and ensure funding, the EYDCP middle-managers had produced a monitoring format. This requested the documentation of each programme’s aims, objectives and targets. However, programme organisers reported difficulties in complying with these demands. In particular, they seemed unable to interpret the terminology used.

As a prelude to designing an external monitoring and evaluation system, the researcher discussed these issues with both middle-managers and the programme organisers. It was agreed that difficulties experienced in setting up a monitoring system might be due to the fact that middle-managers had not conveyed the extensiveness and 'stretching' aims of the policy needing implementation. In particular, programme organisers required greater appreciation of the need for 'joined up' collaborative strategies to achieve policy aims. Despite the fact that the wider thrusts of policy had been set out by WAG in planning guidance [WAG, 2002], the normative nature of policy implementation directives did not appear to have assisted middle-managers to devise a framework that programme organisers and workers could easily understand and take action upon. To further complicate matters, middle-managers recognised that the purposes of 'new' policy may not have been sufficiently explained to programme organisers and workers. Nor had the need for training in processes of identifying suitable aims, specifying objectives to meet aims, setting targets or identifying and measuring the outcomes of new strategies and programmes been foreseen. It was apparent to the researcher and middle-managers that the process of policy implementation was failing because of these shortfalls. The challenge was to identify 'gaps' in the policy implementation process, to determine the nature of programmes necessary to remedy these gaps and to increase the workforce's knowledge and understanding of policy aims. Also, to devise a system of monitoring and evaluating programmes [which could be readily understood and operated by programme workers], to ensure that programme outcomes were in line with policy demands.

This was a course of action advocated by Pestieau [2003:12] in her contention that policy implementation can best be evaluated by a form of research that combines 'behaviour change' and 'problem definition'. It was reasoned by the researcher that in order to achieve these goals and facilitate policy implementation, both providers and where possible service recipients, should be part of the policy implementation process and the development of suitable monitoring and evaluation systems. It was argued by Pestieau [2003], Cheetham [1997] and Copeland and Wexler [1995], that this process might be accomplished using an action research methodology.

Soon after the preliminary diagnosis of the research problem, the NAFW established a new Children and Youth Support Framework, which subsumed and built on to the existing programmes. The 'Cymorth Scheme' now identified a number of key themes for activity; each theme was accompanied by an overall aim and key indicators. [WAG Guidance 2002]. Programme managers were charged with the responsibility of monitoring the effectiveness of their programmes, through identification of targets for meeting the aims and objectives of the

WAG. Further, external evaluation of the scheme was now a mandatory condition of funding. The researcher, having given much thought to the choice of a methodology appropriate to external evaluation of the scheme and the need to overcome problems currently hampering policy implementation, decided to adopt the strategy of action research. The means by which this decision was arrived at were discussed in the previous chapter. Through the application of an action research methodology it was hoped to improve policy implementation; enlist service providers' and service users' cooperation and collaboration in identifying gaps in services; encourage identification of innovative means of intervention; experiment with new forms of practice to address service gaps and bring about changes in organisational structure [through encouraging better workforce participation] in service planning, implementation and outcome evaluation. It was agreed with middle-managers that this was a course of action which might encourage professional self development of programme managers and workers through a process of reflection on action. Also it might empower both service providers and users to become more active participants in the implementation and evaluation of policy implementation processes. According to Rothman [1995:49 55], such action research strategies are akin to methods of community development, one of the main aims of policy [see chapter 2]. It was hoped that the achievement of such outcomes would outweigh any disadvantages of action research methodology, such as those identified by Denscombe [1998], which were outlined in the previous chapter.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the proposed design of the study. Firstly, as a background to the research design, the merits of quantitative and qualitative research approaches will be discussed and their underlying philosophies explored. Also the chosen approach, methods of data collection and analysis and their limitations will be outlined. This is an exercise intended to illuminate some of the problems encountered in the design of this study. Next all stages of the study will be outlined, the research population and method of sampling discussed and methods of data collection at each stage of the study will be explained. Finally, issues relating to ethical considerations, generalisability, validity and reliability will be addressed.

4.2 The Research Design

As this study is primarily concerned with making sense of the problems involved in policy implementation and in promoting initiatives for changes and improvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the process, the researcher adopted an action research methodology. This was described and analysed in chapter three. According to Hart and Bond [1995:38] action research has

a distinct identity which spans a spectrum of research approaches from experimental to social constructivist methods. It can therefore be considered as a vehicle for both testing theories and models that may have been developed in other settings, or as a means of identifying patterns which may eventually lead to the formulation of a hypothesis, or the advance of a general theory which might be tested deductively. These two possible outcomes of applying an action research process are known respectively as 'deductive' or 'inductive' research methods. In the case of this study, the interests of the researcher were directed by the need of the County Borough commissioning the research, to evaluate the extent to which policy directives were being complied with. Thus the purpose of the study was not so much to test the model of policy implementation adopted, that is to deduce whether 'top down' or 'bottom up' policy models were more effective, but to better understand the intricacies of the processes involved in putting policy into action. In particular, how these processes could affect expected policy outcomes and whether or not, involving service providers and users in the process of policy implementation, through the application of an action research methodology could facilitate the attainment of policy goals. It was therefore planned that the study should adopt an inductive approach. The decision to adopt this approach was based on Majone and Wildavsky's [1984], observation [see Chapter Two], that the process of policy implementation is dynamic and more likely to be influenced by the ways that the organisation responsible for policy implementation, service providers and service users interpret and apply policy, rather than the effect of change strategies imposed upon the organisation. The research problem was therefore focused on the extent to which an action research methodology could aid interpretive evaluation of a policy implementation process.

4.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Processes.

According to Hart and Bond [1995:39] there are various definitions of action research, but they, following Sapsford and Abbott [1992:101-3] and Gill and Johnson [1991:57], prefer to describe action research as the antithesis of experimental research, as do Eden and Huxham [1993], Cohen and Manion [1984:47] and Susman and Evered [1978]. Hart and Bond argue that action research is fundamentally qualitative and therefore more appropriate for use in organisations concerned with the provision of care or social intervention. Qualitative research makes no attempt to count or quantify, its concern is to describe in detail and create insight into previously poorly understood phenomena. In contrast, quantitative research attempts to demonstrate and present its findings in terms of quantification and measurement [Desmond and Cormack 1991:6]. Parahoo [1997:51] points out differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches that

relate to philosophical assumptions, methods of data collection, and techniques of data analysis. Clarke [2000] also notes the appropriateness of qualitative research in respect of any programme concerned with the adoption of systems theory in respect of effecting change.

4.4 Philosophical assumptions

According to Parahoo [1997:51], quantitative research is *positivist*, as it adopts a modified form of empiricism; *reductionist*, because it reduces complex phenomena to simple units for recording purposes; and *deterministic*, because it relies on notions of cause and effect. By way of contrast, Parahoo argues that qualitative research examines phenomena from individual perspectives in the context in which they happen. It can therefore be viewed as holistic rather than reductionist and undeterministic because it does not attempt to reduce complex phenomena. Also it searches for individual experience, rather than cause or effect. These philosophical considerations undoubtedly affect the methods of data collection and data analysis chosen. Denscombe [1998:220] also contends that qualitative research has a number of advantages. In particular that the descriptions and theories it generates are 'grounded in reality', "thus leaving little scope for armchair theorising" or "ideas plucked from thin air". Also, Denscombe contends that qualitative research provides rich and detailed data, is better able to tolerate ambiguities and contradictions than quantitative methods and is also able to provide alternative explanations. Agreeing with this viewpoint, Miles and Huberman [1994:10] argued that the major feature of qualitative research is that it is able to focus on "naturally occurring ordinary events in natural settings". Because of this it provides a "strong handle on real life".

On the downside, Denscombe [1998:221] asserts that qualitative research may be less representative, because of its generality; less objective, because its interpretation is reliant upon the researcher's 'view of the world', though he also argues that quantitative methods may be guilty of 'glossing over points'. Other disadvantages are that it may oversimplify explanations, because in the quest to identify themes and develop generalisation, data that 'doesn't fit' can be underplayed or disregarded. Also, in the process of coding and categorising data there is a real danger that its true meaning may be lost. However, as was seen in the last chapter, qualitative and interpretive approaches to the study of policy implementation have previously been advocated by researchers such as Pestieau [2003: v] because of their capacity to look at the process of programme delivery and the learning that takes place from positive and negative experiences, as well as its results.

4.5 Data Collection

Denscombe [1998:178] argues that in quantitative research data collection methods are usually predetermined [constructed prior to the study], structured [specified in advance] and standardised [administered in the same way to all respondents]. Samples and sampling methods are also decided on in advance. In contrast, qualitative research relies more on unstructured interviews and observations [Denscombe, 1998:179] and Parahoo [1997:53]. Data collection methods are therefore more flexible and less structured. Questions may not be determined in advance, nor are respondents necessarily asked the same questions in the same way. Also samples need not be selected in advance of data collection, particularly when, in the course of a study, new phenomena may be identified and consequently have to be explored.

4.6 Data analysis

Denscombe [1998:204] argues that in quantitative research measurement of results is an important part of the process. Where appropriate, statistical tests are often used to establish the probability of certain phenomena occurring. In contrast, qualitative analyses do not subscribe to the necessity for measurement. The purpose of this approach is to make sense of the data and to identify structures that support findings. In short, it seeks to understand what is not understood, not to measure. For these reasons, Pestieau [2003] argues that qualitative forms of data analysis can suggest links between factors that assist or impede the policy implementation process, whereas quantitative approaches fail to link research results to policy decisions.

4.7 Limitations of Quantitative Approaches

Although according to Parahoo [1997:9], quantitative research has been described as one of the highest forms of attaining knowledge, critics such as Denscombe [1998:285] highlight its limitations in understanding human phenomena and suggest that data collected using this method are only as good as the methods used to collect them. Consequently, quantitative approaches can be described as producing only a partial view of the phenomena being investigated. The claim that quantitative approaches provide 'hard evidence' has become increasingly criticised, especially when dealing with human behaviour [Cormack, 1991:139].

Qualitative approaches are valued for their capacity to investigate the uniqueness of individuals and individual situations. According to Cresswell [1994], because of this qualitative research can be used to give participants 'a voice' in the research process. Denzin and Lincoln [1994] also noted how qualitative approaches are increasingly linked to 'action activist'-orientated research [Parahoo, 1997:60] and participatory action research, which consist of research, educative, and

socio-political elements and are specifically focused on attempts to challenge and change the status quo.

4.8 Limitations of Qualitative approaches

Critics of the qualitative approach consider its interactive nature to be its greatest weakness, as this is said to limit its objectivity. Mays and Pope [1995] suggested that qualitative research is particularly susceptible to researcher bias and it lacks reproducibility because of the fact that different researchers may come to very different conclusions. However, Parahoo [1997:62] argues that notions of objectivity, replicability, generalisability, reliability and validity are superfluous in qualitative research. Concern with these matters is said to be similar to the process of 'using the rules of one religion to judge another'. Qualitative researchers are described as having devised their own value systems, which consist of 'truth', 'value', 'applicability', 'consistency', and 'neutrality'. Mays and Pope [1995] support this view and suggest that these criteria can best be applied by giving an account of the method and data which can stand scrutiny, thereby ensuring that another trained researcher can analyse the same data in the same way and arrive at similar conclusions. In this study the qualitative methodology of action research will be used and every effort will be made to ensure that the criteria identified by Mays and Pope [1995], specified above, will be adhered to as closely as possible. The methods used and the data collection and analytic tools employed will be discussed in the following section, which describes the design of the study.

4.9 Addressing problems encountered in the design of the study

Action Research has two components, action and research. Parahoo [1997:171] states that,

"With action research, the emphasis is on action and research methods are used to inform this action".

Denscombe [1998: 57] defines action research as a means of dealing with real world problems and as a means of bringing about participative change through a cyclical process of analysis, reflection, implementation and re-evaluation. As has been shown in previous discussion collaboration between researcher and service providers allows the following factors to be addressed,

- identification of a practice problem [in this case, difficulties in policy implementation].
- using research to assess this problem.
- planning and implementing a change [collaboratively with service providers/users].
- evaluating the outcome.

In this study the 'practice problems' addressed were the difficulties experienced by programme implementers in putting new policy strategies into action; the lack of insight into policy aims; the inability to devise suitable strategies to research or assess the extent of the problem; a reluctance

to adopt new ways of working; a lack of a theoretical framework for implementation and measurement of policy goals and a lack of awareness of the need and importance of evaluating the outcomes of policy implementation. Therefore, it was rationalised that those concerned with the process of policy implementation required facilitation to overcome these problems. Action research was possibly a means whereby such facilitation could be provided, learning could take place and at the same time the policy implementation process could be better understood, implemented and evaluated, [see previous chapter]. In addition, it was perceived that action research had the propensity to enhance processes of community development.

Therefore a characteristic of the planned research study was collaboration between the researcher and the service providers and users, in order to solve practical problems. These practical problems related to:-

- The difficulties in policy implementation experienced by programme workers.
- The need for cooperation between the researcher and programme workers in changing practice through the construction of a new model /framework for intervention.
- The need for evaluation of the effectiveness of a new model jointly constructed for the purpose of evaluating the extent of policy implementation.

4.10 The stages of the study

This action research study was divided into 4 specific stages. Each stage represented one of the typologies in the spectrum of action research approaches, described in the previous chapter. It was hoped that working collaboratively with service providers and service users through each of these stages would bring about structural change in the system, enhance professional and personal development, as well as empower both professionals and service users to develop their community.

• Stage one - The Establishment Stage [Experimental stage of Action Research]

This consisted of a preliminary investigation of the activities of a selected sample of programmes and the identification of gaps in service provision and service outcomes. It culminated in a workshop in which the researcher and practitioners jointly reviewed the 'gaps' and agreed a strategy to remedy these. Contractual arrangements for the conduct of this study provided the sanction for the research to be carried out at the various worksites involved in policy implementation. All of the participants had been informed of the study by the 'Partnerships' that had been set up to instigate, manage and monitor the scheme [WAG 2001]. Participants were requested to take part in the research process, but there was no compulsion for them to do so involuntarily. To ensure high ethical standards, those participants who had been identified by

sampling to contribute to this preliminary stage, were contacted by the researcher. Verbal consent for visits was sought and programme practitioners were informed that there was no pressure on them to take part if they did not wish to do so. However, no programme workers refused to participate in the study. Confidentiality was assured in respect of information divulged, all research notes were securely stored by the researcher and at the end of the study these were destroyed. Service users were invited by programme leaders to attend focus groups. They too were informed that there was no obligation to attend; they could leave at any time. Also they were re-assured that any confidential information given would be treated according to conventional standards.

- **Stage Two [Organisational Change]**

A series of workshops were held, in which the researcher worked with practitioners and managers, [following the 'framework' in Fig.4] to explore the nature of 'gaps' in services and to enable them to construct a model of intervention capable of monitoring and evaluating the structure, process outputs and outcomes of programmes. All of the managers and programme workers were invited to these workshops. Although attendance was not compulsory, non-attendance occurred only because of illness or inordinate pressure of work. Invitations to attend the workshops were circulated via normal organisational communication channels. This stage of the research programme was primarily focused on involving service providers in the process of organisational change and enlisting their help to devise a monitoring tool, or model of evaluation. That model had to be capable of increasing the transparency of the process of programme delivery and user involvement in programme planning and evaluation. In particular, efforts were focused on helping professionals identify 'stretching' service aims and objectives, in line with the 'Cymorth Scheme' policy to reduce child poverty through inclusion, encouraging parents to work, to develop communities and to integrate these objectives into plans for service delivery. Thereby, it was hoped to align the outputs and outcomes of services with the expected outcomes of policy and to meet the needs and expectations of service users. This stage involved the construction and the testing of a rudimentary model of evaluation and reflection on how its use in practice might improve the effectiveness of policy implementation, enhance professional knowledge and skills and increase the potential to improve user outcomes. The model consisted of two sections [see appendix 4], the first clearly outlined the policy theme/s to be addressed by each programme [WAG, 2002]]; indicators chosen for the purpose of addressing the theme; the extent of baseline knowledge regarding indicators; targets identified by the programme;

objectives set for attaining targets; inputs required to achieve objectives; impacts expected and finally, outcomes to be achieved at the end of one year of programme delivery.

The second section of the model identified evaluation benchmarks that could be used to measure the extent to which the 'thrusts' of policy were being addressed during the process of programme delivery. These benchmarks addressed policy vision ; overall knowledge of local aspects of the theme; cohesiveness with other agencies in order to address the theme, the nature of unmet need; the degree of continuity in intervention ; the extent of community participation and development involved in attaining the objectives of the policy theme; the nature and extensiveness of measurable outputs and outcomes; the extent of training /mentoring offered to service users /volunteers ; the frequency of monitoring effectiveness of programmes and the extent to which attempts were made to influence policy making.

It was during this stage of the study that programme workers were encouraged to become active participants in the research process, through working closely with service users to define their needs and to meet those needs through processes of collaborative intervention, community development and programmes of social inclusion. Prior to this stage of the research, few of the programmes had been user led. Thus it was necessary for programme workers to have an opportunity to reflect on the importance and necessity of user involvement. Also to develop the skills needed to ensure user involvement in service planning and delivery. Thus, during this stage of the research process there was little direct contact between the researcher and service users but the participation of service users in the development and evaluation of the outcomes of programmes was observed to increase as service providers considered 'new' ways of service delivery.

•Stage Three [Professional development]

This stage of the study involved the testing of the efficacy of the model and its 'user-friendliness' for each of the programmes. Also reflection, on the part of programme providers, on the extent to which they perceived that the model was assisting them to identify suitable objectives, targets and inputs. This was in order that service providers might improve the outputs and outcomes of services in line with the expectations of the Cymorth scheme. Programme providers were asked to benchmark their progress against the policy implementation criteria provided in the second section of the model. For this stage of the research all programmes were contacted by managers, at the partnership level, to inform them of the need for a monitoring process to be carried out jointly by themselves and the researcher. This process was part of a formative evaluation of the process of using and applying the model, devised jointly by programme providers and the

researcher. During the course of the monitoring process, it was the intention of the researcher to assess the extent of the policy implementation process within each programme, to identify barriers to policy implementation and to help programme leaders and workers re-shape those programmes and services which had difficulty in implementing the Cymorth themes, in the way that WAG intended. During this stage of the study, all types of provision were monitored jointly by the researcher and the programme providers, in order to assess the functionality of the monitoring model that programme workers had helped to devise. Also their competence in the use of the model and evidence of improved user outcomes, as a result of policy implementation, were monitored. In all of the programmes the monitoring process was carried out by appointment and practitioners were informed of their freedom to decline to take part in this part of the scheme, if they did not wish to participate. Assurances were given regarding the handling of any emergent confidential information relating to service users experiences of the model's implementation.

At the end of this stage workshops were again arranged in order for a representative sample of programme providers, [those who had been most successful in applying the model and who had made most progress in attaining policy criteria benchmarks], to present their experiences of using the model, and for all service users to discuss the need for any further modifications of the model. In terms of the action research framework adhered to in the study, it was obvious at this third stage, that all programme providers had made some progress in their professional development as a result of the action research process adopted for the study.

Stage four [Empowerment]

In the final stages of the research study, a random sample of programmes and programme providers was chosen in order to summatively evaluate the extent to which both programme providers and users' knowledge of policy had increased and strategies for policy implementation had improved. This part of the study involved a review of the scope of policy objectives covered by the programme, that is the number of Cymorth themes now being addressed by each programme; the effectiveness of the model in monitoring policy outcomes, that is the extent to which the model made the process of policy implementation more transparent; evaluating the extent to which policy benchmarks had been met and therefore, the intended aims of policy implemented ; the 'inclusiveness' of users in policy implementation processes and the capability of both service providers and service users to recognise and report shortfalls in policy provision and implementation. Thereby, the extent to which both programme providers and service users had made progress along an 'empowerment' continuum and were better able to implement and evaluate policy was assessed.

4.11 The Research Population

The population consisted of a total of 34 programmes and all the service providers and users. Collectively, these programmes covered a wide spectrum of needs related to children between the ages of 0-18 years and their families, [though the upper age limit was later expanded to 25 years because of the perceived need of extended support for those with learning difficulties]. The programmes could be categorised into :-

- Pre-school intervention programmes.
- Family support /parenting development programmes.
- Outreach schemes for parents with learning difficulties.
- Counselling programmes.
- Women's Aid programmes.
- Programmes concerned with raising awareness of children's needs.
- Child safety programmes.
- Parenting skills programmes.
- Child-minding programmes.
- Young carers support programmes.
- Play resource centres.
- Toy library schemes.
- Play schemes.
- Children's rights programmes.
- Befriending schemes for families of children with a disability.
- Childcare training schemes.
- Support schemes for young people leaving care.
- Speech and language development programmes.
- Social inclusion programmes.
- Youth access schemes.

[It is significant to note that although the policy programme was predicated upon the importance of community development, no community development programme existed and therefore it was difficult to see how social inclusion programmes could be sustained. When the researcher enquired about this, the local authority representatives stated that they had been told by officials from the WAG that it should be integral to all programmes. However, investigation by the researcher showed that very few of the programmes had considered the issue].

These programmes were staffed by varying numbers of workers, depending on the size and nature of the project. At this stage it was becoming clear that it would not be possible to include all programmes in each stage of the study and therefore, a sample of some sort would have to be made, during some stages, in order to comply with constraints on the researcher's and respondents' time.

4.12 The Study Sample [Stage one]

The purpose of stage one of the studies was to identify 'gaps' in the policy implementation process. Initially, it was decided that due to restrictions on both time and resources, preliminary evaluation of a programme's adherence to policy aims would be limited to a purposive sample, representative of all categories of programmes initiated under the scheme. A purposive sample is described by Parahoo [1997:232], as one in which the researcher deliberately chooses to include in a study respondents of his/her choice, on the basis that those selected will be likely to provide the required data. However, in the case of this study, care was taken to include in the sampling frame an example of all types of programme offered by the County Borough, in which the evaluative study of 'Cymorth' policy implementation was being carried out. The sample was therefore chosen deliberately, on the basis that the best examples were being provided for the purpose of generating data on the issue being researched. This was done with specific considerations in mind. Parahoo [1997:232] suggested that in choosing a purposive sample, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the research question, rather than choose samples because of their convenience, or the fact that they have volunteered, or have been directed to volunteer.

In this study, a particular emphasis was placed on this advice, as the researcher believed that it was important to maintain objectivity and eliminate bias. Bryman [1995] suggests that an important aspect of the collection of data, in purposive sampling, is the careful selection of units to which the data relate, but it is rare for a population to be sufficiently small for all units to be included. Therefore, it is incumbent on the researcher to select a representative sample, that is, a sample that is representative of the whole population. Without a representative sample, there is support for the argument that results may be idiosyncratic and of unknown generality. To enhance the likelihood of achieving a representative sample, a process of random sampling, wherein each unit had the chance of being chosen, was necessary. In this study, undertaking a simple random sample of the programmes involved in the scheme would have meant that the variety of programmes would not have been adequately represented. Therefore, it was necessary to undertake a stratified, random sample from which the purposive sample could be drawn. This approach involved dividing the population of 34 programmes into strata which represented each type of unit of interest. By taking a random sample from each of these strata, the researcher ensured that the resulting sample of twelve programmes accurately reflected the population in terms of function, or in the case of this study, programmes. In this study, after categorising each programme according to the specific nature of interventions, a purposive selection of each type of programme was made. However, where there was only one programme of a particular type the

researcher had no choice but to include it in the study. The programmes chosen consisted of the following categories:-

- Family support [Programmes 1+2 *] [this scheme consisted of several programmes run from two different sites Its purpose was to provide parenting support to families experiencing difficulties in managing their young children]
- ‘Sure-Start’ [Programme 3*] [A programme for improving children’s developmental progress]
- Under 3s project for disadvantaged children [Programme 4 *] [A programme to enhance learning opportunities for families living in a deprived area]
- Parenting skills [Programme 5*] [A skills based programme for parents who were experiencing parenting problems with older children]
- Support for young people leaving care [Programme 6*] [This programme provided support and training for young people leaving care]
- ‘Young Carers’ project [Programme 7 *] [This programme provided support for children and young people caring for relatives]
- A special needs advisory service [Programme 8 *] [This programme provided support for families of children with special needs]
- A school exclusion programme [Programme 9 *] [The programme supported children and young people excluded from school]
- A Women’s Aid programme [Programme 10*] [The programme was provided by a women’s refuge, and supported families experiencing family violence]
- A Speech and Language Programme [Programme 11*] [This programme provided early speech therapy interventions for children judged to be slow in language development]
- A Welsh Language Programme [Programme 12 *] [This programme was specifically designed to provide support and developmental activities for Welsh /learning families]

NB. Programmes have been numbered for clarification of the analysis which is presented in the following chapter

Stage two

In the second stage of the study workshops were arranged for the total population of both service providers and programme managers. As the total population was invited to attend, three workshops were needed to accommodate workers from all of the programmes involved in the scheme. Only 80% of managers were able to attend as some were prevented by pressure of work.

Stage three

In the third stage of the study, working visits were made to all programmes included in the original sample, in order to facilitate their use of the evaluation model devised as the result of the workshops. During this stage of the study programme managers and service providers were asked to reflect on the value of the model, as a tool for policy implementation and, to modify the model according to individual need. This was an exercise which, in the majority of cases, assisted programme providers to become involved in a process of professional development, governed by the identification of individual learning needs. At the end of this stage the total population of programme providers was brought back together for a formative evaluation of the policy implementation model. A purposive sample of those programme providers who had used the model most effectively, was chosen to demonstrate to others how the model had improved their ability to implement policy.

Stage four

The fourth stage of the study reverted to the system of stratified random sampling adopted in stage one. From the stratified random sample a further purposive sample was chosen for more in depth interviewing, regarding the application of the modified evaluation model that had emerged from the third stage of the study. This sample provided the researcher with a summative evaluation of the efficacy of the model.

4.13 Data Collection [Stage one - Experimental approach]

In stage one of the study data collection was carried out using a qualitative survey approach, described by Bryman [1995] as conventionally associated with questionnaires and interviews. Marsh [1982] however, claimed that survey design can incorporate other methods of data collection, such as structured observation or research based on existing statistics or documentation. In this study the data collection tools used within each programme were analysed and loosely structured interviews were undertaken with programme managers and workers. These activities were to ascertain the key Cymorth themes adopted by the programme and the links made to other themes, in order to broaden existing aims, objectives and expected outcomes of programmes. Service user focus groups were also organised, and outcome data was again collected using a loosely structured interview schedule which focused on users' perceptions of access to services; the relevance of the programme to the needs of the community; how the programme had benefited individuals; the perceived equity of provision for needs with comparative communities; the social acceptability of the programme and its perceived efficiency and effectiveness.

Examination of documents or records has been identified by Bryman [1995] as an integral element of qualitative research. In this study, programme workers were asked to produce any form of documentation, for recording quantitative or qualitative data, used in their programmes. These documents were examined by the researcher for evidence of the policy aims, objectives to achieve these aims, targets for their accomplishment and evaluation of service outcomes. In loosely structured interviews respondents have considerable latitude over what they want to say and how they say it. According to Bryman [1995], this data collection tool, which at most is guided by an aide-memoir to ensure that salient points are covered, allows respondents to go off at a tangent, or to choose to speak about issues that s/he believes to be important. The researcher goes along with the drift of the discussion, often asking questions that seem to be of interest, but has to remain alert to the necessity of keeping respondents focused on the objectives of the study. In this study the researcher, using an aide-memoir [see appendix 6], asked respondents to give an account of:-

- The theme, aims and objectives of their programme.
- Its technical effectiveness.
- The process of care provided by the programme.
- Any continuity between the programme and other agencies and services.
- Technical outcomes of the service provided.
- The effectiveness of the programme in reaching target families.
- The degree of provider satisfaction and autonomy in the planning and delivery of services.
- The degree of self assessment of effectiveness.

Responses to questions and prompts were recorded in note form and afterwards transcribed and analysed using content analysis, whereby the main themes of the responses were identified. Focus groups were set up to assess service users perceptions of programmes designed to implement policy, and their perceived outcomes for service users. Parahoo, [1997:296] defines focus groups, '*As an interaction between one or more researcher and more than one respondent for the purpose of collecting research data*'.

The purpose of focus group interviews is to obtain different perspectives on a phenomenon, [in this case, the perceived nature of programmes and the outcomes of child and family policy for service users]. Their major advantage is that valuable data can be obtained quickly. Kitzinger [1994], cited in Milburn [1995], suggests that some people are often more comfortable in voicing their opinions when in a group and there is an opportunity for participants to reflect on, and react to, the opinions of others, which sometimes can generate valuable insights into the subject under discussion. On the other hand, group pressure to conform may affect the nature of the information given. The disadvantages of focus groups are that dominant personalities or factions can

monopolise the discussion and express their views at the expense of others. Cowley et al [1996] proposes that this can best be controlled by allowing the group to determine the direction of the conversation within the framework devised for the session. The larger the group, the more difficult is the task of managing it. Even when interviewers are skilled, it may be difficult to ensure that all opinions are heard. In addition, focus groups may not be suitable for discussion of sensitive or personal issues. Also the taking of notes and audio-taping is difficult if several people talk at once. The analysis of data may also be daunting.

According to Parahoo [1997:296], as focus group interviews are not replicable, another disadvantage is that the reliability and validity of the findings are difficult to ascertain. However, it is possible to feed back information to members of the group so that they can confirm that the data collected is a true representation of their views. In this study, service users were invited to attend focus group interviews so that they could generate ideas regarding the nature of preferred service outcomes, preferred methods of service delivery, and perceived gaps or shortfalls in the services they were receiving. Again, data recorded during the interview was analysed using content analysis in order to identify the main themes. At the conclusion of this stage a workshop was arranged so that researchers and programme workers could identify perceived gaps in service provision, evaluation processes and how practice might be improved.

Stage Two [Organisational /professionalizing approach]

This stage consisted of a series of workshops in which problems related to 'gaps' in service provision, evaluation procedures and practice procedures were identified, discussed and remedies sought. The aim of the workshops was to ensure that through the application of the action research methodology, programme workers would be enabled to shift from a consensus model of working, to one in which they felt empowered to bring about the structural changes necessary for the implementation of policy. Thus the content of the workshops consisted of a series of group exercises which enabled participants to identify the reasons for 'gaps' in services, the shortfalls of current evaluation processes and practice procedures, and to determine ways in which these could be remedied and changed. This activity was assisted by the production of a work book [see appendix 7], to aid participants recognition of service shortfalls. The outcome of the workshops was a draft model of service evaluation strategies, incorporating the main thrusts of policy. Visits by the researcher to each programme were then arranged. These were intended for the purpose of working with the programme workers to modify the model to suit their individual need. During workshops and visits the researcher took copious notes of discussions and interviews, all of which

were again transcribed and analysed using content analysis to identify predominant themes relating to the policy implementation process.

Stage Three [Professionalizing/ empowering approach]

Hart and Bond [1995:44] use the term 'professionalising' to denote an agenda which can be grounded in practice. Its purpose is to encourage professional development and enhance professional skills. In this stage of the research each programme was assisted by the researcher to assess the degree to which the jointly constructed model had enabled workers in the programmes,

- To address the gaps in service provision.
- Incorporate policy direction.
- Modify practice.
- Internalise the need for continuous evaluation to ensure policy implementation.
- Accomplish structural change for community development.
- Ensure preventive activity.
- Ensure collaborative working.
- Ensure the participation and development of service users.
- Achieve professional development.

Data collection was again by means of an interview guided by an aide-memoir. The interview was based on the components of the model, the purpose of the exercise being to assess how the model was being used in practice. During this stage practitioners were encouraged to employ the process of reflection to evaluate changes in culture and practice. Holter and Schwartz-Barcott, [1993:299] recommended this approach as a means of bridging the gap between theory research and practice. Content analysis was used to identify themes related to the efficacy /or otherwise of the model and continuing gaps in policy adherence and service provision identified in stage one of the study. Workshops were arranged for the total population of service providers, during which a purposive sample of the most successful users of the model were requested to present an account of their use of the model and to evaluate its effectiveness for ensuring policy implementation within their programmes. All participants were then asked to discuss any final adjustments that they considered necessary and the researcher then modified the model accordingly. At the end of this stage the finalised model was presented to each programme for a summative evaluation of its effectiveness.

Stage Four [Empowerment]

Empowerment was defined by Hart and Bond [1995: 40] as a process of 'consciousness raising' Rothman [1995:205] defines empowerment as,

"A process of increasing, personal, interpersonal, or political power, so that individuals can take action to improve their life situations".

However, it is pointed out that as empowerment theory has its roots in various epistemological disciplines, the use of the term may be vague and can mean different things. Rothman [p.42-43] illustrates this argument by showing the term is sometimes used in a contradictory fashion. For example, in terms of 'locality development' the term conveys the gaining of community competence- "*the skills to make decisions that people can agree and act on*". It is also said to convey "*the development of a sense of personal mastery, of individual growth which is considered as a component of community building*". In terms of social planning 'empowerment' is associated with the giving and receiving of information so that 'informed' consultation and choice are facilitated. It is only in terms of 'social action' that the term 'empowerment' is regarded as meaning the acquisition of material power or political clout to affect decisions. Balloch and Taylor [2001:244] suggest that in terms of educational theory the term 'empowerment' refers to a process of 'conscientisation', based on Friere's [1972:27] ideas of a panacea for the problems of overcoming oppressive social structures. In respect of the final stage of this study the term 'empowerment' was interpreted in much the same way as Rothman interprets its usages in respect of 'locality development' and 'social planning' interventions. Indeed, Hart and Bond [1995:42-43] determine that 'empowerment' in terms of action research refers to the development of negotiative abilities to manage change, pluralistic definitions of improvement and shared roles in research. Thus through progression of policy implementers through an empowerment continuum of action research it was hoped that in the last and final stage of the study, participants might undertake a summative evaluation of the effectiveness of the model. A purposive sample of programmes was chosen in order to evaluate the extent of change since the use of the model. The results of this sample's summative evaluation formed the basis of the final report on the effectiveness of the action research programme to effect change in the extent of policy implementation.

4.14 Data Collection and Analysis

In this study a variety of data collection methods were used, documentary research, unstructured interviews, and group interviewing.

Documentary research

Bryman [1995:188] claims that materials used to yield data in documentary research may consist of several types of information, such as reports, memorandums, speeches, statistical records, and compilations of information. Each may provide data on a variety of characteristics of an organisation. Denscombe [1998:161] claims that organisations possess a wealth of documents

relating to administration, policy, management, finance and commerce. These may contain '*a pretty systematic picture of things that have happened*'. Therefore, Denscombe concludes that such documents can provide a detailed and accurate picture of what should and has taken place.

In the case of this study of the implementation of the 'Cymorth' scheme, the first documents to be scrutinised were Government and Welsh Assembly publications, as it was claimed by Denscombe, that these are authoritative, [they have been produced by the state, drawing on large resources and expert professional knowledge, factors that are said to result in documents having credibility]. Objective, [since data is produced by officials it should be regarded as impartial] and factual, [usually such documents are based on statistically tested data which constitute 'hard facts' and are unambiguous]. Denscombe [1998:161] concludes that the advantages of documentary research are that data is usually accessible. It is also cost effective and permanent. However, it is advised that care should be taken to evaluate the authority of the source of data, in order to gauge its credibility. Also, it is advised by Denscombe that data may have been produced for purposes other than those of the current investigation and that documents may owe more to the interpretation of those that produced them than to an objective view of reality. All of these factors were borne in mind whilst reading relevant reports referred to in Chapter One and to the Cymorth scheme implementation documents produced for local authorities by the WAG. It was from these documents that the principle policy themes and directives were identified.

When analysis of government documents and publications had been completed, the evaluation records of each programme were scrutinised in order to evaluate the extent to which policy directives were being addressed. Following the second stage of the study, when an evaluation model was formulated, it was the extent of the use of this model and its effectiveness in facilitating policy implementation that was scrutinised. This scrutiny was undertaken by both the researcher and the service providers, it was aimed at assessing the efficacy of the model in making the policy implementation process more visible.

Unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews are defined by Denscombe [1998: 113] as allowing interviewees to speak their minds and develop their own thoughts, whilst the interviewer is as un-intrusive as possible. According to Denscombe, the unstructured interview is aimed at discovery rather than checking and it lends itself to in depth investigation, particularly when it explores personal accounts of experiences and feelings. According to Sarantakos [1998: 247] this type of interview has no strict procedure. Sarantakos suggests that in its extreme form an unstructured interview is theoretically inconceivable as there has to be a degree of structure. A view agreed with by Parahoo [1997:293].

Nevertheless, in this type of interview there is no strict ordering of questions and the researcher is able to 'pick up' on certain research points by formulating appropriate questions and employing neutral, probing techniques. The structure of the interview is flexible and the researcher encourages the respondent to be expansive when providing answers. In this study, unstructured interviews were carried out with the head of each programme selected for inclusion in the sample.

Group Interviews

Denscombe [1998:114] defines group interviews as opportunities for a researcher to pose questions to a sequence of individuals. Lewis [1992:413] argues that group interviews have several advantages over individual interviews, as they help to reveal consensus views and to generate richer responses through allowing participants to challenge one another's views. They may be used to verify data gained through other methods and enhance the reliability of responses. Denscombe describes group interviews as having more than one respondent involved in the interview process. All respondents are said to be simultaneously addressed by the researcher and the purpose of a group interview differs from that of an individual interview, in that it allows the researcher to gather different perspectives on the same phenomenon in a short space of time. Although group interviews are only possible with general issues, they do provide opportunities for brainstorming and obtaining valuable data quickly.

Bryman [1995:179] asserts that some people are more comfortable voicing their opinions in the company of others. The group also provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on and react to, the opinions of others. They may agree or disagree, thus a range of opinions may be gathered. The sharing of experiences can provide valuable insights into phenomena. However, Denscombe [1998:114] points out that there are some major disadvantages in group interviews. Dominant personalities may monopolise discussions and intimidate less confident and articulate people. Parahoo [1997:299] also cautions that group interviews cannot be used effectively for the purpose of examining sensitive or personal issues. It is also difficult to record data in group interviews as it is impossible to take notes when many people are talking at the same time. Tape recorders often only capture the voices of those seated near to them. Data analysis may also be difficult. Group interviews are not replicable, and it is difficult to ascertain their reliability and validity. In this study, despite these drawbacks, it was found that group interviews played an important part in the data collection process. This was because of the fact that they allowed for discussion, the airing of views and reflection on practice. They revealed a great deal of in-depth information and valuable insights into practice and organisational culture.

4.15 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyse data collected from both individual and group interviews. Denscombe [1998:167] defines content analysis as a method which helps the researcher to analyse the content of documents or any text, thereby providing an investigative study of the thematic aspects of communication. The method aims to make inferences about individual or group values, sentiments, intentions or ideologies. It is suggested by Sarantakos [1998:281] that content analysis has two aims: - The first is to identify manifest content - the obvious aspects of the interview responses. The second, is to identify the latent content, that is the underlying meaning conveyed by the response or conversation. In this study efforts were made to address both the manifest and latent content of the respondents' conversations. Denscombe [1998:167] argues that the main strength of content analysis is that it is a method that can be repeated by other researchers, though care must be taken not to dislocate meanings from the context in which they were made.

4.16 Ethical Considerations

Bryman [1995:3] argues that especially in any form of organisational research, it is important for the investigator to be sensitive to the ethical and political dimensions of a study. It is Bryman's view that when research access is organised by senior management [as was the case in this study], a researcher may be faced with the possibility of suspicion, regarding the true aims of the research. In particular, the research study may be perceived as a management tool for rationalisation of the work-force, or a means of gaining inside information about work patterns at all levels of the organisation. It is therefore important for the researcher to re-assure both management and workers over the issue of neutrality and ethical considerations. Parahoo [1997:78] discusses the ethical principles that are important at every stage of a research process.

These are:-

- Beneficence-** the need to ensure that the research project benefits both individuals and society in general [by contributing to the pool of knowledge on an issue].
- Non-maleficence-** the research should not cause any harm to participants.
- Fidelity-** trust should be built between the researcher and the participants.
- Justice-** a researcher must be fair to participants by not giving preferential treatment to some and depriving others of attention.
- Veracity-** at all times a researcher must be truthful and honest even though this may cause participants to withdraw from the research.

Confidentiality- the confidentiality of information collected from recipients must be respected.

In short, participants in research have an ethical right not to be harmed, the right of full disclosure, and the right of self determination [to withdraw at any time] and the right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality.

For the above reasons the researcher ensured from management that all participants in the study would be able to give informed consent, in respect of their participation. Also, that they would have a right to withdraw at any time, without any coercion on the part of the participating organisations. At preliminary meetings with both managers and staff, ethical issues were discussed and the positions of both the researcher and the organisations clarified. This process proved to be of benefit in reducing tensions that might otherwise have occurred. Rappoport [1970:505] argues that inevitably, in respect of using an action research methodology, there are tensions between the goals of social science and action. These tensions were referred to as 'goal dilemmas'. Hart and Bond [1995:95] concur that the tension between the academic community and the goals of sponsors is a familiar theme. For example, Halsey [1972:175] showed how action research can cause 'action situations'. Commenting on this, Hart and Bond [1995:95] suggest that in respect of action research, use of the experimental, or fact finding typology may not cause a great deal of tension between the researcher and the researched. However, when awareness of problems is raised and issues that may be 'uncomfortable' for the organisation, or for workers, are put on the agenda commitment to the research process may falter. Especially, this might be the case when during the organisational phase differences in viewpoints between staff and management may be revealed, or faults are identified in the structure, function or culture of the organisation; when at the professionalizing stage, conflicts are revealed between organisational and professional goals, or when at the empowerment stage, increased autonomy of service providers and recipients may be perceived to lessen the power of the organisation. To overcome the likelihood of such conflicts occurring, Hart and Bond [1995:98] advise that it is prudent to discuss and agree with sponsors, beforehand, the responsibilities of researcher and sponsors. Also to discuss the degree of direction and influence that the study might have on all levels of the organisation and the community served, both on a day to day basis and strategically, in the longer term. These researchers also recognised the need for early identification of other stakeholders whose interests or political agendas require to be made explicit, especially if there is a danger that these may later disrupt the research process. In addition, they emphasise the importance of agreeing contingency plans to cover situations where key figures may move on during the life of a research project and the need to define group boundaries, that is of the

researcher and the researched. The latter being particularly important where these may have to be re-negotiated as the project moves forward or the roles of people within the organisation change. Geddes et al [1993:32] therefore suggest that a key task of an action researcher, especially in the fields of health or social care, is to be an interface manager and to be skilled at working across professional boundaries. This is a view supported by a number of other researchers such as, Cunningham [1993], Pettigrew and Whipp [1991] and Haynes [1989], because of the need to manage an action research project through a series of cycles, shifts and developments. It is the view of these researchers that consideration of the above factors can identify practical ways of minimising conflict and maximising collaboration. Also it is a means of diverting ethical problems.

In the case of this study, attention was paid to all of these recommendations, but even so, some of the organisations in the 'partnerships' proved to be less responsive to shifts and developments than others. A particular problem encountered was one that related to negotiations for covering situations where key people moved on. In stage three of the study an unforeseen occurrence was that key management of the programme passed from the local council to the education department. As a result, key people previously in charge of the project were demoted and replaced. Because the education department had a more hierarchical culture than other organisations involved in the project and had not been party to previous discussion and developments, the researcher had to spend much time explaining and justifying the research methodology used and in engaging the organisation in appreciating the need for a participative community development approach to attain policy goals.

Denscombe [1998:63] states that another distinct ethical problem for action researchers may occur when the research is centred on the activity of practitioners. This is because it is inevitable that during the process of reflecting upon practice in multidisciplinary settings the activity of colleagues may also come under the microscope, because their activity interlinks with the process of the research. Stating that practitioners are not 'islands', isolated from routine contact with colleagues and clients. Denscombe asserted that,

"Their practice and the changes that they seek to make can hardly occur without a knock-on effect for others who operate close-by, in organisational terms".

It is contended that this may lead to staff finding themselves in an ethical dilemma, especially if the practice of some workers deviates from what others perceive is required in the interests of policy implementation. This was indeed the case in this study, particularly in relation to some of the gaps in policy implementation and service provision noted in all stages of the study.

Weaknesses in some of the projects had a potential to adversely influence the implementation of the whole programme. To overcome such difficulties, frank and open discussions of perceived problems and difficulties was encouraged.

In particular, ethical issues were raised in relation to responsibility for leadership in respect of policy implementation. That is project managers were sometimes criticised by staff for not recognising deficits in organisational structure and skills relating to need detection, collaborative working, self-governance, knowledge, the degree of user participation and community development. Some organisations were criticised by others for not perceiving the need for collaboration between agencies, thereby disrupting continuity in service provision. Others were very critical of a disregard for the importance of social inclusion as an outcome of policy implementation and the consequent waste of resources that may have resulted, because of a lack of sustainability of any improvements achieved through the Cymorth programme.

In some instances, service providers within and between organisations criticised each others' practices and cultures. A particular example of this appeared to be in respect of poor communication. Such deficits were perceived by workers to be the result of perpetuated myths, received knowledge regarding issues of confidentiality, power and status, or implicit acceptance of the status quo and a reluctance to visualise, or accept change. In some instances of communication and disclosure, there were examples of potentially dangerous practice contravening the terms of 'the need to know' guidance on confidentiality of the Human Rights' legislation [2000], reported by staff. The concerns were subsequently addressed by service managers.

Denscombe [1998] perceived that because of the likelihood of such occurrences, action researchers cannot be exempt from the need to gain authorisation of their roles and boundaries. They need to have a clear idea of when and where the research may step outside the bounds of collecting information which relates to the practitioners alone and when and where, the information they gather may have implications for other people, the organisation concerned, other agencies, or statutory bodies. Consequently, the usual standards of research ethics must be observed, permission obtained, confidentiality maintained [with respect for the 'need to know' basis of information transmission] and identities protected. Thus it can be argued that researchers must execute transparency in all aspects of their practice and the need for informed consent from those involved in the research must be recognised. In the case of this study, at each stage of the research process contractual agreements between the commissioners of the research and the researchers were monitored by service appointees, at partnership levels. Consent to all aspects of

the research process was therefore agreed at this level, following consultation with programme workers. Nevertheless, consent was obtained from the programme managers for all interactions with projects and project workers undertaken by the researchers.

4.17 Issues of generalisibility, validity and reliability

Denscombe [1998:64] suggests that given the constraints on the scope of action research projects, it could be argued that findings might rarely contribute to broader insights. Because action research tends to be located in work-sites, the prospects for generalisibility and representativeness may be curtailed. The research setting, context and constituent features are 'givens' rather than factors which can be controlled or varied and the research is generally focused on one site rather than spread across a range of examples. Bryman [1995:187] claims that some organisations may not wish the findings of an action research study to be made known, because of ethical and political implications. However, Bryman asserts that in contrast to other forms of organisational research, which may only have peripheral relevance to organisations, the methodology has considerable support from researchers because of its potential to be carried out within a framework that makes a contribution to knowledge and provides a route for rapid application of social scientific knowledge. Schofield [1993] and Stake [1978], argue that in any form of qualitative research what may be most important is the notion of 'naturalistic generalisation'. This notion is explained as the use of the findings from one study to understand similar situations in a different setting. In particular, Schofield asserts the fact that qualitative studies can be of use in understanding other similar phenomena, is of more interest to qualitative researchers than the notion of 'generalisibility'. Agreeing with this view, Parahoo [1997:240] claims that in respect of qualitative studies, it is for the reader to determine whether a study may be useful to other settings.

As in the case of this study the research was limited to one County Borough [although data was gathered from more than thirty sites, which differed in aspects of focus and nature of intervention], the study is obviously vulnerable to the kind of criticism outlined above. That is the findings relating to one instance, or one organisation, should not be generalised beyond this 'specific case'. However, it may be argued that the similarities in the data gathered from all programmes involved in policy implementation within the County Borough, help to make the findings of this one study fairly robust. As Millman [1976] argued the study of the 'typical' rather than the 'unusual' may provide sufficient validity for advocating the generalisibility of the findings of the study.

The concept of validity relates to whether a study actually measures what it purports to measure. Bryman [1995:54-57] claimed that 'face validity' refers to whether there is an apparent correspondence between the measure used and the concept in question. In these study practitioners were the judges of whether interview content, for both individuals and focus groups, related to the concepts explored. The absence of any criticisms or complaints appeared to confirm the face validity of the measures. This observation appears to correspond with the observations of Parahoo [1997:271] that validity depends on the degree to which questions used in interviews adequately represent the phenomena being studied.

'Criterion validity' connects the measure with a relative criterion [Bryman, 1995]. In the case of this study, measures in the form of unstructured interview schedules and various validated typologies, frameworks, models and assessment strategies were used. These had clear links with policy strategy and literature. This was confirmed by peer audit, and confirmation of the participants. Parahoo [1997:271] confirms that criterion validity is best decided on by the comparison of findings with data collected on the same phenomena by other methods. The use of the various methods described above to collect and compare data gathered from workers involved in the various projects of the policy programme, helped to confirm the criterion validity of the data.

Construct validity relates to the possibilities of drawing hypotheses about likely connections between concepts of interest and other concepts [Bryman, 1995:59]. The measure links validation to the theoretical arena. In the instance of this study, policy literature and reports clearly indicated the ramifications inherent in policy focused on children, young people and their families, and the likely outcomes of failing to put policy into practice.

4.18 Reliability

According to Bryman [1995:55], this is a concept which relates to the consistency of a measure. Agreeing with this view, Parahoo [1997:38] defines reliability as,

"The consistency of a particular method to measure or observe the same phenomena".

It refers to the degree to which a measure is consistent over time. In the case of this study application of the measures to a number of different programmes, on different occasions, yielded consistent information and replicated themes, thereby confirming the reliability of the measures. At each stage of this study data collection was followed by analysis and the feeding back of the results to programme managers and practitioners, so that adjustments could be made to practice. In the light of these adjustments further evaluation of practice standards were made on the basis

of practitioners' and researchers' judgements. Thus portrayal of the methodological process adopted in this study can be visualised as a cyclical process, which has the capability to achieve the quest for perpetual development built into the idea of policy change, professional, community and personal development processes. The crucial points about the cycle of inquiry in action research are that:-

- the process is on going and thus is receptive to policy change.
- that research should feed back directly into organisation management and practice.

In this way, development rather than stultification becomes the norm. All of the criteria discussed above were of the utmost importance to the study, but throughout, the researcher was also keenly aware of the importance of the criteria of truth, value, applicability and consistency which characterise qualitative research. In the following chapter the methods of data analysis used will be explained in more depth and the results of the study will be presented.

4.19 Conclusions

In this chapter the context of the study was discussed and it was shown that even though the local borough involved had 'pockets' of high deprivation, before the commencement of this study there had been little effort to monitor or evaluate the policy implementation process designed to remedy problems of social deprivation and exclusion. Neither had there been any serious attempt to ensure good 'governance' of the policy programme. It appeared that the normative guidance relating to policy issued by the WAG, in relation to evaluation, may have been poorly understood by those that had the responsibility to implement it. As a result, a form of 'compliance' strategy had been instituted, in which programme providers had been charged by the managers of the strategy, at the local level, to identify the aims and targets of their individual programmes. This was in order that some form of measurement could be submitted to WAG. Unfortunately, it appeared that a poor understanding of the 'stretching' and 'joined-up' aims of child and family policy hampered identification of suitable objectives to attain policy goals. To compound this matter, project managers and their staff appeared to have little understanding of terms such as aims and targets and therefore, did not know how best to identify these. It was therefore perceived that the process of policy implementation appeared to be less than robust. The apparent challenges for the researcher were to identify problems causing 'gaps' in the policy implementation process and to determine the nature of intervention required to 'remedy' such gaps. Also, to determine ways of facilitating workforce and people development, in order to overcome gaps and to sustain policy implementation through ongoing monitoring and evaluation

of policy outcome status. It was therefore decided to base the research design of the study on a spectrum of action research typologies, [see Chapter 3], designed to 'shift' service implementers from merely identifying policy implementation problems to being empowered to overcome them. Action research was described as an inductive form of research capable of illuminating the intricacies involved in processes of putting policy into practice and improving policy outcomes. Inductive research is fundamentally qualitative and is concerned to provide insight into poorly understood processes. It makes no attempt to reduce the complexity of a situation, but provides an actual account of what takes place in practice. Although there are criticisms of inductive qualitative processes, it was seen that this is said to be the best method of understanding human phenomena, such as those which may disrupt policy implementation processes. The study was planned to be carried out in four stages. As was discussed above, these followed the trajectory of action research typologies through identification of the problems [experimental stage], using research to assess the problem [organisational phase], planning and implementing change [professionalising stage] and evaluating outcomes [empowering stage].

Methods used for data collection consisted of documentary analysis, group interviews and semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was planned to be carried out using content analysis, a process concerned with identifying themes and their underlying meanings, thereby making the process of policy implementation potentially more visible.

The research population consisted of thirty four projects, thus engaging all of the service providers and users involved. A purposive sample representing all types of project was chosen. In the final stage of the study it was planned that this sample would be further reduced, in order to accommodate more in-depth interview processes. Finally issues relating to generalisation of action research validity and reliability were addressed.

Chapter Five

Results of the Study

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three it was shown that an important feature of action research is its capacity to allow participants to reflect on actions undertaken and thereby, to consider whether change is necessary to address deficits in knowledge or practice. It may have been for these reasons action research was an approach to programme evaluation recommended by WAG [WAG 2002]. In this chapter, the preliminary results of the study will be presented. The presentation will, as far as possible, cover the whole process of policy implementation described in the preliminary chapters of the study. In accordance with the frameworks identified by Clarke [2000:265] and Copeland and Wexler [1995 :57], [Figures 2 and 3], it will be shown how gaps in policy implementation were identified and how reasons for their occurrence were reflected on.

This process was premised on the arguments of Morgan [1986:4] and Pestieau [2003:5] [see Chapter 2], that it is necessary to identify or 'map' the various factors or 'metaphors' which constitute barriers to the implementation of the policy process. As was explained in the previous chapter, in this study data was collected in four stages. Each of these stages was accomplished using an action research methodology [see Chapter Three]. The principal concern was to assess the degree to which those taking part in the study were informed by policy and its underpinning theory. There was also a concern to evaluate the extent to which professionals involved in the study had a practical orientation towards the implementation of policy, a subject which Ledwith [2005:2] considered to be paramount in situations concerned with any form of community development. These dual concerns were also in accordance with the work of Eden and Huxham [1993:5], [see Chapter Three] who argued that when research is for the purpose of problem solving, fact finding and investigation of relationships in complex organisations, positivist approaches may not be suitable. These researchers emphasised that concerns for 'what happens in practice' are essential components of an action research methodology. Therefore, throughout the data collection stages the action research frameworks identified by Hart and Bond [1995:40], [Fig.4] were followed. These provided a structure for the presentation and analysis of data collected from participants. Also they allowed programme deliverers to be included in the research process and gain an opportunity to increase their competence in analysing policy implementation processes. This first stage of the study corresponds to the 'experimental' stage of action research which Bryman [1995], [see Chapter Four] described as consisting of data

collection using questionnaires, interviews, observation and documentary analysis. In this chapter all of the observation made at the start of the study will be reported on.

5.2 Preparatory Stage Results

Base-line observations obtained from interviews with a sample of programme managers responsible for implementation of the Children and Youth schemes

At the commencement of the study it was expected to find that children and young people's 'partnerships', that is the alliances formed by the various statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with the implementation of the Cymorth Scheme, would have integrated the WAG themes [WAG 2002] namely,

- Family support
- Health Improvement
- Play leisure and enrichment
- Empowerment, participation and active citizenship
- Community development
- Training, mentoring and information
- Building childcare provision

with the strategic Community Plan. The goals of this plan have already been indicated as social inclusion, active citizenship and community development. As has previously been explained in Chapters One and Two, these goals were identified by the WAG [NAfW, 2001], as important policy initiatives [WO., 1998; NAfW, 2001; NHS Wales, 2002; NAfW, 2000; NAfW, 2002; SEU, 2000; HO, 2002; NAFW, 2002; ETFW, 2000].

The 'Cymorth Children and Youth Support Fund' Guidance [WAG, 2002], clearly indicated the need for integration of Cymorth themes with community development plans. Therefore, at the outset of the study it was expected to find that appropriate indicators for achieving policy outcomes had been identified. However, initial interviews between the researcher and strategic management personnel, at both 'partnership' and programme level, revealed that programmes had mostly absorbed the themes of the Cymorth scheme [WAG, 2002], into previously identified and unchanged aims of programmes. As a result, there appeared to be little acknowledgement between agencies at partnership level, or between various programmes at operational level, of the need for 'cross-cutting' strategies and 'joined-up' working to achieve social inclusion and community development. Nor did there appear to be any obvious evidence of how local projects were the means by which national policy targets could be implemented.

Despite these observations, the Borough Council involved in the study was eager to be involved in the promotion of the 'economic, social and environmental well-being' of their area. It wished

to be acting in partnership and to have a “shared vision for the future of its communities”. This vision was reflected in the County plan [2001] which stated broadly that partnerships should aim to achieve,

- Economic prosperity
- Better health and well-being
- Reduction in Crime and Disorder
- Education and lifelong Learning
- An improved environment
- Confident communities

However, there appeared to be little evidence that such targets had been integrated into individual programme aims. In an attempt to clarify what these targets might mean, a set of principles were offered by the County Plan. Presumably principles were meant to underpin, or focus thinking about goals. These principles were “sustainable development, social inclusion and equal opportunities”. It was observed, however, that these principles did not appear to be actively influencing the actions of ‘partnerships’ set up to implement Children and Youth schemes. Arguably, the researcher was given the impression that the Cymorth target themes were considered to be “stand alone entities”. Therefore, at partnership level there might have been more recognition of how physical, social, psychological and cultural factors interacted to influence the health, social well-being and development of children and young people. From the outset of the study it was apparent that there could be more awareness, at the operational level, of the importance of interactive effects of multi-dimensional social, cultural and psychological factors on the health, development and welfare of children and young people. Thus greater recognition of the breadth of services and interventions required to overcome such problems was required. It was against this background that Stage one of the study commenced.

5.3 Stage one

This stage of the study was based on observational visits, the collection of qualitative data using loosely structured interview schedules, a review of documentary evidence relating to the activity of the various groups visited and focus groups involving service users. Analysis of this data was expected to provide an overview of the current structure, process, outputs and outcomes of projects included in the scheme. A strategy described by Clarke [2000:264] and Copeland and Wexler [1995:56], as essential when planning an evaluation of policy implementation. As was explained in Chapter Four, for the first stage of the study a stratified sample of twelve projects was chosen from the population of programmes. These programmes were chosen randomly from their specific strata to represent similar schemes within the Cymorth project. The

representativeness of the sample was addressed in the previous chapter. In all of the schemes, general observations were made of the siting of the project, its environment, ambience and the behaviour and activities of staff. Key personnel were interviewed using an aide-memoir and any documentation relevant to the functioning of the scheme, such as user assessments, or programme evaluation, was gathered for evaluation and analysis.

User focus groups were organised at three of the programmes. Due to time restraints, it was not possible to organise further focus groups at this stage of the study. The specific objectives of this stage were to collect qualitative data relating to frameworks of policy implementation [Clarke 2000, and Copeland and Wexler, 1995] [Figs. 2 and 3], in order to identify the ways in which:-

- **current services offered by the various projects met the overall aims and objectives of policy.** [This was judged by the type and number of objective themes from the Cymorth framework adopted for the programme [Indicators][*enabling legislation*].
- **current services and provision were structured** [in particular, whether they were suitably sited, accessible, available, and 'cross-cutting'] [*Organisational Structure*].
- **current services were organised and whether they were delivered efficiently and effectively [input process] [programme performance]**
- **current services were evaluated [outputs] [*Programme Performance*].**
- **current services were evaluated in terms of their benefit to service users [outcomes][*Programme Performance*].**

Observations were recorded in field notes, whilst free ranging interviews were recorded, with the consent of interviewees, both in note form and by means of a tape recorder. Outcomes of the programmes, that is the perceived benefit of programmes to users, were derived from information elicited through the medium of focus groups. To facilitate data collection in focus group interviews, an aide-memoir interview schedule was used and conversations were tape recorded. In each case the researcher had the consent of those users who had previously signified to programme leaders that they wished to take part in the focus group and had expressed no objection to the recording of their conversation. Each participant was informed that all recorded data, both written and recorded, would be securely stored and destroyed at the end of the study. The research objectives for user focus groups were to elicit the value of the programme to users in particular to identify,

- perceived gaps in provision.
- users' perceived level of participation in the programme.
- users' desired levels of participation in the programmes.
- the extent to which users perceived that social inclusion was an aim of the programme.

5.4 Results of Stage One

For the purposes of brevity and clarity the results of this stage of the study will be presented in a thematic way. Observation will be both general and specific. Wherever it is appropriate findings specific to individual programmes will be commented on.

General Observations

In all of the programmes visited key personnel were welcoming, helpful and well prepared. However, the degree to which programmes could be contacted by telephone varied considerably. This was evidenced when appointments for visits were being made. For example, there were some programmes that were only contacted after a considerable number of unsuccessful telephone calls and a lack of response to messages. This finding caused considerable concern as it was most apparent in programmes operating an emergency assistance service for families under extreme stress, such as programme 10, [a Women's Aid programme]. In contrast, there was one programme [6], [Support for young people leaving care], which provided an enthusiastic and welcoming reception in the case of an opportunistic visit by the researcher. On the whole, however, with the exception of a small minority of programmes, all were easily contactable.

The accessibility of programmes was also judged according to siting, physical, geographical and social access. Criteria chosen for this observation were:-

- closed/open access .
- transport links.
- non-stigmatising position .
- clean and attractive premises.

None of the programmes visited achieved all of these criteria, but all of them achieved some.

Programmes 7, 8 and 9. [Young Carers', Special Needs Advisory and School Exclusions programmes], were visited at their administrative offices. In the case of these programmes, service users were usually contacted at other venues which were not assessed. The remaining programmes were located in venues for users, in respect of these the following observations were made.

Physical access

This appeared to be difficult in programme 5 [The parenting skills programme], as the accommodation site was on the first floor, accessible only by means of a very steep staircase. A similar finding was made in respect of programme 6, [The Support Programme for young people

leaving care], where the meeting room for young people involved in the programme was also on the first floor. Neither of the buildings had a lift and were therefore inaccessible to any person with a mobility problem. This finding indicated a possible example of discrimination against those with any form of disability preventing them from walking upstairs. However, both of these projects scored highly on all of the other criteria, as they were in a town centre, close to main shopping areas, on 'bus routes and they conveyed a pleasing image.

Accessibility

Although physical access to programmes 1, 2 and 3 [Family support, 'Sure Start' programmes and an Under 3s project for disadvantaged children] was relatively easy, public transport was not readily available and service users had to be 'bussed' in. This was particularly the case in programme 1 [Family Support], which worked on a referral only basis and received most service users from another deprived area, some fifteen to twenty miles away, that was socially and culturally very different. All of these programmes were sited on, or at the edge of social housing estates, which in the case of 1 and 2 [Family Support and 'Sure Start' programmes], appeared to be run down, deprived areas. Programme 2, in particular, the 'Sure Start' programme was sited in what was one of the remaining buildings in a housing clearance area, notorious for crime, drugs and public nuisance. Programme 3 [An under 3s programme for disadvantaged children] was sited in a health centre and had a large car park. However, it appeared that most facilities were solely for the use of staff and health centre patients. To some extent, the lack of accessibility did not matter too much as services users were seen, individually, at home. Nevertheless, it appeared that there might be some aspects of all of these programmes which were arguably in direct conflict with social inclusion, community development and citizenship policy [WAG, 2002].

Appropriateness in terms of conveying policy purpose.

Because of persistent vandalism, the building housing programme 1 [Family support], was surrounded by a fence. This together with the use of transport to 'bus' people in from another area of deprivation [rather than the service being made available for local people for purposes of building community], appeared to show that the programme might be characterised by a somewhat 'stigmatised' image. However, the interior of the building was clean and bright, with attractive play facilities and well decorated counselling rooms for parents and children.

Programme 2 [Family Support], shared a building also occupied by Housing and Social Services agencies. Staff employed in this programme revealed that service users associated both

Housing and Social Service agencies with 'authority' and 'enforcement'. The siting of a children's service in the same building as these agencies was reported to convey the wrong message to parents. Although the programme was meant to convey the concepts of new policy, namely social inclusion, community development and citizenship, its siting appeared to perpetuate pre-conceptions of authoritative control and compulsion. As in programme 1 [Family Support], vandalism was a common feature of the area. As a result of several arson attempts, the building had been 'fortified' with window grills and steel barred screens for the doors. Although there were a few local people attending this programme, some of whom had referred themselves, people requiring the service, who lived in what was considered to be "a more respectable" area adjacent to this 'run down' community, were reported by staff to be reluctant to attend. The local families attending were said to consist of people experiencing the most extreme forms of deprivation. Their numbers were increased by other families 'bussed in' from equally deprived areas, arguably exacerbating the problems of social exclusion and isolation already experienced by local attendees. Thereby, the objectives of child and family policy outlined in Chapter Two appeared to be somewhat compromised.

Despite these problems, the interior of this building was newly renovated and decorated in a pleasing manner. There was a meeting room for parents and an attractive play room for children. However, the researcher noticed that although staff were working and playing with children, parents were very much left to their own devices in a room apart. Arguably, this meant that positive influences on children's behaviour or development were not being observed by parents. As a result, it was thought to be unlikely that any behavioural improvements, on the part of children, could be maintained by parents within their own homes. This assumption on the part of the researcher was strengthened by parents' assertions that their children '*did what they were told*' at the centre, but reverted to '*old behaviours at home*'. Failure on the part of staff to transfer skills to parents was therefore construed as a possible antithesis of government policy set out in Welsh Assembly guidance [NAW, 2001].

Programme 3 ['Sure Start'] was housed in a health centre which also accommodated a GP surgery and a chiropodist. The ambience of an institutionalised health care setting was prevalent. This was magnified by the fact that programme leaders reported they had to contend with ill-disguised antagonism, ridicule and opposition from the GP, about the nature of their programme. They were frequently asked if their programme was concerned with 'car maintenance'! There

was sufficient, though limited room to accommodate children and parents in this building, but the health authority refused to do this, on the grounds that the building was not insured for that purpose. As a result families were seen at home by programme workers. Therefore their isolation appeared to be compounded and they remained socially excluded, despite interventions. As a result it was perceived that desired policy outcomes, described in Chapter Two had possibly been given insufficient consideration.

Programme 4 [Under 3's project for disadvantaged children]. Without a car this programme was only accessible from the nearest 'bus stop'. This meant that service users had to walk approximately half a mile to the facility, which was sited on a marshy, windswept mountain top in a derelict industrial mining area. The community in which the programme is based, is seen by those living on its boundaries as a rather undesirable social area. It has no social facilities such as a church, or shop and even the local public house had been burned to the ground. However, the site of the programme was well known locally, as it housed a university project for the education of women. This had been set up during the miner's strike of the 80s. Because of its links to the university, the centre was equipped with modern technology to facilitate learning. However, it was reported by some service users that many 'would be' users were 'put off' by the elitist image created by the links with higher education. This situation, in conjunction with the siting of the programme, in what they termed an 'undesirable area', meant that facilities offered by the programme were possibly underused. The criticisms levied at the siting of the programme signalled the need for some concern. Although the programme was sited in an exciting educational development, historical cultural perceptions of the area appeared to outweigh this advantage. It appeared that more attention needed to be given to indigent cultural and image factors if the policy aims set out in WAG guidelines [WAG, 2002], were to be implemented.

Programmes 5 and 6 [Parenting skills and a Support Programme for Young People leaving care] As has already been noted, both programmes were sited in a central position on busy shopping streets. The exteriors of both of the buildings housing these programmes were well maintained, and they had welcoming and non-stigmatising appearances, arguably in keeping with the philosophies of new policy [WAG, 2001].

Programmes 7, 8, and 9 [Young Carers' Special Needs Advisory and School Exclusion programmes] were, as has already been explained, administrative centres for programme management. However, none was easily accessible, a factor which might deter contact by any interested party. In the case of programmes [7] and [9], office space was at a premium. This

appeared to result in difficult working conditions for personnel involved in delivering programmes.

Programme 10, [A Women's Aid project] was situated in a rather insalubrious and 'run down' street. Its image appeared to be unwelcoming and foreboding. In view of the nature of the programme, access could only be obtained through a security system. Once inside the building the programme premises had to be accessed via a dark and dismal staircase. Whilst commendable efforts had been made to make the meeting rooms in this establishment comfortable and cheerful, funding stringencies hindered attempts by staff to remove an air of neglect and disregard which pervaded the building. Thus the siting and appearance of the building militated against the social inclusion and citizenship discourses of government policy, described in Chapter One.

Programmes 11 and 12, [Speech and Language and Welsh Language programmes] were also run from administrative premises. These were adequate, but not easily accessible to the general public.

Early observations showed that there appeared to be some cause for concern in all of the programmes. In particular, programmes 1, 2, 3 and 4 [Family Support, 'Sure Start' and a programme for Disadvantaged Children] gave cause for concern. In all cases premises had been allocated by the Local Health Trust or the Local Authority. Probably because of funding restrictions, the organisations concerned may have found it difficult to financially prioritise the aims of the Cymorth scheme, or the government's strategy for children [CYPU, 2000], by supporting the families of young children. Specifically, in programme 4 [Project for disadvantaged children], insufficient consideration had been given to aspects of the local culture which appeared to be 'putting off' programme participants. In this instance, more consideration of the need for community development and user involvement, as means of overcoming social exclusion [WAG, 2002], appeared necessary.

In contrast **programmes 5 and 6**, [Parenting skills and Support for Young People leaving Care], were both partnership funded by the voluntary sector and it was obvious, in both instances, that some thought had gone into their siting and public image, thereby communicating that in these programmes there was an awareness of the need to align programmes with policy strategy for social inclusion and community development [described in Chapter One].

Programme 7 was also funded by a voluntary organisation, but in this instance the siting and image of the building appeared somewhat less inviting.

Programme 8 [Special Needs Advisory], which was funded by a Local Authority partnership had a bright, business-like interior, although it was not easily accessible from the city centre.

Programme 9 [School Exclusion Programme], again funded by Local authority partnerships, had poor access and image.

This was also the case in relation to **programme 10**, [Women's Aid].

Programme 11 [Speech and Language] was administered from a new health authority building. The office was bright and modern but had few welcoming exterior features in terms of sign-posting or child-friendly features.

Similar observations applied to **programme 12** [A Welsh Language Programme].

The initial conclusions, based merely on observations of the physical, geographical and social aspects of programmes, indicated that the statutory organisations may have had less opportunity in terms of time or resources to focus on the required image or siting of programmes, than the voluntary sector. Also it appeared that the voluntary sector may have had greater specific resource provision and indeed, more experience in considering how policy thrusts might be reflected in the image of their provision. But in all instances, there appeared to be some room for improvement, particularly in means of conveying the purpose and intent of the Cymorth scheme 'user' image, access, siting and accessibility, in order to illustrate the aims and intentions of policy. In the absence of addressing such factors directly, the concepts of reducing social exclusion and effecting community development and citizenship may have been obfuscated from both the public and programme deliverers' view. If this was the case it may not have been surprising that policy directives appeared to be poorly understood, and, in the main, services were not 'cross-cutting'. They appeared to be delivering 'more of the same', though such practice was specifically condemned by WAG [WAG, 2002:5].

Overall then, it appeared that some improvements might be made in respect of the type, or extent of change required for the implementation of newly introduced child and family policy. Specifically, there appeared to be an absence of a vision for change. This was evidenced in the perceived lack of attention given to the need for portraying the public image of change. If this finding indicated a barrier to change, it might also represent a degree of automation in policy implementation and reliance upon a 'top-down' approach to the implementation of policy strategies. Only two programmes [**5 and 6**], appeared to recognise the significance of visual representation of policy intent. These were both 'new' voluntary service schemes, newly funded and initiated for specific purpose.

5.5 The Range and Scope of Services offered by the programmes. [Inputs]

Information on the range and scope of services offered by each programme was gathered using loosely structured interviews and document analysis. All of the programmes had clearly identified aims reflecting the identity, characteristics and needs of their user group. However, in programmes 1, 2, 3 and 4 [Family Support, 'Sure Start' and Disadvantaged Children Programmes], examination of documentation revealed that awareness of the need to link programme aims to the broader Cymorth themes [WAG 2001], in a way which explicitly demonstrated policy thrusts, could have been strengthened. This weakness was exacerbated by the fact that there was apparent confusion, or lack of understanding on the part of policy implementers, of the terms aims, objectives, outputs, outcomes and targets used in guidance documents [WAG, 2002]. Consequently conceptual misunderstandings of how programmes should be structured and processed were apparent. In particular, it appeared that because of a lack of knowledge of the rationale underlying policy thrusts, there was an inability to recognise desirable policy outcomes. In turn, this meant that service inputs and outputs were often inappropriate for the achievement of desirable outcomes. This deficit was described in Chapter Two [Elmore 1985], as being typical of 'top down' policy implementation, where insufficient thought is given to the need for 'mapping' policy processes in both a forward, ['top down'] and backward, ['bottom up'] direction, in order for policy implementation to be effective. Elmore [1985] argues that failure to adopt such frameworks may lead to lack of recognition of the intricacies involved in the policy implementation process and the exact level at which the process may fail. This phenomenon was also recorded by Bailey [1983], in a commentary on failures in community development processes. As a result of such deficits, programmes appeared unclear as to the process of target setting. Consequently, the task of evaluating programmes was almost impossible. This was mainly because there were no clear pathways between service inputs and intended service outcomes.

Programmes 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 [Parenting Skills, Support for Young People Leaving Care, Young Carers', Special Needs Advisory and School Exclusion Programmes], appeared to have a clearer view of how to identify aims and objectives for implementing the Cymorth themes [WAG, 2002], underpinning policy strategies. Yet, apart from the instance of **programme 5** [Parenting Skills], there appeared to be considerable scope for the portrayal of more robust policy implementation in all programmes. It was observed by both local authority managers and the researcher that this issue might be addressed by re-visiting the scope of the Cymorth themes with each of the programmes. This might facilitate identification of a broader range of aims and objectives to signify 'joined up' working for the implementation of new policy strategies.

A lack of clarity about other aspects of the Cymorth scheme [NAW 2001] was also elicited from interviews. These aspects were related to recognition of the main policy target groups. Most programmes recognised there was a potential contradiction in the fact that though the target of most programmes was the child, or young adult, services also needed to be focused on parents, if policy objectives were to be achieved. In many instances problems manifested in a child or young person were regarded as the only 'passport' for parents to receive support services which could improve social inclusion. Conversely, **programme 7** [Young Carers], had found that although their referrals consisted of the families of young carers, the recipients of their services needed to be the young carers themselves. It was clearly they, and not their families, who needed support. In other programmes too, although targets may have been clearly set, access to the identified target group was sometimes difficult. For example, in the case of **programme 4** [Under 3's Project for Disadvantaged Children], it appeared difficult to access the target group of young families because of cultural divides. These created barriers to the kind of 'cross-cutting' community development processes prescribed in WAG guidance [WAG, 2002].

This confusion over target groups was understandably unproductive. A traditional emphasis on the facilitation of child development, in the absence of emphasising the need for social and cognitive development of parents, may have made it difficult for programmes to recognise what they were required to do to broaden service aims in line with new policy. Other problems identified derived from the fact that historically, the availability of services for parents was, in the main, linked to re-active rather than the preventive proactive interventions outlined in policy [WAG 2002]. As a consequence, most users appeared to have been referred to programmes following the onset of a problem, rather than to prevent such an occurrence. This meant that the spirit of the policy, namely to create an enabling environment, was possibly lacking in robustness. However, **programmes 5 and 9** [Parenting Skills and School Exclusion programmes] had managed to overcome this deficit by advertising their services, and encouraging self referrals.

In summary, there appeared to be some differences between the services for children and those for young people, in terms of their level of understanding of policy thrusts and the ability to identify aims, objectives, outputs, outcomes and targets which could be used to evaluate the extent to which their programmes were attaining Cymorth themes and the broader intentions of policy. Further differences between schemes in relation to personnel and organisation will be discussed in the following section. These preliminary findings appeared to indicate that the experimental nature of Cymorth implementation strategies had resulted in a lack of clarity

regarding the nature and purpose of policy. As a result most of the programmes were experiencing conceptual difficulties in understanding what was expected of them in terms of policy implementation. Consequently, other than programmes **5 and 9**, [both voluntary services programmes with specific funding], all projects appeared to have resorted to a process of limiting programme aims and objectives to the kind of services traditionally provided. Therefore services appeared to be unchanged and service outputs amounted to 'more of the same'. Programmes provided appeared to be merely services that staff felt comfortable with delivering, rather than the types of services that could reflect the policy aims described in Chapter One. This meant that there were perceived weaknesses in the policy implementation process.

Personnel and organisation

The programme coordinators provided comprehensive information regarding staffing and the structure of their organisations. In some instances organisational charts were also provided. Staff of **programmes 1 & 2**, [Family Support], **3** ['Sure Start'], **4** [Under 3's project for disadvantaged children] and **8** [Special Needs Advisory Service], were overwhelmingly female. This was recognised as problematic by the coordinator of programme **1** [Parent Support]. She recognised that it was difficult in the absence of male team members, to develop a programme to support fathers. In contrast programmes **5** [Parenting Skills], **6** [Support for Young People Leaving Care], and **9** [School Exclusion Programme], had a very visible male staff presence. This was especially important as in all instances the majority of referrals were for boys. **Programme 6** [Support for Young People Leaving Care], recognised the necessity of having both male and female staff as, in the experience of the programme leader, the needs of boys and girls differed greatly. **Programme 5** [Parenting Skills], staff felt that the facilitation of their fathers' group, by a male worker, was an essential service.

Differences were also apparent between the programmes in relation to perceptions of the need for collaborative working, voluntary working and user participation, all described in policy guidance [WAG 2002]. Again, it was programmes **1 and 2** [Family Support], **3** ['Sure - Start'] and **4** [Under 3s project for Disadvantaged Children], all organised by statutory agencies, that mostly deviated from the policy direction for encouraging family participation in work or training. Of course, it may have been that as these schemes were providing traditional services, mainly to mothers and young children, the need to enrich parents' futures through engaging them in skill training or work, thereby enhancing children's opportunities, was not fully considered. When questioned on this issue, programme leaders appeared to be rather dismissive of the potential

opportunities that the idea might hold. This demonstrated that programme staff did not fully appreciate policy demands. Reasons cited for reluctance to consider change were bureaucratic barriers, such as the CRB checks which now have to be carried out on all people working with children and issues relating to liability and Health and Safety legislation. It appeared that parents themselves had not been consulted on this issue. Neither was there any evidence of parent forums to facilitate discussion. All of the remaining programmes, organised by voluntary services, had some form of user forum and programmes 5 [Parenting Skills] and 8 [Special need Advisory], had recently commenced training, linked to a National Accreditation Scheme, for parents.

These findings revealed that the concept of user participation appeared to sit more easily within the cultural norms of professional voluntary agencies, though this may have been more due to the availability of new, specific for purpose funding. Within governmental and bureaucratic organisations, it was very difficult to convince staff of the need for user participation in service planning and delivery. Also, it appeared difficult to convince them of the need for encouraging social inclusion of parents, through skill training for participation in the work force, in order that children might have better futures. However, it was also apparent that statutory organisations were restricted in terms of traditional less flexible forms of organisation and service delivery and the lack of provision of purpose built facilities for the delivery of new policy objectives.

In terms of organisational structure, only programmes 5 [Parenting Skills], 6 [Support for Young People Leaving Care], 7 [Young Carers' Project] and 9 [School Exclusion Programme], all run by voluntary agencies, appeared to be working in a 'matrix' culture. A 'matrix culture' was defined by Weinrich and Koontz [1994:277-281], as a means of,

"Combining functional and project patterns of departmentation in the same organisation structure".

In all other programmes there was still some evidence of bureaucratic 'top down' control over programmes from the statutory agencies 'partnerships'. For example, staff employed in programme 5 [Parenting Skills], complained of controls exerted by a statutory agency over the nature of referrals to the programme. Specifically, there was a reluctance to make pro-active referrals and a tendency only to refer following an incident that could have been prevented.

Programmes 1 and 2 [Family Support], 3 ['Sure Start'] and 4 [Under 3s Project for disadvantaged children], all managed by the statutory agencies, seemed content to work in a traditional bureaucratic hierarchy. There appeared to be little awareness of how this might affect the flexibility of their provision, or their capacity to meet the demands of new policy directives.

However, these programmes had not had the advantage of benefiting from 'fit for purpose' facilities or resources. These findings suggested to the researcher that there were organisational and cultural barriers to new ways of working, particularly in the statutory sector. These barriers appeared to preclude any movement away from traditional bureaucratic stereotypes of organisational activity. Thus understanding of the need for collaborative or 'joined up' working to achieve the flexibility or subsidiarity required to ensure the main thrusts of policy needed strengthening. As a consequence, collaborative working between agencies and user participation in programmes, were conspicuous by their absence. It became obvious that there were some deficits in organisational structures and functioning that needed to be addressed, if policy objectives were to be achieved. Further, the reluctance on the part of policy implementers to depart from traditional ways of working, which concentrated merely on the provision of services to children, rather than supporting and enabling parents and communities needed to be addressed.

5.6 The Process of Service Delivery [Outputs]

This was examined by the identification of:-

- Cymorth project themes appropriate to the programme, [WAG 2002].
- Aims and objectives most suited to the themes.
- Interventions /service inputs and outputs planned to achieve aims.
- Measurable targets set for each part of the process.
- The extent to which service users participated in the process.
- Whether the process was empowering.
- Whether the process was collaborative [involving other agencies].
- Whether users controlled the programme.
- The extent to which the process was capable of achieving the main policy thrust of social inclusion, community and economic development.

From this information it was intended to evaluate:-

Outputs

- The extent to which aims and objectives achieved strategic themes.
- Number of outputs that could be related to aims and objectives.
- Number of appropriate interventions.
- Number of appropriate needs addressed.
- Number of social inclusion factors addressed.

and Outcomes

- The number of outcomes that could be related to service inputs.
- User's perceptions of the service, in terms of the extent to which they felt that the service had benefited them.
- Whether users were more empowered.
- Whether social inclusion/community development had been achieved.

In relation to the process, information was gathered through loosely structured interviews and the examination of any appropriate records. All of the programmes had identified the theme most appropriate for their programme, but only programme 5, [Parenting Skills], appeared to have the confidence and autonomy to choose more than one theme and thereby demonstrate 'joined up' working. By limiting programmes to one theme the complexity and breadth of services needed to attain social inclusion, community and economic development was not demonstrated. Because a lack of clarity characterised the definitions of aims, objectives and targets, these indicators appeared to have been poorly applied to the identification of appropriate service inputs, outputs and outcomes. At best, apart from programme 5 [Parenting Skills], the only indicators / or objectives identified were those provided as exemplars by the Cymorth scheme for each theme [WAG 2000]. These exemplars were often not directly appropriate to the specific activity of programmes and therefore served only to increase the confusion experienced by programme leaders and workers. In the majority of programmes, as a result of what appeared to be confusion, documentation of themes, indicators, aims, objectives and targets was poor. These were consequently expressed only in terms of the numbers of service inputs, or numbers of users expected to attend programmes. The identification of a target as 'something to aim for' appeared to need strengthening in most programmes.

Overall, the relevance of Cymorth themes to individual programmes, appeared to have not been given sufficient consideration. This meant that service objectives, appropriate for meeting broader policy objectives, were non-existent in the majority of cases. What was becoming increasingly apparent at this point was the lack of conceptual understanding of policy aims on the part of the Local Authority statutory agencies. In particular, there appeared to be a need to strengthen understanding of the organisational and strategic changes required to achieve these aims. These factors had the effect of preventing the transmission of clear directives to the service providers employed in the programmes. It appeared to the researcher that these matters would have to be addressed, if programmes were to be aligned with policy aims.

Needs Assessment

Every programme kept records of user attendance and all programmes had made some attempt to profile user needs, using some kind of assessment tool. However, this process had only reached a degree of sophistication in programmes 5 [Parenting Skills], 8 [Special Needs Advisory Service] and 9 [School Exclusion Programme], where evidenced - based assessment strategies were being used, although the need of such strategies was clearly outlined in policy guidance [WAG, 2002].

Also, it was only in these programmes that the need for user empowerment, collaborative working and social inclusion, through an educative or skills training process were recognised. Therefore, in the main, service outputs, where identified, appeared to stand as independent entities and few links were apparent between service inputs and outputs. The logical process of breaking down the themes into achievable aims and objectives, that is the identification of 'small steps' encompassing both service 'inputs' and 'outputs' to attain policy goals, was hardly discernible. Clearly therefore, programme objectives did not appear to have been influenced by the broad thrusts of policy outlined in Chapter One.

These findings indicated that there appeared to have been a deficit, particularly on the part of statutory agencies, to link the Cymorth themes to policy thrusts. As a result, it appeared that programmes had a mechanistic orientation or compliance orientation as Pestieau [2003] identified. Orientation was focused on achieving the one theme perceived to most represent the traditional nature of the service offered. This appeared to signify conforming with, rather than actively embracing new policy. Thus services remained much the same, with an emphasis on the delivery of traditional care interventions for children, rather than on the development of their families and communities for purposes of improvement of economic and social circumstances. This signalled the possibility that more heed should be paid to the complexity of user need, and the extent of 'joined up' working required to achieve the policy aims discussed in Chapter One. Specifically, it appeared that programmes were being hampered by a lack of lateral thinking in respect of the complexity and interlinking nature of policy thrusts. However, little action to address the need for collaborative change and staff development, in order to facilitate action, seemed to have been taken, at the strategic level. In contrast, voluntary organisations appeared to have appraised their local agencies of how the philosophies, integral to 'new' policy, should be interpreted in practice and had been provided specific funding for this purpose. As a result the voluntary agencies were delivering programmes that more reflected policy aims and objectives.

5.7 Knowledge of what was required

Interviews with programme providers served to show that there were a number of factors which complicated the processes of identifying needs and implementing programmes to meet those needs. Consequently the process of service delivery appeared to be somewhat obfuscated and its documentation, measurement and evaluation was limited. Basically these factors appeared to be a consequence either of knowledge deficits or a lack of recognition of what was required. Further

analysis of the interviews indicated that the key factors relating to shortfalls in the policy implementation process were:-

- a lack of definition of the population served.
- a lack of awareness of processes of identifying needs and unmet needs, at both individual and community levels.
- a lack of awareness of the need for continuity of services for service users.
- a lack of recognition of the need for collaboration between agencies.
- a lack of recognition of the need for universal/targeted services.
- a lack of recognition of the need for community development.
- a lack of recognition of the need for social inclusion.
- a lack of recognition of the need for self monitoring.

These findings suggested that a need for greater awareness of how to recognise and profile needs was resulting in low levels of identification of baseline measurements of actual and comparative needs. As a consequence, a greater ability to recognise appropriate targets for service outputs and outcomes was required. This perceived deficit appeared to be particularly marked in relation to the following factors:-

Population served

There was clearly a level of confusion over how the community receiving the service should be defined. Astonishingly, a key confusion was whether the service should be delivered to a geographical community [gemeinschaft], or a community of interest [gesellschaft] [Tonnie, 1955]. As a result, in a number of instances, the population targeted by the programme was not always from the locality in which the programme was sited. For this reason the Cymorth themes of community development and active citizenship, appeared to be apparently rendered meaningless to both service providers and users.

The contrast between the targeted programme population and the area in which the programme was sited, was most apparent in **programme 1** [Family Support], where children and parents were 'bussed' in from other deprived areas. This practice appeared to do little to improve their own communities, or the community in which the programme was sited. In fact, many members of the community in which the programme was sited were hostile to the scheme. This was because they were unable to use facilities that they believed should be for the benefit of their own children and families. As a consequence, there appeared to be some conflict. Hostility expressed itself through vandalism, which the programme had attempted to control by the building of a high fence. This was said, by service users, to convey the impression that local people should 'keep out'.

In programme 2 [Family Support], apparent failure to assess the local culture meant that a large section of the targeted community did not appear to want to associate itself with the remainder

of the population, even though they were separated only by a small railway bridge. As the result of under-use of the scheme by the local community, people from other communities were again 'bussed' in to fill the voids. As in programme 1, this led to the juxtapositioning of two different problem cultures, and hostility from the host community.

In programme 3 ['Sure Start'], the sharing of health centre premises with a doctor and chiropodist appeared to have led to hostility between the older and younger members of the population. It was the view of the older population that their services were being disrupted by newcomers [young families].

Programme 4 was apparently disadvantaged by lack of recognition of local cultural norms. In this instance there appeared to be two reasons for the problem. Potential service users from a nearby village were firstly deterred by the 'elitist academic' image of the programme's building and by the fact that the building could only be reached via an isolated and lonely road, through a very 'run down' and somewhat derelict area.

The populations served by programmes 1 and 2 [Family Support], 3 ['Sure Start'] and 7 [Young Carers], were in the main, referred by professionals such as health visitors, community nurses, social workers, police and teachers. In fact, a previous report [Specialist Health Promotion Service, 2002:14], had confirmed that 90% of all referrals occurred in this manner. Therefore, the opportunity for self-referral by local people, in order to promote social inclusion and community development, did not appear to be available. In contrast, programme 5 [Parenting Skills] disclosed that the majority of their referrals were self-referrals. These came from the parents of teenage children. This occurrence was interpreted by the programme as a 'cry for help' from a particular community group, which had few services available to support them.

Increased consultation or assessment of the culture, needs, strengths and weaknesses of individual communities, before the implementation of programmes, might have prevented such problems in several schemes set up to deliver the Cymorth strategy. An apparent oversight in respect of these matters meant that, in some cases, programmes were hampered in their ability to identify and facilitate solutions to local problems. This finding appeared to highlight the possible shortcomings of bureaucratic top-down, policy implementation which, according to Pestieau [2003], is characterised by a failure to define particular need in ways that can best be met by local resources. Thus new policy directives were possibly hampered by the fact that there might be few 'local solutions' for specific problems. Because of these possible shortcomings, it appeared that the only obvious criteria identifiable for evaluation of the Cymorth Schemes' implementation were the number of programmes instituted in a particular locality. The fact that

the majority of programmes might fall short of meeting actual or expressed need, or policy goals appeared to require more attention. As a result, the actual needs of local communities appeared to be inadequately met, policy directives were only partially implemented and potentially resources were in danger of being wasted. This criticism appeared to be less applicable to programmes provided by the voluntary sector as these were aimed at specific communities. However, there was still scope for improvement in these programmes, as little effort had been made to profile the needs of the 'community of interest' against the general status of the community at large, or to determine ways in which families and communities might be socially and economically developed.

The identification of individual needs and unmet needs

The assessment of individual needs was in some instances, programmes 1 [Family Support]; 3, ['Sure Start'], and 5, [Parenting Skills] carried out using an assessment tool of the programme leader's choice. No research appeared to have been carried out to ascertain whether or not these instruments had been properly validated. Therefore, some questions as to their reliability and validity were raised. The remainder of the projects had no individual assessment tools.

In respect of unmet need, in most instances there appeared to be no method of recording needs that could not be met by current services. Issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, unemployment, anti-social behaviour, illiteracy, health problems and powerlessness, were articulated by some project workers as serious unmet client needs that individual programmes were unable to address. However, there did not appear to be concerted effort between individual agencies to seek to pool knowledge, skills and resources in order to address specific unmet needs. This finding suggested that concepts of collaborative working and of preventing duplication of services and waste of resource to tackle unmet need, required more consideration. When the notion of collaborative intervention to address unmet need was suggested by the researcher, the suggestion appeared to be met with some reluctance to take action, especially in the light of the fact that strategic agencies had not specifically requested programmes to document unmet need. However, this finding was unsurprising, in the light of the fact that traditionally, 'cross boundary' working between agencies had received little encouragement, or indeed had been disrupted through emphasis on competition and 'markets' [Rea,1998: 206-7]. Consequently, though understandably, cohesiveness in intervention programmes, explicitly desired by the policy, [see Chapter One] appeared to be somewhat lacking. Overall, it appeared that a lack of formal assessment of individual and unmet need was possibly resulting in a shortfall of services designed

to meet individual or group needs. However, these findings might have been the result of previous policy to curtail community care expenditure [Drakeford, 1998:226]. Nevertheless, it was apparent that there were low levels of consideration for the way in which increased cohesiveness and collaboration between programmes might better address need and strengthen the process of making 'political' representation 'up the line' to 'partnership' or Assembly level, when the magnitude of a problem could not be addressed at an operational level.

In contrast to the above findings **Programme 6** [Support for Young people Leaving Care], had begun to address one area of unmet need, namely the desire of young men and women to have separate forums in which to express and discuss their problems. **Programme 7** [Young Carers' Project] was able to verbalise the unmet need of young carers to have access to public transport that could convey them to social events. **Programme 8** [Special Needs Advisory Service], recognised the unmet need for their services [advice on special needs] in the under 7s and pre-school age groups and were taking steps to address these needs. **Programme 9**, [School Exclusion Programme] had identified two unmet needs, firstly the need for wider access to an alternative curriculum for young people who were failing under the provision of the National Curriculum and secondly, the lack of access to local Sports Centres because of financial barriers. These findings suggested that as, in the main, there was no requirement for formal assessment of individual, group or unmet need; the latter were rather sporadically addressed. Later, this was confirmed by service users themselves, during focus group interviews. Service users complained that any expressions of their unmet needs usually went unheeded by programme workers, [this problem will be discussed further in the section on outcomes]. Lack of need assessment therefore appeared to be a possible barrier to effective policy implementation.

Continuity of services

Most programmes were of short duration, on average 6-10 weeks. This meant that it was difficult to achieve, or reliably measure service outputs, let alone outcomes, in such a short space of time. Although it appeared likely that at the end of a period of programme intervention families and children might be referred for more help, or to a different kind of programme, there did not appear to be any plans for some sort of continuity management between programmes. That is, some sort of evaluation of what had, or had not been achieved. **Programmes 1& 2** [Parent Support], **3** ['Sure Start'] and **4** [Under 3's Project for Disadvantaged Children], were all short term and had no system of progression or outcome measurement. Interestingly, service users in **programme 3**, complained about this, as they felt that the programme ended just as they or their

children were beginning to make some progress. **Programme 5** [Parenting Skills], did involve participants from previous programmes in the running of current groups, thus providing an opportunity for service users to consolidate and disseminate their learning. The programme had also made links with the further and continuing education services, in the hope of identifying some kind of accreditation scheme for parents' newly acquired knowledge. However, at the time of the study no means of accreditation had been identified. **Programme 6** [Support for Young People Leaving Care], also had close links with education services, but no structured system for the continuation of learning had been identified. **Programme 7** [Young Carers'], had close contact with the education system in cases where young people's education had been disrupted by their caring responsibilities, but there was no system of measuring the outcomes of the interventions made in respect of the young carers' educational achievements. **Programme 9** [School Exclusion Programme], followed up the immediate outcomes of its service, but there were no facilities for undertaking this process in the longer term. The limited duration of programmes meant that it was very difficult to identify and achieve any long term goals. As a consequence, it was also difficult to identify and measure the outcomes of programmes. For service users the limitations of short term programmes meant that they might be cast back onto their own resources just as they were beginning to make some progress. More importantly, short term interventions appeared to militate against the facilitation of social inclusion, citizenship, or achieving community and economic development. Thus it appeared that this aspect of the scheme might need review, if more 'stretching and progressive interventions' capable of achieving desired policy outcomes were to be achieved.

As was noted above in the discussion of need and unmet need, it was likely that the absence of any continuity in programme provision illustrated a 'demarcation' attitude between programmes and agencies. Also, it was likely that a need of more awareness of other schemes and opportunities, likely to provide further support for achieving the policy goals of raising children out of poverty, community development and economic improvement, was delaying progress.

Collaboration between Programme Providers

The previous section showed evidence of an apparent lack of collaboration between professional groups. This appeared to make it more difficult for programmes to tackle the problems of social exclusion and to implement policy that could address the wider needs of service users. In **programme 1** [Family Support], there appeared to be a reluctance to refer service users from one part of the same programme to another. For example, to refer between support and counselling

branches of the service, because of 'perceived' issues relating to confidentiality. There was also uncertainty about record sharing, allegedly because of concerns about the Data Protection Act, [2000]. These erroneous views were of some concern, as the need to share information on a 'need to know' basis was not recognised. As a consequence there were dangers that some service users might be exposed to inadequate or inappropriate interventions, or service providers might be compromised as a result of a lack of comprehensive information about a client's situation or behaviour. Although many of the programme coordinators were known to each other and their personal contacts might have been the basis for a fruitful networking of services, there appeared to be little contact between services. For example, between the Local Health Boards and the Children's and Young Peoples Programmes, or between Programmes and schools. Neither was it possible to identify any continuity between different levels of services, in order to provide a spectrum of seamless services between promotional, preventive, interventive and rehabilitative care. As a consequence, most services were reactive, rather than proactive. This suggested the possibility of children and families experiencing unnecessary trauma and pressure which might be avoided through earlier intervention based on increased collaboration between agencies. It appeared that interpretations of the rules governing confidentiality were somewhat of a barrier to provision of integrated services.

These findings seemed to be exacerbated by a need for greater appreciation of what other services might contribute to the wellbeing of service users. Also it seemed that more awareness of the need for a continuum of services, ranging over a spectrum of prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation, was required. The presence of a culture of short term-ism seemed to be engendered by a lack of 'stretching and progressive interventions' and the persistence of a kind of demarcation culture between programmes. Thus an 'us and them' culture prevailed creating a power orientation between, and even within services. This was a potential for disruption and fragmentation of the progress of service users towards the policy goals of social inclusion, citizenship and community development. It was thus clear, early in the study, that the researcher had met the classic features of bureaucratic dysfunction and that this was disruptive to efforts to create a more flexible system.

The need for universal services?

The Cymorth guidance emphasised the need to target services towards the most disadvantaged. [WAG, 2002]. Dingwall et al [1988] warn that this approach has the potential to leave many in need. The principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child [1999], also emphasise that

every child in need has a right to service, if equity in health and social well being are involved in shaping policy. These cautions are pertinent considerations in Wales, where 18.9 % of children live in poverty. Worse, the community in which the study was carried out had the eighth most deprived index score in the whole of Wales [NAfW, 2001]. These figures suggest that as a result of poverty and deprivation, large numbers of children in this area may be susceptible to illness and/or social exclusion. If this is the case, it is arguable that targeted, rather than universal services may increase risk. This speculation was based on the fact that a previous evaluation of the scheme had shown that the greatest numbers of referrals to the programmes came from the universal service of health visiting [78%]; schools and playgroups referred 6.5%; whilst 5.1% accessed the scheme as a result of publicity. Only 4.5% of families self-referred and 0.6% were referred by relatives. The remaining 5 % were referred by Social Services, 'Women's Aid' and the police. This suggests that targeting services to specific limited groups may seriously reduce the potential numbers of scheme participants. All of the programmes visited recognised the importance of universality as a means of reducing stigma and ensuring that the needs of families within local communities were met. However, only **programme 5** [Parenting Skills], was currently operating a self-referral system. Moreover, none of the programmes, apart from the health visiting service, appeared to have any system for identifying and recording unmet needs in those sectors of the community not directly referred to their programme.

These findings suggest that the majority of programmes were not based on any understanding of the need for problem orientation. In the main, programme managers appeared to be content with a kind of 'business as usual' approach. Because concepts of need were limited, questions relating to whether or not programmes were 'doing things right, or doing the right thing' were limited.

The need for community development and social inclusion

With the exception of **programmes 5 and 9** [Parenting Skills] and [School Exclusion Programme], examination of programme documentation showed that the Cymorth themes adopted by the majority of the programmes did not focus on policy directives. Interventions were not focused on the need for community development strategies to overcome problems of child poverty, economic inactivity, social exclusion and a lack of active citizenship [NAfW, 2001]. Although the NAfW [2001:2] had emphasised that,

"Young people should be treated as valued members of the community, whose voices are heard and needs considered across the range of policy making".

and that,

“ The introduction of the Children and Young People’s Framework is part of a series of recent developments affecting local and national planning processes, such as the wider local government modernisation agenda, new requirements for strategic planning such as Community Strategies and the Best Value regime ” [NAfW 2001 : 4].

Thus, amongst programme providers there was room for improvement in understanding how the process of community development could assist in making the voices and needs of children heard and of how the process could overcome the effects of social exclusion. All programmes appeared to concentrate on individual interventions rather than community interventions aimed at improving the social infra-structure and thereby, reducing the incidence of social exclusion and economic disadvantage. Thus the majority of programmes were falling into a trap that they had been cautioned about, namely that,

“Higher level strategic planning is of little value unless it is supported by lower level operational knowledge and plans and vice versa. Without the specific contributions of each agency the overarching plans run the risk of being statements of broad aspiration not connected to specific implementation and delivery programmes ” [NAfW, 2001 :5].

In contrast to the majority of programmes, it was only programmes 5 and 9 [Parenting Skills] and [School Exclusion Programme], that showed awareness of the need to profile and prioritise the needs of the community and rank them in order of their priority. These activities enabled them to plan community-wide interventions to reduce social exclusion and the long term disadvantage caused by adverse determinants of health, social and economic well-being. However, the strategic partnerships, possibly for historical reasons linked to conservation of community care resources [Clarke, 1998:128], had not requested any of the programmes to design their interventions on evidenced based information related to local need. As a result, some programmes did not appear to be meeting the actual and real needs of communities, as was shown in Chapter Five. Consequently, there was a likelihood that cost effective and efficient care outcomes were not sufficiently robust. One key factor appeared to be oversight of the importance of building human relationships within communities as a source of social support and facilitating social inclusion. In contrast, it appeared that interventions were focused on individuals, ignoring the fact that individual problems were likely to be caused, in part, or in whole, by structural factors operating within the environment. Focusing on the individual meant that programmes might be missing opportunities for development at a community level. As a result, policy goals were difficult to achieve, programmes were falling into the trap of not supporting strategic planning, opportunities for development were being lost and resources potentially wasted.

The need for self monitoring

Finally, the evaluation and monitoring systems used by each programme were reviewed in order to determine the extent to which programmes monitored their own progress. Evaluation of inputs, outputs and outcomes of the programmes varied considerably. There were some examples of good practice, but, in the main, there appeared to be a requirement for more systematic and measurable data collection. Although all had attempted some form of evaluation, as a result of the recent 'top down' introduction of the Cymorth Plan Objectives and Targets document [Appendix 3], better explanation and understanding of this document might have provided more facilitation of the majority of those involved in programme development and implementation. Programme providers therefore required more guidance or opportunity to understand the terms employed in the document if they were to thoroughly evaluate the outputs and outcomes of their programmes.

Some examples of attempts made to evaluate service provisions are as follows:-

Programmes 1 and 2 [Family Support], were evaluating the developmental progress of individual children in their play schemes, using a child development monitoring tool. Also, at the end of a period of attendance at the scheme, parents were requested to fill in an evaluation questionnaire relating to the perceived effectiveness of the scheme. Also there were evaluation forms available for the play scheme being operated, but there was no attempt to evaluate the integrated outreach or counselling work carried out at the project.

Programme 3 ['Sure Start'], had adopted the "OMAHA" evaluation tool [Carpenito, 1993], recently introduced to the local health authority by a nursing professor. The tool was a kind of algorithm used by American nurses to aid diagnoses and measure the effectiveness of nursing interventions. However, the project leader felt that this tool was not appropriate for the programme. In her view it was 'medically' orientated, a sickness rather than a wellness model, based on a checklist approach. This approach was proving to be too simplistic for the measurement of complex social needs and the breadth of interventions required for alleviating need and assuring social progress.

Programme 5 [Parenting Skills], was using a very thorough form of continuous monitoring and evaluation of programme aims and objectives. The evaluation model used was a statutory form of evaluation imposed on all programmes by the voluntary organisation, the main funder of the programme. As a result of using this evaluation model the programme leader appeared to have a much better understanding of how to achieve the Cymorth Plan objectives and targets than other programme providers.

Programme 7 [Young Carers'] carried out an annual evaluation of the number of contacts and categories of services provided. This evaluation was then presented to funders. The scheme also distributed a questionnaire to the families of young carers, asking them to evaluate their satisfaction with the service. Interestingly, this questionnaire did not seek to elicit the views of actual service users, the young people themselves!

Programme 8 [Special Needs Advisory Service], was in the process of implementing the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations [PQASSO] system [CES, 2002], of organisation self appraisal, which had the Home Office Charter Mark. This system, however, is more concerned with identification and evaluation of operational factors within an organisation, than operational outputs such those desired by the Cymorth Scheme. The programme also used an evaluation questionnaire. This was sent to parents on the closure of cases for the purpose of eliciting their perceptions of the value of the programme.

The remainder of the programmes had no system of monitoring and evaluation.

These results show that even if an evaluation system had been adopted it was applied to a specific project, rather than to the task of evaluating the implementation and effects of the totality of the Cymorth scheme. There was, therefore, no engagement with output or outcome measurement on a macro scale. This meant that the complexity of the implementation of the Cymorth Scheme and especially its potential for facilitating programmes to attain equity and social inclusion within local communities was not being comprehensively measured. Neither did there appear to be a process of strategic governance of policy implementation. As a result, opportunities for measuring the effectiveness of the Cymorth strategy may have been missed. Arguably, a greater awareness of the importance of implementation evaluation and outcome measurement, might have better assured the effectiveness or otherwise of policy.

Programme Outcome Measurement

Although a few of the programmes had instituted the use of a satisfaction questionnaire, only **programme 7** [Young Carers'], had attempted to ascertain how the programme had 'made a difference' to the lives of users. As evaluation was a central part of the research contract, it was decided to sample, at this early stage, some user opinions of services received in order to ascertain whether their desired outcomes were being met.

With the consent of service managers three focus groups were planned. The membership of these groups was randomly chosen from three of the projects, **programmes 2, 3 and 4** [Parent Support, 'Sure Start' and an Under 3s Project for disadvantaged children]. The purpose of the meetings

with the three groups was to determine the extent of user benefit from the services and the impact that the services had on their lives and perceived needs. The focus group meetings were organised by the programme leaders. Participants were invited to attend and were assured that they need not come, or stay, if they did not wish to. During the focus groups, conversations were recorded electronically, and by hand. Every effort was made to record the totality of the data.

What follows is a selection of the comments made by service users. Comments represent the major themes of the feedback offered. Each group was asked to focus upon responses to four questions [see below]. To ensure confidentiality each group is referred to only by a letter.

5.8 Focus Groups' opinions of the service offered to service recipients.

Researcher: - I'm here to ask what you think of the service and if it has benefited you in any way.

Group [A]

'The children benefit a lot. She [the programme leader] picked me up off the floor'.

'It helps you rather than the child'.

'You can talk to a total stranger better than a friend or relative'.

'All my children have grown up, except for him. Things have changed since the older children were born'.

'More people are now telling you what you do wrong. it makes you worry'.

'They told me to get down and play on the floor. I've never done that before'.

Group [B]

'It's been of benefit to the children'.

'It's brought me out, mixing with others'.

'She reads now, and eats at the table'.

'It's great, they're lovely here, and the children look forward to coming [grandmother.]'

'It gets you out of the house.'

Group [C]

'It helps across the board'.

'She [a team worker] has been a real friend'.

Researcher Is there anything else that you would like to see put in place here?

Group [A]

'I'd like to see a playgroup set up for us'.

'Yes, there is a local playgroup but they look down their noses at you'.

'Yes, with us, we know each other we've been in the same boat'.

Group [B]

*'More often, more than twice a week' [frequency of meetings].
 'Too much on breastfeeding, they bully you from start to finish about it'.*

Researcher. What about yourselves, would you like an opportunity of learning some work skills, for instance?

'I would, I messed around at school and then I was pregnant at fourteen. I'm not stupid, I know that.'

'I went back to local college and got some NVQ s. It was hard with kids and all, but it's worth it, it makes you feel better about yourself'.

'Something on computers and such, so that I can keep up with the kids'.

'No, I've got enough to do looking after her'.

'It's all right for the young ones, but I'm too old to learn things now'.

'My time's taken up with the children. You never get a minute. I couldn't take anything else on'.

Group [C]

'I took a Math's GCSE last year, here'.

'I'm interested in stained glass so I'm doing a course next year on that. It gets me out of the house'.

'Most of the girls round here, they can't be bothered, all they do is clean and watch TV. Their husbands are in work and so they just do nothing'.

Researcher What difference do you think that coming here has made to your lives?

Group [A]

'Taught me that you have to have confidence'.

'It builds confidence to ignore your family and advice from relatives'.

'Confidence to talk to health visitors and GPs, I never would before, but now I answer back. [general laughter]'.

'My parents, especially my mother, were upset at first with me coming to the project. They saw it as a let down and that there was something wrong with them. But as they've seen what benefit I've gained, they're all right about it now'.

'It taught me that I was the boss and not... her [the baby]'.

'I don't just want to be a better parent; I want to be a better person'.

Group [B]

'Gets me out of the house'.

'Gives you a chance to talk to someone, not just baby talk'.

'To know it's not just you, everyone's got problems'.

Group [C]

'I'd like to get a job sometime'.

'I'd like to as well, but the jobs round here are rubbish. I'm not working in a factory'.

5.9 Unaddressed need

Although the research was still in its early stages, focus groups provided a sharp insight into the gap between what was being offered and what might be achieved. The problem noted at this stage, was outlined earlier. There still appeared to be an 'agency' centred approach to the problem of implementing policy. As with other forums of social care, the emphasis was on the individual, not the group. Clear examples of this arose from the focus groups which, on the whole were complimentary about the projects. However, a number of the participants in group [A] suggested that they would like to take a more active part in the work of the project. Two of the women, who had been mothers at the age of fourteen, expressed an interest in being involved in parenting classes at a local school, as they felt that young girls might learn from their experiences. However, one of these women had her offer of help rejected on the grounds that her account of becoming a mother at the age of fourteen might 'frighten' teenage girls! Others in the group were enthusiastic about starting a playgroup, but they had not been given any advice on how to proceed, or to learn skills that were necessary for this venture.

These examples reveal that real opportunities for social inclusion were being overlooked. A number of this group of motivated and intelligent women may easily have been integrated into the work of the project. Thus a low level of user participation became apparent. Yet arguably, in any project where community development is an important factor, user involvement is a key feature.

Other examples of how programme organisers were missing opportunities to recognise relevant need and implement new policy were seen in relation to housing issues. Several of the women complained of living in areas where they, and their children, were isolated. They said that their children 'had no-one to play with'. One woman told of how her health visitor had helped to get her re-housed because of isolation. Initially, she had been very happy with the move, the accommodation provided was far superior to that in which she had previously lived. Sadly, however, she soon found that she was living in a flat, above that of a man who frequently caused disturbances. He had recently stabbed his girlfriend during a row. When she complained about his anti-social behaviour, she herself was threatened. Now she was 'frightened to go out,' or let her child play in the garden. The result of the move for this woman was therefore increased isolation and fear, yet none of the programme workers had thought of collaborating with the Housing Association to implement an anti-social behaviour order, or to eject the undesirable tenant, in order to promote the social inclusion of this family.

This oversight to recognise the need or opportunity to work at a cross agency level, either within or without new policy initiatives, led the researcher to the sad conclusion that from the start, the

real goals of policy, and more specifically, what had to be done by programmes to achieve them, had not been fully appreciated.

In group [B], two interesting, if disturbing insights arose to illustrate the above point. In the first place, it appeared that little involvement of the mothers was either offered or sought. For their part the mothers saw the programme as a crèche, or child-minding activity, aimed at providing them with respite from their parental responsibilities. As a consequence, mothers did not appear to seek total involvement in the programme. Programme providers were not conveying awareness of the fact that service user involvement was one of the goals of policy. As a result, at an individual level, nothing seemed to have been done to help parents improve parenting or personal skills. As interventions with children were carried out in isolation from parents, parents were not observing and learning skills appropriate to the purpose of improving their parenting abilities or sustaining their children's progress through social and economic development.

Sadly too, another ideal opportunity to improve children's lives by implementing some of the 'stretching' goals contained in policy had been overlooked. During conversation with the mothers the researcher uncovered a long-standing complaint against a local school. In particular, discontent was expressed with the running of an after-school club which was described as 'expensive and poorly run'. The researcher offered, what to her was an obvious comment. 'If you fail to get satisfaction from the school itself, then you might approach the governors'. Herein lay a unique opportunity for involvement of mothers in community matters, because it transpired that the parent governor posts were all vacant. However, when the researcher enquired if anyone, anywhere, had suggested that the women themselves might wish to put their names forward to fill these vacancies, [thereby providing an opportunity to improve services], the reaction from the group was one of horror. The most common response was summed up by one woman who said, '*I couldn't do that. I wouldn't know what to do!*' Friere [1972] may probably have argued that these women needed 'conscientisation', but at a more practical level the programme could have offered these mothers some training in self-assertiveness and basic training in what it needs to become a school governor, and thereby address their grievances. Such an intervention would have been wholly consistent with some of the stated aims of policy and the Cymorth Scheme explored in chapter one. However, an opportunity to help these people to become more active in the management of their own lives had been lost, as had the chances of developing more 'active citizenship', 'community development' and 'social inclusion'.

Although a small number of the participants in focus group C had made a decision to improve their own education, the local culture, was described by them as "passive, and resigned to

whatever fate sends". This culture appeared to militate against the success of this programme, as young mothers did not seem to want to attend. Yet the area served by this programme was characterised by the term 'social deprivation'. An absence of a cohesive and supportive community was reported, and it did not need a social scientist to recognise that the key indices of social exclusion, lack of employment, low wages, poor housing, lack of public transport, few shops, low educational achievement, vandalism and street crime, which were the norm in this community. Yet, despite these apparent dystopic symptoms, the need to tackle these problems and thereby achieve policy goals did not appear to have been an important element of the programme.

5.10 Conclusion

In this chapter an attempt has been made to 'map' the barriers or 'metaphors' which may impede policy implementation, a process recommended by Morgan [1986:4] and Pestieau [2003], as essential to the preliminary stages of evaluating policy implementation. This was a task which prepared the way for implementing an action research strategy, which according to Eden and Huxham [1993], and Ledwith [2005:2], is essentially based on concerns for measuring what is happening in practice, within an evaluative framework such as that described by Clarke [2000], or Copeland and Wexler [1995].

The preliminary findings of the study described in this chapter, show that if the several themes of the Cymorth programme were going to be successfully implemented, in the sense that the process, outputs and outcomes of policy implementation could be improved, then a better understanding of the nature of the philosophy that underpinned the policy was essential. Despite the whole 'raft' of policies produced by the Welsh Assembly, which had been circulated to the Borough Council by the Welsh Assembly Government, at the 'partnership' or strategic level of local government [See Chapter 2], more opportunity seemed to be required for contemplation or discussion on what the policy meant.

Also to facilitate policy implementation, consideration of how policy shifts might affect organisational form or structure and of how implementation of policy required collaboration between agencies and considerable attitudinal change on the part of the workforce, was required. Additionally, attention to the need for change in levels of knowledge and skill, on a multidisciplinary basis, was required. This was especially the case in respect of some of the statutory agencies involved in the scheme. Interviews with service providers who worked in the various programmes revealed that not even the managers of these programmes had received sight

of policy documents. There had been little discussion with programme managers of the aims and objectives of policy, nor of what these might mean in terms of knowledge or skill deficit on the part of service providers. Programme managers claimed that they had merely been informed of the need to identify a Cymorth Theme appropriate to their programme and to identify aims and targets for achieving this theme. This task appeared to have been bureaucratically imposed over a short time span in order for the County Borough to comply with the requirements of the WAG for funding. Arguably, the task may have been better accomplished if programme managers had had more opportunity to gain better skills in understanding and interpreting policy, identifying appropriate aims and target setting and of evaluating progress towards policy implementation. This lack of skill on the part of programme managers had not been detected at the strategic level, although it was evidenced by failure of the majority of programmes to identify themes obviously applicable to their programmes and certainly by the fact that none of the programmes [except for those instituted by some of the voluntary sector], had demonstrated any innovation in the type of programme provided.

Overall, the policy focus on alleviating child policy and social disadvantage through family community and economic development appeared to require more emphasis. There appeared to be many 'barriers' to policy implementation, such as the absence of robust vision and problem orientation, in respect of such matters as the siting of services, their appropriateness and accessibility; lack of sufficient awareness of the importance of culture; insufficient understanding of policy aims, which resulted in an absence of a 'vision' for change; knowledge requirements, in respect of the range and scope of services needed for policy implementation and understanding of the terminology used at the strategic level; a lack of collaboration resulting in a low level of 'joined up' working and poor relationships; 'compliance' or a 'mechanistic' response to programme provision; 'self referencing', that is the provision of 'more of the same' services because of a need for a greater understanding of what was required; lack of assessment of the characteristics of the population served, resulting in unmet need; assessment of individual rather than community need; a lack of awareness of the need for community development; a lack of strategic governance resulting in poor self-monitoring and the need for greater awareness of the importance of outcome measurement. Consequently, these factors resulted in short termism and a lack of influence upon strategic direction; a lack of social inclusion resulting in poor human relationships between service providers and recipients, and an overall lack of resource and autonomy in respect of organising appropriate services to comply with Cymorth planning guidance [WAG, 2002].

In contrast, some voluntary agencies appeared to have a slightly better understanding of the philosophies underpinning policy, and were endeavouring to change their practice accordingly. However, their funding was specifically related to their capacity to effect change, a factor which may have increased motivation. In contrast, statutory agencies appeared to have less concept of the need for change. On reflecting upon this issue, it became increasingly evident to the researcher that because of its flatter, more flexible structure, the voluntary sector may have found it easier to familiarise their staff with the 'thrust' of new policy directives. To this end, they had ensured that all programme staff concerned with 'new' policy implementation had copies of policy documents and the strategy to be adopted for putting policy into action. In addition, a performance evaluation strategy encompassing process, output and outcome measurement was also available. This finding appeared to illustrate Parsons [1995] and Osborne and Gaebler's [1992] assertions that the voluntary sector appeared to be increasingly taking a lead in service provision as a result of the state not being able to provide the range of services expected. The situation appeared to illustrate the extent to which voluntary agencies have almost become a 'third sector' in their eagerness to increase their responsibility for service provision and thereby maintain financial viability [Osborne and Gaebler, 1992]. The situation therefore raised the question of whether in the long term the current developments in the voluntary sector would result in a shift in focus, away from beneficiaries of their service towards a greater concern for the maintenance of a more bureaucratic management system. This situation has already been noted by researchers such as Willett [1994], and Knight [1993], both of whom contended that as private agents of public policy, voluntary agencies will lose their authority to mediate oppressive state policy and as a result are likely to lose their *raison d'être*.

However, at the current time this was not a direct concern of the researcher, the main purpose of the study was to investigate and remedy the policy implementation process. The concern of the initial phase of the study was to investigate why the management and service provider's responses to government legislation appeared to be slow. In the following chapter the preliminary evidence reported above will be analysed.

Chapter Six

A formative analysis of the preliminary evidence

6.1 Introduction

Pestieau [2003:8] defined formative analysis as a form of evaluation undertaken in the early stages of a programme. Its purpose is to help managers improve the ways in which a programme works. It was shown in the last chapter that data collected during the first stage of this study highlighted there was some room for improvement in interpretation of the aims and objectives of new child and family policy. There appeared to be potential barriers to policy implementation because of a 'lack of 'robustness' in interpretation. It will be recalled from Chapter One that both the UK and Welsh Assembly Government claimed that,

"Children's rights and needs are closely aligned with the philosophy of the Convention".

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989], [UK First Report to UN, 1994:1].

Consequently it was claimed that child policy should reflect the central tenets of the UN Convention, namely that:-

- Children are visible and central.
- Children are people with inalienable human rights.
- Children have a right to special assistance.
- Children's own views should be given due weight.
- A greater emphasis on state rather than family responsibility is required.

The shift in policy to integrate these tenets has arguably been a movement away from the traditional 'liberal standard' of British child and family policy characterised by a belief that,

"whilst the state has a legitimate interest in the rearing of children, this is best served if intervention is confined to the last resort".

[Daniel and Ivatts, 1998: 15].

There has been a movement towards a policy strategy which places a greater emphasis on the responsibility of the state to support families caring for children and to strengthen the 'public responsibility' for child care [DSS, 1998]. Policy strategy has been subsequently 'rolled out' in various legislative documents, developments and 'cross cutting' policies [CYPUP, 2000; DTI, 2003; DfEE, 1998; DES, 1999; DoH, 1999; DoH, 2000] [see Chapter One]. In Wales, the emphasis on the 'rights of the child' has been integrated into the Cymorth Scheme, a strategy for securing the well-being of children in Wales [WAG 2000, 2002]. The purpose of this policy is to strengthen the role of the state in child care by ensuring the collaborative implementation of

explicit policies for developing strategies aimed at tackling child poverty. It is expected that this will be accomplished through economic and social development, improving the balance between work and family life, thereby reducing social exclusion and improving the 'life-chances' of all children [CYPU 2000]. These processes require administrative and organisational change [see Chapter Two].

Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] argue that there are certain prerequisites for perfect policy implementation. Clear objectives are required; there should be no ambiguity about the purpose of policy; it should be supported by key groups; implementers must possess commitment and skills and have sufficient time and resources. Preferably there should be few links in the implementation chain; a lack of resistance to the policy and excellent communication between all parties. These researchers claimed that even if these criteria are met, there are two possible outcomes of policy implementation. Either implementers behave like automatons and act according to plan, or they may apply their own discretion in accordance with their perceptions of policy and the services required to implement it. Hupe [1993], in agreeing with Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43], suggests that it is not sufficient to expect that new policy will be automatically adopted. There are always likely to be shortfalls in the implementation process that require identification and analysis. In a more recent evaluation of policy implementation Pestieau [2003:7] emphasises the importance of systematically collecting information about the implementation of policy to determine the way in which its outcomes may be influenced.

The purpose of this chapter is to collect information about the policy implementation process through analysis of perceived barriers to outcome achievement. Reflection on the findings of the previous chapter revealed that to achieve the outcome themes of the Cymorth Scheme [WAG 2002], policy implementers required a better understanding of the philosophy underpinning policy and the necessary organisational skills. The key questions that arose from reflection on the previous chapters are:-

- Whether improvement of the process, outputs and outcomes of the Cymorth Scheme, constituting the policy implementation framework, [Clarke, 2000 and Copeland and Wexler, 1995] could be improved to bring policy implementation in line with policy?
- Whether the managerial responses to much of what was happening could be improved?
- Whether economic, social, administrative and organisational change could become a reality?

It was the contention of the researcher that the probable answers to these questions might be distilled from analysis of the 'barriers' to policy implementation identified in the previous chapter. This was a process recommended by Pestieau [2003:12], Morgan [1986:4] and Ledwith

[2005:2]. It is seen as a means of mapping problems of policy implementation within the context in which they occur. As was seen at the conclusion of the last chapter, several themes appear to emerge from the preliminary findings. In this chapter these themes will be discussed and the need for more robust responses to child and family policy directives will be postulated. It is hoped that the process will enable the researcher to draw conclusions from the first stage of the study. This activity reflects Hart and Bond's [1995:40-44], 'experimental' stage of an action research methodology framework. The aim is to determine the problems that may be encountered, the extent of perceptible, or behaviourist change required among members of an organisation and the extent of organisational change needed to overcome barriers to change. The remainder of this chapter will be presented in three parts. Following an analysis of identified barriers to policy implementation, possible interventions will be proposed in accordance with both the vertical and horizontal frameworks of action research methodology, discussed in Chapter Three. Finally an account will be provided of workshops set up to address shortfalls in policy implementation and the visits made to programmes to support policy implementers achieve policy aims. Findings from these visits will be presented and evaluated.

6.2 Analysing the Barriers

[i] Provider autonomy and adequacy of resources

As was seen in the previous chapter the autonomy and resources [to initiate schemes and design programmes for policy implementation] possessed by the various programmes was variable. Statutory services, used to working within a bureaucratic, hierarchical form of organisation, appeared less able than voluntary organisations to appreciate the need for an autonomous, innovative and resourceful means of programme planning to implement government policy in a collaborative way. That is through 'partnerships' which meet local need and encourage social inclusion and community development.

Weinrich and Koontz [1994:277-281], claim that organisations based on a matrix culture, such as the voluntary organisations met with in this study, are more likely to be sufficiently flexible to combine functional and project patterns of departmentation within the same organisational structure. Significantly, it was the voluntary organisations that seemed to be more successful at implementing the Cymorth Scheme. They appeared to have more autonomy, resourcefulness and innovation in respect of setting up new services to meet the requirements of policy. Consequently they had adopted and integrated several of the Cymorth themes into each of their programmes, thereby illustrating the 'cross cutting' nature of policy.

In contrast, the programmes provided by statutory agencies appeared to be more restricted. Lack of autonomy and resource appeared to have contained their activities to only one of the Cymorth themes [WAG, 2002]. This was usually a theme encompassing a traditional mode of service delivery. However, the theme chosen had been agreed with managers at the time of the initial funding of the programme. Moreover, the theme was compatible with the aims of the Cymorth scheme, but it did not convey innovative change. Constraints appeared to make statutory organisations less flexible and less innovative than voluntary organisations. To improve it seemed necessary for statutory services to demonstrate that their programmes were additional to, and distinctive from, the main stream services provided by the local authority. This was a considerable challenge. In traditional hierarchical organisations there seemed to be a need for greater awareness of the need to integrate Cymorth themes into all aspects of service provision. By so doing, it might be possible for them to achieve more 'cross cutting' and innovative policy outcomes also.

On observing perceived restrictions in autonomy and innovative programme planning within bureaucratic statutory services, Rummery [2002:234], argued that such programmes were powerless to devise suitable strategies to bring about change, particularly in areas of high deprivation. Rothman [1995:12] and Hill [1980:253], claimed that in such situations policy implementers usually believe solutions lie in the external spheres of politics and economics and that these need massive long term economic investment. In this study some programme managers also reported that the causes of restricted life chances, experienced by the communities served were beyond their intervention capacities. Moreover, statutory agency programmes did not appear to recognise that the policy thrust for integration of services through 'partnerships' was a means of pooling resources. Nor did they seem to recognise that the impetus for health and social improvement was a means of bringing about community development [DoH, 2000]. Rummery [2002:235], in a discussion on partnership working, points out that the term 'partnership' may often be little more than rhetorical. This is because those involved do not have the autonomy to experience a degree of interdependence and trust. These factors may be slower to develop within the public sector because of historical work patterns that confined workers to 'isolated silos' [Alcock and Scott, 2002:115]. For example, in this study a particular restriction on autonomous and resourceful programme planning within health services appeared to be the narrow medical definition of 'health improvement targets' adopted by the health authority. Defined targets were not premised on the need for integration of health and social care. For example, targets such as increases in numbers of child immunisation were mainly techno-centric.

Therefore, although the Welsh Assembly Government had determined a legal duty for statutory agencies to work in partnership with the voluntary sector [NAfW 2000:2.2], the concept of 'partnership' was less robust than it might have been.

Such findings beg the question of whether the level of Local Authority is the critical level for power coordination. As was seen in Chapter One, Ling [2000:84] argued that hierarchical agencies are invariably characterised by 'power struggles' and 'weak partnerships'. Powell and Glendinning [2002:1] claim that despite the fact that Government has determined a legal duty for statutory agencies to work in partnership with the voluntary sector, as is the case in Wales [NAfW 2000:2.2], current problems in forming partnerships may result from governance narratives influenced by obsession with markets. Ling [2000:84] and the Audit Commission [1998:6], suggest that a solution is 'governmentality', the self-organisation of inter-organisational groups with participation of all agencies and service users. 'Governmentality' is prescribed as the remedy for preventing disruption of the 'steering capacity of the state'. 'Governmentality' requires a flatter organisational form conducive to a more inclusive society [Handy, 1990:159]. Balloch and Taylor [2000:7-8] and Glendinning et al [2002:6], suggest that currently the concept of partnership is constrained to the margins of organisations. It is limited to special initiatives, or the use of designated monies for specific objectives. The building of real partnerships and governmentality requires time, investment, co-terminosity, pooled knowledge, skill and resource. Such requirements are likely to be bedevilled by the persistence of power relationships, poor technical support and a resistance to engaging communities in partnership work. Non-engagement of communities is described by Craig and Taylor [2002:134] as the result of,

"New rhetoric being poured into old bottles",

Public sector agencies are described as being so engrained in power holding that they are reluctant to perceive the benefits of engaging communities as a means of improving service outcomes. Hudson and Hardy [2002:55] argue that traditionally the public sector has expressed its aims and objectives in terms of service inputs and outputs, rather than articulating these in terms of service user outcomes. In this study, it was noted, particularly in public sector programmes that more attention might have been paid to the importance of user outcome measurement. This appeared to indicate that programmes were overlooking the need for basing their services upon a policy implementation process framework capable of identifying inputs, outputs and outcomes [Clarke, 2000:265; Copeland and Wexler, 1995:57]. This would have enabled them to have a clearer picture of the process of programme delivery and the outcomes, or effects of new policy

on the people policy was designed to serve. Oversight of this issue may have precluded reflection on the ways in which policy may be influenced from 'the bottom up'. This is a process described by Elmore [1985], Pressman and Wildavsky [1984: 6], Barrett and Fudge, [1981] and Lewis and Flynn [1978], as reformulating as well as implementing policy in a way that meets local need. Clarke and Newman [2000:89] claim this process is more familiar to voluntary agencies, which are said to have developed the skills of outcome evaluation and the ability recognise its influence on policy direction.

Hudson and Hardy [2002:55] suggest that as well as being more 'flexible' and responsive to 'governmentality' issues; the voluntary sector may be more familiar with the process of influencing strategic policy direction. Consequently they may be more aware of the importance of the value of outcome measurement as a means of evaluating and influencing policy direction. Perhaps benefiting from more targeted resources, having more autonomy and more flexible organisation, they have had more opportunities, than the public sector, to learn that policy implementation is not a foregone conclusion. As Van Meter and Van Horn [1975:450] claimed, in the public sector policy implementation may not be considered to throw up any great issues. As a result, it appeared that, in the statutory agencies, the effects of policy implementers upon policy implementation, as identified by Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43]; Hupe [1983]; Parsons [1996:467]; Hill [1993], and Lipsky [1976], needed more consideration. Overall, it appeared that hampered by a lack of perception of the main thrusts of policy, organisational difficulties, and policy implementation frameworks, managers, particularly in the public sector, experienced some difficulties in the task of providing leadership for service providers. Factors relating to autonomy and resource appeared to be clouding the vision of what might be achieved as a result of 'new' policy direction. Arguably this lack of vision was derived from a lack of robust and clearly defined goals and objectives, in respect of the policy implementation process. In particular, goals needed to be focused on 'strong stretching partnerships' and 'governmentality'. Thereby outcomes of economic and social development of families and communities might be achieved.

6.2 [ii] Lack of vision

It appeared desirable to formulate a collaborative, integrated and strategic vision of the broader thrusts of policy, so that all agencies involved with the scheme complied with the national policy frameworks and objectives identified by the WAG [2002]. To ensure governmentality this vision needed to be communicated throughout geographic and 'interest' communities within the County Borough. However, it became apparent to the researcher that such a vision was stronger within

the voluntary agencies. This may have been because, in programmes provided by the statutory agencies, few service providers appeared to have encountered policy documents [CYPU 2000, NAFW, 2000]. They therefore appeared to be uncertain of how such terms as 'social inclusion', 'community development', 'empowerment', 'participation' and 'citizenship' should inform their programmes and services. To strengthen understanding it appeared that staff from the 'public' agencies required better access to policy documents and greater opportunities to reflect on the changes they were required to make. Within the voluntary organisations' programmes greater familiarity with policy and more awareness of strategies required for its implementation were observed. The finding suggested to the researcher that the use of an organisational type of action research [Hart and Bond 1995], might help to improve policy implementation through processes of education, increasing awareness and skill development. This speculation was influenced by Hogwood and Gunn's [1984:43] argument that there were prerequisites for perfect policy implementation. In particular, policy implementers required clear objectives and little ambiguity over the purposes of policy. It was their view that change was unlikely to occur unless policy implementers understood the main thrusts of policy [CYPU, 2000].

Handy [1993:116] identifies vision as one of the four important strategies for achieving 'a perfect fit' in any situation. It is his view that vision is a necessary condition for freedom of action. If leaders are able to convey a vision of what is required they are able to instill confidence in their employees,

"A confidence which gives them a belief that they can actually deliver the dream".

As was shown in Chapter Two current policy is characterised by the 'Titmussesque' ideal of communitarianism which is seen as a corrective for the 'value deficits' of the statist system managerialism, the market and individualism. 'Communitarianism' is identified as the vision to 're-incarnate' society [Clarke and Newman, 2000:131]. For this to happen it is desirable for the vision of communitarianism to be communicated. That being the case service deliverers may work collectively to create social relationships within communities that are neither reliant on the state nor the market [WAG, 2000]. According to Handy [1990:27-38], voluntary organisations are more likely to motivate their staff to achieve a vision of what is required to achieve organisational goals. Also they have a greater degree of flexibility to facilitate change as they may be less constrained by substantive problems related to resources, resistance, class and complexity than statutory services [Etzioni,1961].

6.2[iii] Self referencing as a barrier to change and sustainable development

Although it was expected that strategic policies produced by Government, such as 'governmentality' and 'communitarianism', would be encompassed within frameworks for service delivery [CYP, 2000; DES, 1999; DoH/DfEE, 1996; NAFW, 2000], a lack of vision appeared to be resulting in a process of self-referencing. It was observed by the researcher that in a number of programmes there existed a process of falling back into 'tried and tested' ways of working. This seemed to convey that both programme managers and their staff were happier to work in ways that they felt comfortable with. This is a reaction which has been well documented as discretionary application of policy by 'street level bureaucrats' [Hogwood and Gunn, 1984; Lipsky, 1980; Hudson, 1989]. It is said to be the result of necessary bargaining processes, power relationships, values, interests, motivation and behaviour being overlooked by service managers and 'partnerships' alike. Majone and Wildavsky [1984] observed that to ensure active involvement in policy implementation strategies there is a need to engage service providers in the process of bringing about change.

Programmes run by voluntary organisations appeared to have a better grasp of the philosophy of 'new policy', and the ways in which this philosophy impinged on service delivery. This understanding seemed to have resulted from negotiation and bargaining with strategic management over new ways of working. Thereby 'cross cutting' strategies had been encompassed into programmes. These enabled community development and progress towards social inclusion and economic development of clients, through training programmes. To this end, appropriate aims objectives and targets for service development to achieve policy aims had been identified and documented. However, voluntary organisations appeared to be hampered in their progress by a lack of understanding of policy aims, on the part of statutory agencies. In particular, collaboration in the process of community development for economic and social improvement appeared to require strengthening. Rothman [1995] and Hogwood and Gunn, [1984:43] claimed that an understanding of the primary values of community development is a necessary prerequisite for change. Values identified were locality development, social planning and social action. Seemingly there is some considerable scope for engaging policy implementers in these strategic goals for change.

Mullins [1993:670] argued that effective change is reliant upon the style of managerial behaviour. Although hierarchical authority, coercion and autocratic styles of behaviour are sometimes necessary to attempt to impose change, other methods may work better. Lipsky [1976:206-210], also argued that it was necessary to take account of how overly bureaucratic work environments

may be unfavourable to contemporary demands for improved services from those expected to implement policy at 'street level'. Agreeing with this view Thompson and McHugh [1990:224], suggest that any resistance to change must be managed and techniques developed to resolve conflict. Mullins [1993:670] recommends that staff are encouraged to participate in change; thereby they will be committed to its implementation. Otherwise, staff may feel insecure, out of control and resort to perpetuating tried and tested strategies [Wehrich and Koontz 1994:432].

In the light of these arguments, it was the contention of the researcher that an action research approach encompassing both organisational and professionalising strategies [Hart and Bond, 1995:40-44; Ledwith, 2005:33], was required to overcome the problem of the statutory agencies' reluctance to embrace the need for managing change. It will be recalled from Chapter Three that these strategies involve effecting organisational change towards consensus; overcoming resistance to change; restructuring the balance of power between managers and workers and identifying tangible outcomes for improvement. This might be facilitated by empowering professionals and enhancing professional control to resolve problems and develop practice.

6.2 [iv] Cultural barriers to organisational change.

Traditionally, a bureaucratic culture prevailed in the majority of agencies involved in the implementation of the Cymorth scheme. The culture characterised the bureaucratic nature of their organisations. A matrix or 'flat' organisational structure approach was only apparent in the voluntary organisations involved with the scheme. Weinrich and Koontz [1994:277] describe the 'matrix' organisation as one that allows for the simultaneous provision of both functional and project patterns of service delivery, within the same organisational structure. It is the view of Wehrich and Koontz [1994:277] that this type of organisational structure provides the best outcomes for clients, an important consideration in respect of the Cymorth Scheme. However, the structure has received criticism for its potential to cause power struggles within organisations, between project and functional managers [Harvard Business Review, 1986:77-81]. Although many of the organisations involved in delivering the Cymorth Scheme had duly appointed project/programme managers, in reality they appeared to have little autonomy. This was because they were expected to be subservient to the bureaucratic management regimes of their primary organisations. Clarke and Newman [2000:36] suggest that such problems may be due to confusion caused by cultural change. They describe how various phases of cultural change have focused on managerial cultures emphasizing efficiency and cost. Variants have been

characterised by visionary images of 'customer driven' services, 'empowered staff' and 'quality services'. Now an emphasis appears to be placed on 'reinvention' of the role of government and abolition of old notions of the state and its professionals 'solving' social problems. Public as well as private organisations are now expected to be responsive and flexible.

This finding signalled the requirement for each programme to acknowledge the need for autonomy and independence of action to meet needs, of particular communities, in a flexible way. Subsidiarity, defined as the idea that central authority should have '*a subsidiary function to the smallest competent agency*' is an approach based on the concept of collaboration with communities. It portrays the fact that to meet the complexity of policy objectives, multi-agency interventions are needed. To be effective these interventions should take place on an equal footing with communities, as each agency has an important role in ensuring that 'the sum is not greater than its parts' [Glendinning et al. 2002]. These authors claim that if participative interventions are to be a reality, partnership is an essential component of subsidiarity. To be successful in terms of illustrating policy implementation in a transparent way, the degree of collaboration and partnerships between the communities and agencies involved in this study needed to be increased. However, as was shown in relation to perceived cultural barriers to policy implementation, the need for collaboration to develop community, appeared to be better recognised by voluntary agencies. Managers within the statutory agencies seemed to require greater facilitation to acquaint staff with the purposes of policy and to create more functional organisational matrix forms.

The situation illustrated the contention of researchers such as Hill [1993:2] and Parsons [1995:466] that 'top down' models of policy analysis fail to identify the complexities of the implementation process. To remedy this problem the researcher again decided that an educative intervention in the form of organisational and professionalising forms of action research, as described by Hart and Bond [1995:40-44], was required to change the situation. What appeared to be needed was a restructuring of the power balance between programme and agency managers. This might bring about increased professional empowerment, and more autonomy in relation to community development for the social and economic improvement of clients.

6.2 [v] Mechanistic orientation

In order to facilitate subsidiarity and collaboration between agencies for community development and social and economic improvement, a baseline measure, or profile of the needs of individual communities was required [Rothman et al, 1995:256-267]. However, the needs of communities were not being profiled. Therefore services were planned and delivered in a rather mechanistic

fashion. There was scope for service to be planned on a needs based approach as presently, it appeared that service users were getting 'more of the same'. Because the needs of communities and individuals were not profiled, the type of interventions that might be facilitated by the broader remits of 'new policy' were at best limited, at worst unrecognised.

According to Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia [1995:259], community profiles should consist of an epidemiological survey of all health and social factors relevant to the community. Data collected should be compared with generalised data for the country concerned, in this case, all-Wales statistics. Thereby the status of specific communities, in comparison to a countrywide perspective, can be identified. Such a profile might have been compiled at 'Partnership/management' level and made available to all programmes. Programme managers could then have prioritised the needs of their particular community against the base-line profile. This practice might have justified the components of the programmes they wished to offer and demonstrate that programmes were needs-led and aimed at engendering social and economic change. Profiling has the potential for recognising unmet needs and can be used to facilitate 'bottom up' responses to policy, such as recommended by Parsons [1995:468].

It was perceived that a process of action research using both organisational and professionalising strategies [Hart and Bond, 1995:40-44] might address the deficits identified in policy implementation. The process might enable managers and programme staff to construct and interpret community profiles and ensure that all were aware of the existence of unmet needs that could be barriers to policy implementation. Also assessment of community resources might lessen external dependency for enhancing clients' decision making processes, providing skill training, facilitating collective activities and consciousness-raising [Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia, 1995:259].

6.2[vi] Unmet need

It appeared to the researcher that programmes had made insufficient distinction between needs that could be met by programmes, those that required more strategic action from the 'Partnership' level and those that required the resources of Government. Based on the assertions of Rothman [1995:15], it was perceived that such distinctions might engender more transparency, particularly in the process of providing information to the strategic level, about the success or otherwise of the policy implementation process. At the time of the first stage of the study it was only the voluntary organisations that appeared to address this matter. The statutory agencies did not appear to be categorising interventions for unmet needs according to resource potential. Therefore arguably, they were losing opportunities to influence policy at the corporate level through feedback from

the operational level, a process recommended by Parsons, [1995:476]. It was perceived by the researcher that in accordance with the recommendations of Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43], programme workers should be facilitated to identify unmet need and highlight inequalities between communities. This might facilitate programmes to be outcome orientated and targeted at the social inclusion, economic and social development of communities.

Again this was a process likely to be amenable to action research interventions as according to Eden and Huxham [1993], these have the capacity to enable social change. Hart and Bond [1995: 40] suggest that organisational and professionalising models of action research may overcome reluctance to identify need and influence policy implementation more positively. It was noted by the researcher that needs for a more robust vision and greater knowledge and skills in relation to policy and needs determination, were resulting in a lack of motivation and awareness of the importance of change. This was especially the case within the statutory sector. Programmes offered to fulfill the Cymorth Strategy were, in the main, somewhat lacking in policy intent and direction and they were weakly focused on community and individual needs. Therefore programmes lacked objectives aimed at improving the social and economic situation of parents and their communities. In addition low levels of recognition of unmet need and requisite programme planning appeared to be hampering progress of the Cymorth Scheme. This finding illustrated the arguments of Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43], that perfect policy implementation can only occur when clear objectives are provided.

6.2 [vii] Knowledge deficit as a barrier to policy implementation

From the above discussion of findings it appears that on the part of managers and programme providers, there was a requirement for greater knowledge regarding the philosophy of policy. Without this, conceptual appreciation of the main thrusts of policy and the importance of profiling individual and community need required strengthening. Also, there appeared to be a need for greater consciousness, on the part of managers in the statutory sector, that implementation of policy within a devolved administration needed a 'shift' away from hierarchical control. This 'shift' should entail a move towards a more 'adhocratic post-modern' structure, dependent upon the networking of agencies [Parsons, 1995:461]. There appeared to have been little attempt to identify complex and diverse patterns of interaction, or power relationships between agencies, nor to define how centralisation, [in terms of policy formulation] and decentralisation, [in terms of policy implementation] could stimulate competition between agencies to achieve policy outcomes. As a result, programme managers appeared to have received no direction from 'partnerships' in respect of how the structure of their own programmes needed

to be aligned with current policy strategies and contemporary ideas on organisational form and structure [Thompson and McHugh, 1990:197].

Again it was decided by the researcher that action research might address these problems in a practical way. That is by feeding the results of initial observation back into practice, thus assisting both managers and service providers to improve their practise and facilitate the participation of service users in policy implementation. This was a process identified by Denscombe [1998:58] as one of the greatest advantages of action research. To accomplish change, it was perceived that there needed to be a greater awareness of the benefits of a collaborative approach. Sadly there appeared to be a resistance to collaborative action on the part of several of the agencies participating in the study. This finding appeared to be a definite barrier to policy implementation. As Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] and Pressman and Wildavsky [1973:xiii] noted, to ensure policy implementation there must be no ambiguity over its purpose, a lack of skills on the part of policy implementers, or a lack of support on the part of key interest groups. Neither should there be a lack of interaction between those that set goals and those undertaking action to achieve them.

6.2[viii] Power orientation as a barrier to ‘Strong Stretching Partnerships’.

Power orientations between and within agencies, as witnessed by some of the statutory agencies’ reluctance to work collaboratively with voluntary agencies, appeared to be causing barriers to collaboration. Yet collaboration was a key element of policy strategy [WAG, 2000]. Programme providers did not appear to appreciate that policies cut across many sectors and required ‘joined up’ working between agencies, if social inclusion community development and economic and social improvement were to occur. Specifically, there appeared to be need for more appreciation of the fact that partnerships and programmes should indicate the symbiotic links between provisions for children and families. In particular, the inter-connectedness of issues relating to children and their families, such as social well-being, health and economic status appeared to need strengthening [Daniel and Ivatts, 1998:90-1]. In the absence of this, the majority of programmes required greater conception of the need to support the development of parents and communities, if the situation of the child was to be improved. This was in spite of the fact that ‘communitarianism’ [see Chapter Two] had been spelled out in policy documents [CYPU, 2000]. Similarly, concept of the need for continuity in service interventions through collaborative strategies required emphasis, if opportunities for sustainable improvement and assessing outcomes over a longer period were to be provided. Despite the setting up of ‘partnerships’ at management levels, demarcations between agencies persisted. The finding perhaps signified the difficulties experienced by some agencies in relinquishing their perceptions of power and

authority over what might have been perceived as agencies of lesser importance. This problem appeared to lead to a lack of continuity in programme provision. Consequently, it appeared that because of 'demarcation' services might be terminated when families were just beginning to benefit from intervention. As a result of a lack of follow-up, longer term outcomes of intervention appeared to go unrecognised. Power orientation was also observed to be possibly resulting in a lack of community integration into programmes and a lack of user involvement in the planning and evaluation of services.

To combat this problem the researcher identified a need for interdisciplinary workshops in which service managers and providers, from all agencies involved in the scheme, could explore and reflect on their roles and responsibilities. In particular, it appeared important that reflection should focus on whether 'power interests' should be subservient to policy goals. This was an issue which again coincided with the recommendations of Pressman and Wildavsky [1973:xiii], that it is necessary to increase interaction between those that set goals and those that put them into action, if policy implementation is to be improved.

Moreover the concept of 'partnerships' with service users was observed to be weaker in the statutory sector, though as was noted by Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia, [1995:264], 'partnerships' are essential for community development strategies. As was shown in focus group interviews [Chapter 5] service user views were often overlooked, and their participation in programmes was not actively encouraged. This signified a possible lack of determination to 'construct the nature of problems' experienced by service users, to institute agreed solutions and to ensure that such action was a permanent feature of all agencies. In order to increase awareness of the barriers to policy implementation created by power orientations, interventions based on organisational and professionalizing processes of action research were planned [Hart and Bond, 1995:40-44].

6.2[xi] The lack of problem orientation and good governance

There appeared to be scope for awareness, on the part of management, of the need to define problems innate to individual service users or individual communities. The strategy of targeting as opposed to universality in the provision of services, an issue discussed by [Rothman, 1995 :12] may have meant that the need for providing needs meeting programmes for which programmes could be seen to be accountable was obscured. Although this was a requirement of guidance provided by WAG [WAG, 2002], it appeared to the researcher that all programmes needed to demonstrate accountability, high standards of performance, best value and governance. Glendinning et al [2002:34] claimed that this could be achieved through establishing 'networks of

interdependence'; These were defined as problem orientation and transparency through record keeping. Such networks were said to consist of documentation of processes of assessment, intervention and evaluation of service outcomes, in order to demonstrate high standards of care. This process was also recommended by Clarke [2000:265] and Copeland and Wexler [1995:57]. However, only programmes provided by voluntary agencies appeared to undertake these tasks. Problem orientation could have been facilitated through collaborative and participative identification of aims, objectives, inputs, outputs, outcomes and service targets between service users and providers and between agencies, a process advocated by Rothman [1995:32], but in the case of the implementation of the Cymorth scheme this was not being carried out.

In addition a process of benchmarking the implementation of policy directives could have been adopted in order to signify 'best value' and good governance, in respect of policy strategies and economic investment [Glendinning et al.:100]. This did not appear to be happening. In line with the principle of subsidiarity, it was perceived by the researcher, that monitoring criteria chosen by individual programmes to demonstrate problem orientation and resolution, might be integrated into the monitoring framework model provided by WAG [WAG, 2002]. The use of this model might then be monitored to capture individual and integrated interventions on a regular basis. This action might demonstrate, not only that policy was being implemented according to Government strategy, but also that 'best value' was being achieved through processes of problem orientation and self-governance. Models of good practice identified from particular programmes could be disseminated in order to raise overall standards of service provision. However, as was stated above, the only agencies that operated systems of problem orientation and governance were the voluntary agencies. Statutory agencies needed to strengthen this practice. This might increase awareness of the need for improving human relations between service providers and users and between agencies, in order to accomplish change. It was decided that for the purpose of addressing this issue strategies of professionalising and empowering types of action research [Hart and Bond, 1995:40-4], might be used to assist in problem definition, resolution, improving practice and ensuring good governance.

6.2 [x] Lack of awareness of the importance of human relationships

Evidence of a lack of awareness of the importance of human relationships was found in respect of both service providers and users. In respect of the former, there was no evidence that service providers had been afforded the opportunity of continuing education and professional development. Particularly, these were not provided on an inter-professional basis, in order to improve the knowledge and skills requisite for policy implementation. As a consequence, the

concept of active partnership working, as discussed by Glendinning [2002:100], was not part of agencies' agendas. In a similar vein, understanding of the need for community involvement and development, as recommended by Rothman [1995:32], appeared to lack robustness, which meant that human relations between staff and service users were inadequate. For example, it appeared that considerable effort was required to improve factors such as the access and availability of services and the staffing of programmes to match user need. Careful consideration of factors related to programme siting, transport links, stigmatisation, cultural appropriateness, attitudinal barriers, image and referral patterns was needed to ensure that programmes were 'user friendly' and provided a range and scope of services to match user need. Also in relation to staffing, consideration needed to be given to matching staffing profiles with the profiles of service users. Only in this way could programmes provide role models for parents and children.

Consideration also needed to be given to training, educating and developing service users, in order that they might be empowered to complement staff in terms of experience and cultural knowledge, thereby sustaining progress [Rothman, 1995 :42]. However arguably, the need for stronger leadership and guidance from management in respect of these matters, except in the case of the voluntary sector, precluded strategic governance of service user activity. The findings suggested a need for greater awareness of these issues on the part of managers at the partnership level. Again it was thought by the researcher that the deficits described might be addressed through the use of professionalising and empowering types of action research [Hart and Bond, 1995: 40-44].

6.2 [xi] Barriers created by lack of Strategic Governance

A need of greater appreciation of the importance of strategic governance, defined as networks of interdependence [Glendinning et al, 2002:34], for the achievement of policy goals, meant that deficits existed in the range and scope of services. In addition there appeared to be deficits in the monitoring and evaluation of the extent of policy implementation, the extent of user involvement and the range and scope of programmes. Although the main purpose of programmes was to improve the lives of children and young people, the need for family and community development, in order to support children should also have been an equally important consideration [CYPU, 2000]. Unfortunately, in many programmes this required more consideration, arguably programmes were not pro-active in this respect.

In the majority of programmes monitoring and evaluation systems needed development, especially in respect of how they represented policy thrusts. Attempts to address this situation were hampered by a need for better understanding of what was required. For example, user

involvement, as a means of evaluating programmes might have been capitalised. This should be realistic as opposed to tokenistic [Arnstein 1971], but there was little evidence to show that programmes were user-led, except to some degree in the programmes provided by voluntary organisations. This finding particularly demonstrated the need for recording and evaluating user outcomes, a process advocated by both Rothman [1995:31] and Pressman and Wildavsky [1984]. Outcomes are claimed to be essential in respect of social planning, but in the main, this was being overlooked. As a result important consequences of policy, in particular its effects upon families and communities were poorly recognised. This finding demonstrated that more emphasis needed to be placed on employing an evaluative framework for policy implementation [Clarke, 2000: 265, Copeland and Wexler, 1995:57], at the commencement of the Cymorth Scheme.

6.2[xii] Barriers related to the lack of outcome orientation for the purpose of influencing the strategic direction of policy.

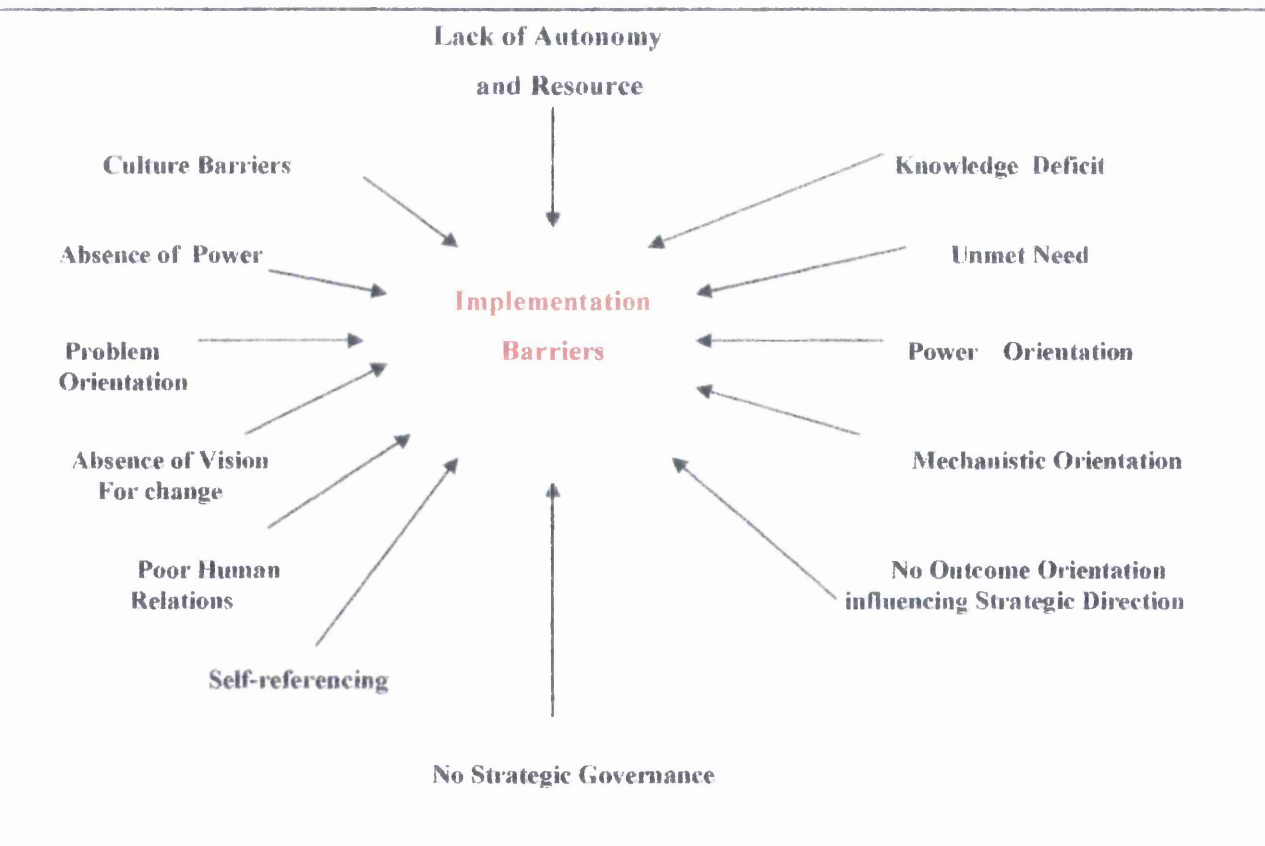
Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] and Pressman and Wildavsky [1984:6] emphasised the importance of communication between all parties involved in policy implementation. This included those who are the recipients of services. In relation to this matter, Rothman [1995:395], emphasises the importance of asking service users what benefits they have received from programmes. This offers a valuable perspective for the evaluation, planning and delivery of services and thereby, the policy implementation process. According to Glendinning et al [2002:100], it is the only way of proving that programmes are making a 'difference' to peoples lives, particularly in respect of achieving inclusion and citizenship. Clarke [2000:267] argues that evidencing the 'differences' can only be achieved by application of an evaluative framework.

However, apart from overlooking the need of an evaluative framework to identify 'differences' made to people's lives, most programmes exercised restraint in respect of innovation and autonomous action to redress the expressed needs of service users. As a consequence more might have been done by programmes to identify the outcomes of services, to feed back outcomes of policy direction to management, or to influence the direction of policy. Arguably, investment in 'new policy' was not being comprehensively evaluated. This meant there was a possibility that money was being directed at the wrong issues.

This finding suggested the need for greater political awareness of management and service providers' responsibilities to inform as well as implement policy [Parsons, 1995:462]. It is the view of Parsons that policy implementation should be seen as an 'evolutionary learning process' rather than as an implementation sequence. As a consequence, policy implementers have an important role in influencing and re-shaping policy, as well as carrying it out. According to

Derthick [1972]; Pressman and Wildavsky [1973]; Dunsire [1978]; Gunn [1978]; Morgan [1986/1993]; Pestieau [2003] and Ledwith 2005.2], it is important that barriers to policy implementation and the non-achievement of effective policy outcomes are identified. In adopting a ‘constructivist’ approach to this exercise, Morgan contends that there are likely to be several metaphors involved in the process of policy implementation failure. These metaphors should be identified in order to create insight into the complexities of policy implementation. It is Morgan’s view that there is no one model or frame-work that can be applied to analysis of policy implementation. This is because problems of implementation have to be constructed according to context. Analysis of the implementation process is a learning activity which should lead to enlightenment of participants involved. The ‘mapping’ of the context of problems offers the possibility of understanding the multiple nature of factors involved in causing barriers to policy implementation. The barriers to policy implementation identified in this study appear to mirror several of those identified by Morgan [1993].

Fig.5 A Visual representation of the identified barriers to Cymorth Policy Implementation



In accordance with the recommendations of Pestieau [2003:8], the results of this formative analysis of the Cymorth policy implementation process were conveyed to the 'Partnership' level of the County Borough. These results indicated that the aims and objectives of the Cymorth scheme had been somewhat narrowly interpreted. Arguably therefore, the conditions of the planning guidance [WAG, 2000] were hardly being met. In particular, more attention might have been paid to the need for 'stretching programmes' incorporating strategies for lifting children out of poverty through processes of social inclusion, community and economic development. Therefore, it appeared that there was a requirement to consider the prerequisites for perfect policy implementation [Hogwood and Gunn, 1984:43], discussed at the beginning of this chapter. To overcome the problems identified in this situation, it was recommended to the County Borough that the process of policy implementation might be improved through action research, as advocated by Hart and Bond [1995:4] and Pestieau [2003:12]. In particular, Pestieau claimed that policy implementation can best be evaluated using a form of research that illustrates what is happening in practice, thereby services may be re-aligned.

6.3 Outcomes of barrier identification and re-alignment of services.

To ensure that barriers to policy implementation identified in Fig.5 could be addressed, it was the wish of the County Borough sponsoring the research study, that an evaluation framework model should be devised. It was rationalised that this would enable programmes to improve and sustain standards of policy implementation and continuously monitor and evaluate their performance. Thereby the funding of programmes by WAG would be justified. Continuous monitoring and evaluation were seen as essential to ensuring that programmes were always on track to achieve the broader long term goals of policy [CYPU, 2000]. The County Borough valued independent evaluation of the Cymorth process as an essential aspect of ensuring transparency and 'best value'. In the following section steps taken to remove policy implementation barriers and re-align services will be discussed.

The nature of the barriers to policy implementation identified in this study [Figure 5] indicated that if 'new policy' was to be embedded in practice, participative and educative involvement of both management and staff in a re-structuring of the policy implementation process was desirable. The base-line or formative evaluation of the study described above, was accepted and acted on by the 'Partnerships' of the County Borough concerned. Arrangements were then made for setting up workshops to address the need for re-alignment of programmes with current policy, the training and development needs of all staff, and improved monitoring. It was planned to achieve the latter

through development of an evaluation model, which encompassed all of the recommendations of policy. There was agreement that workshops should be based on an action research approach [Hart and Bond,1995] in order to enhance and develop the professional practice of both managers and service providers and increase the participation of service users. In the following sections findings, from stage one of the study will be discussed under headings of Hart and Bond's action research framework. This will illustrate how workshops were planned and facilitated.

6.4 Summary and analysis of findings from Stage One of the study, according to the Action Research Framework of Hart and Bond [1995].

In summary analysis of the findings indicated that at both the strategic and operational levels of the organisation acknowledgement of the complexity and 'crosscutting' nature of policy [CYPU, 2000] needed strengthening. The extent of professionals' practical orientation towards policy implementation differed considerably between programmes. Noticeably policy implementation was more robust in programmes organised by,

- voluntary rather than the statutory agencies.
- those serving young people rather than children [these tended to be organised by the voluntary sector].
- those with a more flexible or 'matrix' type of organisational structure, [mainly the voluntary sector, rather than the historically bureaucratic statutory organisations].
- those who historically had their 'ear to the ground' in terms of general awareness of policy thrusts [mainly the voluntary sector].

In consideration of the findings of the literature reviews, it was decided to use an action research methodology to improve knowledge of policy, its implementation process, and to devise a model for continuously monitoring the sustainability of standards of policy implementation. Firstly, using the action research framework of Hart and Bond [1995], an analysis of the findings reported thus far was undertaken according to the vertical axis of the model. Secondly, analysis according to the horizontal axis was carried out. Necessary shifts in managers' and service providers' actions to improve policy implementation were identified from the barriers discussed above. The exercise demonstrated Zuber and Skerritt's claim [1996: 5] that the use of action research has the potential to bring about technical, practical and emancipating improvements in the process of policy implementation.

Reference to the discussion of this model [Chapter Three] [Hart and Bond, 1995:40-44], shows that the vertical axis consists of the following components, educative, collective orientation, problem focus, change intervention, continuous development, a cyclic process, research

relationship, and collaboration. Whilst the horizontal axis requires shifts in action from experimental approaches through organisational change, and increased levels of professionalisation, towards increased empowerment in respect of policy implementation.

6.5 Vertical axis analysis - An educative strategy to overcome the barriers caused by lack of autonomy, vision, self-referencing and knowledge deficit.

Findings from stage one of the evaluation show that both at a strategic and operational level most agencies [apart from some voluntary organisations], involved in the planning and delivery of services required greater strategic vision of the policy thrusts. Indeed, the majority of programmes needed to strengthen awareness of policy thrusts [CYPU, 2000]. In particular, the concepts and theories underpinning the need for change, such as social inclusion, collaboration, participation, empowerment and active citizenship appeared to need strengthening [WAG, 2000]. Arguably without such action, inadequate levels of awareness of the importance of project siting, contactability, accessibility, comprehension of the complexity of the notions of 'joined up' working, user participation and collaboration prevailed. Yet Rothman [1995:28] emphasised that these factors underpin community development strategies. For the majority of programme providers, the Cymorth Scheme seemed to represent only a 'new way of working' which was being imposed from 'above'. Programmes had done their best to comply with what was required, but most were working 'in the dark'. They therefore fell back on a process of self-referencing, a strategy described by Morgan [1993] as an 'autopoietic metaphor', meaning that service providers merely carried on doing what they had done before. This might have been because it was more comfortable than having to make poorly understood changes.

The findings indicated that policy implementation was unlikely to be a feasible proposition in the absence of an educative strategy. Facilitation of an exploration of policy and identification of operational links with service provision appeared to be necessary requisites for ensuring that the policy implementation outcomes of collaboration, partnerships and citizenship [CYPU, 2000] were fully understood. Also it was perceived that the underlying values of policy needed to be made sufficiently transparent, so that service providers might discriminate between the provision of normative and 'value added' services.

Programme managers required more opportunity to 'hone their skills' in processes of defining aims, objectives and target setting, in order to systematically evaluate the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of their programmes and adhere to a policy implementation framework, such as that described by Clarke [2000:265], or Copeland and Wexler [1995:57].

[6.5 i] A Collective orientation to overcome cultural barriers, mechanistic orientations and power orientations

There appeared to be only cursory acknowledgement of the 'collective' or 'cross-cutting' nature of policy [CYPUP, 2000; DfEE, 1998; DoH/DfEE, 1996]. Partnerships purported to be 'working together', but in reality the degree of collaboration seemed to leave much to be desired. Programmes continued to deliver services in a mechanistic way, dominated by traditional power structures. Indeed, as was seen earlier in the chapter, voluntary organisations commented on the reluctance of statutory agencies even to consider working collaboratively. Programmes therefore appeared to have received little information on the need for collaborative intervention. As a consequence they continued to work in isolation, at best only networking with other agencies, rather than providing a system of integrated care and support. The concept of governance, as described by Glendinning et al [2002:97], was barely evidenced. Absence of a collective orientation also meant that services were individually rather than community focused. This resulted in the provision of 'victim blaming' rather than 'enabling strategies', described by Rothman [1995:32], as an important characteristic of community development interventions. As a result, policy strategies for social inclusion and citizenship appeared to have been thwarted from the start and service users were condemned to having 'no voice' in the planning and implementation strategies of services. It became obvious that oversight of the need for collective orientation was hampering a 'vision' of how strategic policy objectives could be achieved. Moreover, a lack of suitable implementation frameworks, based on a collective vision of policy implementation, such as those identified by Clarke [2000:265] and Copeland and Wexler [1995:57], was a barrier to sustainable development of the communities in which programmes were implemented.

The lack of sustainable community development meant that the values of community integration, social inclusion and citizenship, described by Rothman [1995: 29-33], which underpinned Cymorth policy [NafW 2000], were 'non-starters' in the policy implementation process. Another perceived deficit in respect of poor policy implementation was an apparent lack of understanding of the importance of the concepts of subsidiarity, 'contingency' and the 'flexible matrix organisation' [Thompson and McHugh, 1990:197].

Subsidiarity is the 'flat' structured approach to the setting up of programmes and schemes. It is commended for its propensity to show that no two communities have exactly the same needs. Consequently each scheme should have autonomy and independence of action in order to meet the needs of individual communities [Thompson and McHugh 1990:1997]. To achieve

subsidiarity organisations need to be flexible, and cognisant of the contingency or matrix theory of management [Thompson and McHugh [1990:95]; Wehrich and Koontz [1994:277-281]. These approaches, based on the concept of collaboration, clearly portray the fact that to meet the complexity of policy objectives, multi agency interventions are required. These interventions must be indeterminate, flexible and take place on an equal footing. Each agency has an important role in ensuring that the sum is not greater than its parts. Partnership is also an essential component of subsidiarity, if participative intervention is to be achieved [Glendinning et al. 2002:106-109].

It soon became apparent through the process of analysis, that an understanding of the principles of partnership and collaboration needed to be instilled at all levels of the organisation. It was determined that this might be achieved through processes of continuing education aimed at weakening the existing demarcation culture. Demarcation cultures resulted in mechanistic service provision and perpetuation of power barriers. To facilitate greater understanding a system of consensitisation [Ledwith, 2005:31; Friere, 1972] and continuing education of all participants was suggested. This was intended to create a wider knowledge of the 'quality policy benchmarks' of collaboration, participation, community development and subsidiarity. Thereby, it was reasoned opportunities for wider vision might be created and integration of policy into working practices increased.

[6.5 ii] Problem orientation and focus

Findings showed that programme aims and objectives had been virtually 'plucked from the air' in response to 'top down' interpretations of policy implementation. This was a process criticised by Derthick [1972] and Pressman and Wildavsky [1973], for its disingenuous assumptions that policy will be perfectly implemented. Although all programmes had attempted to link their aims to one of the Cymorth themes, few had based their service provision on the actual needs of individuals or communities, or the 'cross cutting' intentions of policy strategy [CYPU, 2000]. As a result, programmes appeared to be professionally led, non-problem orientated and had little 'add on value' to services currently in existence, despite this being a criteria emphasised in policy implementation and funding guidelines [WAG, 2002 :5]. Although a few of the programmes had attempted to profile the needs of individuals, using some kind of assessment tool, this was not standard practice. None of the programmes had a baseline measurement of the needs of individual communities within localities. This meant that the process of problem solving,

particularly according to principles of subsidiarity, was ill-defined. To remedy this 'gap' it was perceived that each programme should have access to a community profile, consisting of an epidemiological survey of all social and health factors relevant to the communities served [Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia [1995:259-261]. This profile should consist of the numbers of inhabitants, demography, health status, employment, economic status and social factors [household structure, family status, crime and disorder, deprivation factors, cared for children, education facilities /opportunities, achievement, truancy, environmental hazards, transport etc.]. Each of these measures needed to be compared with All-Wales statistics, so that the status of specific communities might be identified and targets for improvement set. To ensure that all programmes were 'singing from the same hymn sheet', it was suggested that the community profile should be compiled by the local authority and made available to each programme. Programme managers should then be expected to prioritise the needs of their community against the base-line profile, thereby justifying the components of programmes offered. This would ensure that programmes were not a duplication of other provision. In this way programmes could demonstrate that they were needs-led and that local projects were translating national targets into action through the 'fine tuning' of interventions. It was apparent that if problem recognition was to be enhanced, profiling skills were a necessary component of on-going staff development.

[6.5 iii] Human relationships and the problem of unmet need

There was plenty of evidence to show that if the nature of need fell outside the usual remit of a particular programme, serious indicators of need might be overlooked. Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia, [1995:260-5], categorise a number of need assessment techniques which may be used to stimulate collective efforts to fulfill need. However, it was found that the requirement to detect unmet need required greater emphasis. Referrals for improved service, or continuity of care were therefore few. If recognised, unmet need appeared to have been brushed aside by resource concerns, inordinate concerns for 'confidentiality', or erroneous interpretations of current civil rights legislation. It became apparent that if needs were unable to be met by programmes, or the programmes of colleagues, the strategic level of the organisation required to be informed of deficits in resources. If then the 'Partnership' was unable to deal with the needs at a strategic level, it should be their duty to refer un-met needs to Government.

Only in this way could a two-way process of policy direction be established and the process of informing policy made transparent [Parsons, 1995:262]. Specifically, inequalities between and within localities needed to be documented. Skills of profiling unmet need, impact assessment and

making representation to overcome need deficit appeared to be essential elements of staff development. Also to achieve a two way process of policy there seemed to be a need to improve human relationships between programme personnel and strategic and government levels of policy planning, implementation and service delivery. Possibly these factors might be achieved through processes of interdisciplinary activity. The improving of human relationships between service providers and users was also a necessary adjunct to increasing people's participation in policy strategy.

[6.5 iv] Strategic governance to ensure change and policy implementation

Glendinning et al [2002:34] argue that governance is an element in the changing nature of relationships between state and society. It signifies recognition of the fact that hierarchical forms of government can no longer provide effective means of control and coordination. To improve the current status of policy implementation it was apparent that at the strategic level there was need for an emphasis on strong partnerships and increased continuity in care and support. This would indicate to programme managers that policies cut across many sectors and require 'joined up' working between agencies, if their implementation is to be successful.

At the operational level it was important for programme managers to recognise the inter-relatedness of issues affecting children, their families and the community [Daniel and Ivatts, 1998:90]. Currently the range and scope of services appeared to be too narrow to respond to policy demands. The majority of programmes focused on the child, as the primary recipient of services. Thus opportunities to improve children's well-being through improvement of family and community environments, were possibly missed. In some of the programmes the researcher had found that although children received much attention, parents were left to their own devices. It was perceived that the involvement of parents and the wider community in forms of development, might improve self-esteem and empower people to become more self sufficient.

User involvement in programme activity Rothman [1995:28], was another area in which change was an essential aspect of policy implementation. Current observation of service provision showed that participation of users was merely tokenistic. There was little encouragement for users to make individual needs known. Community integration, or greater involvement of the community in the day to day activities of programmes, might also help to identify opportunities for social inclusion and citizenship through skill enhancement. To achieve these aims changes within the organisation needed to be both transformational and transactional. That is changes needed to be informed by more visionary thinking [Mullins, 2003]. Arguably, at the strategic level a review of organisational structure might facilitate more flexibility for greater collaboration

and integration, whilst at the operational level, improved human resource management should afford increased opportunities for continuing education and professional development, preferably on an inter-professional basis.

Apart from one of the voluntary organisation programmes, little attention had been paid to providing opportunities for 'lay' service users to benefit from experiences of training and educational development and thereby, to perhaps contribute to service provision. In relation to this matter Rothman [1995:29] comments that community development is enabled by the process of educating participants and nurturing their personal development. By not encouraging service users to participate in programmes and thereby improve their skills, opportunities were being lost. Staffing issues were also an important management consideration. It was clear that greater attempts might have been made to align staffing profiles with the needs of the communities involved in the scheme. In particular, a scarcity of male staff was apparent in all programmes. This was of particular concern in areas of one-parent family prevalence, where the absence of male role models had been perceived as a social deficit. This finding is one that has been upheld by researchers such as Dennis and Erdos [1993:50-3], who showed that in the absence of fathers it is likely that children's health and development are likely to be poorer and their academic performance and skills below the levels of children from two parent households. To facilitate change consideration needed to be given to 'change management processes' such as those discussed by Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43]. Such processes might facilitate policy implementation at strategic and operational levels. Thereby, it might be possible to institute the prerequisites for improved policy implementation discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Above all, there appeared to be a need to develop a culture of self governance in order to ensure that professional practice was focused on and directed by, the broader aims of policy strategies.

[6.5 v] Outcome orientation to ensure improvement and involvement in influencing the strategic direction of policy

According to Rothman [1995:29], in any organisation processes of improvement and involvement are necessary aspects of continuing development. These factors were therefore perceived to be important indicators of the success of the Cymorth scheme. Particularly, in terms of the extent to which it was successfully implementing policy and developing people and their communities. However, as has already been indicated, baseline assessment of the organisation's progress in policy implementation indicated that there were many 'gaps' or barriers to policy implementation

in current provision. To overcome perceived deficits, or barriers identified earlier in this chapter [Fig.5], consideration needed to be given to the need for demonstrating accountability for policy implementation, to improving standards of performance, to increasing professional skills, and demonstrating evidence-based practice as well as 'best-value ' [that is, that outcomes of services actually met needs].

It appeared to the researcher that to achieve the aim of accountability, it was necessary for programmes to demonstrate they were not only 'doing things right', but that they were 'doing the right things'. It was determined that if the policy implementation was to be made transparent, high standards of performance needed to be evidenced through documentation of appropriate frameworks for policy implementation [Clarke, 2000:265; Copeland and Wexler,1995:57]. Thereby service inputs, outputs, outcomes and targets might be adhered to throughout processes of supportive intervention. To achieve this end, the County Borough concerned had requested the production of an appropriate model of policy implementation against which they might benchmark the progress of their scheme towards policy implementation. It was discussed with personnel at the partnership level that such a model would need to demonstrate a cyclic process of policy implementation, thereby illustrating planning, implementation and evaluation processes which might lead to reformulation of planning and implementation procedures, or policy reformulation.

6.6 Analysis of the Implementation of the Cymorth Project, according to the Horizontal axis of Hart and Bonds Action Research Framework Model [1995]

The horizontal axis of Hart and Bond's framework [Chapter Three], clearly demonstrates the spectrum of the shift in organisational behaviour that is required to ensure policy implementation. This axis plots a trajectory of development from experimental 'ad hoc' attempts to implement policy in a 'top down' way, through the imposition of standardised frameworks for policy implementation, on to professional development as a means of creating more knowledgeable and reflective practitioners. Practitioners should be capable of making discriminate changes in practice to fulfill the demands of policy. Finally, the trajectory moves on to the 'empowered' organisation, in which service providers have the autonomy to transform and change the system in order to ensure policy outcomes are achieved. This being the case, policy implementers may then be in a position to influence policy change and re-evaluate service provision.

Analysis of the vertical axis of Hart and Bond's Framework [1995: 40 45], clearly showed that the organisation being studied had only progressed to the second stage of this spectrum. Some

programme providers dealt with individuals in groups, but had no clear idea or conceptualisation of the wider demands for community development and social inclusion. Indeed, it would be a fair criticism to point out that they were 'stuck' at this phase. Most of the programmes were experiencing great difficulty in using the standardised policy implementation frameworks provided by WAG [WAG, 2002], to conceptualise service provision and monitor the progress of the Cymorth Scheme. As has already been described, interviews, observation and documentary evidence clearly showed, at both the 'Partnership' and programme levels of the organisation, staff had difficulty in developing evaluative skills. This appeared to be due to a need for greater understanding of the concepts of target setting and frameworks for establishing aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes reflecting policy directives. Thus arguably, staff found it difficult to monitor policy implementation. Also, in the majority of programmes, a greater conception of objectives suitable for achieving the principal policy benchmarks of social inclusion and economic and social development was required.

As a consequence of these findings, evidence of the third and fourth stage of Hart and Bond's, [1995 :40-44], horizontal action research framework, 'professionalisation and empowerment', [as judged by the use of evidenced-based standards of professional practice and participation of service users] was sought. It was found in only two of the programmes involved in the study. Based on these findings Stage Two of the study was planned.

6.7 Stage two of the study

This stage of the study consisted of a series of nine workshops. These were arranged by the researcher with the help of the Scheme Organisers. Workshops were aimed at providing staff members of the organisation, [both statutory and voluntary], with the necessary knowledge and skills to improve policy implementation and construct an evaluative model of the process. Aims were to be achieved through the employment of action research, already described as an ideal methodology for dealing with practical issues [Denscombe, 1998] and the implementation of policy [Pestieau, 2003:12]. Every member of the partnership [managers] and every programme member was invited to attend the workshops. Workshops consisted of presentations, group discussions and exercises on,

- target setting, within the broad boundaries of the Cymorth Scheme Themes.
- applying appropriate policy implementation frameworks [Clarke 2000; Copeland and Wexler 1995] and identifying appropriate aims, objectives, inputs, outputs and outcomes for monitoring the policy implementation process.
- identifying and applying Policy drivers/benchmarks namely :-
Collaborative working.
Participation.

Social inclusion.
Community development.

To aid participants' development in policy implementation, workshop participants were provided with appropriate outcome indicators based on quality 'policy benchmarks' [CYPUP,2000]; [WAG, 2000]. They were also encouraged to improve need detection and thereby, the choice of appropriate Cymorth themes, through processes of data collection based on community profiling and needs analysis. Indicators of social exclusion and individual and family assessment, as described by Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia [1995:259-266] were recommended for this process.

During the workshops participants were facilitated to monitor their progress on the adoption and documentation of quality benchmarks. This was the first stage in the construction of an evaluative model of policy implementation. Monitoring forms [see appendix 5], were issued by the researcher and these were to be used in conjunction with the Objectives and Targets monitoring forms provided by WAG through the 'Partnership'.

6.8 Quality benchmarks

In order to ensure that policy was being implemented in an appropriate manner, the following essential benchmarks were identified from the themes which emerged as a result of analysing the perceived barriers to policy implementation.

- **Overall Vision -** evidence of knowledge of policy, 'joined up' working, thinking and communitarianism.
- **Measurable inputs, outputs and outcomes -** underpinned by base-line data [in order to overcome self- referencing] and facilitate governance.
- **Cohesiveness -** working across sectors and collaboratively with other framework projects [in order to overcome cultural barriers and facilitate governmentality].
- **Active participation -** of the community and service users - in the planning implementation and evaluation of programmes [in order to overcome mechanistic orientation and facilitate change].
- **Knowledge -** of policy directives, national and local statistics, indices of social exclusion and the skills to compare data and identify needs [to overcome knowledge deficit].
- **Continuity -** knowledge of other schemes, systems of access for users and further opportunities to enhance social inclusion, so that development was continuous [in order to overcome power orientation and achieve 'strong stretching partnerships'].
- **Pro- activity -** to act on unmet needs both at the individual and community level and to lobby for appropriate services both at the level of Partnerships and WAG [in order to overcome the lack of problem orientation and ensure the development of flexible organisations].
- **Mentoring and Training-** of volunteers through the provision of work placements and citizen

- training schemes [in order to improve human relationships and abolish tokenism].
- **Outcome Orientation** Continual review - of objectives [indicators] inputs, outputs and outcomes through internal monitoring of progress at six-monthly intervals [in order to ensure improved governance, strategic direction and that services were 'making a difference '].

All of these benchmarks related to an integrated model of policy implementation. They were emergent themes from analysis of the gaps identified in policy implementation [see Fig.5]. They needed to be applied to each of the Cymorth Scheme themes chosen in each programme. [Appendix 3]. Thereby the strengths and weaknesses in each programme might be identified

The purpose of the workshops was to:-

- provide facilitative training for staff and help them rectify gaps in service provision due to weaknesses in policy implementation.
- bring a bout change through enabling staff to discover more about the phenomena and practical problems that have emerged as a result of current policy.
- initiate a 'feedback loop' in which findings from programme providers could generate the possibilities for changes that might be implemented and evaluated. The process might be seen as a prelude to further refinements and improvements of the implementation of policy, as well as improvement of skills and professional development.
- recognise programme providers as crucial people in the research process, and convey to them that their active participation was essential to the implementation of the Cymorth Scheme.

It was perceived that in order to accomplish the broader thrusts of policy, policy implementers would need to engage in the process and be supported through a 'cycle' of change. Thus it was hoped to develop service providers' skills and facilitate their progress along the horizontal axis of Hart and Bond's [1995], action research model [See Fig 4].

6.9 The research relationship

Carr and Kemmis [1986:162] argued that action research, the cyclic process of continuous monitoring described above, has the ability to deal with the practical concerns of service providers over whether they are implementing policy through 'doing things right' and 'doing the right things'. It was the view of these researchers that action can be jointly planned by researchers and workers taking the values of each into consideration. From the literature it was determined [see Chapter Three] that this would be the best means of designing an evaluative model of policy implementation, capable of facilitating organisational and service change, improving service outcomes, solving problems and generating new knowledge of the system best suited to policy implementation.

According to Holter and Schwartz-Barcott [1993:300], collaboration is an important aspect of the research relationship. An important aspect of action research is the need to demonstrate how the researcher can act as a catalyst to help members of an organisation define problems, or to provide new ways of thinking about an old problem. Agreeing with this view Hart and Bond [1995: 56] claim that this is a research process which overcomes the limitations of positivism. It is a facilitative means of engaging members of the organisation in the process of policy implementation and its evaluation. Thereby, it was hoped that service providers would develop a sense of 'ownership' of an evaluative model which could be used to monitor organisational progress in terms of policy implementation. Moreover it was hoped that service providers might receive personal benefit from accumulating evidence of professional development and gains in knowledge and skills, which might be used to improve service outcomes. According to Hart and Bond [1995:56] it is the aim of action research to ensure the empowerment of participants in the process. Drawing on the work of Lewin, Hart and Bond, [1995:57] explain that participation is an important means of achieving democracy within the research process. As such, participatory and collaborative change is likely to be more effective than change imposed from above. The object of the exercise is for participants and researcher to become co-researchers and co-change agents. In the following section an account is provided of the development process planned for programme providers as a result of employing an action research methodology.

At the conclusion of the workshops arrangements were made to make follow-up visits to each project in order to assess its progress in developing an understanding of each of the quality benchmarks for policy implementation. Also at these visits skill development in integrating benchmarks into the monitoring forms issued by the organisation, in accordance with the directions of WAG, was to be assessed.

6.10 Findings from visits to programmes and evaluation of results.

At each appointed visit to the various programmes, progress in relation to the identification of themes appropriate to their programmes, and the appropriateness of aims, objectives/indicators, targets and the extent of adoption of quality benchmarks was assessed by both programme workers and the researcher. Adhering to the action research methodology, both positive and negative aspects of the programmes performance were identified. This activity provided a modelling experience for the continual cyclical re-assessment and re-alignment of the programmes, according to findings and experiences on both an individual and collective basis. Visits were also an opportunity to incorporate emergent policy guidance from WAG [2003]. Both

positive and negative findings from visits to the programme will be reported under the specific benchmark headings, and specific barriers identified.

6.10 [i] Themes, Aims, Indicators, Targets and Outcomes.

Benchmarks [Vision, Self-referencing Communitarianism]

Good progress had been made by all of the programmes in identifying these factors on the monitoring form provided by the Cymorth Scheme. It was pleasing to see that programmes were also recognising the inter-connectedness of themes and the need for identification of sub-themes more in line with policy requirements. This was perceived as a means of demonstrating the breadth and 'cross-cutting' potential of programmes. The majority of programmes had also been able to develop appropriate objectives/indicators for achieving the aims of the appropriate Cymorth theme. However, most programmes were still a little hesitant in respect of target setting for broader policy aims. It appeared that more help was needed to help overcome difficulties. Some of the programmes had identified the need for qualitative as well as quantitative targets and those that had not taken this on board were receptive to constructive criticism and suggestions. For example, there was one programme that was able to construct qualitative targets to measure 'school readiness'. Also as a result of being more adept at the identification of appropriate objectives/indicators, there was a greater appreciation of the need for increased collaboration and cohesiveness, between and within programmes.

However, hesitancy persisted in respect of differentiating between 'outputs' and 'outcomes' of services. More discussion and explanation of this issue was required in order to make understanding more explicit. This demonstrated a rather mixed picture of development in relation to the identification and monitoring of themes and identifying a framework of inputs, outputs, outcomes and targets. Nevertheless, it became obvious that all of the projects had concentrated hard on improving their knowledge and skills in this area, somewhat to the detriment of making progress with the process of benchmarking against quality standards for policy implementation, as will be seen in the following section.

The researcher's recommendations from these observations were that there was still room for improvement in terms of implementers understanding the process of using a policy implementation framework. It was perceived that attempts to achieve the broader policy aims might be improved by increased governance. Evidence of knowledge deficit, organisational fragmentation, professional and occupational boundaries, and the lack of innovative management to overcome these shortfalls, all contributed to a general absence of an overall shared vision. In

particular, regarding the communitarian philosophy of policy and how this should affect implementation strategies. Consequently there was an over-reliance on normative patterns of service provision. It was obvious that managers at partnership level needed to encourage new ways of working, in order to overcome problems.

6.10[ii] Collaboration

Benchmarks [cohesiveness-continuity, overcoming cultural barriers mechanistic orientation, power orientation in order to improve governmentality]

All of the programmes visited demonstrated a better understanding of the need for collaboration between agencies. In the main, they were able to identify agencies and programmes with whom they needed to make stronger links. Two of the programmes had already identified benchmark standards for improving collaboration. The others were in the process of identifying potential collaborators and the ways in which they could improve 'weak links' between themselves and other agencies or projects.

A better understanding of the causal relationships between social factors and health, well-being, exclusion, poor self-esteem, poverty and low levels of education was demonstrated by programmes. In addition, programmes were recognising that causal relationships could only be addressed through robust interdisciplinary interventions, as had been stated in policy documents [CYPU,2000]. However, only a small minority of the programmes had taken any concrete steps towards interdisciplinary action. As a way forward these were exploring the possibilities of 'shared records', or shared identification of needs planning and evaluation. Two of the programmes were reviewing their organisational form in order to enable more flexible and innovative working patterns, although some others had also given this matter some consideration. However, there was still a great deal of room for improvement, especially in those programmes heavily influenced by traditional forms of bureaucratic organisation. Some programmes were exploring theoretical frameworks which made it possible to analyse the work processes and functioning of their programmes, but there was much scope for further development. Overall it was agreed by the researcher and programme workers that the concept of collaboration was better appreciated, but that there was scope for more lateral thinking and innovation.

In respect of the benchmark of 'cohesiveness' the voluntary agencies reported a lack of co-operation from both health and social service agencies. As a result there were divisions between 'professional' workers from the statutory and voluntary sectors. However, there was some evidence of increased informal networking between individuals, but this action had not been systemised and there appeared to be reluctance on the part of the statutory sector managers to

refer people to the voluntary sector schemes. This fragmentation of services possibly resulted in users accessing services from more than one programme simultaneously, an occurrence which may have resulted in a serious drain on limited resources and perpetuation of barriers to governmentality

6.10[iii] Continuity –

Benchmarks [continuing support / progress monitoring/strong stretching partnerships]

There was no evidence of continuity of services for programme users. It appeared that once the requisite number of service delivery weeks was reached, services terminated. Consequently, there was no means of checking the numbers of programmes accessed by the same families, or the suitability of programmes. Neither was there a system for progressing users to education or training programmes which would give them a ‘hand up’. This was obviously a problem that needed to be addressed at management level.

6.10 [iv] Data Collection, community profiling evidence of social exclusion, -

Benchmarks [Knowledge of national/local data and indices of social exclusion - Problem orientation]

Most of the programmes collected some form of data, but in most instances data collection was simplistic and quantitative [numbers of people attending programmes]. As a result of the workshops there was a greater awareness of the importance of statistical data and indices of social exclusion, as a means of comparing and detecting need. However, only in two of the programmes had such data been used in any meaningful way. Some projects had good IT systems but, in relation to data collection, these had not been developed for meaningful use. Managers obviously needed to be more aware of the importance of relevant data collection as a tool for implementing, monitoring, influencing and shaping policy. Consideration needed to be given to ensuring that all service providers were aware of the importance of relevant data and its usage.

6.10 [v] Participation –

Benchmarks [Mentoring and training of volunteers, Active participation of users and communities; Human relationships; abolishing tokenism]

A few programmes were already demonstrating very good examples of participation. It was best demonstrated in programmes that had set up a planned programme of training for volunteers. Other programmes had developed systems in which users participated in planning and some had

developed systems of evaluating service users' views of the extent of their perceived participation. In some programmes, user views were welcomed and valued, but in others the views and values of professionals prevailed. Only one programme [run by a voluntary organisation] had actually included service users in the delivery of their programme, though others were addressing the feasibility of such an action.

Most programmes relied on professional referrals, which meant that service users had little say in referring themselves to a programme of their own choice. Overall, the majority of programmes needed to 'move up the ladder' of user participation described by Arnstein [1971].

Mentoring and training of volunteers

Apart from the exception of one voluntary organisation programme, there were no training schemes available in any of the programmes. Generally, there was much opposition to volunteers, on grounds of the need for 'complicated time consuming' police checks in order for volunteers to work with children. To facilitate social inclusion more emphasis needed to be given to this strategy.

Active participation of users/community

Overall, as observed above, most programmes encouraged little user participation and employed a top-down approach. Appreciation of the need to work with users was therefore somewhat inadequate. In respect of working with the community, there was little concept of the need for innovation, community development, or the need for culturally appropriate programmes.

6.10[vi] Social exclusion

Benchmarks [Social inclusion, community development]

Following the workshops all programmes demonstrated more interest in indices of social exclusion. Several had developed a greater awareness of the institutional factors that influenced opportunities, self-esteem and self-determination. [CYPU, [2000]; Daniel and Ivatts, [1998]; Dennis and Erdos, [1993]]. There was also some evidence of recognition of the institutional factors within communities, such as lack of employment opportunities that would need to be addressed by innovative programme interventions, if progress was to be made with policy implementation.

However, in general, programmes demonstrated reluctant to take imaginative leaps towards innovative interventions. Many programmes were too engrossed in bringing about individual change, [despite the recognised deficits of this approach], to consider the need for community

intervention. Only two programmes were attempting to use evidenced-based practices to facilitate social inclusion. Evidence of transformational change was therefore absent and more effort was obviously needed, from the researcher, to place issues of social exclusion higher up the agenda.

Community Profiling

Awareness of the need for profiling, as was recommended by Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia, [1995], was greatly increased and some programmes had taken steps to facilitate this. The need for profiling of 'social capital', that is support systems within the community had also been recognised by a few programmes. However, in the majority of cases, skills of profiling and needs analysis required more development. This was a situation that needed to be more enthusiastically addressed.

Knowledge of data

With the notable exception of two programmes there appeared to be a need for more adequate knowledge of current statistics, local/national data and of research evidence applicable to the work of the projects. In particular, the existence of data on such issues as the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence, disability, school exclusions, dental disease, obesity and accidents could have received more attention. Also there might have been more awareness of good practice and innovative schemes in other areas, and the availability of literature on these subjects [Dennis and Erdos,1993:]. As a consequence of giving low priority to such issues many of the programmes were failing to meet the actual health and social needs of the communities they served. This was a situation that required addressing.

6.10[vii] Assessment –

Benchmark [The pro-active identification of unmet need/strategic direction]

Several of the programmes had adopted some method of individual family assessment, but in the majority of cases assessment methods were not derived from evidence-based practice or validated processes. In the main, assessments were of individuals rather than family groups and they were not compared with community profiles, in order to ascertain comparative need or inequity. There appeared to be a need for more appreciation of the concept of shared assessment, even within the same project. In a number of instances the issue of 'confidentiality' still appeared to be clouding rational consideration of the importance of collaborative determination of need and gaps in service provision.

It appeared to the researcher that there was much reliance on referrals from statutory services. Also there was much repetition of the nature of these services in the programmes provided. With the exception of one programme [a Voluntary organisation] there was little evidence of any innovative outreach work. In one instance a toy library had published a catalogue of its resources, but on the whole there was little evidence of the publicising of services. Therefore, in respect of their enthusiasm to meet actual needs, inertia appeared to characterise most of the programmes. Arguably this was a situation that required to be addressed.

In summary, the results show that all programmes had made some progress in relation to monitoring the degree of policy implementation undertaken and the efficiency of its outcomes. However, on the whole there was still room for improvement in the application of quality benchmarks derived from policy [CYPU,2000; WAG,2000], in order to measure the effectiveness of programmes and demonstrate the robustness of policy implementation.

6.11 Action research analysis of Stage Two of the study

Reference to Hart and Bond's action research framework model [Chapter3] shows that all programmes had made progress along the vertical axis of the model. In particular, results showed that programmes were much more informed and knowledgeable about the nature of policy and that they appreciated the need for a collective, problem focused orientation, if policy goals were to be achieved. Almost all of the programmes now recognised the need for change, but for many of the programmes improvement and innovative change appeared to be a challenge. Nevertheless, there was recognition of the fact that the model of action research they were piloting for the purpose of policy implementation, represented an invaluable cyclic process which could help them 'stay abreast' of policy demands, remedy gaps in policy implementation and thereby improve the implementation process. At this stage of the study there was enthusiasm on the part of all programme implementers to maintain the research relationship and continue collaboration with the researcher.

Along the horizontal axis of the action research model, a shift had been observed from the experimental application of policy, to an enthusiasm for using the organisational framework provided by the WAG for measuring the extent of policy implementation. However, weaknesses were apparent in the extent to which programmes were able to professionalise the process of policy implementation through the application of policy benchmarks. Weaknesses were also

apparent in appreciation of the need for empowerment or emancipation of service users, through application of 'best value' criteria.

6.12 Implementation barriers

At this stage of the study it was becoming much clearer that particular barriers to the process of policy implementation, identified during base-line evaluation of the Cymorth scheme [Fig.5], might be addressed in more depth through the process of action research. Barriers that still needed attention were:-

- Barriers of lack of vision and self referencing, which still hampered participants in the process of working towards 'communitarianism.'
- Culture barriers persisted in respect of collaborative working and there was also some reluctance to recognise that processes of social inclusion are multidimensional and require multidisciplinary intervention. 'Partnerships' were therefore weak.
- Mechanistic work patterns still prevailed due to a lack of appreciation of the importance of achieving broader policy outcomes and applying policy implementation frameworks. Indeed there appeared to be a fear of the monitoring processes imposed to evaluate implementation. Therefore 'Governmentality' was slow to develop.
- A lack of knowledge still prevailed in relation to philosophies underpinning policy and the skills needed to bring about change. Ambiguity and a lack of clarity of purpose prevailed. This made the monitoring processes difficult for staff.
- The persistence of power orientation between agencies prevented joint planning. A lack of 'flexibility' within and between agencies precluded the development of organisational change, 'subsidiarity' and 'contingency'.
- A lack of 'problem focus' concealed the desirability of identifying need through participative community profiling and individual assessment. Such strategies were required in order to recognise factors precipitating social exclusion. Also, a lack of tools for profiling unmet need hampered programmes developing a vision for change. 'Tokenism' rather than 'participation' appeared to characterise service provision.
- The above situation called into question the state of human relations within the organisation and with service users. Also questioned was whether sufficient emphasis was placed on the need for improvement and involvement of both service staff and service users, if policy was to be implemented. 'Good Governance' and 'outcome orientation' was required to ensure 'best value'.
- A persistence of 'self-referencing' within the organisations suggested that the process of 'change management' might have been stronger. Strategic direction required strengthening.

6.13 Conclusion

In this chapter a formative analysis of preliminary evidence was carried out. It was shown that in the main, the aims and objectives of child and family policy, as set out in policy documents [CYPU, 2000 and WAG, 2000], might have been more robustly interpreted. Also policy

implementation frameworks might have been better understood. Thus the importance of shifts in policy and the new forms of 'governmentality' required to implement them, [see Chapter Two] might have been given a higher profile. Following the work of Hogwood and Gunn, [1982:43], in relation to the prerequisites for perfect policy implementation, the researcher set out to identify, in accordance with the work of Morgan, [1993], barriers to achievement of such goals. Decision regarding this action was influenced by the work of Pestieau [2003:12], who claimed that defects in the policy implementation process are best detected through a process of identifying and understanding the actions of implementers.

The process of action research [Hart and Bond 1995], employed throughout the first and second stages of this study, enabled the researcher to identify and confirm the barriers to policy implementation within the County Borough. Also the research process enabled monitoring of the extent to which barriers had been addressed through a series of work shops planned to aid policy implementation. Probably due to the mechanistic nature of bureaucratic organisations, some programmes still appeared to be focusing on the top-down implementation of policy strategies, decried by Parsons [1995:462] and Pestieau [2003:12]. However, through the process of action research the majority of programmes had made progress in 'getting to grips' with some of the barriers to policy implementation. Consequently, the complexity of trying to implement policy through a poorly understood organisational framework was gradually being addressed and the professionals involved appeared to be gaining in confidence. However, there remained some reluctance to reflect on the perceived barriers to policy implementation and to apply policy benchmarks for their removal. As a result the standards set by WAG strategy were not yet achieved. Also there appeared to be a need for more confidence to inform strategic direction, as arguably, oversight of this matter may have been resulting in a degree of failure to achieve 'best value', in terms of demonstrating how policy outcomes could improve the lot of children and their families.

The action research processes which enabled these recalcitrant problems and barriers to be addressed will be identified in the following chapter which also provides the results of the third and final stages of the study.

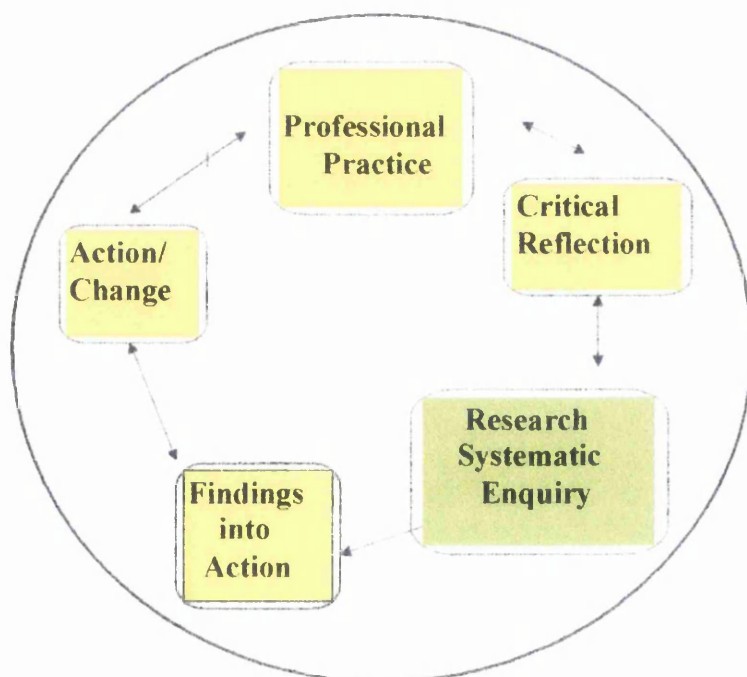
Chapter Seven

Action research as a means of overcoming 'gaps' and barriers to the policy implementation process – Findings from Stages 3 and 4 of the study.

7.1 Introduction

The barriers to policy implementation identified in the previous chapter were addressed further in stage three of the study. At this stage it was intended to finalise the development of a model of policy implementation which could assist programmes to continuously monitor and evaluate their progress in the implementation of the Cymorth Scheme. The model would be evaluated in the fourth stage of the study. Development of the model had been a three stage process which began in July 2002, with a base line evaluation to identify 'gaps' in policy implementation. This base-line evaluation was followed by a series of nine workshops which took place between March and July 2003. These were aimed at tackling barriers which created 'gaps' in the policy implementation process [Fig.5] and were executed in accordance with Hogwood and Gunn's criteria for policy implementation [Hogwood and Gunn, 1984:43]. Throughout the workshops the researcher took heed of the arguments of Hupe [1993], that policy is not automatically adopted. Also of Pestieau [2003:7], that it is important to systematically gather information about the implementation process if one wishes to determine what influences outcomes. The cyclical process of action research was applied throughout the workshops.

Figure 6. The Cyclical Process of Action Research [Hart and Bond 1995]



This model enabled workshop attendees to contribute to the formulation of a model of policy implementation which best represented the aims of the Cymorth Scheme. This policy implementation model was intended to provide programme workers with a series of appropriate aims based on the need to overcome the barriers to policy implementation, identified by the researcher and workshop attendees in phases 1 and 2 of the study [see fig 5]. The new model was intended to assist the monitoring of progress against benchmarks for goal achievement, thus making the process of policy implementation more transparent.

The advantages of this approach were that :-

- It allowed the solving of practical problems.
- It had personal benefits for practitioners, in that it provided solutions and thereby increased effectiveness and esteem.
- It generated a continuous cycle of development and change via on-site research in the workplace. This had benefits for the organisation in that it created a potential for improving practice and resolving problems. Thus 'best practice' and positive outcomes were ensured.
- It involved practitioners in the research process, thereby appreciating and respecting their knowledge and skills and providing them with 'ownership' of the process of policy improving implementation.

Workshop activities appeared to achieve what Ledwith [2005:2] described as praxis. A process of action and reflection which is a means of building theory from experience. It was argued by Ledwith that the process is an 'ideal' means of ensuring that marginalised and excluded communities can be placed at the centre of change. The model of action research produced by Hart and Bond [1995:40-44] [Fig. 6], characterises the whole process of developmental change required to progress practitioners towards more 'professionalised' and 'empowered' actions. Benefits of this approach are that it moves away from a 'top down' model, in which research carried out by professionals is expected to be put into practice by practitioners. Instead, research and practice are integrated through involving practitioners in the research process. Benefits are that practitioners develop the confidence to implement policy from 'the bottom up'.

At the end of each workshop attendees were given the opportunity to identify themes, aims, objectives /indicators, targets, inputs, outputs, outcomes and policy benchmarks for their particular programmes. This was done in accordance with the policy frameworks acclaimed by Clarke [2000:265] and Copeland and Wexler [1995:57]. A rudimentary model of policy implementation appropriate to the Cymorth Scheme and the context of its implementation were thereby devised. Participants were requested to pilot the model in practice. Subsequent visits to each of the programmes, during the period of August to September 2003, resulted in the

refinement of the model in preparation for the third stage of the study. In this chapter the conduct of the third and final stages of the study will be presented. Findings from interviews and questionnaires will be discussed and processes of change will be illustrated by case studies. Finally, responses to the model of policy implementation, constructed and piloted through the process of action research, will be analysed and results summarised.

7.2 Conduct of the third stage of the study

This chapter reports the actions and the findings of the third stage of the study. It began with a series of two workshops held in November and December 2003. These were attended by participants from all programmes. Participants were informed by representatives of the 'Partnership' [managers], of recent developments that had taken place in relation to the Cymorth policy strategy, namely the introduction of an Information Technology [IT] policy implementation framework monitoring model [appendix 2]. This information placed a greater emphasis on the importance of monitoring progress and increased the necessity of improving the quality of monitoring activity. The purpose of the third stage of the study was to allow workshop participants to reflect and report on their experiences of piloting the policy implementation model, derived at through previous workshops. Several of the programmes involved in the study presented their experiences of implementing the model. They identified difficulties encountered, the extent to which the model had improved and enhanced their programme, in terms of its adherence to policy thrusts, and its benefits for service users. In the main, presentations were extremely positive and highlighted more innovative and imaginative methods of service delivery which undoubtedly 'added value' to mainstream services. As will be recalled from previous chapters the necessity to 'add value' to mainstream services had been stipulated in a WAG policy document [WAG, 2003:3]. This document had been produced during the period in which the rudimentary model was being piloted. New policy implementation guidance specifically stated,

"Programmes appropriate for Cymorth funding should provide services distinct from universal services, and be focused on target areas and multidisciplinary action. Alternatively, they should be observed to be providing information and support into universal services, or specialised services which could prevent the need for higher tier intervention, and be focused on facilitation and community development".

[WAG,2003:3]

Not all of the programmes had found the process of piloting the rudimentary model easy. Whilst the majority felt that they had 'got to grips,' or were 'getting to grips', with the mechanical processes of identifying appropriate themes, aims, indicators / objectives, inputs outputs,

outcomes and targets, that is the application of a policy implementation framework [Clarke, 2000:265; Copeland and Wexler,1995:57], more conceptual aspects of the process were temporarily overlooked. Policy implementers appeared to have been so involved with the mechanical processes of monitoring that they had paid less attention to how the outputs and outcomes of their programmes might reflect the application of quality policy 'benchmarks' [Appendix 5]. These policy 'benchmarks' had been distilled from policy analysis, policy paradigms and policy implementation strategies described in Chapters One and Two of the literature review and confirmed by the identification of 'gaps' in policy implementation [Fig. 5]. As a result of these problems, barriers to policy implementation had not yet been overcome. In the majority of programmes there was still 'room for progress'.

The programmes that seemed most successful in working towards the removal of policy implementation barriers, [those that had been involved in presentations], were mainly those managed by voluntary organisations. This phenomenon was also reported by Clarke and Rummery [2002: 72]. It was accounted for by the fact that voluntary organisations are more practiced at determining their own eligibility criteria, complementing generic services, early intervention, addressing multiple problems, taking a holistic approach and working with communities. Handy [1990: 83-140] also discusses the way in which the cultures, structures and systems of voluntary organisations assist them in being more flexible and responsive to change, than statutory organisations.

To assist the majority of programmes in the application of the model they had helped to design, a modified version of the piloted model was agreed by the researchers and programme providers. Modifications to the 'bench-marking' model, mainly in terms of terminology, were assisted by criticisms and comments received whilst testing the model during visits to the programmes. During Stage 3 workshops participants were facilitated to apply the amended model to their specific programmes and to comment on any perceived difficulties, or further amendments, they thought necessary. At the close of the workshops participants appeared to be more knowledgeable and confident about application of the model and they were able to suggest the necessity for further modifications.

Particular problems still encountered related to difficulties experienced by 'short term' programmes [such as those provided by Women's Refuges]. In such programmes service users may only stay for a few days. It is therefore difficult to determine long term outcomes for individual service users. Difficulties were also experienced by programmes whose service users were other programmes, [e.g. the toy library programme which supplied toys to other

programmes]. In such instances the nature of service outcomes might be very different. To accommodate these variations it was agreed that the researcher would provide all programmes with exemplar model templates, representing programme variations. This would allow programmes to refer to exemplars when pilot testing the final model. Participants were reassured that if they encountered any difficulties in application of the model they could contact the researcher and request facilitation.

It was recommended to the Partnership that all programmes should be given a six month period, from December 2003 to June 2004, to 'test drive' the model. Effectiveness of the model would then be re-assessed in Stage 4 of the study. This would allow programmes to monitor the effectiveness of the final model, to identify both short and long term goals and unequivocally show their 'best value', by demonstrating how policy requirements for social inclusion, collaboration, participation, community development and citizenship enhancement [CYPU, 2000; WAG, 2000] were being addressed. However, because of changes in the management of the policy implementation process, final evaluation of the application of the model [Fourth Stage] was requested in March [three months earlier than planned]. This meant that the programmes had very little time to thoroughly test the amended model. The final evaluation was carried out through the collection of data from a sample of twelve programmes. There was insufficient time to include all programmes. For purposes of reliability and validity the sample represented only those programmes chosen during the first stage of the research process.

7.3 Final Stage of the Study

During the final stage of the study data was collected from each of the programmes visited. This was for the purpose of monitoring the use of the model of policy implementation. The model was devised jointly by programme workers and the researcher for evaluating programmes' progress in the process of policy implementation. An important objective of this exercise was to determine whether or not the study had 'made a difference', in terms of improving the policy implementation process. At each of the programmes visited, data collection was carried out using a 'two pronged' approach. This consisted of both an interview and a questionnaire. The latter was left with interviewees who were requested to return the questionnaire to the researcher within a three week period [See appendix 4].

7.4 Findings from the Interviews

7.4[i] Methods of monitoring in use at the beginning of the study

Nine of the twelve programmes visited had used some form of monitoring or evaluation tool prior to the start of the study, but these had been found to be rudimentary as they only recorded service inputs relating to one Cymorth theme [as has been explained in earlier chapters of the study]. All forms of assessment were different and evaluated different aspects of the policy implementation process.

Four of the programmes operated by the voluntary sector had fairly comprehensive monitoring systems, but one of these was mainly management orientated and reflected processes of governance rather than policy implementation, per se. Another, collected only user views and yet another programme said that their forms,

'Did not always reflect what they were doing, but they were OK!'

Of the remaining five programmes, one had constructed their own tool to collect users' views of their service. However, this proved to be difficult, as the users in this case were other organisations who were not always cooperative. Another had adopted an assessment tool constructed for the purpose of making a 'nursing diagnosis' of health status. [Carpenito, 1993]. The programme manager complained that the tool was,

"Very limiting, not helpful, it took months to retrieve data. We eventually got some useful material from it, but there was a lot of duplication and it was time consuming. At the end of the day the model was very subjective, too medical! The questions set the agenda and each member of the team interpreted answers differently. Answers had to be categorised according to knowledge, skills, behaviour, or coping mechanisms of the families involved, but it was difficult to know which category to put answers in. The assessment tool had no 'social' categories. We used it for three years and then 'knocked it on the head'".

According to this respondent, all service providers involved with 'Sure Start' programmes had also been asked to fill in a quantitative questionnaire relating to the demographic and attendance details of service users [see appendix 4]. The manager exclaimed!

'This was not useful' it didn't tell you anything about the effectiveness of the programme'!

This viewpoint was upheld by another programme manager who stated that this particular model of evaluation,

"Was of no benefit to her service".

As a result this manager had constructed her own 'before and after' evaluation,

"Modelled on the universal language of speech therapy assessment".

Another project manager stated,

"We did our own monitoring, but this was merely based on whether people liked or disliked our service"!

The fifth programme had merely monitored attendances. There were three programmes that had no form of monitoring until the Cymorth Scheme monitoring framework was produced. In these instances programme managers did not appear to recognise the need to evaluate the extent to which their programmes achieved policy goal outcomes.

7.4 [ii] Target setting

Only six of the twelve programmes had set targets to monitor their performance, before taking part in the study. Four of these were in the voluntary sector and were used to the process of target setting and monitoring, as part of the process for justifying funding. Another, from the education sector, had also undertaken target setting and monitoring of performance as a means of receiving funding from the Welsh Language Board. The sixth programme constructed developmental targets for measuring the attainment of individual children enrolled in the programme.

Ten of the twelve programmes had previously collected users' views of their service. Four of the ten programmes said that they requested both evaluative and consultative views, thus signifying some concern for user participation in their programmes. These programmes were also able to give examples of how users' views had prompted changes in their services, or in the methods of service delivery. Other responses showed that users' views were collected by means of a comments box. Another had a system for collecting users' views, but it was rarely used. Yet another carried out a 'before and after' consultation, but this was more evaluative than consultative. However, in all of these programmes little was said to have been changed because of users' comments.

7.4 [iii] Measuring Effectiveness

Nine of the twelve programmes had attempted to measure the effectiveness of their programme, but most commonly effectiveness was measured by frequency of attendance or programme use. This was a system employed by six programmes.

One had a standardised system for measuring improvements in children's performance on a developmental scale. Another, a similar system for evaluating the progress of parents. One programme used a system of 'smiley faces' as a rough evaluation of the programme's effectiveness. Thus, as was shown in Chapter Three, no standardised method of evaluating programmes involved in the Cymorth scheme had emerged. In particular, few of the programmes appeared to have evaluated the extent to which the aims and objectives of their programmes attained policy goals, or achieved the policy outcomes laid out in government documents [CYPU,

2000]. Probably, for this reason, policy implementation barriers, such as those identified in the previous chapter, had developed.

Managers at 'Partnership'/ strategic level therefore had little opportunity to determine the extent to which policy directives were being implemented, or adhered to. Moreover, it would have been difficult to determine how the vast sum of money invested in the project by the WAG was benefiting children and their families. However, since the implementation of this action research project as a means of evaluating the implementation of the Cymorth Scheme, all programme managers had been made aware of the necessity to identify appropriate aims and objectives for meeting policy goals. Moreover, they were now finding the process easier. This was an outcome predicted by Ledwith, [2005:2], if care was taken to ensure that community development was an integral part of policy implementation. As Ledwith commented, failure to consider the need for facilitating development invariably resulted in.

"Actionless thought and thoughtless action".

7.4 [iv] Family Assessments

All programme managers were also in the process of, or had already implemented, more standardised family assessment procedures. This process facilitated the identification of needs and the selection of appropriate policy goals to meet those needs. The findings confirmed the usefulness of an experimental form of action research to identify problems and barriers to policy implementation. Also findings substantiated the views of Hart and Bond [1995:37], Holter and Schwartz-Barcott, [1993:299], Morgan [1963], and Pestieau [2003], that collaboration between researchers and practitioners can identify problems and start to provide solutions which may change practice and develop theory.

7.4 [v] The effectiveness of workshops

There was unanimous agreement from the twelve programmes in the sample that the training workshops and follow-up visits, undertaken by the researcher were useful. In particular, usefulness was defined in terms of having acquainted service providers with the broader thrusts of policy [CYPU, 2000], frameworks of policy implementation [Clarke, 2000:265; Copeland and Wexler 1995:57] and the knowledge and skills required to put policy into action. Comments about the workshops were as follows,

"Useful, a little confusing at first but the follow-up visit helped to make sense of everything".

“Brilliant, the fog lifted, and we knew what we were supposed to do. The follow-up visit was very useful and the team appreciated it. It’s good to have others opinions. The team has come on in leaps and bounds since”.

This was a team which, previous to the researcher’s visits, had operated a programme that merely visited families in their own homes. Thereby, users’ experiences of social exclusion appeared to be sustained. Programme providers recognised that their approach ignored the importance of community development. Since attending the workshops, workers had identified perceived barriers to policy implementation [Figure 5] and were trying to address these. They had begun to identify community needs and apply policy benchmark standards to their interventions. As a result they had identified the importance of ensuring that all children in the community possessed the social skills essential for school readiness. This had been done through collaborating with teachers at the local school. They had also introduced a number of mothers to a training scheme, thereby adding to the provision of universal services, limiting social exclusion, encouraging citizenship and effecting community development. The programme leader commented about the action research project as follows,

“Very useful, it gave me the confidence to do what I thought was right, and the confidence to make changes’ I was very satisfied with the follow up visit”.

Other programmes leaders commented as follows:-

“Very useful, but there was no follow up”, [this was because the programme was being re-located at the time of visits].

“Very useful, and the follow up was very helpful”.

“Some stuff I already knew, but very useful, though some people were pretty stunned, but you can’t learn to swim by reading a book, or not getting wet”.

“Very interesting and useful, but a bit intimidating, the follow up visits were very useful”.

“Very useful, I enjoyed the exercises on collaborative care best. Follow up visits helped to get my project off the ground”.

“Very helpful - opportunities to interact and look at model. Follow up was useful”.

“Very useful gave me a ‘grip’ on projects”.

“Extremely useful’, helped me to understand what it was all about. Follow up visits gave confidence”.

“I didn’t attend myself, but staff found them very useful”.

These responses all indicated a very positive response to the content and conduct of the workshops. Although two of the respondents felt that the workshops were a little confusing or intimidating, they still agreed that the workshops were very helpful, and that the follow-up visits helped to clarify issues of uncertainty.

7.4 [vi] Use of the model

Findings showed that none of the programmes had found the model form difficult to fill in. When asked what was the most difficult part, the most and least helpful aspects, the following responses were given:-

"The most difficult aspect is user impact, because our users are other agencies. The rest is not too bad. It keeps you on track".

"Nothing is difficult, it's fine, makes sense".

"It is all useful, it keeps you focused and on track, I'm used to individual practice analysis, I am now looking at things in a different light, in a more holistic way. The most difficult part is working out the main themes as several are applicable".

"No problems, no difficulty with filling in the form. - useful to help identify aims".

"I thought the model was difficult to 'fill in' at first, but when researchers visited it was much easier. Most difficult part of the model is distinguishing short and long term goals as this is a short term project".

"Most difficult part of the model is setting targets, we tend to set targets too high and this leads to dissension with funding partners. Most helpful part of the model is the way that it classifies outcomes".

"No difficulties with the model. It's all applicable to the programme. Having a dummy [model pro -forma] is useful to refer to. Nothing in this model is difficult. It is similar to other models used in this project".

"Model is most useful, some difficulty in amalgamating all aspects of our work to fit one model.

"Most helpful parts of the model are the targets. We now have the ability to separate them into inputs, outputs and outcomes".

"The first model form was difficult [reference to the rudimentary model piloted]; the most difficult part was identifying measurable targets. We are now able to use the model on a regular basis. It makes us focus on evaluation. It's an eye-opener to think evaluatively. The reflective process is most important".

"The 'model' is not difficult, but I have to do three for each part of the programme It helps identify gaps and helps you to be more focused in your planning".

7.5 Evaluation of the Model

It is obvious from the above comments that the policy implementation model devised for the Cymorth Scheme was widely appreciated by all of the programmes. However, specific observations could be categorised as positive factors, or factors needing more consideration. On the positive side, the model of policy implementation designed through the process of action research appeared to be helping programmes 'to keep on track' and to be 'more focused'. It had also increased awareness of the complexity of implementing 'joined up' policy and the need for holistic intervention. Another advantage, was that the model enabled users to classify outcomes according to various policy thrust benchmarks [Chapters 1 and 2]. The model also appeared to

have increased awareness of the importance of evaluation and made target setting easier. This was achieved through enabling programmes to distinguish between targets for inputs, outputs and outcomes.

In some programmes there were a few difficulties, not with the use of the model per-se, but as a result of various anomalies within and between programmes. For example, short term programmes found it difficult to set both short and long term objectives. This was because the contact time with users was indeterminate. One programme planned to try and overcome this by having short term aims for service users, [as many are involved with the programme for less than a week] and long term aims for the programme. Although this meant that they might need to make some further amendments to the wording of the model, it would facilitate the identification of long term goals for their programme.

Programmes that had 'other' programmes as service users felt that they might also like to make some amendments to the wording of the model. This was in order to clarify the nature of their 'user group'. They wanted the authority to request more feed-back from their users in respect of quality outcomes for the 'end user' of their service. It was their view that a simplistic outcome measurement, such as a score on a 1-5 scale, or the use of a 'smiley face' scoring system, did not provide sufficient information to allow them to make adjustments to the service. They required a more in-depth criteria based evaluation, in order to determine how they might improve existing services. Finally, programmes which were 'multi-funded' felt that they were considerably overloaded by the process of evaluation. Some thought needed to be given to how the model of policy implementation for the Cymorth Scheme could be integrated into other evaluation models, in order that programmes were not overburdened with evaluation processes.

These findings indicated how an organisational form of action research had brought about measurable changes in the knowledge, attitudes and skills of the workforce and had, in the main, overcome resistance to change. All attributes of action research acclaimed by researchers such as Eden and Huxham [1993:5], and policy implementation analysts such as Pestieau, [2003], therefore appeared to have been substantiated by this study.

7.6 Results from Questionnaires

As stated above, at each visit to the twelve programmes questionnaires were distributed. These were intended to investigate the usefulness of the model of policy implementation [that programme staff had helped devise]. Programme managers were requested to fill in the questionnaire and return it, anonymously, to the researcher. The questionnaires consisted of 18

questionnaire and return it, anonymously, to the researcher. The questionnaires consisted of 15 questions [see Appendix 7] on the extent to which the model helped with the monitoring and evaluation of programmes. Also programme staff were asked to determine the extent to which the model helped them to improve policy implementation. The questions required a response on an attitudinal scale of 1-5. [1 representing the statement that the model had not helped them at all, and 5, that the model had helped them to a much greater extent than any previous method used]. Of the twelve questionnaires left with the programmes, ten were duly returned. Two were not completed, due to pressure of work, despite several reminders from the researcher. The questionnaire could be categorised into six areas.

- Monitoring activity.
- Confidence in using monitoring tools.
- Use of the model to identify the need for new activities and targets.
- Use of the model to determine 'what works' and the need for change.
- Use of the model to increase knowledge of policy.
- Use of the model to implement policy benchmarks and thereby 'best value'.

Analysis of the questionnaires showed the following,

7.6 [i] Monitoring Activity

Has the model helped you to monitor policy implementation?

" Since having the model I've been able to monitor policy implementation activity more carefully"?

Nine of the ten respondents replied that,

" The model had helped them to monitor activity more carefully".

Two replied that, *'It helped them to a moderate extent"*.

Five that, *"It helped them monitor more than previously"*.

Two that they monitored activity, *"To a much greater extent than previously"*.

Whilst another said that,

"It helped to monitor the right stuff".

One of the programme managers commented,

"That it was already monitored sufficiently before using the model".

7.6 [ii] Has the model helped to adopt new Cymorth Themes?

Apparently the model enabled all, except one, of the programmes to adopt more themes from the Cymorth framework, thereby broadening the scope of their provision and creating 'joined up' and 'cross-cutting' interventions.

Three said, *"They had adopted new themes to a moderate extent"*.

Two said, *“They had adopted more themes to a much greater extent”*.

One had adopted *“no new themes”*.

Comments added to the responses suggested that,

“The model has definitely helped me to adopt new themes, they are now much easier to identify”.

7.6 [iii] Has the model helped to identify new indicators?

Similarly positive remarks were made regarding the identifications of new indicators.

Two said, *“The model had helped them to identify new indicators to a moderate extent”*.

Three had been helped by the model to *“Better identify indicators by the model”*.

Four had been helped to a *“great extent”*. One had *“not been helped”*.

There were no comments offered in respect of this question.

7.6 [iv] Has the model helped to identify new aims for the programme?

All except one programme felt that they had been helped by the model. However, this one respondent did report that the model had helped her to identify new aims.

“But only a little”.

Two said, *“They had been helped only to a moderate extent to identify indicators and aims, as they had already felt confident with the process”*.

Three had been helped to undertake this activity *“more than previously”*.

Four had been helped to a *“great extent”*.

One had been helped *“a little”*.

A comment from one respondent pointed out the importance of,

“Aims being needs led and not based on making them fit with the Cymorth Themes”.

These findings illustrate the extent to which the professionalising process of action research adhered to during workshops and programme visits appeared to have helped develop the workforce into more reflective practitioners. At the end of the study participants appeared capable of being more discriminating about the extent to which policy goals were being adhered to in the services provided. These results appear to show that with the exception of one programme [the same programme in all instances] all had been helped by the model to monitor the policy

same programme in all instances] all had been helped by the model to monitor the policy implementation activities of their programmes; to adopt new Cymorth themes and to identify new indicators and aims. Those who were only helped to a moderate extent were those who had previously been confident about the language and processes of monitoring activity. As was shown in the last section, these tended to be the programmes mainly funded by the voluntary sector, which was not so surprising given the nature of their former experience [Clarke and Rummery 2002: 72; Handy 1990: 83-140].

There now appeared to be a greater awareness of the importance of monitoring the process of policy implementation across all programmes. Staff appeared to have been helped by the model to develop more confidence in these processes. This was a vast improvement on the standards of policy implementation monitoring observed during the first stage of the study. All programme managers now appeared more familiar with the language of monitoring and were confident that they could distinguish aims, indicators and objectives. Another positive aspect was the adoption of new Cymorth themes. This indicated that there was now an awareness of the fact that policies cut across many sectors and required 'joined up' working across a variety of agencies if policy implementation was to be achieved. [Chapter 2]. Programmes were also demonstrating awareness of the complexity and inter-relatedness of issues relevant to children and their families [Chapter 1]. It was also encouraging to find that at least one of the programmes pointed out that aims need not necessarily be constrained by the identified Cymorth themes. This was a positive step in recognising that programmes have an important role in identifying unmet needs and in conveying these to 'partnership' and policy makers, as was suggested by Hogwood and Gunn, [1984] and Pestieau [2003]. The findings appeared to indicate that an empowering process had taken place, a form of consciousness raising claimed by Ledwith [2005], following Friere [1972] and adopted by Mies [1993], which roots change into everyday practice. It was now more apparent that programmes had a better understanding of the barriers that had previously prevented them from achieving the desired policy goals [see previous chapter].

7.6 [v] Confidence in using monitoring tools

Has the model helped you to apply a policy implementation framework and measure activity in terms of inputs, outputs and outcomes?

Except for one programme, all programme participants felt that they could now apply a policy implementation framework, such as that described by Clarke [2000], or Copeland and Wexler, [1995] in order to measure their activity. They were now more able to identify and measure

inputs, outputs and outcomes, to a greater, or much greater extent, than previously. There was one exception, the programme manager commented,

"The programme had always done this"!

Though no evidence was provided to substantiate the claim.

However, most programmes had been enabled to identify new activities for their programmes and to classify their activities in terms of inputs, outputs and outcomes.

Two had been helped to use input measures to *"a moderate extent"*.

One commented, *"These were already in place"*.

Five had been helped to undertake the activity *"More than previously"*.

Two to *"a much greater extent"*.

In respect of output measures

Two programmes had been helped to a *"moderate extent"*.

Five *"more than previously"*.

Two to a *"much greater extent"*.

One did not reply.

In respect of outcome measures:-

Two programmes had been helped to a *"moderate extent"*.

Five identified outcomes *"more than previously"*.

Two to a *"much greater extent"*.

One did not reply.

Although these results indicated that all programmes had made progress, it was still apparent that the process of monitoring and evaluation could be sustained and further improved by an ongoing process of Action Research.

7.6[vij] Use of the model to identify the need for new activities and targets

Has the model helped to identify new target activities?

Since using the model the majority of programmes agreed that they were now able to identify new targets.

Three had been helped to *"a moderate extent"*.

Four *"more than previously"*, and one commented,

"It [the model] has given an incentive to 'kick on' ".

Two to a “*much greater extent*”.

One did not reply.

It was apparent from these replies, that the ability of programme staff, to determine appropriate inputs, outputs, outcomes and target activities had been strengthened by the action research process and the use of the model that programme implementers had helped to design. As a consequence programmes appeared able to sustain and continuously monitor the process of policy implementation. This finding suggested that programme managers were now more aware of the need to evaluate the structure, process and outcomes of their programmes in order to demonstrate ‘good governance’ of policy implementation.

7.6 [vii] *Use of the model to determine ‘what works’ ‘and the need for change*

The model helps me to document what works well / what does not work well?

“What works well?”

This question aimed to determine the perceived strength of links between service inputs and outputs, that is the cause-effect relationship between what is put into the service and what emerges in terms of benefit for service users and ‘best value’ for the organisation. Since using the model all respondents, except one, agreed that they had been enabled to a greater or much greater extent to know ‘what works well’ or ‘what does not work’. The exception in this case did not provide a response, but commented that they needed national research comparisons to undertake this activity. It can only be assumed that this response represented a plea for increased access to information on evidence based practice, an assumption that required further investigation.

One had been helped to a “*moderate extent*” to know what works well.

Five had been helped “*more than previously*”.

Four had been helped to “*a great extent*”.

What does not work well?

One made no response,

Three had been helped to “*a moderate extent*” to determine what did not work well.

Four to “*a greater extent than previously*”.

Two to “*a great extent*”.

The results showed that programme managers had gained confidence in the process of evaluation.

This was helping to make their activity more transparent and improve ‘governance’. Programme

workers were now more confident of being able 'to do the right things' as well as 'doing things right'. This indicated that the majority of programmes were more accountable and that they had attained a higher standard of performance. In addition programmes appeared to be more 'user' outcome orientated and more aware of 'best value' processes for the organisation. This awareness indicated recognition of the necessity to provide services which met particular needs. The results indicated a growing awareness of the importance of 'subsidiarity' as described by Weinrich and Koontz [1994 :277-281] and the necessity to identify and 'flag up 'unmet need'.

Have you made changes to the programme because of knowing what works?

One programme commented, "*not yet*".

One indicated that "*a little change*" had occurred.

Two had achieved change to "*a moderate extent*".

Three had been helped to make more changes, one commented,

'Particularly listening to feedback from males and females with regard to service preference'.

Two had made "*a much greater extent*" of change.

Apart from one programme, all had made changes to the project as a result of applying the model.

In the case of the exception, changes were planned but not yet implemented. This could well have indicated that there had been insufficient time for introducing change.

One of the respondents commented that they had only made "*a little change As [we] already know a lot about what works in parenting*".

Two had only made "*moderate change*".

In view of the fact that the programmes had only been working with the model for a short time, these results were encouraging. This assumption was strengthened by the fact that three had made further changes to their programmes since working with the model and two claimed to have achieved a considerable change. These results indicated that interventions [CYPU, 2000] were appropriate forms of policy implementation. Efforts were obviously being made to re-align programmes accordingly. The need for some concern was only indicated where programmes were complacent about their levels of knowledge and provision.

7.6 [vii] Did the model increase knowledge of child and family policy?

Is there a better understanding of what policy for children and young people is trying to achieve?

One programme failed to respond.

Two had more knowledge to "*a moderate extent*".

Five had more knowledge "*than previously*".

Two had a much "*greater extent of knowledge*".

In respect of the question on whether programmes now possessed a better understanding of the aims of child and family policy, all except one respondent thought that this was the case. The one programme commented,

"Which policy-not sure what the question mean"!

On the whole these responses were encouraging as they suggested that in all, but one, of the programmes the process of action research employed during the workshops had helped workers to develop a better knowledge of child and family policy. It was thus probable that policy implementers now possessed a greater awareness of the range and scope of services needed to implement policy and of how they could work towards increasing social inclusion, citizenship and community development, through partnership and collaboration. These speculations were substantiated, to a greater or lesser extent, by the responses to the following question.

7.6 [ix] Did the model help programmes to implement policy benchmarks?

Levels of partnership working?

One programme had "*not increased partnership working at all*".

One intended to "*increase partnership working but had not achieved it yet*"!

Four had increased partnership working by "*a moderate extent*".

Three had increased partnership working to a "*higher level than previously*", but one commented that this was,

"Not the result of the evaluation model"!

One had increased partnership working to "*A much greater extent*".

Apart from two programmes, all felt that the model had helped them to increase levels of partnership. One programme manager commented'

"Partnership working was already high".

The other programme manager had the intention to increase partnership working, but had not yet found the time to do so.

Seeking to increase partnership even more?

One programme intended to do this to "a moderate extent".

Six were now “More determined to increase partnership”, though one commented that, “*They had always aimed to do this*”.

Three were determined to “*Increase partnerships to a much greater extent.*”

Appreciation of the need for partnership signified a greater awareness of how collaboration with other agencies could provide continuity and flexibility in and between services. Thereby programmes could contribute to subsidiarity, gain a wider knowledge of others skills, find increased opportunities for networking, influencing policy and bringing about the demise of the demarcation culture. Thus important policy goals of ‘communitarianism, ‘partnership’ ‘governmentality’ might be achieved.

The claim by one of the respondents that partnership work was already high may have indicated a lack of awareness of the need to keep an ‘open mind ‘about the extent or levels of partnership required because of the indeterminacy of need encountered in community settings. It was encouraging to see that the majority were determined to increase partnership working even more.

7.6 [x] Use of local data to identify user need?

One programme did not respond.

One had not been helped “*at all to use local data*”.

One had been helped “*a little*”.

Four used local data to “*a moderate extent*” since using the model.

Three used local data “*more than previously*”.

The use of local data for need determination had increased in all but two of the programmes.

These two produced the following comments,

“*Already knew about local data*”.

“*We did this before*”.

This response was worrying. Only half of the respondents were using local data to a moderate extent since using the model. Findings from previous reports showed that the availability of base line data was a matter of some concern. This concern needed to be addressed by the partnership if objective determination of need was to be achieved by programmes.

7.6 [xi] Identification of appropriate assessment tools for detecting individual/family

Two programmes had not been “*helped at all*” [1 replied that the question was not applicable].

Two had been helped to “*a moderate extent*”.

Five had used assessment tools “*more than previously*”.

One used them to *“a much greater extent”*.

Since using the model all except two of the programmes had identified appropriate assessment tools for detecting individual and family needs. Of the two programmes that had not done this, one respondent stated that this was “inappropriate to their programme”, [it provided a service to other programmes]. The other stated that appropriate assessment tools had already been in place.

One commented,

“We devised a yp [young persons] evaluation form, devised by yps [young persons] themselves”

In view of these responses a very eclectic use of assessment tools is discerned, this might also be an area that requires more in-depth examination by the partnership.”

7.6 [xii] Focusing on preventive activity as well as identified problems?

One programme had been helped to a *“moderate extent”*.

Five now focused on this *“more than previously”*.

Four to a *“much greater extent than previously”*.

Preventive, rather than reactive interventions were now seen as important by all of the programmes. All respondents claimed that their focus on preventive activities had increased, but to varying degrees.

7.6[xiii] Service users more involved in programme planning and evaluation?

Two programmes did not respond.

Six said that to *“a moderate extent”* there was more involvement of service users.

One was involving users *“more than previously”*.

One was involving users to *“a much greater extent”*.

User participation appeared to have increased, at least to a moderate extent, in all but two of the programmes. One was the programme that did not respond to the question, but did comment,

“Always involved from the start”, and the other,

“There had been a fairly high level of involvement to begin with”.

This response begged the question of the degree and nature of user participation and whether this was reflected in user outcomes. The fact that the majority of programmes had only increased user participation to a moderate extent suggested that there was scope for improvement in this area of policy implementation. However, the limited amount of time afforded to the programmes to report on the implementation of the model would not have facilitated the complicated process of ensuring user participation. The most positive perspective was the increased awareness of the need to involve users in the planning implementation and evaluation of programmes.

7.6 [xiv] Service Users' are being offered skill training?

Five programmes did not respond, but one commented, "No".

and another, "*Yes through volunteer and parent training*".

One programme responded that this question "*was not applicable in the case of their programme*".

One, "*offered skill training to a moderate extent*".

One, "*more than previously*".

Two, "*to a much greater extent*".

Half of the programmes were now offering some skill training within their own programmes and it was encouraging to find that the necessity for skill training was appreciated. However, the Government emphasis on work as a means of overcoming poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, [see Chapter One] appeared to require even more focus. This might be done at the strategic levels of the County Borough and communicated to programme managers. However, the notion of skill training within a 'safe' environment, as preparation for work, appeared to be recognised by at least half of the programmes.

7.6 [xv] Service users are offered skill training in a related programme?

Five programmes did not respond.

One said that "*this occurred a little*".

One to "*a moderate extent, more than previously*".

Three "*more than previously*".

These results were similar to those above, and may be accounted for by the short time which had elapsed between final implementation of the model and evaluation. Therefore progress in these areas needed to be monitored closely.

7.6 [xv] The community is being included in this programme?

Three programmes did not respond to the question, but one commented, "*the community of interest, I hope so*".

One replied that this was "*not occurring at all*".

One to "*a moderate extent*".

Three "*More than previously*".

Two to "*a much greater extent*".

Seven programmes were involving their community in programme development, that is 50% were now engaged in this process. However, one of these appeared only to interpret the question as referring to the 'community of users'. The others had appreciated the need for including the larger community in their programme if social exclusion was to be overcome.

One programme commented that it was providing accredited language and play training for groups of mothers. This was a significant development and an important step forward in line with the thinking of Ledwith [2005:2], that a collective process for change was liberating. However, it appeared that in the majority of programmes there was still a great deal of scope for paying more attention to the process of applying a policy implementation framework. In particular, progress was required in respect of ensuring interventions always matched the aims and objectives of policy; involved service users in the policy implementation process; increased the extent of collaboration, empowerment and ownership and achieved the main social policy thrusts of social inclusion and community development.

7.7 Perceived progress towards policy implementation

Analysis of these responses clearly showed that the workshops and the use of the model formulated between programme providers and the researcher, had made considerable improvements in practice, in all but one of the programmes. In that particular case, it was suspected by the researcher that the process of self-referencing [Chapter 5 and Fig 5] was so intense that it would require concentrated intervention for change. However, in some programmes development and progress towards policy implementation had been quite dramatic. Outcomes for service users were therefore improved and policy implementation more robust. However, there was still considerable scope for improvement if all of Pestieau's [2003], steps for analysis of policy implementation were to be thoroughly addressed [Appendix 8].

The following two case studies are presented as a graphic illustration of the way in which the policy implementation process appeared to have improved practice. It is cautiously perceived that improvements are a result of concerns for addressing prerequisites for policy implementation identified by Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43]; concerns to understand and analyse the importance of the actions and interactions that take place during the policy implementation process as was advised by Pestieau [2003:12], and concern to test the efficacy of action research to facilitate development and change.

7.8 Case study one

During the first round of workshops the programme leader of a speech and language programme, originally employed by a statutory agency but now seconded on a part-time basis to the Children and Youth projects, had a very 'insightful experience'. Since her secondment she had been seeing children referred to her by other professionals, on an individual basis. In fact she was continuing to do what she did within her own agency. Therefore she was offering a service which was 'more of the same'. It did not provide 'best value' in respect of ensuring that policy thrusts were being implemented. During a group discussion of the various policy thrusts of collaboration, participation, social inclusion, community profiling and needs assessment, this programme manager suddenly commented,

"I'm doing it all wrong! I shouldn't just be working with individuals, I should be working in a collective way, and collaborating with others".

During a follow up visit to this project the manager explained how she now planned to work in a facilitative manner with other groups. Thereby she hoped to enable them to learn the basic skills of speech therapy. These skills would be appropriate for dealing with children who had minor problems. This would 'free' her programme to deal with children who needed more specialist attention. During the researchers final visit to this programme it was learned that she had made tremendous efforts to re-align her service to the policy requirements laid down by WAG through the Cymorth Scheme. She commented,

"I attended the training sessions and found them useful - they gave me the confidence to realise, that what I had thought all along was right, and they gave me the confidence to change. The model keeps you more on track, keeps you focused on analysis, looking at it [the particular intervention] in a more holistic way. It helps plan strategically. It has altered my practice dramatically, made me realise that as a professional I have so much to offer other people about sharing knowledge and expertise. It gives me more job satisfaction and others are more aware of what you do. I now have plans for the participation of users; I am training playgroup and nursery leaders to have the confidence to carry on work with all children".

On the final questionnaire this programme leader commented,

"Since the training I have completely changed the way of working and moved away from an individual case load to a far wider role, - - training becoming a larger part of the work. I feel that I always had good standardised assessments and was very aware of outcome measurements, audit, clinical effectiveness, clinical indicators, but it gave me the opportunity to look at the project in a far wider context".

These responses show how, as a result of appreciating the demands of policy, a marked shift had occurred in this programme leaders practice and way of working. Community development, collaboration and participation were increasingly part of her strategy for 'added value'.

7.9 Case study two

In this instance, a child and family support programme was being run in a very traditional way. The programme manager, a highly qualified health professional and a team of very competent nursery nurses were providing a home support parenting programme, mainly for mothers and children. Despite requests by the service users for a more group-orientated programme, the service continued to provide a kind of modified health visiting programme. The service marginally met needs, but appeared to be most successful in providing a rather medically orientated service. Characteristically the service only visited families in their own homes, potentially sustaining, rather than breaking down social exclusion.

Following the first workshops, the programme leader and her staff revisited the themes identified for their programmes. They realised that their narrow focus on health related aims, such as increasing immunisation and breast feeding, was not sufficiently broad to demonstrate the complexity or breadth of the work that they were doing. Several of the nursery nurses working in the programme commented that the problems encountered by families were more social than health orientated. Without relevant input to redress adverse social factors there was a distinct likelihood that children's health and development were at risk. The nursery nurses saw the need for changing some of the structural aspects encountered in the lives of their families, if social inclusion was to be achieved.

At the follow up visit the researcher noted that programme workers had already made some commendable efforts to monitor their activity carefully. They had made great strides forward in adopting more Cymorth themes, [thereby broadening the scope of their programmes]; identifying new aims, objectives and targets, and they were able to analyse the process of their work in terms of inputs, outputs and outcomes. That is, they were able to use a framework of policy implementation. Yet there still appeared to be a lack of understanding about what was specifically required to implement new policy. In particular, they were unsure about how they could develop and adopt strategies aimed at reducing social exclusion and improving social and community development. Discussion of how policy thrusts could be applied to working with the families involved in the programme appeared to lead to some enlightenment and a few ideas about what could be done to demonstrate policy benchmarks. The researcher urged the programme workers to reflect on the actual needs of their community and to set up programmes relevant to need.

After a few weeks the programme leader contacted the researcher and asked her to pay another visit. It transpired that reflection on current ways of working, as opposed to ways of working as indicated by policy, had made the programme workers realise that they had been providing a

programme of containment, rather than one of empowerment and development. It was now feared that failure to change in line with policy guidelines [WAG 2003], might result in lack of future funding. Ideas to re-align the project with current policy strategies were quickly based on an assessment of the needs of the area and a determination to match programmes to need. At the final visit to this programme the researcher was told that several new programmes were planned to meet specific needs. For example, a group programme to reduce home accidents which was to be linked to accreditation from a national first aid organisation. Also a "Ready for school programme", run in conjunction with local schools. This programme would teach parents how to develop their children's early social skills and improve their children's development. These programmes were certainly capable of 'adding value' to mainstream services and of providing services which might obviate the need for higher tier interventions. It was commented that the model devised through the process of action research had:-

"Helped us to plan strategically, to plan objectives short and long term".

"Now we know where we are going, it [the model] has helped us focus on the project".

"The new model helps us to work pro-actively, in a preventive fashion - not re-actively".

"We have plans for increasing the participation of users, our 'Ready for School' projects are a great success".

Both of these case studies illustrate the shift from individually orientated interventions to community orientated programmes, more in line with policy requirements [[CYPUP, 2000; WAG, 2000]. The illustrations signify improved accountability and performance management, improved clinical governance, standard raising, better professional supervision and an increased awareness of 'best value' and the necessity to link needs to appropriate service provision.

7.10 Analysis of Responses

Analysis of these responses appears to show that the use of the model formulated between programme providers and the researcher, as a result of the action research process [Hart and Bond, [1995], had made considerable improvements in practice. In some programmes, such as those referred to in the exemplars above, development and progress had been quite dramatic. Some programmes had made fewer improvements, but still progress was being made. As has already been seen some programmes, notably those in the voluntary sector, had a head start on those of the statutory services. At the outset they appeared to possess a better knowledge and understanding of policy and of how they should go about implementing change. [Clarke and

Rummary 2002:72; Handy 1990:83-140]. Also staff providing programmes in the voluntary sector appeared to have more experience and expertise in relation to monitoring progress, attaining programme objectives and targets, achieving outcomes and encouraging user participation. However, the spectrum of development since the introduction of the model of policy implementation showed that in areas of partnership, need identification, prevention, user participation and community development, all programmes had progressed towards the main policy goals of achieving increased social inclusion. However, there was no room for complacency as some still had a long way to go. In particular, there were still barriers to policy implementation in respect of sustaining all aspects of required change. Policy implementation barriers remained those identified in accordance with the recommendations of Morgan [1963], [Fig.5].

7.11 Summary of Results

The use of the model had obviously influenced the adoption of policy benchmarks for the purpose of implementing the broader policy aims set out in recent child and family policy. Particularly encouraging results were seen in relation to an increased understanding of child and family policy, as set out in government papers [CYPU, 2000. WAG, 2000], and a perceived need for innovative organisational activity to achieve broader policy aims.

However there was scope for improvement in relation to the following areas:-

- **'Communitarianism', 'Partnership', 'Governmentality'** - although there was evidence of increased activity in these areas, there was no room for complacency as levels of desired activity varied according to need and the types of intervention required. This was an area for constant monitoring.
- **Use of local data as a baseline for activity** - although this activity had increased, the increase was only to a moderate extent. More investigation was needed into appropriate ways for the 'partnership' to provide local data for programmes. This might prevent 'tokenism' and encourage 'participation' in services designed to meet need.
- **Assessment tools** - although the majority of the programmes were using some form of assessment tool, some were not the right 'tool for the job' Further exploration of this area is suggested.
- **User participation** - it was encouraging to see that this had increased but again, only to a moderate extent. There was scope for further improvement.

- **Skill training**- several of the programmes had developed strategies for skill training, but there was still considerable room for improvement.
- **Community participation** -only half of the programmes had included local communities in their work, and this deficit needed to be addressed if social inclusion was to be a reality.

7.12 Conclusion

In summary, it can be seen that the use of the model, constructed and implemented through a process of action research, had increased awareness of the nature and complexity of policy. Also it had increased awareness of the importance of monitoring activity and increasing the transparency of the policy implementation process. However, there was still some way to go to ensure social inclusion and community and economic development in respect of alleviating child poverty. Nevertheless, programmes now had a model of policy implementation capable of demonstrating how their services were attaining 'best value' in terms of the policy implementation process. By encouraging programmes to focus on the needs of the disadvantaged, partnership working, user involvement, adding value to mainstream services, implementing preventive services, bringing about social inclusion, and demonstrating evidence based practice, all of which were designated as important for the Cymorth process [WAG, 2003.], the model had facilitated a degree of change. The final stage of this study, clearly indicated that all of the criteria on the vertical axis of Hart and Bond's framework [Hart and Bond 1995:40-44], had now been addressed. In respect of the horizontal axis of the model all, except one of the programmes, had to varying degrees moved 'up the ladder'. Programmes were now able to reflect in a very professional manner on the extent to which policy directives were being attained. However, despite development, in respect of unequivocally achieving policy benchmarks, some weaknesses persisted. These weaknesses will be addressed and discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Eight

Discussion of Findings

8.1 Introduction

Pestieau [2003:9] claims that although policy implementation frameworks assist in the investigation of the effectiveness of policy outcomes, to some extent they rely on compliance reporting. Consequently, she claims,

“What might have been done to improve policy implementation might be missed”.

Taking account of this proposal, the concern of this study was to determine whether an action research methodology might improve policy implementation outcomes and make the process of analysing and evaluating policy implementation more transparent. Using an action research methodology, in particular the action research framework presented by Hart and Bond [1995:40-44], the research question was tested. This was achieved through evaluation of the extent to which changes in child and family policy thrusts were being implemented within a County Borough. The process involved, identification of the nature of ‘gaps’ or ‘barriers’ to policy implementation; the ways in which the implementation process could be improved and whether a model of self-evaluation for policy implementers could be devised to improve the extent and outcomes of policy implementation. This was a process advocated by Pestieau [2003:12], in her recommendation of the need to,

“Use behaviour change in tandem with problem definition, looking for changes in the policy environment, rather than discrete policy decisions, as well as using frameworks”.

Pestieau claims this process can be informative and ‘add value’ to the policy implementation frameworks discussed in Chapter Three [Clarke, 2000:265; Copeland and Wexler, 1995:57]. Parsons [1995:459] claims that analysis of the delivery side of policy is seen to be increasingly important by the governments of many countries. In Parson’s view, governments have perceived that a bureaucratic approach to policy delivery is ill-suited to devolved and decentralised forms of government. The rationale for this claim is that devolved forms of policy implementation require more responsive models of public organisation than can be afforded by bureaucratic organisations [Parsons, 1995:459]. A number of models of policy implementation exist and can be divided into three categories, ‘**Top down** models’, [Derthick, 1972; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973; Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975. ‘**Bottom-up** models’ [critiques of ‘top-down’ models] [Elmore, 1978; Hjerm and Porter, 1981; Lipsky, 1971] and **Hybrid theories** [Majone and Wildavsky, 1978; Hjerm and Porter, 1981]. Any might have been used to evaluate and analyse the process of

implementing the Cymorth scheme. However, the methods adopted for this study were primarily premised on an argument forwarded by Morgan [1993] that problems of policy implementation are specific to the context in which they occur. It was Morgan's thesis that analysis of policy implementation should be perceived as a learning activity that can enlighten participants involved in the implementation process. To enhance the enlightening process the researcher adopted the recommendations of Pestieau [2003:12] and also of Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] that to detect flaws in the policy implementation process the actions and behaviour of those involved in the change should be understood. An action research methodology was employed [Hart and Bond,1995] [Chapters Six and Seven], whereby policy implementers were encouraged to reflect on deficits in administration of policy, to learn what action was required to address the deficits and to devise their own model for monitoring effectiveness of implementation and outcomes of new policy [see Chapter Seven].

Findings of the study show the many problems encountered in respect of child and family policy implementation, specifically in the context of the County Borough in which the research was carried out. Also findings show how the process of action research helped programme managers and staff to develop new skills, to improve the policy implementation process and, in conjunction with the researcher, design and evaluate their own model for monitoring the sustainability of improvements in policy implementation strategies.

This chapter will discuss the findings of the previous chapters. In particular, how the use of action research methods assisted both the researcher and programme staff to identify gaps in the policy implementation process, to realign programmes to overcome perceived 'gaps' and through the use of a model of evaluation [jointly designed by programme staff and the researcher], to make some improvements in respect of policy outcomes. Thereby the whole process of policy implementation became a little more transparent. The following discussion will analyse the four stages of the study and will take place in the context of the literature on child and family policy, policy implementation and action research reviewed in the first three chapters of the study. It is hoped to demonstrate how the process of action research assisted policy implementers to 'move forward' from the positions described in Chapters Six and Seven. For each of the stages integral to the study, the following aspects will be discussed:-

- barriers to policy implementation identified through the process of action research.
- shifts in levels of professional functioning required to implement policy, accomplished through the use of an action research methodology.
- the efficacy of an action research methodology to improve the transparency of the policy implementation process through the identification of a model of policy implementation.

8.2 Stage one - establishing a base-line through an experimental action research approach

As a consequence of the County Borough's responsibility to implement child and family policy devolved to it by the Welsh Assembly Government [WAG, 2000], the Cymorth scheme had been introduced to each of the programmes involved in the scheme. In order to provide evidence of the responsible administration of policy, the County Borough concerned had been charged with engaging a researcher, external to the organisation, to evaluate the extent of policy implementation [WAG, 2002]. At the outset of the study, through a process of formative evaluation [Chapter 6], the researcher found that there were many 'barriers' to policy implementation.

This was a finding that resembled that of Morgan [1993]. The 'barriers' were 'mapped', [figure 5] and formed the foundation for developing an action research process to try to improve policy implementation. Each of these barriers was jointly identified by policy implementers and the researcher. This was achieved by using experimental and organisational types of action research [Hart and Bond, 1995:40-44], [see Chapter 5]. Methods of addressing these barriers were agreed with managers and policy implementers and professionalising and empowering types of action research were then employed to try to achieve the degree of structural change required for implementation of 'new policy' based on 'communitarianism', 'governmentality' and 'governance' narratives [Glendinning et al. 2002:1]. The means of addressing barriers to policy implementation are discussed in the following section of this chapter.

8.3 Communitarianism - The importance of a vision for change

In the first instance the researcher observed that 'partnerships' [management level] and programmes [policy implementers] were experiencing a number of problems in respect of implementing the Cymorth scheme. These problems appeared to be related to conceptual understanding of policy and its purpose. In particular problems were centred on the need for greater appreciation of the 'inter-relatedness' of policy aims to relieve child poverty through processes of social inclusion, citizenship, community and economic development [WAG,2000; CYP, 2000]. As was seen in Chapters One and Two, the 'communitarian vision' of 'New Labour' seeks to re-insert 'communities' into policy. To achieve this aim agencies are expected to work in 'partnership' and come closer to the communities for which they are accountable. Hughes and McLaughlin in Glendinning et al [2002:162], argue that the rationale underlying this vision is the realisation that problems facing today's society are multidimensional. Consequently multi-dimensional and multi-agency responses are required to address them. 'Joined up' thinking and working is therefore crucial to all aspects of implementing child and family policy. The

preliminary findings of this study [Chapters Four and Five] showed that to some extent, particularly in the statutory sector, investment made in the setting up of new programmes for innovative service delivery did not ensure that the spirit of policy [WAG, 2000] was explicitly communicated.

For example, the appropriateness of buildings which housed new programmes and their siting might have better reflected the ethos of policy '*to bring about a more inclusive society in which children might flourish*' [CYPU, 2000]. Particular problems were identified in respect of buildings housing statutory agency projects, rather than in those managed by the voluntary agencies. The need for a more innovative vision for change had sometimes resulted in the siting of programmes many miles from family homes, or an unacceptable distance from the nearest transport stop. Families were certainly not within 'pram-pushing' distance of facilities, a condition set out in policy [MGoF, 1998]. Indeed, for many the facility was not even in their own community. Thus concepts of social inclusion, building community and citizenship were not being visibly portrayed or communicated [DoH, 1998]. Some facilities had rather stigmatising images, [for example they were run down, or connected with authoritarian images]; some were situated in stigmatised areas, [areas known for drug dealing or other crime]; some were culturally inappropriate for their client groups, [linked to organisations perceived to be elitist, or situated in different social class areas]; some facilities appeared to be too institutionalised [usually based in health centres or hospitals]. Thus a considerable number of issues mitigated against inclusion policy. The need for greater awareness of the above factors indicated that at the strategic level of the organisation more emphasis might have been placed on the specific nature of policy thrusts and strategy, its importance in terms of achieving the desired change and of how it was necessary to project the image of such policy into all aspects of programmes. Although such issues may not have been explicitly spelled out in policy or policy and planning guidance [WAG, 2002], they were present. These issues were rehearsed in the broad thrusts of the 'Titmussesque' communitarian policy set out in Chapters One and Two. It was shown how analysis of policy documents conveyed the broad thrusts of policy. Documents were obtainable and could have been accessed by the majority of policy implementers but, at the micro-level of policy implementation, these did not appear to be influencing patterns of service.

The need for more robustness in a vision for change suggested that a bureaucratic form of administration, typifying the administration of statutory agencies [Clarke and Newman, 1997; Hill, 1993] may have been employed in the implementation of the less innovative programmes involved in the scheme. This bureaucratic form of administration has been severely criticised by a

number of policy researchers [Derthick, 1972; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973; Hood, 1976; Dunsire, 1978 and Gunn, 1978], for placing too much reliance on the definition of policy goals at the strategic level whilst neglecting the methods of their implementation at the operational level. As a consequence it appeared that discourses prevalent in policy documents [WAG, 2000; Blunkett, 2000; HO and MGF, 1998;], namely social inclusion, citizenship, prevention, social rights and social justice, explicit in policy strategies for Children and Young People, devolved to the County Borough by the Welsh Assembly Government, had not been sufficiently integrated into a vision for change by the County Borough 'Partnership'. This oversight may well have been due to the fact that guidance on implementation was not forthcoming until 2002 [WAG, 2002]. By this time, ways of working may have already been entrenched and these differed little from those traditionally applied in mainstream services. These findings suggested that at the operational level policy strategies may have been more robustly interpreted.

Indeed, it was shown in Chapter Six that statutory agencies' staff had had less encounter with policy documents than their counterparts in the voluntary sectors. As a result they appeared to be experiencing more difficulties in understanding policy objectives. This encumbrance reflected Hogwood and Gunn's [1984:43] argument that for perfect policy implementation clear objectives and an absence of ambiguity are necessary. In contrast, workers from the voluntary sector seemed to have a clearer vision and a better understanding. Their attempts at implementation therefore appeared to be a more 'perfect fit' with policy [Handy, 1993:116] and their attempts to achieve the broader thrusts of policy were more apparent. It appeared to the researcher that to redress this situation, within the statutory sector, processes of consciousness raising and skill acquisition, such as advocated by Ledwith [2005:2], were required to help programme managers, staff and service users to better understand policy and the ways in which it should be implemented, monitored and evaluated. Such processes may have constituted somewhat of a challenge for those at the strategic level of organisation if, as been suggested by Glendinning and colleagues [2002:161-3], there was a reliance on traditional work patterns and experience. As Glendinning et al observed, past models of multi-agency working under the Conservative administration of the 1980's and 90's were characterised by inter-organisational conflict, differential power between partners, blurred boundaries and loss of autonomy. To overcome lack of robustness in the vision of 'communitarianism' it appeared that both at the strategic and operational level there was a need for a clearer understanding of the importance of a 'shift' from 'multi-agency' to 'inter-agency' models of working.

Inter-agency working is more focused on agencies contributing equally to the solution of jointly recognised problems, without the loss of identity or rationale. This of course calls for changes in organisational form. To achieve cultural and organisational evolution highly prescriptive 'top-down' models of work organisation and policy implementation should give way to more 'flexible' forms of management and work [Weinrich and Koontz, 1994:277-81]. Thereby organisations and workers may be allowed to apply their own discretion in respect of services required to implement policy within their particular communities. According to Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] and Parsons [1996:467], in the past such considerations have had a low profile because policy implementation has been perceived as 'not throwing up any great issues'. However, it is now recognised that disregard of the means of policy implementation may result in 'powerlessness' to execute change [Rummery, 2002:234]. The previous chapter illustrated how the use of action research assisted in increasing awareness of the need for a better understanding of policy and organisational reform in order to target the goals of 'communitarianism'. Workshops and the construction of a model of policy implementation appear to have helped to make the spirit and purpose of policy more explicit. Organisational methods of action research appeared to have assisted the workforce in embracing change. However, to deliver 'the dream' staff at both strategic and operational levels needed to have the 'vision' strengthened and sustained through dissemination of policy goals and implementation skills.

8.4 Strategic Direction to overcome problems of self-referencing

Strengthening and sustaining the 'vision' of policy implementation has the potential to enhance awareness of strategic direction. As was noted by Handy [1993:116] [Chapter Six], leaders, in this case strategic managers, are required to instill confidence into their employees in order to create a belief that they 'can deliver the dream'. It was observed by the researcher that a need for more confidence regarding the 'vision' and the means of achieving it was resulting in what could best be described as 'self-referencing'. The term self-referencing, as employed in this study, refers to the way in which programme managers and staff tended to fall back on tried and tested patterns of behaviour and practice. This occurred when they were confronted with the new challenges of implementing the Cymorth themes, the purpose and nature of which required interpretation. Pestieau [2003: 9] describes this behaviour as 'compliance implementation'. That is, policy implementers appear not to resist policy implementation, but because the process may require more explicitness there is no change in the status quo and 'business' remains much the same as always. Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43], suggest that such situations arise from the need

for more consideration for the prerequisites for perfect policy implementation at the strategic level. In essence 'compliance implementation' can mask inertia to change.

To have avoided this problem more account might have been taken of the style of management required to facilitate change [Mullins, 1993:670]. Wehrich and Koontz [1994:432] suggest that staff need to feel secure if they are not to fall back into patterns of work that they feel comfortable with and therefore not actively participate in change. It appeared to be difficult for programme providers to deliver improved services at 'street level' [Lipsky, 1976:206-210], if their vision of policy was not sufficiently robust and the means of change ill-perceived. In the majority of programmes it appeared that individual intervention continued to be more prevalent than community development. This appeared to be the outcome of insufficient appreciation of the 'cross-cutting' nature of policy premised on the interactive properties of health, social, education and economic outcomes and 'new' organisational forms required for 'governance' [Glendinning et al, 2002:1; Weinrich and Koontz, 1994:277-81]. Evidence of this was the fact that the majority of the programmes had integrated only one of the Cymorth themes into their programmes. In the majority of instances this was a theme typical of existing service provision. There appeared to be little appreciation of the need for addressing more than one theme at a time and the need for collaboration with other agencies to ensure holistic innovative 'stretching' interventions. As a consequence, few of the programmes were able to demonstrate 'joined up' strategies planned to overcome the integrated nature of problems.

For example, several of the programmes provided by the statutory agencies were limited by the fact that they operated from institutionalised settings and were bound by traditional ways of individual service delivery, cost and resource restrictions. Probably, as a result of such restrictions, there appeared to be a prevalent belief, on the part of implementers, that solutions to the problems of people attending programmes lay outside their jurisdiction [Rothman et al 1995:12; Hill, 1980:253]. In contrast voluntary agencies' staff appeared to have had the opportunity of negotiating and bargaining with strategic management over new ways of working. Probably, as a consequence, they had been able to develop more 'cross-cutting' strategies and to perceive the need for community development. Unfortunately, it appeared that the efforts of the voluntary services were hampered by statutory agencies' restrictions on autonomous and resourceful programme planning. As a result the efforts of the voluntary sector to engage in collaboration for change were sometimes thwarted.

In this study, the findings show that as well as a need for greater awareness of policy direction and content, there appeared to be some confusion, on the part of programme managers and staff,

over the range and scope of services required to implement policy. This indicated to the researcher the need of an educative strategy to assist programme implementers align their programmes with the Cymorth scheme themes, which were intended to eliminate deficits in social or health status [WAG, 2002:3]. It was observed that even when appropriate themes were adopted, programmes limited indicators for attaining the chosen Cymorth theme to a minimum number of examples of interventions. Sadly, these examples did not usually reflect any innovation; they simply adhered to the interventions suggested by the monitoring framework provided to the County Borough by the WAG [2002]. As a result, some of the interventions chosen by programmes could have been more appropriate to the contextual needs of communities.

Thus, as Ledwith [2005:1] observed, failure to link themes precluded opportunities for strong partnerships and community development. Although two of the programmes organised by the voluntary sector had made excellent progress in integrating themes, they were in the minority. These programmes were also hampered by some statutory sector agencies, which appeared slow to appreciate the importance of collaboration. As a result, continuity and sustainability of interventions were limited. The problems experienced by programme managers and staff of statutory agencies appeared to stem from a need to strengthen strategic direction at the 'partnership' level of management. Thus a better understanding of what was expected from service providers at the operational level of service provision might have been developed. Because of a need for more clarity and direction programme staff appeared to be falling back on 'tried and tested' ways of delivering and monitoring programmes. This meant that new policy thrusts were at best being paid 'lip service'. A description of a pattern of policy implementation already attributed by Pestieau, [2003:9].

In summary, this situation appeared to illustrate possible weaknesses if more 'top down' approaches to policy implementation are executed at the organisational level. Dunsire [1990:15] argues that such approaches are the result of excluding considerations of how '*real people actually behave*'. According to this view, implementation of policy is,

"Unlikely to be a process in which x will automatically follow y, in a chain of causation".

In the case of implementation of the Cymorth scheme it appeared that at the strategic level of the organisation, too much emphasis had been placed on the responsibility of programme managers to comply with policy by merely identifying and integrating a Cymorth theme into their traditional programmes, in order to comply with requirements for funding. As a result it was shown that more consideration could have been given to the need for identifying,

- a process whereby themes appropriate to specific needs could be identified and implemented.
- how goals appropriate to achieving these themes should be put into practice, monitored and their outcomes evaluated.

Thus a situation previously described by Parsons [1995:467] and Pestieau [2003:2], appeared to exist where,

“Policy implementation failure is likely to be due to too much emphasis on goals by the top, rather than on the roles of the workers on the line”.

Because strategic direction in respect of the broader aims of policy [CYPU, 2000] appeared to require strengthening, the majority of the programmes appeared to choose a minimalist approach to implementation of the Cymorth themes. That is, they limited their interventions to adoption of one theme. This was usually a theme which appeared to be familiar with their pattern of service provision. Programmes therefore lacked innovation and required little change in working practices. Opportunities for praxis, described by Ledwith [2005:9], as the ability to link knowledge and theory to practice, were therefore possibly missed. It appeared to the researcher that to combat the effects of ‘self-referencing’, processes of education and skill enhancement were needed. Moreover, at the organisational level the provision of indicative strategies for policy implementation appeared to require strengthening.

The previous chapter demonstrated how the use of organisational and professionalising forms of action research helped to address the problems of self-referencing. Workshops, visits and the construction of a model of policy implementation had begun to move policy implementers along the road of realising the need for ‘partnerships’ to provide integrated programmes for change.

8.5 Culture Barriers and Partnerships

Several examples of cultural factors appeared to be hampering successful policy implementation. It was apparent that in the majority of programmes ‘self referencing’ had resulted in cultural barriers to policy implementation. These barriers appeared to be the result of preference for perpetuation of traditional ways of working. A number of important aspects of policy outlined in Chapters One and Two could, therefore, have been better addressed. The following examples illustrate the perpetuation of barriers to change. Interpretation of the concept of ‘care’ [Daniel and Ivatts, 1998], as ‘women’s work’ was perpetuated in most of the programmes, especially those catering for younger children. This meant that there were few male role models for small boys being brought up by a single female parent. Dennis and Erdos [1992:102] argued that this was a situation likely to have long term detrimental effects on developmental and social

outcomes. Another example was the perceived preference for individual, rather than group intervention. With the exception of some voluntary sector programmes, bureaucratic professional cultures were observed to militate against group interventions or group participation in programmes. Thus few opportunities were created for skill training and the development of service users, factors identified as desirable outcomes of social inclusion strategies by policy thrusts [Pawlick and Stroick, 2004:71 ; MGoF, 1998:24-29].

Inclusion of service users was also affected by the fact that in the majority of programmes the concept of self-referral was not favoured. The reason most commonly given for this factor was that service users were unable to determine the nature of services they might require. When questioned about this matter several of the programmes fell back on 'self-referencing', the fact that this was not traditional practice, or that it was too time consuming, or difficult to organise. Yet, as was shown by Ledwith [2005:2], inclusion of service recipients in service planning and delivery is an important aspect of developmental strategy. This particular barrier was most prevalent in the statutory agencies, illustrating the strong perceptions of professional power [Browne, 1998], in health, education and social care agencies. In contrast, some of the voluntary organisations involved in programme provision were much more aware of the importance of concepts of user participation and empowerment. For example, one programme had commenced accredited training for parents and two others were making progress 'up the ladder' of participative processes identified by Arnstein [1972], through meaningful consultation with their client groups.

In addition, it appeared that more attention might have been paid to the need for considering the cultures of local communities. Principally 'culture clashes' appear to have been caused by the inappropriate siting of programmes, or the 'bussing in' of people from different communities. The need for more appreciation of the importance of local culture had had the potential, in a number of instances, to lead to 'culture clashes' between different client groups and between service users and service providers. This meant that programmes may not have been specifically suited to the specific needs of some communities. For this reason it would appear that concerns to implement 'new policy' should take into account the importance of culture and how this might be influenced by the actions of policy implementers, styles of community interventions and characteristics of professional and service user interaction.

In this study the use of action research revealed that cultural barriers appeared to be compounded by 'weak partnerships' between service users and programme staff and a lack of collaboration between different professional groups in various programmes. Partnerships between service users

communities and providers are therefore an important aspect of policy. Geddes [1998:18] argues that partnerships involving the direct participation of local communities are an impetus to achieving 'best value' from services. Partnerships are desirable because they have significant implications for accountability and social inclusion [Glendinning et al, 2002:100]. Also desirable are 'partnerships' between agencies. Glendinning et al [2002:1] claim that a lack of collaboration between professionals causes fragmentation in interventions, a lack of sustainability and a lack of continuity in provision and support, all of which are identified as important aspects of 'new' forms of policy. Weak 'partnerships' appear to be the result of a disregard for obvious organisational changes required to limit barriers to inter-professional working, such as matrix structures for more flexible organisational forms [Weinrich and Koontz,1994:277-281] and subsidiarity [WAG, 2003]. Such structures were observed in only two programmes [both in the voluntary sector]. The remainder of programmes appeared to be satisfied with working in traditional bureaucratic hierarchies and might have given more consideration to how bureaucratic forms of organisation may adversely affect the flexibility, effectiveness and efficiency of provision [Thompson and McHugh, 1990]. As Pestieau [2003:4] observed such shortfalls may have a serious effect on the policy implementation process.

Lipsky [1976:208 -10] clearly argued that for many reasons 'street level' bureaucrats may not respond favourably to contemporary demand for improved and more sympathetic services to clients. To counteract such problems Elmore [1985:20] suggested that policy implementation processes should begin with a 'concrete' statement of the behaviour that creates the occasion for a policy intervention and should describe a set of organisational operations that can be expected to affect that behaviour. Such actions would have been beneficial in respect of policy implementers involved in the Cymorth Scheme. Rummery [2002:230] argues that 'partnership' between agencies is an important feature of 'networked governance'. It reflects the fact that in respect of implementing 'new policy' government is an 'enabler' rather than a vehicle for coercion of agents or agencies to act in a particular way. Through 'partnerships' the exercise of 'governance' reflects the complex realities of welfare, which should now be delivered by a range of providers and be characterised by dynamic, flexible and evolving methods of working that rely on horizontal self-governing networks [Rhodes,1997:53].

In summary, it can be seen that in the case of the County Borough involved in this study, a number of issues likely to cause cultural barriers to policy implementation required more consideration. In particular, there appeared to be potential problems relating to various aspects of culture and 'partnerships'. Both at the strategic and the organisational level, understanding of

what was required, or the need for change could have received more priority. This was a situation which again illustrated the case of Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] that there are important prerequisites for policy implementation, cultural factors being one of them. Even if programmes appreciate the myriad effects of culture upon their services, reluctance of an organisation at the strategic partnership level to restructure organisational form means that the autonomy of programmes to create change is limited. Because programme managers and staff may carry on their 'business as usual', often working in isolation rather than in partnership, exercising professional power rather than participative action with communities and failing to address the distinct needs of local communities, some considerable financial implications, in terms of wasted investment for new policy implementation, may be incurred. These findings indicate the need for improvement in the micro-management of change in order to facilitate organisational restructuring, the strengthening of 'partnerships' and the education of staff at the operational level, in order to ensure effective policy implementation.

Through the process of workshops, visits and the use of the model of policy implementation the need to address cultural and partnership issues was accomplished using organisational and professionalising processes of action research. Results show that definite progress was achieved in these areas, but there is still a long way to go to reach the levels of 'partnership' defined by policy discourses [WAG, 2000].

8.6 Governmentality versus Mechanistic orientations

'Governmentality' is defined by Clarke and colleagues [2000:89] as a response to the dilemma of overcoming the persistent problems associated with the means of policy coordination, overcoming vested interests, and the prevention of 'logjams' and inertia. The term is said to be derived from the work of Foucault and it concerns the colonisation of identity through which an obedient population and civil society is secured. 'Governmentality' is a concern to reach 'hard to reach groups' and to encourage them to become collaborators in the construction of a more inclusive society. It was observed that the efforts of programmes to comply with demands from the strategic level were considerable. However, although the Cymorth scheme's programme monitoring framework should have assisted in the process of identifying programme aims compatible with achieving 'governmentality', there was some confusion. As has already been seen confusion over the monitoring terms 'aims, objectives targets, inputs outputs and outcomes', meant that the choice of Cymorth themes was usually limited. In most instances only one theme was chosen and usually this was a theme which reflected traditional forms of service and

intervention. The value of the monitoring framework as a tool to facilitate a 'shift' towards 'governmentality' was therefore obfuscated. Most programmes appeared to lack confidence in applying the policy implementation framework to community interventions, a problem also identified by Clarke [2000:265]; Copeland and Wexler [1995:57] and Pestieau [2003:12]. Indeed, in most instances, the use by programmes of such a framework appeared to be compounded by difficulties. As a result programmes appeared to be delivering services which could best be described as 'more of the same', that is programmes offered very little more than had been traditionally provided by statutory services. In other words mechanistic forms of service delivery prevailed, despite the fact that guidance [WAG, 2002:5], called for 'adding value to mainstream services'. Therefore a process which was intended to achieve 'governmentality' did not even appear to be succeeding to ensure 'governance' defined by Clarke et al [2000:90], as *'the responsibility for determining key strategic objectives'*.

There were some exceptions to this finding. A few of the voluntary organisations appeared to have a better understanding of the policy 'shift' towards 'governmentality' and the process of policy implementation and monitoring. Clarke et al [2002:257] suggest that this is the result of voluntary organisations having had a long experience in the use of monitoring frameworks. Whilst Glendinning and colleagues [2002:240] note that voluntary organisations are also skilled and experienced in the setting of goals over horizontal as opposed to vertical networks. A process which is conducive to facilitating 'governmentality'. In most of the programmes managers and staff admitted a need for more knowledge and skill in relation to processes of identifying and implementing policy frameworks and monitoring and evaluating 'aims, targets, objectives, and service outcomes'. As was argued by Parsons [1995 : 464], Hogwood and Gunn [1983 :43] and Pestieau [2003:v], merely imposing new strategies and controlling people to conform, is not sufficient for ensuring that policy will be implemented in the way intended. In this study, it was noted by the researcher that the assumptions on the part of the organisational partners that programme staff possessed adequate policy knowledge and implementation skills to institute and monitor the Cymorth scheme, might result in a poor return for the Welsh Assembly's investment in terms of policy implementation. It appeared that knowledge and skill training were needed for programme managers and staff to gain a greater understanding of the process of 'governmentality' and its intended outcomes, in particular the engagement of 'hard to reach' groups. Compliance with policy implementation therefore appeared to be mechanistic and not to be proceeding to plan. Thus services were basically unchanged. Pestieau [2003:12] described such situations as 'top-down' process of policy implementation. It was her view that the

corrective is a more facilitative and supportive policy implementation environment. In short, it appeared to the researcher that policy implementers required more knowledge and skill in processes of policy implementation if resources were not to be wasted. Glendinning and colleagues [2002:240], argued that it is important that policy implementers have an awareness of the implications of 'governmentality' for their work.

As was seen in the last chapter through the use of organisational and professional models of action research policy implementers were assisted in improving their skills in processes of both vertical and horizontal methods of monitoring. Thereby they were assisted in appreciating how the process of 'governmentality' was expected to operate. A few of the programmes, including some from the statutory sector, were enabled to make considerable progress towards implementing strategies which had the potential to achieve this aim.

8.7 'Best value'/Ambiguity/Knowledge Deficit

The above discussion has already made it apparent that there was a need for enhancement of policy implementers' knowledge in relation to the actual strategic aims of policy. In the absence of such enhancement the immediate task of implementing policy was resulting in narrow programme outcomes. The need for enhanced knowledge and skill was also apparent in relation to various aspects of professional work. In particular, difficulties were observed in programme implementers' ability to assess needs at both an individual and community level [WAG, 2002:7]. Ledwith [2005:2] claimed that need detection is central to community development, but the majority of programmes had no strategy or framework for needs assessment. Only a minority of programme providers appeared to appreciate the importance of need assessment and had sought out specific assessment tools for the purpose. However, only in very few instances had the effectiveness of these tools been validated, despite this being a requirement laid down by the WAG [2002:6]. Consequently, it appeared that in the majority of instances, the assessment tools used may not have been best suited to the task in hand. Because the tools had not been validated, it was possible that they might not have been sufficiently robust to comply with mandatory requirements for 'evidence-based practice' [WAG 2002:6 and 26]. Moreover, it was observed that tools used for need assessment were limited to the detection of individual, rather than community need.

The findings of the study show that at this time the Borough Council appeared to have put little emphasis on 'best value', in terms of policy implementation. Best value might have been better achieved if services were designed to meet specific needs [WAG, 2002:26]. This was an

argument presented by Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia [1995:259], who claimed that it is essential to determine the problems of residents in a community if interventions are to be responsive to need and residents are to be responsive to social change. However, programme implementers did not appear to be considering whether inadequate needs assessment might result in the delivery of inappropriate programmes, poor outcomes and therefore, sanctions in terms of referred plans and funding delays by the Welsh Assembly Government [WAG, 2002:5]. It was perceived that the concept of unmet need was not 'triggering' determination to influence policy from 'the bottom up'. Elmore [1985:25] argued that failure to determine the appropriateness of a 'bottom up' policy model to enhance policy implementation, ignores the fact that those who are implementing policy can also contribute to policy making through negotiation and consensus building. It was the opinion of Elmore that this approach allows policy implementers to enter into the political environment and to argue the case for unmet need. However, the findings from the first stage of this study showed that the requirement for greater awareness of the importance of need assessment strategies often meant that unmet need was addressed by only a very few programmes, mainly those housed in the voluntary sector. This finding was not too surprising in view of voluntary organisations' long history of political agitation and advocacy in this sector [Hill, 1993].

Overall, it appeared that the importance of profiling need, both at an individual and community level, should receive a higher priority in order to ensure 'best value'. That is ensuring that service provision is matched to need [WAG, 2002:26]. To overcome problems related to a mechanistic provision of services, it appeared that the organisation required to ensure that base-line statistics of health and social status were made available. That being the case comparative measures of need could be made against other areas [WAG, 2002:25]. Thereby unmet need might be identified. As was discussed briefly above, Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia [1995:257] and Ledwith [2005:2] identified need assessment as an essential adjunct to community development, because it enables service provision to be targeted on actual need. Therefore, it appeared that if the broader aims of policy were to be addressed, the organisation required a keener sense of its responsibility to ensure that all professionals in its employ had the necessary knowledge and skills to assess both individual and community need and to recognise unmet need. To possibly assist in this process some agreement was required on the assessment tools best suited to need detection, in order to comply with WAG [2002:26] guidance. Thus it became apparent that if change was to be effected, a greater emphasis needed to be placed on the requirement for knowledge and skills relating to need detection. Currently awareness of this deficit required

strengthening. Hart and Bond [1995:40], argued the importance of professionals reflecting on practice as a means of improving their service and the functioning of an organisation. The researcher believed that it might be important for professionals involved in policy implementation to reflect on how they could improve and professionalise the practice of needs assessment at both individual and community levels [Hart and Bond, 1995:40-44]. Also, it was considered that programme providers might reflect on how they could feedback their observations of the effects of policy on the needs of the populations that they served. If this was done they might 'flag up' unmet need to the Assembly Government. This was an idea supported by Sabatier [1986], who argued that to be effective, policy making and implementation should be one and the same process.

In summary, it appeared that policy implementers required more knowledge and skill in respect of needs assessment, a process recommended by WAG [2002:12]. In the main, those that had attempted to identify unmet need had done so in what appeared to be a cursory manner, using untried and untested tools. There was no agreed tool for the purpose of detecting need. Therefore, the detection of needs and problems for purposes of individual and community development appeared to require strengthening. To effect change in respect of this matter policy implementers required the opportunity to gain more knowledge and skills, to be provided with 'joined-up' resources for need detection and also to have an opportunity to reflect on how they might influence policy making at government level through processes of making unmet need known. Thereby, according to Elmore [1985:25], the process of policy implementation might be improved.

During workshops and visits policy implementers were made aware of the need for assessment, profiling, need detection and unmet need documentation based on validated assessment tools and statistical data. It was not the brief of the researcher to provide educational input in respect of the use of such tools. Indeed many of the professionals involved in delivering programmes would be familiar with them. Increasing awareness of the value of such tools, through action research, appeared to be the best way of increasing their use [see 7.6]. Thereby the use of 'evidenced-based' policy and practice might be enhanced and processes of auditing and measuring results increased. These processes are identified as important governing mechanisms [or otherwise] in the facilitation of welfare partnerships, increased [Glendinning et al 2002:241].

8.8 Power orientation / Lack of flexibility

In addition to culture barriers caused by traditional professional power structures, 'power orientation' - a tendency to rely on a notion of the invincibility of a particular professional culture, was also shown to be a cause of disruption to collaboration and continuity between programmes and various agencies involved in the scheme. Glendinning et al [2002:25-28] claim that this is a situation which is not unusual. Although in theory 'networks' should be collaborative, in reality this may not be the case. 'Power orientation' may militate against continuity between services from different agencies. A lack of continuity between service provisions was perceived to be caused by reluctance to seek help or continued support from other agencies. Lack of collaboration appeared to result in services sometimes being terminated at a point when service users' progress was just starting, or at which attainable outcomes were not yet achieved. Better outcomes may have been reached by further support from a more suitable provision, perhaps from another agency. Because of disruptions in the continuity of support the measurement of longer term service outcomes was sometimes difficult. This problem had the potential to leave service users and providers feeling confused, frustrated and sometimes abandoned. 'Short-termism' orientation on the part of programme providers militated against facilitation of individual service users' progress towards social inclusion, citizenship or community development. Yet as Glendinning et al [2002:25-28] claim, effective strategic partnerships should ensure the continued involvement of local people. This is a strategy which Ledwith [2005:2] agrees is essential for community development.

The need for greater appreciation of the need for continuity in service provision also appeared to indicate a need for greater awareness of the potentially supportive roles of other agencies and the advantages of sometimes referring service users from one service to another. In some instances the reasons given for a reluctance to refer was a concern for confidentiality, but in reality, the reasons appeared to have more to do with a programme's belief that they should be the sole provider of service. In particular, it was noted that there was little networking between Local Health Boards and Children and Young Peoples Programmes, or between programmes and schools, despite the fact that the need for 'partnership' working was emphasised in guidance for implementing the scheme [WAG, 2002:5].

It appeared, to the researcher, that this lack of collaboration and discontinuity between programmes meant that it was difficult to construct an audit trail for the purpose of outcome measurement, or to pinpoint problems when progress did not go to plan. Yet, as was noted above

the drive towards 'evidence-based' policy and practice is an important 'New Labour' mantra [Glendinning, 2002:241].

Dunsire [1978] argued that a lack of collaboration may result in dysfunctional conflict between professionals. This researcher believed that policy can only be put into action when groups resolve their differences. Effective policy implementation systems require shared goals, methods and systems for controlling conflict and power struggles. These observations suggest the need for more continuity and collaboration between the wide ranges of services that may be required to ensure social inclusion. Parsons [1995] on the other hand argued that a degree of conflict was an essential political process for agencies to acquire and achieve power in a world now characterised by a 'mix' of delivery systems. However, in the circumstances of this study such a view appears to militate against the thrust of policy which, as was discussed above, favours 'partnerships', or collaborative processes, rather than 'the market' as a preferred means of service delivery [WAG, 2002:5]. It was therefore perceived from the initial stages of this study that what was needed was an appreciation, by each of the programmes involved in service provision for Children and Young People, that each part of the programme 'mix' played an essential role in policy implementation processes. If, as was suggested by Glendinning et al [2002:140], policy implementation can only be achieved through a process of collaborative working then, a major culture change within the organisation might be necessary.

Thus the researcher reasoned that 'power orientation' could best be mitigated by increasing collaboration and partnerships between programmes. Since the introduction of the concepts of new policy [WAG, 2000] 'partnerships' between the various agencies had become the modus operandi at the strategic level of the organisation. However, the need for 'joined-up' working appeared to require greater appreciation at operational levels of the organisations. This was a situation commented on by Glendinning et al [2002:139-40], as not uncommon. It was their view that 'partnerships' have yet to be demonstrated in practice. Powell and Exworthy [2002:26] argue that power asymmetries can set a limit to networks, the flatter organisational forms which are said to be essential aspects of 'partnership' working and 'governmentality' [Rhodes, 1997:200]. However, it may have been difficult for professionals schooled in the Weberian concept of power as an observable commodity, to make the transition to a Foucauldian perspective of power being diffuse localised and invisible [Glendinning et al 2002:26]. Yet as Glendinning asserts, it is necessary to communicate to agencies that multi-disciplinary perspectives are vital in determining,

"What works best, when and where!"..

In summary, despite the prevalence of a rhetoric of 'partnership' working in policy guidance [WAG, 2002:5] perceptions of differing levels of power between agencies appeared to be causing a lack of collaboration and continuity between programmes. As a result, in many instances services users appeared to be frustrated and confused. Also, it appeared that satisfactory policy outcomes were not being achieved because there was insufficient time for policy implementers to enable service users to achieve policy goals. The disregard for continuity and partnership appeared to indicate that a higher level of knowledge, on the part of programmes, of the contribution that other agencies might make to ensuring sustainability and progress towards policy goals, could improve services. Excuses for disregard and lack of knowledge of the importance of 'partnerships' appeared to be spurious, but they had the potential to create a 'revolving door' phenomenon, whereby short-termism in respect of service provision might result in regression of progress and the need for another service to 'pick up the pieces' and begin work with families all over again.

Power orientations were therefore seen as dysfunctional in respect of the implementation of child and family policy. At the operational level of service delivery, culture change and professional development appeared to be necessary in order to improve collaboration and sustainability of progress.

Through the processes of workshops, visits and the construction of a model of policy implementation programme providers were assisted to perceive the need for 'partnership' working and indeed to become more determined to increase this mode of service provision.

8.9 Tokenism /Absence of a Problem Orientation

Only a few of programmes appeared to have a notion of problem orientation, or the need for identification and prevention of potential problems. As a result the targeting of programmes at only established and traditionally perceived problems was a feature of the County Borough's policy implementation process. Yet, policy implementation analysts such as Pestieau [2003:9] and community development researchers such as Rothman [1995:146] emphasise the importance of problem orientation as a means of providing a strong basis for action. In most of the programmes the researcher noted a reactive method of working prevailed. This was probably much influenced by traditional health and social care provision, but it was also noted that this way of working appeared to be favoured by the County Borough concerned. The Welsh Assembly Government, however, in its guidance on implementation of the Cymorth Scheme

[2002:6] had mandated that services should be focused on 'early preventive intervention' in order to reduce crisis intervention at a later date. This approach requires early problem identification in order to determine appropriate interventive measures. However, this guidance may be somewhat confused by other mandatory enjoiners to target services only at 'deprived' groups living in specific target areas [WAG, 2002:5]. As a result problems encountered in any other sector of the population may have been largely unheeded.

Dingwall et al [1988] argued that targeting has the potential to leave many in need and to increase risk. Previous evaluation of the scheme had shown that the greatest number of referrals to the scheme came from health visitors who operate a universal service for all children and their families. This suggested that working with the population at large gave health visitors a more realistic overview of need and therefore more opportunities for intervention. Services that provided targeted interventions referred fewer families to the programmes. The principles of the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' [1999], [Chapter One], upheld the rights of every child to services necessary for their well being and welfare. This indicated to the researcher that a greater awareness of the importance of problem orientation might encourage more equity in service provision. Ideally, opportunities for self-referral to programmes, by service users, might be a means of ensuring more equity of provision and be a means of mediating the problems of unmet need linked to targeting. In policy terms Parsons [1995:87] argued that a problem orientation within service organisations recognises the need for building up social institutions within communities. These can foster social cohesion, civic pride and counter the effects of individualism and social fragmentation. However, it was contended by Parsons that the building of cohesion within communities [the process of communitarianism], is dependent on the recognition of problems within the community and the availability of programmes to prevent their escalation. Therefore the researcher perceived that each programme needed to be empowered to adopt a process of problem orientation that might assist programme staff to determine actual community need. This might empower potential service users to become more active partners in personal and community development, a process strongly advocated by Ledwith [2005:2]. As was noted by Powell and Exworthy [2002:23],

"Prevention is better than cure; joint action should be focused on spotting problems".

In summary, from the above discussion it appears that the concept of the importance of problem orientation at strategic, organisation or operational levels required strengthening. Absence of problem orientation appeared to result in reactive, rather than problem orientated services. However, this approach seemed to be favoured by the County Borough, possibly because of

'mixed messages' in strategic guidance, which conveyed the need, on the one hand, for targeting interventions to specified communities, whilst on the other hand, the need for early intervention based on a universal problem solving approach. Consequently, a disregard for problem identification appeared to have the potential to increase need and risk, to overlook the 'rights' of all children and ignore the need for equity in service provision. Overall, it appeared that a lack of problem orientation militated against the strengthening of social institutions, cohesion and community development. Thus tokenism, in terms of dealing with only those problems that cannot be contained, appeared to prevail. As a result, it appeared difficult for programmes to address the broader aims of policy. Through the process of workshops, visits and construction of a model of policy implementation the vision of programme providers appeared to be widened and interventions appeared to become more pro-active, [see case study two].

8.10 Empowerment/Poor Human Relations

With the exception of two of the programmes, there appeared to be little understanding of the need for community development or social inclusion. It appeared that concepts of the need for improving human relations within communities had not yet been given a great deal of attention at the organisational or operational level of policy implementation. Yet, Rothman et al [1995:29] emphasised the importance of building human relationships as a basis for community development. Moreover, Parsons [1995: 504 and 522], basing an argument on Laswell's [1948] ideas of 'enlightenment', suggested that improving human relationships between policy implementers and communities might assist in developing, or using institutions in which people can learn about problems and be empowered to create their own solutions. It was therefore perceived by the researcher that improving human relationships might assist programmes to adopt a policy mix most suited to the needs of the community in which they are operating. This type of intervention would, of course, be dependent on programmes being empowered by the strategic level of the organisation to have the responsibility for devolved programme planning and 'governmentality', in order to respond to the particular needs of their communities. Thereby, programmes would have an opportunity to bring about community development and enhance social inclusion. Powell and Exworthy [2002:23] argued that unless deprived communities are partners in joint working nothing will change.

In summary, little attention appeared to have been focused on the importance of building human relationships as a means of achieving the broader policy aims of inclusion and community development. As a result, opportunities for empowering communities to create solutions for their

problems may have been lost. To resolve this issue there seemed to be a need for strengthening partnerships at the strategic level to allow programmes more autonomy to identify local need and the degree of collaborative intervention required to meet that need. These processes are, of course, reliant on the building of better relationships between different levels of the organisations and between programme workers and communities. Through the processes of workshops, visits and the construction of a model of policy implementation it appears that programmes were more aware of the need to include service users in their programmes and to offer them skill training.

8.11 Strategic Governance -Subsidiarity, Governmentality and Benchmarking change

If improvements in policy implementation strategies are to be made and sustained, programmes need to feel sufficiently empowered to monitor and evaluate their own performance in policy implementation. Glendinning [2002:43] recognised the difficulties involved in this process due to the ambiguity of the Government's 'modernising' agenda, which on the one hand advocates inclusion and participation, and on the other strengthens central powers of control. It is the view of Glendinning et al [2002:43] that 'imposed partnerships', which characterise strategic governance strategies do not fit descriptions of 'self regulating networked systems'. Neither do local partnerships, managed by partnership boards of local councillors, enhance 'active citizenship'. According to Glendinning et al, they merely perpetuate hierarchical 'top-down' processes of control.

As was seen at the outset of the study, at both the strategic and operational levels of the organisation, there appeared to be a need for greater understanding of the concepts of policy and the mechanistic form of monitoring introduced by the WAG to monitor the implementation of the Cymorth scheme. The level of confusion surrounding policy implementation strategies appeared to have resulted in a disregard, on the part of the organisation, for the need to benchmark the breadth of programme activities against policy objectives; therefore opportunities for strategic governance were being lost. Clarke and colleagues [2000:88-90] describe governance as:-

- The support of organisations which can supply information that cannot be collected and supplied by state officials.
- The development of strategies and priorities through complex negotiation with non-state bodies as a result of state officials being dependent on external organisations.
- The coordination of policies is difficult because of the need to rely on motivation, trust and generosity of spirit.

- The lodging of powerful interests within complicated networks thus favouring 'some voices' whilst excluding others, a process that curtails outcomes.

Governance is a means of increasing the status of partnerships, accessing the capacity of state organisations and pursuing the core objectives of policy [Clarke et al 2000:89-90]. It is not merely a way of providing additional services as adjuncts to state welfare provision. The intention of governance is to liberate entrepreneurship in urban renewal, training, utilities, transport and industry. Clarke and colleagues claim that in the 1980's governance was influenced by an obsession with market mechanisms, thereby governance became associated with 'new managerialism' which limited rational-bureaucratic aspects of government and established partnerships with the private sector. However, the propensity of this form of governance to exclude and control those who resisted the strategy brought about the failure to deliver state objectives. The resulting deficit in democratic processes eroded the legitimacy of this regime. However, it may now be difficult for policy implementers versed in the strategies of 'governance' to shift to the process of 'governmentality' prescribed as a corrective for the shortcomings of governance.

'Governmentality' is aimed at encouraging user groups, the voluntary sector and other partners within a new strategic arena. Thus concepts of competition and the market have been replaced with the concepts of 'partnership' and 'subsidiarity' in which, all must be able to demonstrate measurable outcomes. To facilitate change partnerships are expected to have performance indicators, a vision, a mission statement and a business plan. In addition partnerships are expected to have a common discourse and to pursue a common funding stream. Although inclusiveness predominates there is also a degree of authoritarianism [Clarke et al, 2000:89-90].

This shift from governance to governmentality may be a difficult transition for those used to working in the regimes of governance. Whereas governance is characterised by confrontation and conflict, governmentality is characterised by diplomacy, persuasion and new identities. Key strategic objectives and privileges are the pejorative of government whilst, at the local level, agencies should coordinate administration and enhance 'partnership arrangements'. Transition from an emphasis on government to governance and more recently to governmentality, is a process unlikely to be completed at a single moment in time. Whilst processes of adoption and adaptation occur, the broad shift described above has taken some thirty years to evolve and it is still in a state of flux where government, governance, subsidiarity and governmentality are all at work. It is therefore not surprising that confusion may ensue [Clarke et al. 2000:93].

Consequently, at the outset of the study the majority of the programmes appeared to be somewhat bemused by the notion of needing to monitor the extent of policy implementation evidenced in their programmes. Moreover, as has been previously discussed, at the operational level workers found the implementation of the monitoring process difficult to adjust to. The challenge for the researcher was to ascertain whether the participative construction of a model of policy benchmarks could assist the organisation to develop their vision for change and programmes to monitor progress towards the implementation of policy goals, thereby strengthening concepts of the importance of strategic governance. As was argued by Clarke et al [2000:93], although welfare policy is currently focused on processes of 'governmentality' and subsidiarity, the process of 'governance' maintains momentum.

In summary, there appeared to be a need for greater understanding of the concept of strategic governance, which in the light of ambiguity on this issue, may not have been remarkable [Clarke et al 2002:93]. To complicate this issue programmes also found it difficult to cope with bureaucratic forms of monitoring introduced by WAG. As a result opportunities for developing strategic governance and thereby increasing the visibility of the process of policy implementation were lost. Only one programme, managed by a voluntary organisation, applied a system of strategic governance. As a result of the need for a higher regard for strategic governance at all levels of organisation the attainment of policy aims was inadequately monitored at the start of the research process. However, through the adoption of organisational and professionalising processes of action research programme workers became increasingly empowered to understand the need for 'governance' and 'subsidiarity' strategies [see 7.6]. Moreover, through these processes policy implementers were considerably motivated to working towards 'governmentality'.

The combination of the above barriers to policy implementation resulted in 'a black hole' model of policy implementation, such as that described by Easton [1965:110], and decried by Pestieau [2005:12]. Although, according to the 'partnership' level of the organisation policy was subscribed to, in practice the implementation of policy was far from robust. At the initial stages of the study, the majority of programmes set up for the purpose of implementing the Cymorth Scheme policy [WAG, 2002] required more understanding of the policy thrusts underpinning their programmes and what was required of them to put the programmes into action. Consequently, programme managers were working blindly to try and integrate a single Cymorth theme into their already functioning programme, rather than reviewing their programme to determine whether or not it could be better developed to meet a wider range of policy aims. This

situation was one that illustrates the argument of Sabatier [1986] that to understand and analyse processes of policy implementation it is necessary to examine both 'top down' approaches and 'bottom up' responses to the process. Also the argument of Pestieau [2005:12], that policy implementation is best evaluated through engaging implementers in a process of 'problem definition' and 'behaviour change'.

The findings of this study showed that although from a 'top down' perspective clear and consistent objectives for policy implementation had been identified in the form of Cymorth themes, which acted as guidelines for intervention and programme planning, precise and effective strategies and guidelines for policy implementation required strengthening. Some delay in this respect led to the need for strengthening vision, policy implementation strategies, knowledge and skills regarding need assessment, awareness of the importance of support structures, community need assessment, collaborative working, self-governance and strategic direction at operational level. The findings demonstrate that policy implementation is a complicated process, also the arguments of Hjern and Porter [1981:217] and Pestieau [2005:12] that bottom up responses to policy implementation cannot be overlooked, as it is at the implementation level that policy objectives may be thwarted. In particular, the findings of this study illustrate the arguments of Browne and Wildavsky [1984:6] that it is necessary to conceive of policy implementation as a learning process which needs to be analysed. Also the argument of Morgan [1993], who contended that the only way to understand policy implementation is to adopt a constructivist approach which will create insight into the positive and negative reactions to policy strategies. These latter arguments appear to demonstrate that merely synthesising analysis of 'top down' and 'bottom up' models of policy analysis is insufficient to illustrate the total picture of the policy implementation process. Through the use of action research the participants in this study demonstrated improvement, in all aspects of the perceived deficits in policy implementation, though in some instances this was modest.

8.12 Overcoming policy implementation deficits using action research

This study has clearly illustrated the importance of Hogwood and Gunn's [1984:43], Clarke's [2000:265], Copeland and Wexler's [1995:57] and Morgan's [1993], claims that it is necessary to interpret and evaluate frameworks of policy implementation in the settings in which they occur. This is because the construction of a policy implementation model is likely to be dependent on the actions of those involved in the process and might vary from place to place, or at different times. In this study it was shown that there were gaps in service provision because of the need to incorporate policy direction in service goals and to modify practice through facilitation of

internalisation of policy demands. In the event of such needs requiring fulfillment, programmes clung on to self-referencing, mechanistic methods of service delivery, power orientations, poor governance and poor human relationship strategies, all of which resulted in a lack of strategic direction.

Consequently, programmes found it difficult to contribute to policy evaluation and development and the County Borough had little concrete evidence of the effectiveness of policy and the efficiency of resource expenditure to present to the Welsh Assembly Government. To determine whether strategic direction could be improved through policy implementation, the researcher, following arguments of Pestieau [2005:12] and Hogwood and Benn [1984:43], adopted a process of action research. This was done in conference with strategy managers of the Borough Council. It was hoped that this approach would engage programmes in the process of policy implementation and evaluation and thereby involve them in a process of participative change.

Action Research as a means of improving performance in the process of policy implementation

The experimental process of action research used to frame the problems inherent to the policy implementation process clearly shows how the factors identified above might be acting as barriers to policy implementation [Morgan, 1993]. Moreover, a great deal of light is shone onto the type of input required to remove these suspected barriers. What is clearly determined from the application of Hart and Bond's [1995:40-44] typology of action research, is that action was required on a number of fronts if policy implementation was to be improved. Hart and Bond [1995:46] clearly showed how, during the process of an action research project, the actions of those involved may shift from one end of a horizontal axis of the typology to the other. Describing this phenomenon they say that,

"The research phase might use a more traditional research design such as a survey, and this would locate it in the experimental type, this may be followed by a professionalizing phase during which practitioners evaluate the findings of the experimental phase in practice".

and that,

"During the course of such a project the action research would have moved along a rational social management framework towards a focus on change and engagement with participants".

This was a course of action also recommended by Ledwith [2005:2], if community development and inclusion were to be realistic goals. In the case of this study, application of the action research framework provided by Hart and Bond [1995:40-44], appeared to move participants in the study along a vertical axis of learning progression which eventually engaged them in a process of collaboration for change. Participants also moved along a horizontal axis of

development in which they progressed from mechanistic/experimental processes of policy implementation towards professional and emancipating behaviours which clearly helped them to address barriers to policy implementation and enhance the policy implementation process.

To remove barriers to policy implementation it was perceived necessary to apply all typologies of action research [Hart and Bond, 1995:40-45]. This was in order to bring about successive levels of change in implementation practices, thereby countering deficits in organisational activity; lack of professional development through failure to reflect on standards of practice and a lack of empowerment of programme workers to develop the autonomy needed to implement policy in a way that was relevant to community need. Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] claimed that this was the best means of ensuring policy implementation. As Hupe [1993:538], clearly indicated, it is not sufficient to rely on beliefs that policy will be automatically implemented. Consequently, following the arguments of Morgan [1993], an experimental type of action research was used to identify current contextual barriers to policy implementation. This was followed by processes of organisational and professionalising types of action research which informed processes of policy intervention. Thereby it was hoped to identify interventions that might improve the policy implementation process. It was determined that to achieve this aim the following issues should be considered:-

- educational needs of service providers.
- degree of perception of the need for collaborative action.
- degree of awareness of problems.
- the research problem.
- desired outcomes of the study in terms of improved policy implementation.
- need for identification of a cyclic process for policy improvement.
- need for service providers to share the role of the researcher and become expert leaders in the process of policy implementation.

Having identified barriers to policy implementation, as was recommended by Morgan [1993], and Pestieau [2005], a means to remove these barriers was needed. Analysis of the types of barriers existing indicated that they might only be removed through processes of organisational, professionalising action and by ensuring that programmes had sufficient autonomy to instigate interventions appropriate to the context of their programme. It was therefore perceived by the researcher that appropriate types of action research interventions would be required to ensure informed and sustained policy implementation. This course of action was intended to:-

- Rectify organisational shortfalls.
- Raise the consciousness of programme providers through education.
- Disseminate good practice by empowering service providers to develop fluidity and flexibility in collaborative activity.
- Encourage service providers to formulate policy problems and provide feedback to strategists.

- Bring about a process of change as a result of defining the research problem.
- Achieve a consensus view of the extent of improvement achieved.
- To instill a notion that policy implementation is an ongoing, process driven activity.
- Enable service providers to become co-researchers/change agents in processes of policy implementation.

thus shifting service providers from ad hoc policy implementers to informed and empowered policy administrators. Discussion of the means by which this shift was achieved will be addressed under the headings of organisational, professionalising and empowering action research approaches, as these were addressed in stages two, three, and four of the study.

8.13 Stage Two - The processes of action research required to achieve improvement in policy implementation

Organisational action research

This approach, as described by Hart and Bond [1995:40-44], was applied in stage two of the study. It consisted of a series of nine workshops for managers at the strategic level, programme managers and operational staff. The purpose of workshops was to equip personnel with the necessary knowledge and skills to reflect on the thrusts of policy and the organisational changes required to achieve policy outcomes. Content of the workshops was in accordance with the mandatory requirements set out in policy implementation guidelines [WAG, 2002], to fulfill the educational needs of policy implementers; to identify management and problem solving strategies to effect change; to encourage collaborative methods of working and to equip service staff with monitoring and evaluation, community development and political skills. The objective was to bring about improved and transparent policy implementation. Originally, organisational action research was applied only to problems in industry [Lewin, 1948], but since it has been a tool of personnel management and more recently an instrument for increasing employees participation in problem solving to improve production. As such, it has contributed both to problem solving and theory building. In the case of this study organisational action research has been used to improve policy implementation in social and health care.

The aim of the workshops was to reach a consensus affirmation of the policy implementation barriers identified in stage one of the study, to identify the means of overcoming each of the barriers and to build a theory of policy implementation that could be represented by an evaluation model. Thereby it was hoped to achieve sustainable policy implementation. The agreed means of overcoming barriers consisted of the following interventions:-

- Strengthening education and training of staff in terms of policy orientation.
- Organisational and management change necessary to achieve consensus over what needed to be done, such as the need for subsidiarity and collaborative working.
- Increasing user participation and establishing client-led services.
- Increasing group working for defining and assessing need.
- Problem definition and the recognition of unmet need.
- Recognising indicators of social exclusion.
- Confirming the appropriateness of planned intervention with service users.
- Defining tangible outcomes of the policy implementation process.
- Introducing the need for reflection on action as a means of improving policy implementation.
- Encouraging workshop participants to collaborate with the researchers in the design of a model of policy implementation.

Findings from the workshops confirmed the presence of policy implementation barriers identified in stage one. The application of organisational action research clearly indicated the need for:-

- Providing an overall vision for change, in order to prevent self – referencing.
- Increasing cohesiveness by removing culture barriers, removing mechanistic orientations to monitoring activities by ensuring that aims, objectives and targets for inputs, outputs and outcomes could be properly defined and measured.
- Redressing knowledge deficits of policy thrusts so that policy benchmarks could be applied to programme activities.
- Ensuring continuity in service delivery so that power orientations were diminished.
- Encouraging problem orientation so that services were proactive, and responsive to need.
- Improving human relations so that there was active participation by service users and the community, and that volunteers were afforded mentoring and training.
- Ensuring integration with strategic thinking so that policy could be shaped by continual community need assessment, volunteers were afforded specific mentoring and training, objectives and target attainment were reviewed and outcomes of programme interventions evaluated.

The effectiveness of this organisational action research activity was to be measured using a rudimentary model of the policy implementation process constructed and tested in the workshops by both the researcher, and County Borough employees. It was intended that the model should enable programme providers to plot aims and objectives to achieve the chosen Cymorth themes, and to measure the extent of application of policy implementation benchmarks to each theme chosen by individual programmes [appendix 5]. In accordance with Hogwood and Gunn's prerequisites for policy implementation it was expected that this process would lead to a reorientation of programme workers' thinking regarding implementation of Cymorth Policy, that resistance to change might be overcome and that restructuring of the balance between 'top down' and 'bottom up' policy making would commence. It was reasoned that change would bring about,

- greater cohesiveness in group working.
- a greater awareness of the need for problem orientation and outcome orientated problem solving.
- greater awareness of the need for collecting tangible evidence of improvement in policy implementation.

- continued reflection on a cyclic process of monitoring standards of policy implementation.
- a desire to continue to engage in a collaborative research process to achieve policy aims.

The process represented what Whyte [1991] described as 'participatory action research' in which members of an organisation are actively engaged in finding the solutions to their own problems, in this case, the means whereby they could make the policy implementation process more transparent and tangible and improve future action. This is a process which according to Hart and Bond [1995:5] contrasts markedly with traditional research methods in which the researcher has a unilateral role. Having identified problems and possible solutions for improving policy implementation, the next stage of the process was the testing of the rudimentary model and reflection on its usefulness as a tool for consolidating improvement in the policy implementation process.

Professionalising Action research

Carr and Kemmis [1986:165] claimed that professionalising forms of action research are intended to engage workers in a process of "change for the better in terms of professional practice and service delivery". After a period of three months, each of the programmes that had attended the workshops was visited by the researcher, in order to assess the extent of improvement in respect of the criteria identified above. Findings from examination of the use of the rudimentary model demonstrated that all projects had drawn on the material used in the workshops to improve their performance in implementing policy.

It was now evident that programme implementers had a much greater awareness of the 'cross cutting' nature of policy. In fact, the majority of programmes had become more competent in respect of the need to choose a range of themes capable of demonstrating the breadth of interventions required to achieve the 'cross cutting' nature of policy [CYP, 2000]. However, some programmes still had difficulty in identifying suitable aims and objectives for implementing their chosen themes. These programmes were still, to some extent, lacking confidence in target setting and in differentiating between outputs and outcomes of service provision. That is, difficulties were still being experienced in relation to the application of policy implementation frameworks. Also, some programme staff had become so obsessed with overcoming difficulties experienced with the mechanistic processes of ensuring documentation of the policy implementation strategy, that they had not progressed as far as being able to apply quality benchmarks to their monitoring processes. However, all programmes agreed that quality benchmarks were an important aspect of ensuring the 'transparency' of policy implementation. Programme staff now appeared to have greater awareness of what needed to be done to

implement policy and of how the desired actions and standards for change should be incorporated into a monitoring tool or model of action.

These findings indicated that programme staff had accepted the need for change which, according to Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43], is the first step towards improved policy implementation. Also they had begun a process of adaptation based on reflection on their competence to achieve policy goals. However, at this point practice remained mechanistic and there was still a need for improvement and professionalising of the actions required to achieve successful policy implementation and its desired outcomes. In particular, there was still an urgent need to encourage staff to reflect more deeply on the need for evaluating their programme implementation plans, against the quality benchmarks of policy implementation, identified from policy documents in the workshops. Thereby, it was reasoned they might improve standards of practice and the outputs and outcomes of services. However, many of the programme staff found this practice somewhat difficult. This was apparently, because they were still struggling with the more mechanistic tasks of identifying suitable aims and objectives for the extra Cymorth themes they had adopted to represent the 'stretching' aims of policy. In addition, many were still hampered by the barriers to policy implementation already discussed in the previous section.

The nature of these findings illustrated not only the complexity of the learning processes involved in policy implementation, described by Browne and Wildavsky [1984:6], but also the need for practitioners to define institutional conditions which create barriers to learning and changes in beliefs, values and ways of working. In the instance of this study, the complexity of the findings appeared to clearly indicate that the application of an action research methodology illustrates Elmore's [1985:20] view that synthesis of 'top down' and 'bottom up' models of policy making are insufficient for effective policy implementation. What is needed is sensitivity to the frameworks, in terms of values, realities, judgements and actions of theorists, policy makers and those at 'street level', if policy implementation is to be achieved.

At this stage of the study the problems facing the researcher were, how to ensure that an effective model for monitoring the Cymorth implementation process was obtained and how programme workers could set their own standards for the identification and application of quality benchmarks and incorporate these into a monitoring tool. At visits to each of the programmes the researcher discussed with programme leaders and workers what was needed to develop these aspects of the policy implementation process. Discussion of the above points with programme staff clearly identified the need for enhancing professional control of the process and the need for assisting the

most successful programmes to disseminate their experiences of testing the new model of policy implementation. Using this approach it was hoped that the attitudes of reluctant adopters could be influenced. Thereby they might acknowledge the need for a greater emphasis on practitioner focused strategies to achieve quality benchmarks and overcome barriers to change. As a result of the above reflections a professionalising process of action research [Hart and Bond 1995] was used to engage each programme in reflecting, again, on barriers to policy implementation and how these might be overcome. Thus programme staff might gain more control over their work situation by,

- becoming more empowered and capable of acting as advocates on behalf of service users.
- becoming more capable of collaboration, continuity, encouraging participation and being involved with the training of volunteers.
- improving data collection in order to target need.
- planning implementation processes to proactively identify unmet need.
- continuing to improve practice through the use of further research and reflection on its application to action and outcomes .

The effectiveness of this process was clearly outlined in the case studies presented in Chapter Seven of this study. At the end of this professionalizing stage of the action research process, programme staff were brought together for two workshops. In these workshops they were enabled to make final adjustments to the model of policy implementation they had piloted in conjunction with the researcher. These adjustments were made in the light of practitioners' observations and the particular circumstances experienced by different types of programmes. For example, the short term nature of some programmes and the fact that for some, programmes such as the Toy Library, the user groups were other programmes rather than the public. Completion of the model [devised through the process of action research], led to the final stage of the study in which the model was 'test driven' to determine the extent to which it could empower programmes to implement change in working practices, for the purpose of implementing policy goals.

Empowering Action Research

The results from the last stage of this study clearly show how consciousness of the thrusts of new policy relating to children and families had been raised in all programmes. This enabled the majority to take greater control and responsibility for the policy implementation process. Greater control was now enabling programmes to bring about structural change and to empower previously excluded groups. As a result there appeared to be a move towards social inclusion through collaborative and participative action. The actions of programme staff confirmed that programmes now had the means or vision, to enable them to incorporate the main threads of

policy into the interventions planned by each programme. This was evidenced by the incorporation into their programmes of subsidiary Cymorth themes. Also, there were observed changes in practice such as relinquishing of self-referencing; recognition of the need for networking and subsidiarity; overcoming culture barriers; relinquishing power and mechanistic orientations; improving human relationships and developing strategies for increasing autonomy, self governance and strategic direction and change, so that the broader aims of policy might be achieved [Ling, 2000]. As a consequence more flexible forms of working appeared to be emerging. These factors appeared to indicate that policy implementation was no longer directed by 'top-down' processes. On the contrary, the majority of programmes clearly showed in their responses to the data collection methods used in the final stage of the study, how their involvement in a process of action research had resulted in them formulating a model of policy implementation that clearly assisted them to bring about change, improve practice and establish a means of monitoring the extent of their involvement in the policy implementation process. Also they appeared to have developed a working knowledge of participatory action research which might later be developed to a more competent level.

In particular, the results discussed in the last section of the study identify the means by which barriers to policy implementation might be overcome. These results are presented in conjunction with the barriers identified in stage one, in order to illuminate the perceived efficacy of the action research model to determine means of improving a policy implementation process.

• **Absence of a vision for change/ Achieving Communitarianism** - The main thrusts of 'new policy' needed to be clearly identified and communicated at the Strategic level. At the Organisational level care is needed to ensure that interpretations of policy are in alignment with those at strategic level. Policy thrusts should then be communicated to operational staff, together with a comprehensive monitoring tool which clearly identifies policy goals. Thus awareness of the policy implementation strategies required may be facilitated.
Awareness.



Consciousness Raising

• **Self-referencing / Strategic Direction** - The need to ensure that knowledge and skills of operational staff are developed sufficiently to prevent reliance on ritualistic practice. That staff have the ability to constantly monitor standards of policy implementation and recognise shortfalls, or the need of change in policy direction and the need to communicate this to government.
Direction.



Gaining control

• **Cultural barriers / Partnerships** - The need to recognise that failure to address cultural issues at organisational, professional and community levels may hinder progress towards policy implementation.
Multi-agency interventions become 'cross-cutting' Interagency Interventions.



Culture change

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanistic orientation <li style="text-align: center;">↓ Governmentality 	<p>At the organisational level less bureaucratic and more flexible forms of structure could be employed to encourage operational autonomy and lateral thinking, regarding strategies required for policy implementation.</p> <p>Changes in organisational form to create 'matrix' structures Engagement of 'hard to reach groups'.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge deficit <li style="text-align: center;">↓ Best value 	<p>This results in staff not knowing what to do, or how to do it. Educational strategies are required to increase knowledge and skills.</p> <p>'Needs-led' services / Improved resource management.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power orientation/ <li style="text-align: center;">↓ Flexibility 	<p>The need to recognise that policy implementation is everyone's business. At the organisational level 'partnerships' should set an example to professional service providers and encourage user participation</p> <p>More Autonomous programme planning/ Continuity in Provision. Community Development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of Problem orientation / <li style="text-align: center;">↓ Tokenism 	<p>There is need to re-orientate practice towards prevention and problem solving and to move away from a lack of innovation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative preventive services 	<p>Robust Forward Planning.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor Human relations <li style="text-align: center;">↓ Empowerment Community Development 	<p>At the organisational level the need for subsidiarity and increasing user involvement should be communicated.</p> <p>Social Inclusion.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Governance / <li style="text-align: center;">↓ Benchmarking Change 	<p>To replace top down policy implementation models with a 'constructivist approach which considers the complexity of society and modern day issues. In particular, to ensure that entrepreneurship in community development is liberated.</p> <p>Citizenship.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governmentality/Subsidiarity 	

Outcomes of the use of action research

It is concluded from the discussion of the above findings that the process of action research has the potential for improving policy implementation. This is because it creates a better understanding of the processes, frameworks and barriers to policy adoption involved in any particular situation and creates a trajectory of development for professionals involved in policy implementation. However, in order to ensure cooperation and successful outcomes of policy, it appears necessary to involve practitioners in identifying and addressing barriers to policy implementation and in constructing a model to facilitate this process. This conclusion was also

arrived at by Carr and Kemmis [1986:180] who argued that engagement of services in action research is a process of change for the better in terms of professional practice and service delivery.

This study was premised on the need to use an action research methodology because of the perceived complexity of the process of new child and family policy implementation. Execution of the study has highlighted the relevance of this decision. Through the use of experimental, organisational, professionalizing and empowering models of an action research methodology, barriers to policy implementation and the means of overcoming such barriers, have been identified. In addition, use of the methodology has clearly shown how the consecutive use of different action research approaches can act as a developmental model for the improvement of service delivery, the achievement of 'best practice' and improved outcomes for service users. It is therefore claimed that in the current climate of reform and devolved policy strategies in health, welfare and social care, that this study makes a modest contribution to the literature concerned with the process of policy implementation. It is concluded that previous models of policy implementation based on 'top down' or 'bottom up' approaches provide only part of the picture of what might be involved in the process of devolved policy implementation.

To understand the process of devolved policy implementation a perception of all of the factors which might be involved in the process is desirable. This is a previous argument forwarded by Parsons [1995: 489], Morgan [1993] and Pestieau [2005:12], who recognise that to understand policy implementation processes there is a need to recognise all of the frameworks which exist in particular contexts. Mapping these frameworks is essentially a learning process which offers an opportunity to understand the multiple dimensions involved and the indeterminacy of varying situations. The use of an action research methodology has highlighted that there is no one way of ensuring policy implementation. This process is reliant on context, the complicated processes of professional and service user development, the continued monitoring of professional performance, cultural barriers and power relationships and the evaluation of service outcomes. Action research is a means of achieving these ends, but it should also be considered that the typologies of action research applied in this study may not be universally appropriate.

The question of whether it is feasible to devise a model of policy implementation has been the subject of many arguments. Parsons [1995] contends that there is no such 'promised land', as the basis of any theoretical model must be embedded in the values of theorists and practitioners. It is the contention of this study that any theoretical model should be embedded,

- in the context of the organisation/s involved.
- in the extent of improving professional activity required.
- in the degree of autonomy required by practitioners.

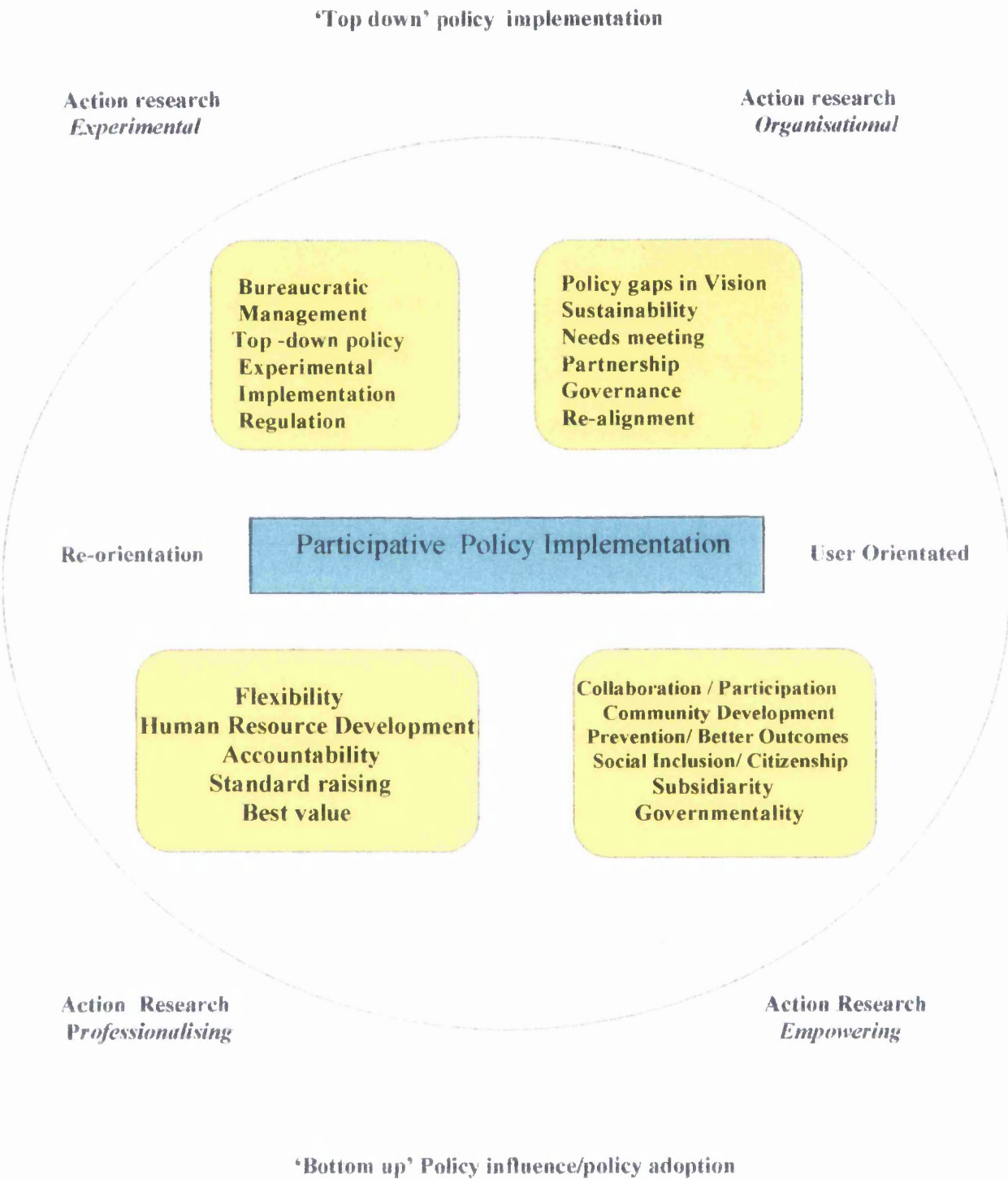
Based on the findings of this study it is proposed that the use of action research theory is a means of providing a general purpose model for the exploration of policy implementation and its improvement. It is a process that can be used in any policy context. However, whether the model should be applied in totality, or in part, should be determined by the nature and context of the setting in which the policy is to be implemented. Figure 7, demonstrates, how in this study action research informed a process model of policy implementation. The documentation which illustrates this process is to be found in Appendix 5, but review of the model clearly illustrates how a constructionist model of policy implementation can determine factors that might influence adoption of policy strategies, related to both 'top down' and 'bottom up' processes of policy implementation. This model was derived from reflection on the changes that policy implementers had made to their practice as a result of applying the benchmark model of requirements of 'new' policy [see Appendix 5].

The model identifies on the top-left hand side, the organisational factors which may hinder the implementation of policy. On the top right hand side are the factors that should be considered when policy is to be implemented. At the bottom left hand corner are the factors required for organisational re-orientation and the development of policy implementers. The bottom right hand corner represents the desired policy goals of 'third way' strategies. This model also provides an opportunity for testing the replicability of the study, as it is contended that the model could be applied to improving the process of policy implementation in a variety of settings, using the spectrum of action research typologies indicated on the model's periphery.

8.14 Conclusion

In this chapter it has been shown how the use of action research can facilitate an understanding and evaluation of the process of policy implementation. Using an action research methodology, this study has deconstructed the complicated process of policy implementation. Barriers to policy implementation have been identified and strategies to overcome these barriers recommended. Also, those expected to put policy into action were enabled and empowered to gain more confidence and autonomy in relation to self governance and governmentality. The use of action research also enabled policy implementers to collaborate with the researcher in designing a model for evaluation of policy implementation which helps to distinguish between 'top down', 'bottom

Fig 7 A Model for improved participative policy implementation



up' and participatory means of implementing policy. Thereby, the knowledge and skills of policy implementers, in respect of implementing, monitoring and evaluating policy implementation processes were increased and stakeholders were engaged in the policy implementation process.

However, the final question is whether or not such a participatory approach to policy implementation can be sustained without some form of strategic leadership in policy implementation? As has been shown in the results of this study, there are many strategic and organisational problems that need to be addressed if the policy implementation process is to be improved. These problems relate to the need to clearly identify policy objectives, in order that there is no ambiguity; to ensure that policy implementers have sufficient knowledge and skills to prevent them falling back on tried and tested ways of working; to ensure that community development plays an important role in order to overcome cultural barriers to change, inflexible forms of organisational structure and lack of professional autonomy; to overcome power orientations by ensuring that policy implementation becomes 'everybody's business'; to create a greater awareness of the need for contextual problem identification and a problem solving approach to local need, thereby improving human relationships between the government, policy implementing organisations and the community. It is concluded that to improve policy implementation there is a need for strategic governance and governmentality. These will replace 'top down' models of policy implementation with 'a constructivist', community development approach, which considers the complexity of modern society and welfare policy approaches. Such a model should assist in improving strategic direction, and the constant monitoring of standards of policy implementation. This may prevent shortfalls in policy implementation, recognise the need for changes in policy direction and communicate such changes to government. In the following chapter conclusions are drawn and recommendations made for further evaluation of policy implementation processes.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed how action research was used to analyse a process of policy implementation by identifying 'gaps' in the policy implementation process, ways in which these 'gaps' might be overcome and to construct a model which might assist policy implementers to plan and evaluate ways in which the policy implementation process might be improved. In this chapter, final conclusions to the study will be drawn and recommendations for further study made. The purpose of the policy implementation process [The Cymorth scheme] evaluated was,

"To provide a network of targeted support for children and young people within a framework of universal provision, in order to improve the life chances of children and young people from disadvantaged families"
[WAG, 2000:1].

It was intended by WAG that this programme would subsume and build upon existing programmes such as Sure Start, Children and Youth Partnerships, the National Childcare Strategy, Youth Access Initiatives and Play Grant Schemes which had already been instituted as a result of government policy [WAG, 2000]. Apart from the need for such a strategy to comply with international and national policy demands [UNCRC, 1987; ECHR, 1998; HO/MGF, 1998], in Wales the need for policy reform was exacerbated by an Index of Deprivation [SEU, 1998], which showed that the lives of one third of children were being seriously compromised by factors of poverty and social exclusion. The strategies introduced by the WAG to combat such factors, were focused on the need for prevention and early intervention to eradicate poverty, improve social inclusion, cohesion and citizenship. Thus it was planned to reduce childhood deprivation through economic and community development [WAG, 2000]. It was planned that strategies should be implemented through 'Partnerships' between statutory and voluntary agencies - 'joined up' actions of community and voluntary sectors were to be achieved through locally led services. As a result of these strategies the WAG urged all agencies to work collaboratively, to identify need and develop interagency plans for a network of supportive services for children and their families [NAW, 2001]. Thus the scene was set for a 'new' form of policy implementation.

It was seen in Chapter One that the Cymorth scheme represented a new turn in policy strategy based on a greater degree of state intervention in family life [CYPU, 2000]. This new turn consisted of a 'shift' in government strategy, from a minimalist position, to one of pragmatic interventionism, based on discourses of citizenship, social rights, social justice, the need for restoring values, reducing dependency on the state, and ensuring social cohesion [Wasoff and

Dey, 2000]. Marshall [1975:201] described this 'shift' as a move towards a 'Titmussesque' regime, its aims were the elimination of poverty, maximisation of welfare and the pursuit of equity. In particular, government emphasised the need to provide a policy framework which would reduce the costs of family breakdown and enable children to flourish. Although critics of policy [Dobson and Moyes, 1996 and Morgan, 1995] have suggested that policy was primarily motivated by a need for Government to stem the costs of family breakdown and provide an incremental response to problems related to the cost of welfare, others, [Giddens, 1998: 94] welcomed the policy as an important development in child care. However, criticisms have emerged of how 'new' child and family policy has been implemented [see Chapter One]. Although a review of strategies for early education, childcare, health and family support has shown that interventions appear to be enhancing the development of children [Sylva et al, 1997-204], in the broader sense policy implementation has been described as falling short of government aims [Harris et al 2003]. In particular, it appears that aims to institute broader thrusts of policy for increasing inclusion, citizenship, work skills, community and economic development are not being met. As a result, an integrated approach to policy implementation, such as that which is proving successful in Nordic countries, is slow to develop. [Moss 2001]. Although reported weaknesses in the implementation of child and family policy strategy did not 'come to light' until this study was well underway, the use of action research, as a means of understanding a contextual policy implementation process, had enabled the researcher to detect the likelihood of this phenomenon early in the study.

In May 2002, the WAG [2002:26] mandated the need for monitoring and evaluating the policy implementation process prescribed by the Cymorth scheme. It was suggested that the evaluation process should be carried out using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and recommended that 'Partnerships' should consider employing the services of an independent evaluator to advise them on the method of evaluation best suited to their purpose. It was further recommended that a decision should be made as to whether independent evaluation should take the form of academic evaluation, or action research whereby the results of evaluation could be fed back into the delivery of the programme at regular intervals [WAG, 2002:29]. These actions signified concern, on the part of Welsh Assembly Government, for the importance of the policy implementation process, as well as policy formulation.

As a result of being commissioned to evaluate the implementation of the Cymorth scheme the researcher, after preliminary investigation of issues related to the policy implementation process and consultation with the local Partnership representatives of the Local County Borough

concerned, decided to adopt an action research methodology for the purpose of evaluating the implementation of the Cymorth scheme. This decision was made in the light of the facts that an external quantitative evaluation of the policy implementation process had already been undertaken and 'in-house' attempts to monitor implementation activity [mostly quantitative] were reported to be encountering difficulties. A literature review confirmed that action research might be a reliable means of gaining deeper insight into the policy implementation process [Pestieau, 2003:5; Cheetham et al, 1997:35; and Morgan, 1986:4]. Clearly, the study has shown that in relation to policy implementation action research has a potential to achieve what Pestieau [2003:12] expressed in the following way:-

" [The ability] to attempt to influence behaviour in the sense of convincing busy people to devote scarce time to new ways of looking at issues, to widen the circle of individuals and groups that they consult, to reject the 'not invented here' syndrome and learn from successful experiences outside their usual sphere of activities".

These sentiments appear to closely mirror the findings of this study reported in the previous chapters. Specifically, the use of action research enabled the researcher to determine that the main barriers to achieving policy goals appear to reside in a need for agencies charged with the responsibility of policy implementation, to develop a robust 'vision for change'. In addition there is a need to identify and remedy 'cultural factors' which might prevent policy implementers from being sufficiently 'open minded' to adopt new ways of practice. Thereby policy implementers might be deterred from adopting what Pestieau labels 'the not invented here' syndrome, though, in this study the researcher labelled this barrier 'self-referencing'. The term signifies a tendency to fall back upon tried and tested 'comfortable' interventions when faced with the challenge of adopting new ways of working. 'Mechanistic orientations' towards bureaucratic structures within organisations appear to staunch 'shifts' towards the more flexible and autonomous ways of working required for policy implementation [Glendinning et al 2002:28]. In addition 'knowledge/skill deficits' appear to prevent staff, at all levels of an organisation, applying policy implementation monitoring frameworks, assessing need at individual and community levels and employing community development skills to achieve policy goals.[Rothman,1995:28-31; Clarke, 2000:73-74].

These problems limit evaluation skills and appear to hamper policy implementers in their efforts to comply with more 'bottom up' strategies, such as those introduced by government to implement policy. Also it was shown that within an organisation agencies might experience 'power orientation', an absence of 'problem orientation' and 'poor human relations'. These may prevent both partnerships and programme workers from widening consultation circles, realising

that policy implementation is ‘everybody’s business’, encouraging user participation, learning from others’ successes and re-orientating practice towards prevention rather than ‘fire-fighting’ [Glendinning et al, 2002:39-42]. Finally, at both operational and strategic levels problems may materialise in respect of ‘strategic governance’ and ‘strategic direction’. In this respect there may be a lack of awareness of the need to replace ‘top down’ policy implementation with a more constructivist and integrated approach. Also a lack of appreciation of a constant need to monitor the policy implementation process in order to recognise shortfalls in strategies, the need for changes in direction, or the need to communicate shortfalls in policy to government. Glendinning and colleagues [2002:43], comment that such findings are not unusual. They are characteristic of tensions within the ‘modernising policy agenda’ which on the one hand advocates participation and inclusion and on the other, the strengthening of power and control.

These issues raise the questions of how successfully action research may illuminate:-

- Why policy strategies require understanding and response from all levels of an organisation?
- Why the process of policy implementation may cause confusion?
- How policy implementation may be improved?
- Whether action research can assist in increasing the transparency of the policy implementation process by illuminating the breadth of theoretical /epistemological knowledge required to effect change?
- Whether the use of action research raises practice issues such as the efficacy and ethics of the approach?
- Whether a model, such as the one identified in this study, constitutes a reliable practice framework for organisations involved in policy implementation strategies?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of action research as a means of determining ‘best practice’ in policy implementation?
- What are the disadvantages of using action research as a means of evaluating the policy implementation process?

However, before discussing further the issues raised by the findings of this study, it is the intention of the researcher to raise the questions of the reliability, validity and replicability/ generalisability of the study.

9.2 Reliability, Validity and Replicability/ Generalisability of the study

Reliability is defined by Bryman [1995:55] as a consistency of measures. Parahoo [1997:38] defines the concept as,

“the consistency of a particular method to measure, or observe the same phenomena, particularly over time”.

In the case of this study the application of measures to a number of different programmes, on different occasions, yielded consistent information and replicated themes thereby producing convincing evidence of reliability.

Validity is said to refer to whether a study measures what it purports to measure. In terms of face validity Parahoo [1997:277] and Bryman [1995:54-57] claim that validity depends on the extent to which questions, used during interviews, represent the phenomena studied. In this study policy implementers and focus groups clearly found that questions directly related to the phenomena of interest and pertinent policy.

According to Bryman [1995:59], construct validity links investigation to the theoretical arena. This study has been firmly grounded in political, policy implementation analysis, community development, construct, systems analysis, systems and management theories, all of which have contributed to the epistemological base of the study.

Generalisability and replicability are said by Denscombe [1998:64] to relate to the extent to which a study may be repeated, or its findings applied in other settings. Denscombe, criticises the method on the grounds that its findings may not contribute to broader insights of a phenomena. Therefore because, in the case of this study, action research was limited to investigation of policy implementation in one County Borough, the prospects for generalisability and replicability may be curtailed. Other constraints are that the research setting, the policy implementation context and its constituent features were all 'givens', rather than factors that might be controlled or varied. However, as is argued by Bryman [1995:187], the methodology has considerable support from researchers because of its potential to be carried out within a framework that makes a contribution to knowledge and provides a route for rapid application of scientific knowledge, thereby increasing understanding of behaviour and facilitation of change. Above all Parahoo [1997:240] and Schofield [1993] argue that what may be the most important aspect of action research is its potential for 'naturalistic generalisation'. That is the potential for using the findings from one study to understand similar situations in other settings. Indeed, Parahoo claims that action research places the onus for deciding its usefulness upon the reader. The remainder of this Chapter therefore seeks to consolidate proof of the ability of action research to evaluate and enhance the process of policy implementation by answering the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter.

9.3 Why policy strategies require understanding and response from all levels of an organisation?

Earlier in this chapter it was shown that although some of the strategies employed by government [CYPU, 2000] to improve the lives of children appear to be successful [Sylva, 1997:204], it is also claimed that policy implementation is falling short of wider policy goals [Harris et al, 2003]. According to the findings of this study also, it is the broader policy thrusts of policy that appear to

be overlooked by policy implementers and programmes. This may not be surprising given that such strategies involve a marked departure from conventional policy and ways of practice based upon individualistic rather than community interventions. Absence of a vision for change may stem from a range of factors transversing poor communication of policy goals, lack of understanding of the rhetoric and purposes of 'new' policy, and an unquestioning approach to whether practice matches the requirement for new types of services. From the outset, therefore, there may be a lack of perspicacity regarding the need to ensure that rhetoric becomes reality through establishing, at all levels of an organisation, a common understanding of what is required. As was observed by Pawlick and Stroick [2004:1], it is not enough to rely on the automatic understanding and adoption of new policy strategies. Problems encountered may relate to the workforce requiring a more robust understanding of the fact that 'Titmussesque' policies are aimed at long term improvement through the use of strategies to improve social inclusion and cohesion, encourage citizenship and abolish poverty. The aims are based on efforts to reduce reliance on welfare, encourage participation in the workforce and facilitate social, economic and community support. Such departures from conventional interventions may create inordinate challenges for policy implementers. It appears that the demands of 'new policy' may cause policy implementers to fall back upon ritualistic modes of practice, [self referencing] and hide behind cultural barriers to change. These findings beg the question of what may be the cause of such a 'hiatus' in the policy implementation process?

Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] clearly set out criteria for perfect policy implementation. These criteria have already been referred to throughout this study, but they will be used again to guide the final discussion. The first of these criteria are 'clear objectives' and 'a lack of ambiguity' regarding the purposes of policy. Policy documents produced by the Welsh Assembly Government [CYPU,2000; WAG, 2002; WAG, 2003; WAG, 2004] and indeed UK and Scottish Government, clearly convey a 'shift' from a 'Hayekian' to a 'Titmussesque' [Marshall, 1975:203] form of child and family policy. This was a form of policy that Clarke and Newman [1997:135] described as introducing the concept of 'communitarianism' as a means of overcoming failures of the statist system and the shortfalls of 'neo-conservatism'. It clearly conveyed that the specific role of the state is '*steering, not rowing*' a notion that Handy [1993:365] explained as meaning that delegation of power from the centre would allow a form of 'federalism' in which stakeholders and the community might take ownership of 'federal operations', thus creating a process of 'governmentality'. This is a model of government which requires less bureaucratic ways of working and organisational structure. Indeed 'flatter' organisational forms are required to

create and build a more inclusive society.[Ham and Hill,1980: 152]. Such strategies have been laid out by government [WAG 2004] and guidance has been provided for the setting up of local 'partnerships' to ensure policy formulation and service provision, appropriate to need, can be delivered in a coordinated and focused way. Clarke and Newman [1997:135] argue that it has been made abundantly clear that the role of Government is now strategic. Government should be regarded as an enabler, an investor and empowerer of Local Authorities whose responsibility it is to govern their local communities. It can be seen that policy documents give a strong 'steer' and are strong on governance, that is the role local authorities are expected to play and how it can be facilitated through 'partnerships'. Although there may be a little less emphasis on how 'governmentality' might be achieved, specifically on how at the local level 'top down' policy action might be replaced by 'bottom-up' initiatives. However, the course is clear for implementation of innovative local initiatives for change.

Further, in the case of Welsh government, both qualitative and quantitative methods of policy implementation analysis are recommended, including the use of action research [WAG 2002:29], to aid the process of attaining policy goals. It is suggested therefore, that there is concern on the part of government to implement a 'bottom up' rather than a 'top down' system of policy implementation and to emphasise the importance of 'governance'. This clearly indicates concern for the importance of the policy implementation process [Scheiber et al, 1991; Hill 1993:39; Parsons 1994:457] and a desire to avoid 'the black box' of policy implementation that may lead to a 'black hole' of understanding of the links between power distribution and the actions of policy implementers [Ham and Hill, 1984:88]. Clearly there is no assumption at government level that policy made 'at the top' will be automatically implemented [Hupe, 1993]. However, the use of action research reveals that more concern might be focused upon Hogwood and Gunn's [1984:43] anticipated outcomes of policy implementation. These affirm that either policy implementers may behave as automatons and act according to plan [provided there is sufficient clarity regarding the extent of change, sufficient resources and direction]; or they may apply their own discretion to the way in which they perceive policy and its methods of implementation. In the case of this study it was shown that a little of both outcomes may prevail. Mostly it appears that responsible organisations may make considerable efforts to comply with the requirements of policy, but a certain extent of lack of clarity regarding the meaning, aims and strategies of 'new' policy may cause confusion and result in programmes applying their own discretion.

Pestieau [2003:2], explains such actions on the grounds that 'new policy' requires multifaceted interagency interventions, the like of which have not usually been contemplated as integral parts

of policy implementation. This study shows how action research assists in revealing the importance of clear policy objectives, identifies the difficulties encountered in initial outcomes of policy implementation and the means whereby such difficulties might be avoided [See pp. 267-8].

9.4 Why the process of policy implementation may cause confusion?

The findings of this study have highlighted the importance of qualitative as well as quantitative policy implementation analysis. It was shown in Chapters One and Two, that current policy in respect of children and their families consists of a considerable shift in policy position and strategy [Daniel and Ivatts, 1998:8]. Against a historical background of minimalist and libertarian child and family policy in the UK, recent policy is characterised by withdrawal of the state from the responsibility for welfare provision and a more pragmatic stance in relation to state responsibility to support families to become self-reliant and self-sufficient [Pawlick and Stroick, 2004:2- 4].

To facilitate this notion policy implementers have been expected to strengthen individual and social organisations, thus lessening the need for state intervention. To encourage policy implementation a 'mixed economy' of welfare provision has been evolved consisting of public, private and voluntary provision. Thus resources other than those of the state can be drawn upon to ensure policy implementation. Blunkett [2000:2] described this policy shift as a 'Third Way' of policy. It provides opportunities for self-reliance. Perry [2000:45-50] claimed that it is a means of re-building a work ethic and banishing the negative role of passive welfare [seen as responsible for perpetuating an underclass and social and welfare dependency] and expanding the labour market through tax incentives, employment bonuses and 'in-work' benefits. To promote this strategy, community partnerships between public, private and voluntary sectors are expected to provide the means whereby policy can be put into action [Ling, 200:4]. Ling, however, comments that this has not been easy as the perpetuation of traditional hierarchical structures and traditional forms of governance associated with the neo-liberalist obsession with markets has prevented organisational shifts to 'governmentality'. Rhodes [1997:57] defined 'governmentality' as the self organisation of inter-organisational networks towards becoming sufficiently 'flexible' to achieve new strategic policy arenas, to engage 'hard to reach' groups and to transform them into compliant collaborators in creating a more inclusive society.

In the main, it appears that those expected to put policy into practice may be more used to working with individuals rather than groups, therefore, the concept of 'partnership' for purposes of achieving community development and 'participation' of service users in service delivery,

together with the requisite skills for such purposes [Ling, 2000:24, Giddens, 1998 :24], may seem little more than rhetoric. It is hypothesised that as this rhetoric is somewhat alien to hierarchical organisational structures and cultures, it may create initial confusion. Therefore those, at the strategic and operational levels of organisations, may not challenge or question whether mechanistic orientation towards bureaucratic hierarchical organisational structures needs to be changed. This situation may be less marked in voluntary organisations where more pragmatic solutions to the problems of implementing policy have been previously rehearsed. A situation also identified by Glendinning et al [2002:33]. Commenting on such issues Ledwith [2005:2] suggested that the broader thrusts of policy might only be achieved with tacit strategies for community development and social inclusion. Hill [1980: 253], however suggests that such strategies are only possible if 'flatter' organisational structures are developed. Agreeing with this view Ling [2000:84] emphasised that the perpetuation of traditional organisational hierarchies stifles progress in respect of implementing new strategies.

What action research reveals, in respect of providing a better understanding of problems relating to policy implementation, is that initial lack of robustness at the strategic level to communicate a vision of change and a tacit understanding of policy rhetoric may result in perpetuation of hierarchical organisational structures which lack the flexibility for project orientation [Thompson and Mc Hugh, 1990 :212-5]. Consequently policy implementers may fall back upon tried and tested ways of providing services. Thus services continue to be delivered at the individual, rather than the community level. Lack of communication and a common understanding that the purposes of policy are to overcome problems of neo-liberalist strategies and the problems associated with the growth of an underclass [Blunkett 2000:2], appear to result in policy implementers failing to interpret the rhetoric. Therefore the purpose of 'partnership' and the challenges that they pose to traditional ways of working and the culture and structure of an organisation may be poorly understood. As a result, in most instances self-referencing may become the norm. Policy implementers may hide behind the cultural barriers of their primary organisations and there is no incentive to change the mechanistic orientations of bureaucratic regimes. *'New wine is therefore poured into old bottles'*.

Further, oversight of the need for changes in organisational structure may create a situation in which hierarchies and bureaucratic forms are not replaced with one level of administration more suited to the facilitation of agency networking. Therefore problems may be encountered in respect of 'partnerships'. These findings illustrate Hogwood and Gunn's [1984:43] thesis that there are certain prerequisites for perfect policy implementation. In particular, the extent of

change must be made clear and be accepted by all. Thompson and McHugh [1990:216-17] comment that throughout industry there is recognition of the difficulties involved in creating flexible organisations which facilitate 'partnership' projects. Organisations therefore need to pay attention to factors related to controlling the structures and resources required, including human resources. The findings of this study show that action research provides a means of understanding the problems related to creating sufficient flexibility to organise 'partnerships' and interagency and inter-professional activity at all levels of an organisation. Without such strategies a variety of structural, procedural, professional, financial and policy issues may occur and inhibit change within organisations [Balloch and Taylor 2001:120].

In this study the use of an action research methodology revealed that the enormous shift in policy and expectations for its implementation can present an inordinate challenge to both statutory and voluntary organisations. Voluntary organisations, however, are said to have made more progress in meeting this challenge because of management strategies focused on making the 'client or community' central to all developments [Balloch and Taylor 2001:108]. Therefore they may possess better understanding and working knowledge of what is required for policy implementation expectations than bureaucratic statutory organisations. Although bureaucratic organisation may effect a shift in policy implementation strategy from a 'top-down' to a 'bottom-up' model, this shift may be affected by traditional factors of paternalism, professionalism, managerialism, entrepreneurship, power dispersal and de-politicisation, left over from the neo-liberalist strategies of previous governments. Pawlick and Stroick [2005:22], observed that such findings are not unusual. Clarke and Newman [1997:145-146] claim that it is not enough to rely upon automatic understanding of new policy strategies. Successful implementation of policy is said to be reliant on absence of ambiguity, clear policy objectives, commitment and skill and organisational and management skills. Action research methodology reveals that to institute 'new' forms of policy all of these factors may need more attention. Reliance on traditional regimes may lead to power orientation, a disregard for the fact that policy implementation has become 'everyone's business' and a lack of communication and continuity in service provision. It may also lead to an absence of problem orientation and difficulties in re-orientating practice from intervention to prevention and from problem containment to problem solving and innovative practice. In addition, at the organisational level the need of subsidiarity and increasing user involvement may result in poor human relations between different levels of an organisation and between service providers and recipients of services. This study has shown that to a considerable

extent such problems may be overcome through the use of action research as a means of engaging organisations and policy implementers in the process of change.

9.5 How policy implementation may be improved?

Hill [1993:59] claims that policy implementation is far more complicated than is generally accepted. According to Hill, many interpretations of policy implementation are over simplified and there has been insufficient study of the policy implementation process. As a result, there has been little generation of a body of theory, or insight into how the process may be improved. Ham and Hill [1984:88] criticised the traditional 'top-down' 'black box' model of policy implementation for creating a 'black hole' of understanding in the links between policy formulation and outcomes of policy. In the view of Ham and Hill, traditional 'top down' policy is normative with no particular guidelines for its implementation. Previously its use for purposes of implementing a new form of social contract may sometimes have resulted in disempowerment of policy implementers. To illustrate this claim Hill [1980:253] cites the failure of experiments in community development planned to alleviate urban deprivation during the 1970's. Andersen [1975:98] confirmed that policy making cannot end with the production of a 'White paper' as,

"Policy is made as it is being administered and administered as it is made".

It is the view of Andersen that policy making and policy implementation need to be an integrated process. If the links between policy formulation and its implementation are ignored then a 'missing link' develops. Therefore, especially when policy implementation calls for a 'bottom-up' approach, it is important for all to understand how formulated policy is transferred through bureaucrats and delivered by service providers. Andersen's [1975:98] rationale for this claim is that bureaucrats are not neutral. They have ideas, beliefs and interests that they may draw on to shape policy. Therefore, although there may be strong concerns for the process of policy implementation at government level, these may be thwarted if at the local level the concerns require more attention. Hay [1996 :44-54], claims that in the light of 'welfare pluralism' involving multiple sectors linked by contracting mechanisms, to form new consensus strategies aimed at increasing the responsibilities of families and communities, the process of policy implementation is far more difficult. Hay argues that the form of 'managerialised' policy which has emerged requires the application of management technologies for re-engineering its delivery. In Hay's view, this new form of policy which departs from the largely 'top-down' character of previous policy implementation processes requires more concern for building facilitative organisational systems. Hogwood and Gunn [1984:62] claim that in the present climate of complex and extensive policy goals reliant upon multifaceted, integrated, interagency interactions, it is more likely that policy implementation will be poorly understood. Especially

this may occur when consideration is not given to the need for more conducive organisational structures. As a result policy implementers may be more likely to apply their own discretion, particularly if they have had little previous experience of the type of policy implementation strategies now required.

In the voluntary sector such experience may have been afforded [Clarke et al, 2000:91], but Parson's [1995:469] argues that, in the main, there is little evidence that either central or local government has any real experience of participative policy implementation such as they are now required to implement. Although during the 1970's partnership schemes existed between government and local authorities, for purposes of community re-generation [Hill, 1980:252-3], they were not sustained. It therefore appears that such shortfalls may constitute a serious 'barrier' to the implementation of policy. It is argued that action research can help to detect the presence of such barriers and it is therefore able to recommend a means of them being overcome. Thereby strategic governance and strategic direction may be improved.

In answer to the question of whether action research can improve policy implementation this study has the following observations to make. The use of action research to evaluate the extent of policy implementation shows that although governments have obviously addressed the issue of needing to pay attention to the importance of 'bottom up' [Elmore, 1985:28], rather than highly criticised 'top down' methods of policy implementation [Ham and Hill, 1984:88; Anderson, 1975: 98], this might be a difficult task. Despite the provision of guidance [WAG, 2002] and monitoring frameworks [WAG, 2003], intended to link policy formulation and implementation, policy implementers may still find it difficult to comply with strategy. Primarily, this may be because the majority of policy implementers at the organisational level [especially in the statutory sector] require a better understanding of either the language of policy, the particular strategies and skills required for its implementation, processes of monitoring and evaluating progress and the organisational structures required to facilitate change. Although there has been no absolute assumption on the part of government that policy devolved to local communities will be automatically implemented [Hupe, 1993:149], the abilities of policy implementers to effect change may have been overestimated and therefore management technologies to engineer change require strengthening.

'New' policy strategies are based on 'welfare pluralism'. They need an integrated response to enable the building of new forms of organisational systems, capable of ensuring social inclusion and community development. Although governments may have shifted away from a 'top down' model of policy implementation towards a 'bottom-up approach', at the management level, there

may be a need for more attention to be focused on warnings, such as those of Hogwood and Gunn [1984:62] that policy implementers may exercise their own discretion. Thereby they may upset the policy implementation process. To ensure policy implementation of the broader thrusts of policy the facilitation of implementers may be accomplished by use of an integrated framework for putting policy into place, such as that advocated by Clarke [2000:265] and described in earlier chapters. Such a model provides indicative illustration of whether the necessary relationships between various planning agencies has been provided and whether quantitative targets are being met. Alternatively policy implementers may be assisted by a conceptual model, [such as that devised from this study, [Fig.7]] as an exemplar for their actions to guide progress towards the attainment of policy aims.

In the light of the findings of this study, actions research can deconstruct the process of policy implementation and provide a qualitative understanding of how policy implementers, especially those from the statutory agencies, may need more facilitation to apply policy and a model of policy implementation evaluation to guide their efforts. Also the adoption of an action research approach to policy implementation can assist policy implementers to embrace change. Thus in answer to the question of whether action research can improve policy implementation, the direct answer may be 'no', in terms of it providing a specific framework for how to accomplish policy implementation per se. However, what it does, is to provide an 'early warning' system of what may be going wrong within an implementation framework, a method of diagnosing policy implementation problems and an educational and developmental means of overcoming problems and facilitating and improving policy implementation. Thereby action research can better assist management to provide an understanding of the policy implementation process than can quantitative methods of evaluation. Also action research can facilitate desired change, ensure 'best value' and improve strategic governance and direction.

9.6 Can action research assist in increasing the transparency of the policy implementation process by illuminating the breadth of theoretical/epistemological knowledge required to effect change?

The above discussion clearly shows that action research provides a better understanding of what happens between the processes of policy formulation and the achievement of policy goals. Also it is a means of indicating barriers to policy implementation caused by the 'policy discretion' of bureaucrats [Hupe, 1993:149, Hogwood and Gunn, 1984:62] and the ways in which such barriers may be overcome through processes of organisational change, management strategies and policy implementers' education and development. According to Pestieau [2005:12], the best way of improving policy implementation processes is to combine problem definition with 'behaviour

change'. Parsons [1995:461], Hogwood and Gunn, [1984:43] and Plummer [1999: 25-85] argue that studies of policy implementation are, of necessity, studies of change. In particular, how change occurs, or how it can be induced, the ways in which organisations conduct their affairs, particularly in respect of structural change and of how agencies interact with one another during the policy implementation process. Change theory is therefore an important aspect of policy implementation. It is the contention of Parsons [1995:461] and the above researchers that it is important to study policy implementation in this way, as policy making does not come to an end when it is formulated. On the contrary, policy is continuously being made as it is administered and it is the study of the interplay between policy makers, administrators and service providers which constitutes a 'missing link' in knowledge of the policy implementation process. Thus it appears that action research may be a way of increasing the transparency of required change because of its facility to incorporate various theoretical approaches.

In seeking to address the question identified at the outset of this section, primarily the arguments of Wildavsky [1970:15] and Laswell [1971] have been heeded. These contend that policy implementation analysis cannot be contained within a specific disciplinary body because of its complexity and the need for flexibility. Thus a multi-method, multi-theory and multi-problem focused approach is required to map the complexity of the policy implementation process. Action research reveals that a number of theories and perspectives may helpfully illuminate the policy implementation process, thereby making its breadth more transparent.

It was identified from the literature review [Pestieau, 2003:9; Parsons, 1995:463; Osbourne and Gaebler, 1992; Morgan 1993], that interest in the process of policy implementation was based on perceptions that in respect of contemporary policy a bureaucratic or 'top down' approach was ill-suited to the problems involved in policy implementation in the 21st century. As a result of these perceptions research into policy implementation theory became centred on what a perfect policy implementation model might look like [Dunsire,1990:15-26]. However, there were criticisms of this work as its emphasis on achievement of strategic policy goals, rather than on the roles of policy implementers, led to the intricacies involved in putting policy into action being overlooked [Hill, 1993]. To avoid this pitfall it was perceived that examination of the roles played by policy implementers might be of much greater importance than the nature of policy itself [Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973: xiii]. Several researchers [Lipsky, 1976:208-10; Hill, 1993: 12], have argued for a closer examination of the way in which government policy aims can be tempered by the views and actions of those involved in its implementation. These arguments led to 'bottom-up' studies of policy implementation [Parsons, 469].

However, attempts to study policy implementation from the 'bottom-up' were thwarted by arguments that they too, were unsuitable. This was because they did not capture the complexity of discretionary decision making on the part of implementers [Pestieau, 2005:9; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973:134]. Criticisms that both 'top down' and 'bottom up' policy implementation processes were too simplistic to characterise the complexities of the process [Lewis and Flynn, 1978:11] led to increasing interest in behavioural models of the policy implementation process, though a number of researchers noted the difficulties involved in this approach [Ringeling, 1978; Hill, 1993]. More recently policy implementation theory focuses on interpretive models [Pestieau, 2003:12]. As a consequence of these arguments the consideration of other theoretical bases for underpinning policy implementation processes may need to be widened to include a number of other frameworks.

Quade and Boulker [1968:2] recommended a systems analysis approach which was defined as follows,

"A systematic approach to helping a decision maker chooses a course of action by investigating problems and searching out objectives and alternatives and comparing them in the light of consequences".

Derthick [1972] and Pressman and Wildavsky [1973] claimed that this approach had initially been used to analyse policy implementation processes because of its bias for action and improvement of rationality, efficiency and examination of all variables involved. Parsons [1995:141] and Thompson and Mc Hugh [1990:27] claimed that Systems theory, defined by Handy 1990; 27], as:-

" Finding explanations of patterns of functioning of organisations in terms of inputs, outputs, transformations encompassing social ,psychological and technical variables. The most popular current variable being 'contingency theory' which deals with designing appropriate structures of coordination and control to fit different environments".

is a methodology thought to be suited to evaluation of 'bottom up' forms of policy implementation because it depends upon a cyclical process of defining objectives, constructing and monitoring plans, analysing implementation, monitoring progress and identifying what happens, if outcomes are different from initial aims. It is the view of Parsons [1995:141] that Systems theory is capable of identifying the part or level of government, or organisation, responsible for delivery of programmes. This is said to be an important factor in the implementation of devolved policy which has derived from theoretical shifts away from Weberian, Taylorist and Fordist control, to post-fordist, adhocratic and post-modern structures that replace hierarchies and bureaucratic forms of organisation. However, Clarke [2000:265] suggests that only an integrated systems theory model can be used to evaluate policy

implementation in administrations dependent on the networking of agencies. Also, Pestieau [2003:12] advises that complete reliance on systems theory is inadvisable because it may not illustrate patterns of interaction and power relationships between agencies. These arguments can be given due consideration in the light of Parsons' [1995:141] argument that policy implementation analysis is incomplete if relationships between the public, private and voluntary sector are overlooked. One explanation for varying viewpoints, is that a shift towards 'governmentality' has increased the importance of relationships between agencies. Of necessity, such relationships are contextual and differ from place to place, they may involve public, private and voluntary organisations. Therefore, systems theory frameworks may not reveal what occurs in processes involving sectoral delivery mix. Action research has revealed that whereas straightforward systems theory approaches may reveal quantitative aspects of policy implementation, more integrated models are required to reveal its complexity [Clarke,200:265, Pestieau 2003:12]. To assist the process of policy implementation in an age of 'welfare pluralism', Clarke takes the view that an integrated model of policy implementation is a necessary adjunct to evaluation of policy outcomes. Drawing on the work of Plummer [2000:85], Clarke [2006:3] suggests that integrated models of policy implementation evaluation require strong strategic leadership.

However Pestieau [2003:12] claims that systems theory does not provide the level of understanding of interaction and power relationships between agencies that is necessary for the evaluation of devolved 'bottom-up' processes of policy implementation. Indeed, a full and in-depth evaluation of the process may require both quantitative and qualitative analysis. What is important is an understanding of how processes of policy implementation may be affected by human interactions.

Parsons [1985:502-540] identified the community as an important component of sectoral delivery 'mix'. Arguing that the community has replaced the 'market' as a means of improving economic development, Parsons identifies important links between policy implementation and community development. As a result it is claimed that actions in relation to policy implementation may be influenced by reality and value judgments of both policy implementers and communities, which may in turn cause policy implementation conflicts between the values of policy makers and policy implementers. Previous studies of 'communitarian' policy implementation [Hill, 1993] have relied on community development theory and strategies of community intervention. Rothman [1995:27-61] identified three modes of community intervention, all of which are described as modes of action requiring different forms of behaviour

to bring about change. Agreeing with this argument Clarke [2000] claims that community development cannot take place in a vacuum. To assist this process a contextual framework is required which, as well as representing a policy project's cycle, must also represent the activities, relationships and achievements of policy implementation at every stage of its progress. Action research reveals that community development theory is a necessary adjunct to the evaluation of progress towards meeting 'communitarian' policy goals. Together these theoretical approaches may identify problems that might arise in respect of communities and enable policy implementers to develop a model for monitoring their progress towards policy implementation. These findings appear to support Pestieau's argument [2003:5], as well as the arguments of Hogwood and Gunn [1986:43; Parsons, 1995:613 and Clarke, 2000:257] that the best way of improving a process of policy implementation is to combine problem definition, behaviour change and participatory action research, in order to understand what happens during the process of policy implementation. In relation to policy requiring community intervention this may be best achieved by the use of community development theory to augment other frameworks for evaluation of the policy implementation process.

Morgan's [1993:4] and Parsons [1995:613-15] argue that problems in the policy implementation process can only be determined if there is an understanding of the implementers knowledge, beliefs, power systems, meanings and values. That is, a more constructivist approach to evaluation is required if the policy implementation process is to be thoroughly understood. Against this background arguments of Cheetham and colleagues [1997:38], Barrett and Fudge [1981], and Lewis and Flynn [1978] state that the analysis of social care implementation cannot be forced into traditional frameworks of evaluation.

Hill [1980: 253] suggested that 'bottom-up' strategies of policy implementation are only possible if 'flatter' organisational structures are developed. Also Ling [2000:84] emphasised, the perpetuation of traditional organisational hierarchies stifles progress in respect of implementing new strategies. Therefore organisational theory is a useful adjunct to policy implementation. If too, as Clarke [2006:3] suggests integrated models of policy implementation evaluation require strong strategic leadership then management theory is also an important adjunct to policy implementation.

It is therefore concluded that a pluralist methodology such as action research is a useful means of providing eclectic theoretical understanding of the implementation of 'new' policy. As Parsons [1995:613], argued,

“The implementation of public policy should involve enlightenment, the fuller development of individuals in society, and the development of consent, consensus and, social awareness, rather than simply the delivery of goods and services”.

Thus it is determined that action research is an appropriate means of illuminating the breadth of epistemological frameworks required for successful policy implementation.

9.7 Does the use of action research raise practice issues such as the efficacy and ethics of the approach?

The majority of policy implementers involved in ‘new policy’ have been trained to work in the professions of social care, nursing, teaching and child care. A minority work for voluntary organisations and appear to have more experience in the provision of collaborative participative care. Principally, the experience of most people called upon to implement policy is focused on individualist forms of prescriptive, didactic forms of intervention [Symonds and Kelly, 1998]. Against this background they are now being challenged to work at a community level [CYPU, 2000; WAG, 2000; WAG 2002] where the nature of their relationships with their client constituencies is being transformed. As a result of this transformation, it has been discussed that practitioners may require some facilitation to determine how the rhetoric of policy might be put into practice.

Action research has been described as a means of awareness raising, empowerment, working collaboratively and developing research ability and it therefore seems a suitable methodology for improving policy implementation and increasing practitioners’ awareness of what they need to do, in order to be seen to be implementing policy. In a review of various more recent policy analyses, Parsons [1995: 591-601] showed how consideration for learning and change had entered the policy implementation cycle. Susman and Everard [1978:589-90] affirmed that action research was suited to problem solving in complex organisations, such as those now concerned with devolved policy implementation [Glendinning et al, 2002 :1]. Holter and Schwartz-Barcott [1993:299] identified the characteristics of action research methodology as,

- A form of research which involves collaboration between researchers and practitioners.
- A means of providing solutions to practical problems.
- A means of changing practice.
- A means of developing theory.

Agreeing with this argument Hart and Bond [1995:40-44], described a spectrum of action research interventions capable of improving practice and developing practitioners ability to

implement policy. Parsons [1995:590-601] also indicated how such participative processes of policy implementation have become more recognised.

The use of action research has shown that the whole spectrum of action research interventions [Hart and Bond, 1995:40-44] may be useful in addressing barriers to policy implementation detected in bureaucratic organisations. Experimental typologies of action research may reveal adverse organisational factors, problems relating to processes involved in policy implementation and a perceived lack of autonomy on the part of practitioners to focus their programmes on problems arising from their specific work contexts and communities. An organisational typology, can determine how to deal with barriers related to the structure, function, culture and management of an organisation. A professionalising typology can determine interventions which might improve and develop professional practice skills in policy implementation and an empowering typology might encourage autonomous action on the part of programme providers. [Hart and Bond, 1995:40-44]. Used consecutively, these typologies are perceived to have the potential for aiding staff development; implementing policy in a way that meets the needs of specific groups or specific communities; improving policy implementation; making the process of policy implementation more transparent and for encouraging staff, at the operational level of an organisation and service users, to become more involved in the process of policy formulation. The eclectic approaches facilitated through the use of action research are thought to be important as it is clear that a 'one size' solution to the problems of policy implementation will not 'fit' all kinds of programmes involved in a policy implementation scheme. Each individual programme is likely to have its own set of circumstances and problems relating to policy implementation. Some programmes, for example those organised by the voluntary sector [Balloch and Taylor, 2001:108], may be more advanced in the knowledge and skills of policy implementation than the statutory agencies. A factor which [Parsons, 1995:499] argued may have been the result of many years of experience in implementation of welfare state policy.

Morgan [1993:4] and Laswell [1971] forwarded the view that policy implementation is essentially a democratic learning process that requires the 'mapping' of the contexts of all of the dimensions involved in the process. These researchers claim that only in this way can enlightenment of policy implementers be achieved. To ensure that policy implementation is robust it may be necessary to employ some means of helping policy implementers identify and de-construct barriers to policy implementation, a means of analysing the problems involved and a means of identifying strategies required to achieve change. Thus the eclectic use of the various typologies of action research, together with the requisite theoretical frameworks, defined

according to specific need, appears to be a pragmatic way forward. This was a conclusion also reached by Cheetham et al [1992]; Lewis and Flynn [1978:5], and Morgan [1993:4]. It was rehearsed in arguments that social care policy implementation cannot be forced into traditional models of evaluation. It was the view of all these researchers that a pluralist methodology is the best means of identifying how the mediation and judgements of policy implementers might interfere with policy priorities. Thus these researchers claimed that the best means of undertaking an evaluative study of policy implementation is through the process of action research.

The application of a range of action research typologies to an analysis of perceived 'gaps' in a systems analysis based process of policy implementation, clearly identifies the strategies necessary to improve and develop policy implementation processes. At the same time it develops the human resource of a project, by involving both managers and staff in the research process. This enables programme providers to gain a better knowledge of policy, the skills of policy implementation and to develop their ability, through participation in programme orientated research. It is concluded that the use of an action research methodology may, in most cases, improve understanding of policy and the organisational, management and educational systems required for change. Thus service providers can be enabled to become 'knowledgeable doers' in the policy implementation process. As a result, policy implementers may be able to contribute to the design and application of a model of policy implementation evaluation capable of measuring the extent of 'best value' practice in a variety of settings. These findings confirm the claims made by other researchers that policy implementation analysis is best tackled from a constructionist viewpoint, if barriers to policy adoption and means of overcoming such barriers are to be identified [Parsons, 1995; Morgan, 1993; Pestieau, 2005]. However, Pestieau [2003:12] warns of the dangers of looking for the 'value added' of policy research in terms of changing practitioners behaviour. This is an issue which may also raise ethical dilemmas in respect of abuse of privilege on the part of a researcher, who may be perceived to be taking the part of the organisation in a process designed to highlight shortfalls in practice and manipulate change. Denscombe [1998:63] also argues that action research may be perceived by practitioners to potentially threaten relationships with colleagues. Specifically if it is thought that change might have a 'knock-on' effect for those practicing alongside them in organisational terms, or for clients who may be thought to be losing out, or to be manipulated by changes in practice.

Parahoo [1997:171] on the other hand, claims that action research has the potential to be ethically more sound than conventional forms of research, which are generally carried out to advance a researcher's cause.

“Researchers rely upon the goodwill of practitioners and their practice to provide data, but give little back”. [Parahoo, 1997;171]

Action research allows for more ‘give and take’. Whereas conventional research findings may be incomprehensible to the practitioner, or inappropriate to their practice setting, action research allows for frank discussion of research findings, reflection on their applicability and their modification to the research context. Also, findings can be immediately fed into practice, implemented and evaluated.

Carr and Kemmis [1986] cited in Parahoo [1997:171] also extol the emancipating potential for practitioners of action research and emphasise its ability to narrow the practice research gap. Confirming the potential advantages of action research Pestieau [2003:12] advocates that action research should be considered as a means of combining ‘problem definition’ with behaviour change in order to create advantageous changes in the policy environment, rather than a means for influencing discrete policy decisions. It is therefore claimed that this study has contributed to previous knowledge by providing new evidence on the old issue of policy implementation. This has been achieved by strengthening the links between the process and action research. In particular, it has been shown how action research can improve policy implementation through creating vision for change and stimuli for improving policy strategies through addressing barriers to change. Such barriers consist of self referencing, cultural factors, mechanistic orientation to bureaucratic hierarchical structures; requirements for increased knowledge and skills; prevalent power orientations; the need to increase problem orientation and to improve human relations. Finally, action research can improve strategic governance and direction through creating a better understanding of application of the policy implementation process. Thereby the potential to ensure ‘best practice’ and ‘best value’ is likely to be strengthened because consciousness of communitarianism is raised, control and direction are facilitated, culture is changed, community is developed and governmentality achieved.

9.8 Whether a model, such as that identified in this study constitutes a reliable practice framework for policy implementers?

The model of policy implementation provided in this study [Fig.7] may represent a ‘new vision’ for policy implementers of what is required of them to ‘shift’ from traditional ways of working and fulfill the demands of ‘Third Way’ politics. Glendinning and colleagues [2002] and Pawlick and Stroick [2005] showed how new policy has moved away from ‘market orientations’. There is now an expectation that better social relationships, community development and movements from

governance to governmentality within organisations through ‘Partnerships’, will replace welfare expenditure with investment in schemes to enhance participation in work. Thereby the life chances of communities are expected to improve.

Although Parsons [1995] contended that there was no such ‘promised land’ as a model of policy implementation, [because of the fact that any theoretical model must be embedded in the values of theorists and practitioners], it is suggested that a model may demonstrate how a democratic process of action research can enable policy implementers to create a pictorial representation of the required ‘shifts’ in policy. Thereby, policy implementers may have a better understanding of what is required of them. It is contended that a model of the aims of policy can provide practitioners with immediate reference to how they are progressing ‘up the ladders’ of ‘partnership’ and ‘participation’. A model may also provide knowledge of how policy implementers can become more empowered and skilled in implementation of new ‘Third Way’ strategies.

9.9 The advantages of using action research as a means of analysing a policy implementation process

This study has shown how an action research methodology can address the problems of evaluating a process of policy implementation in a practical and collaborative way. It has been shown that the process of evaluation can be ‘democratised’ by researchers and organisations working together to identify problems and finding means of overcoming them [Parahoo, 1997:171]. Using an action research methodology operational staff can develop a ‘sense of ownership’ of the process of policy implementation [Pestieau 2003:12]. Also, action research provides opportunities for staff development in both professional and policy implementation procedures, thereby encouraging ‘bottom-up’ participation in policy formulation and direction. In this study it has been shown that action research has the following advantages in respect of policy implementation:-

- It feeds the results of research back into the organisation at both strategic and practice levels, in order to use them as diagnostic tools for the formulation of problems, solutions and the means of devising strategies for overcoming problems in the policy implementation process.
- It devises and tests experimental means of base-line analyses of the policy implementation process.
- It modifies organisational structure in a way that best responds to policy demands, and synergises the agencies involved in the policy implementation process, thereby creating a single vision, subsidiarity and more flexible forms of working.

- It benefits the practitioner through its ability to stimulate learning, improve knowledge and skills, demonstrate processes of evaluation and research and formulates a model of improved practice. As a consequence the use of action research in the policy implementation process can achieve professional development and enhance professional autonomy to implement and influence policy in devolved practice settings.
- It cultivates a continuous cycle of participative monitoring and evaluation of performance thereby solving problems, enhancing organisational development and change, as well as facilitating policy implementation .
- It involves both service providers and service users in the process of research thereby facilitating their engagement in the processes of policy implementation and feedback on policy outcomes. As a result both service providers and users can appreciate their potential to 'shape' as well as accept policy. Such appreciation can 'democratise' the policy implementation process and create a culture of 'best practice' on a multi-agency scale.
- It shows that the availability of a typology of action research approaches provide an eclectic means of overcoming barriers at different levels or perspectives of an organisation, or indeed within different organisations.

In particular, this study has shown that the use of an action research approach has considerable advantages over other, highly criticised methods of policy implementation analyses which have sought merely to employ 'top-down', 'bottom-up', or a combination of these approaches. Yet the review of public policy literature showed that the approach has not been widely used in policy implementation analyses previously [Parsons, 1995:362].

9.10 The disadvantages of using action research as a means of analysing the policy implementation process?

In order to ensure that the conclusion to this study provides a balanced account of the use of an action research methodology for the purpose of analysing a process of policy implementation, the following potential disadvantages of the approach noted in this study were as follows :-

- The action research process may place a considerable burden on service providers who already have heavy workloads and time constraints. It may therefore be difficult to engage them and generate enthusiasm unless awareness of possible constraints is communicated.
- Lack of enthusiasm may be further underpinned by a lack of knowledge and understanding, both of the aims of policy itself and the means of their implementation. Therefore educational strategies are necessary.
- Action research may undermine organisational authority through democratisation of the policy implementation process.
- Action research may only illuminate problems of policy implementation in specific settings. As a result it may not be possible to generalise findings, or replicate the process exactly in other places or situations.
- As they may have a vested interest in influencing results, service providers engaged in the research

process, its by-products and outcomes may contest requisite changes within the framework of the partnership relationship set up between researchers, practitioners and the organisation they serve.

- As work settings are bases for practice and service delivery, it is not possible for the researcher to exercise control over the implementation of the research process. It is therefore necessary for the researcher to enthruse implementers with the desire to apply policy.

Whilst all of these potential disadvantages were encountered to a greater or lesser extent during the course of the study, they were not sufficiently serious to detract from the advantages already discussed.

Overall, the use of an action research methodology illustrated quite clearly, deficits in the policy implementation process at the level of the organisation and at the operational level. More importantly the collaborative nature of the approach provided the means whereby these deficits could be remedied at all levels of the policy implementation process. Also action research provided the model of policy implementation arrived at in this study [Fig.7]. Policy implementers found the model to be an effective and efficient means of guidance in respect of evaluating their strategies for policy implementation in health, welfare and social care. As such, the model may make a valuable contribution to improving policy implementation processes in other situations where devolved policy outcomes are important for the community at large. However, there is a caveat, the findings of this study showed that a constructivist approach to policy implementation analyses is likely to require strong strategic governance and strategic direction if it is to be successful.

9.11 Limitations of the study

There are a number of factors which may limit the usefulness of this study. They should therefore be considered.

- The study was carried out in only one County Borough; its findings may therefore be limited in their usefulness to the process of policy implementation in other settings.
- Replication of the study in its exact form may not generate similar findings if the nature of policy implementation barriers is different, or participation in the action research process is not sufficiently robust.
- The detection of policy implementation barriers has to be an integral part of the process in order to determine the typology of action research process most applicable to the presenting circumstances.
- The researcher has to be able to use the action research typology in an eclectic way if the aim is to synergize action.

9.12 Recommendations [General]

The following recommendations are made in order to further test the legitimacy of the above claims:-

- Although the results of this study indicate that action research is a means of solving problems associated with policy implementation, it is recommended that results should be monitored so that 'best practice' and 'best value' can be established. In particular, the constructivist model of policy implementation derived from his study should be exhaustively tested and its use validated.
- As the study was carried out in only one County Borough it is recommended that other similar studies might confirm, or otherwise, its perceived value.
- The use of action research methodology as a means of identifying organisational and professional barriers to policy implementation needs to be further examined and commented on, in order to extend the theory of policy implementation.
- The process of action research, as a means of developing knowledge of policy and competency in its implementation, needs to be further examined and the process documented.
- The usefulness of action research in respect of documenting the policy implementation process as a framework for monitoring policy outcomes should be further tested.
- At government level it is important to clarify the exact thrusts of policy in a way that is clearly understood at all levels of an organisation. Also it is important to seek reassurance that at all levels of organisations skills for implementation of policy are commensurate with the complexity of policy.
- Bodies responsible for the implementation of devolved policy should consider the appointment of a policy advisor /researcher who can facilitate policy interpretation and implementation strategies, thereby facilitating change, control and compliance.
- Post-modernist/constructivist approaches to analysis of the complexities of policy implementation processes should be more frequently recommended as means of making the reality of policy implementation more transparent.

Recommendations that evolve from the use of action research in the context of the study

At the strategic level of organisations, it would appear that careful consideration should be given to the fact that 'new wine does not flow easily out of old bottles'. Policy implementers who have been used to working within bureaucratic organisations and operating within 'power relationships' require facilitation to overcome the positivism associated with such structures. Thus a 'root, stem and branch' revision of structural and administrative and operational policies and procedures may be required for the implementation of 'Communitarian' policy [Hart and Bond 1995:56]. As Ledwith [2005:2] advised, oversight of the complexities involved in change may result in

"Actionless thought and thoughtless action".

This study appears to confirm the views of Clarke and colleagues [2000:89-90] that policy based on 'Titmussesque' philosophies and strategies built on concepts of 'partnership' require much pre-planning. In particular there is a need for vision, mission statements, and a business plan. 'Governmentality' is particularly reliant on diplomacy and persuasion, in contrast to the patterns of confrontation and conflict which are said to have characterised the 'governance' strategies which advocated 'market approaches' and competition. This study has confirmed the views of Hupe [1993] and Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] that policy is not automatically adopted. There are likely to be shortfalls that require identification and analysis. Pestieau [2003:7] confirmed that such shortfalls can best be addressed through the systematic collection of qualitative data for 'deconstruction' of the policy implementation process. In this way it is possible to determine what may be influencing the outcomes of policy. As a result of the study the following recommendations are made for application to the strategic and operational levels of organisations responsible for 'partnership' strategies:-

- Devolved forms of policy generally require more responsive models of policy implementation than can be afforded by bureaucratic organisational structures.
- Neither 'top-down' nor 'bottom-up' models of policy implementation are sufficiently robust to explain what actually happens during processes of putting policy into practice. A more constructivist qualitative approach appears to be needed. In particular, an approach which facilitates participative change.
- It is important that a vision of change is communicated to staff expected to implement policy so that aims and objectives are clear. Ambiguity about the purpose of policy may be decreased by allowing staff access to policy documents and opportunities for discussion and analysis.
- Strategic direction should also be communicated, in order for policy implementers to be prepared for change, thereby self-referencing can be avoided.
- It should be ensured that policy implementers have the necessary commitment and skills. Educational and skill enhancing strategies may be required to address this issue.
- The construction of a visual model of the 'policy thrusts' underpinning the need for change can enlighten participants in the change process.
- Partnerships need to be strengthened through giving attention to organisational form. Matrix structures are most likely to provide the flexibility required for change.
- The concepts of 'partnership' and 'cross-cutting' strategies needs to be cascaded to all levels of the organisation and supported by changes in organisational forms, cultures and technologies.
- At the outset careful consideration should be given to methods whereby the policy implementation processes can be monitored and evaluated, in order that these processes are transparent at all times.

- Processes of 'government', 'governance' and 'governmentality' require delineation in order to comply with 'Titmussesque' policy requirements.
- Policy implementers require sufficient autonomy to make governmentality a reality. Community development and skill enhancing/training strategies are required for this process.
- 'Best value' should be facilitated through needs-led strategies and engagement of service users.
- Power orientations and tokenism require mediation, and there should be few links in the implementation chain.
- Gaps in policy implementation require early identification and remedial educational processes.
- Sufficient time and resources are required for the implementation process. Methods for addressing such issues need to be evolved.
- Communication between 'partnerships' and policy implementers requires strengthening and technological support.

9.13 Conclusions

It is concluded that this study has provided an illuminating exercise in analysis of how the complexity of policy implementation processes can be unravelled and policy implementation enhanced, monitored and evaluated. The study has confirmed the need for managing policy implementation processes in a participative way. Active participation through involvement of all programmes involved in the implementation of the Cymorth scheme policy, confirmed the ability of service providers to play a responsible and useful role in policy implementation, given conducive and appropriate circumstances.

Representation of the process of policy implementation, as depicted in the model derived from the study [Fig 7], may assist organisations at both the strategic and operational levels to visualise plan and evaluate their degree of participation in the policy implementation process and to monitor its outcomes. In contrast to previously used strategies for analysing the policy implementation process, the model identifies the complexity involved and the specific barriers peculiar to individual settings that need to be addressed. Finally, the value of the model shows that analyses of the policy implementation process should not be limited to one level or sector of an organisation. On the contrary, the study has shown that the use of a model of action research can inject synergy into a framework evaluation of the policy implementation process. This can then be capitalised on to improve and streamline the process at all levels of an organisation and stages of the implementation process.

Previous studies on policy implementation [Parsons, 1995:457 et sequel; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984:6; Elmore, 1985:28; Lipsky, 1976:208] amongst many others have noted the lack

of attention given to analysis and evaluation of policy implementation. At a time when the nature of policy has changed [Glendinning et al, 2002] and there appear to be failures in policy implementation processes [Harries et al, 2003], it is apposite to focus attention on this issue. This study has done just that, using an action research methodology. Although in the past action research may not have been much used to evaluate policy implementation, it appears to be a method which increases understanding of factors likely to cause the process to succeed or fail [Pestieau, 2003:12]. It is in circumstances such as these that action research may come into its own. It is a tool which enables policy implementation evaluators to 'diagnose' and 'trouble shoot' in order to detect and correct failings. It is a constructivist rather than a positivistic approach to policy implementation analysis [Pestieau 2003:3]. This study has shown that action research can illustrate the complexity of the policy implementation process and the ways in which a constructivist approach can 'unscramble' what happens when things go wrong.

Action research is sometimes interpreted as a form of community development [Clarke, 2000:257, Rothman, 1995:26-60] and this study has illustrated that in situations where policy implementation requires strengthening, it is an useful adjunct to systems framework evaluation for bringing about participative organisational change. Thereby, the use of action research, as a means of developing a 'community' of policy implementers, may stem a waste of investment and resource that is the inevitable outcome of non-compliance with policy goals. In this study it was seen that child and family policy implementation programmes have been criticised for failing to meet the broader goals of policy and failing to reduce child poverty statistics in line with government intentions. Though this study provides only a single example of how action research can detect, overcome and provide a model for monitoring progress towards the implementation of policy goals, it has clearly illustrated the claim of Hogwood and Gunn [1984:43] that policy implementation is a process of change, control and compliance. The study has also shown how through the use of action research policy implementers can be facilitated to 'row' in response to government 'steers' and thus accomplish development of the wider community. This process is one that may be disseminated to policy implementers in other areas through a process of 'naturalistic generalisation' [Schofield, 1993]. Thus it is claimed this study has contributed to the growing body of theory on policy implementation evaluation and has shown the importance of interpretative and qualitative processes for increasing understanding of complex interactive policy.

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**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S FRAMEWORK
PLANNING GUIDANCE**

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Assembly Strategic Plan

National Strategies and Policies

Community Strategy

Health & Wellbeing Strategy
 Children & Young People's Framework
 Children's Plans; Early Entitlement
 Young People's Plans;

Drug & Alcohol Action Plans

Health Services Planning (To be decided)

Education Strategic Plans
 Behaviour Support Plan

Children's Services Plans (Social Services)
 Children First

Crime Reduction Strategy

Youth Justice Plans

Local Housing Strategy

Local Transport Plans

Communities First Plans

Local Action Teams (Drug and Alcohol)

Children's Delivery Plan

Young People's Delivery Plan

CCET Plans

Careers Wales

Housing Operational Plan (Including homelessness)

ACPC Plans

National Level

Local Level
 universal/overarching frameworks

Single or agency service strategic plans

Annual service/agency specific plans such as

This table is intended to be an indicative illustration of the relationship between various planning requirements that fall within the scope of the framework and may be subject to change.

first plans can be expected to be initial versions. The Assembly recognises that the process of producing these plans in partnership is a new one that will need time to evolve and be embedded in local practice. The initial drafts ("first aspects") should cover:

- Partnership members (names & organisations)
- A brief description of how the partnership will operate - roles, responsibilities and contribution of the respective partners
- The initial vision of the partnership for services for children and young people for the period April 2003 to March 2008;
- A broad assessment of existing provision and gaps or shortfalls;
- Priorities for service development; and
- Reference to the mechanisms to be employed in consulting with existing and eligible users (children and families);

2.15 Full versions, as set out in paragraph 2.5 above, should be submitted by the end of 24 October 2003. Deadlines for the production and receipt of plans are set out in the table below.

Table 2: Frameworks Planning Timetable

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Framework Partnership</u>	<u>Children's Partnership</u>	<u>Young People's Partnership</u>
• <u>submit first aspects of 5-year strategy to Assembly</u>	<u>By October 02: covering April 03 to March 08</u>	<u>By October 02: covering April 03 - March 08</u>	<u>By end July 02: covering September 02 - March 08</u>
• <u>finalise full version of strategy</u>	<u>October 03</u>	<u>October 03</u>	<u>October 02</u>
• <u>submit first delivery plan</u>			<u>By end May 02 - covering September 02 - March 04 and annually from end October 2003 onwards</u>
• <u>initial strategy published</u>			<u>October 02</u>
• <u>submit Annual Report to Assembly</u>	<u>By October 03 and annually</u>	<u>By October 03 and annually</u>	<u>By March 04 and annually</u>
<u>Cymorth</u>			
• <u>develop plan and submit to Assembly</u>	<u>By October 2002 and annually</u>		
• <u>response to plans by Assembly</u>	<u>By end December 02 and annually</u>		

Theme A – Family support

Related Welsh Assembly Government core aims

Ensure that all children have a flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development

Ensure that all children and young people enjoy the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation

Cymorth theme aim

To ensure families have access to support that will foster positive relationships between parents and children.

Key outcome indicator

A1 Number of receptions into local authority care per financial year

Possible additional indicators

Use of the 4-year-old health visitor assessment
Qualitative assessments of service users
Use of Rickter scale

Examples of activity

<i>Children's partnership</i>	<i>Young people's partnership</i>
Parenting programmes Crèche support to parent groups Parent / toddler groups Promoting alternatives to smacking Story sacks Home Start	Parenting programmes Family conferencing Single parents' groups

Cymorth Plan - Outputs, Inputs and Funding Profile

Partnership Name
 Neath Port Talbot
 Partnership total allocation
 £1,969,662.00
 Form completed by
 Date

Placing the cursor over some of the title boxes will active a comment box. This gives a brief description of information required.

Project details		Objectives and Outputs					
Project name	Timescales	Name/s of organisation/s Involved	Cymorth Theme	Impact Objectives	Key Outcome Indicators	Min No of Users to be reached (please specify whether children or adults)	Cymorth Target Area
Total expenditure in Age group 0-3							
Total expenditure in Age group 4-10							
Total expenditure in Age group 11-25							
Total Partnership and Partnership Participation Costs							

Cymorth Plan - Objectives and Targets

Partnership Name.....
 Completed by Date.....

Theme A – Family support

Please add additional local Key Indicators below

Cymorth Theme Aim:			
To ensure families have access to support that will foster positive relationships between parents and children.			
Key Indicators	Targets	Yr 1 or other milestone Target	Final Measurable target
A1 Number of receptions into local authority care per financial year			

Start Well Project

Start Well Evaluation Report

August 2000 – May 2001

By [REDACTED] (Sure Start Evaluator Officer)

Introduction:

[REDACTED] Start Well Project is a joint project between Social Services and Housing and [REDACTED] trust. It commenced its service at the beginning of June 2000.

The project's aims and objectives are:

1. To improve social and emotional development of young families and their children.
2. To promote the health of pre-school children-improve dental health, reduce A&E admissions.
3. To promote good parenting skills of young families
4. To provide information and support for parents
5. To achieve improvements in children's developmental test performance.

Rational for Evaluation

1. To assess the effectiveness of the project as part of [REDACTED] Sure Start Programme, and to meet the requirements for monitoring targets as set by National Assembly for Wales which may influence programme extension and future funding
2. To allow the project to assess its own progress
3. To establish targets and indicators for measuring and assessing the project outcomes and outputs.

Evaluation Methods

1. As part of Sure Start Programme, Start Well project has been required to produce target information against which their quarterly returns to the Sure Start evaluator progress can be evaluated.
2. Visits and meeting between the Sure Star Evaluator, the EYDCP co-ordinator and Start Well project manager was in place regularly to discuss the project aims, objectives, roles and responsibilities, local targets and monitoring and evaluation.

3. Sure Start Evaluator has specially produced forms for the project to collect quantitative as well as qualitative data for the purpose of evaluation which was discussed and agreed by the project manager and the EYDCP co-ordinator.

Results

The project starts working with 40 referrals since June 2000. The majority of referrals were mainly from health visitor with a smaller number from midwifery service. The number of referrals has risen every month. The referral by May 2001 was 206. Out of the 206 families who accessed the service 123 forms received by the evaluator which were analysed.

The result is as follows: (*Sample of the statistical form is in Appendix 1*)

Graphs for this table is in page 5, 6 and 7:

Characteristics of families who accessed Start Well Project (August 2000 - May 2001)

No. of families accessed the project	206
No. of Children aged 0-3	137
Female	114
Male	9
Age range:	
Under 17	3
18-25	65
26-35	38
36-45	17
Over 45	0
Marital Statues	
Single	43
Married	43
Divorced	10
Living with partner	27
Widows	0
Housing Type	
Local authority	38
Housing Association	8
Private Rental	46
Owner Occupied	28
Council	3
Ethnicity	
White	118
Black (African)	2
Turkish	2
Thai	1
Referral by	
Health Professional	116
Friend	3
Publicity	2
Family	1
Play Group	1

Qualitative Evaluation

Other important part of evaluation was to know how the families feel about the project in general. Special questionnaire was produced by the evaluator and agreed by the project manager (*Appendix 2*) requested to be filled by the family for the purpose of evaluation.

The evaluator received back 123 questionnaire. In general the result came back was very positive with a very good and encouraging comments mentioned by some families regarding the project and the project workers. The results are as follows:

- First question was to know how many people receive such service before. The response was, 115 (93.50%) said they haven't received such service before, 7 (5.70%) said yes they have received such service before and only one (0.80%) was not sure.
- Question (2). Regarding the introductory visit. 83 (67.47%) found the visit very useful. 35 (28.45%) found it fairly useful, 4 (3.25%) Was no sure about the question and only one found it not useful.
- Question (3) was about their satisfaction with service the response we had was, 99 (80.50%) were very satisfied with the service, 23 (18.70%) were fairly satisfied and only one (0.80%) was not satisfied.
- Question (4). Was about how benefit is the service to them. The figures showed that 89 (72.35%) thought the service was very beneficial, 29 (23.50%) thought it was fairly beneficial, While only 5 (4.06 %) thought it was not very beneficial.
- Question (5). The question was about the project workers. Very good response from the families. All the families mentioned that the team was very helpful, friendly and professional.
- Question (6). This question was about the resources that have been distributed to the family by the team. Different resource been used like (Videos, Books, Magazine, leaflets and toys) some families used only one and other used more than one. The pie chart in page (5) shows the figures. Which shows that the majority used more than 2 resources.
- Question (7) was to get some feed back about how useful was the resources to them. The figures showed that 71 (57.72%) said it was very useful. 49 (39.40%) It was fairly useful. And only 3 mentioned it was not useful. On which one person thought the Breast electric pump was not useful and the other 2 thought the toys by it self was not useful.
- Question (8) was about the time of the visit. 108 (87.80%) mentioned that the time was all right to them. 14 (11.40%) said it was too short and only one said it was too long, this mean the highest percentage were happy about the time.
- Question (9). The aim of this question was to know whether the families need more support. 56 (45.52%) said yes and 59 (48%) said No. (8) people left the question blank.

- Question (10). This question was to know what would be the most reasons for dropping out the programme. Well 78(63.41%) left the question blank and 45(36.60%) gave different reasons: The main reasons were as follows:
 - ✦ End of programme.
 - ✦ If their children was a sleep
 - ✦ “ they could leave the programme when fully confident or with extra information to work with”
- Question (11) was to know how many people would recommend this service. The response was 59(48%) said yes they will recommend the service and 58(47.15%) said no and 6 (4.87%) were blank.
- We asked the families to put their comments. 74(60.16%) No comment and only 49(39.83%) gave their comments. It is very crucial for the project to mention that all the comment was very positive and encouraging and reflect how the family was happy about the service and about the team. Many families mentioned the team in their names and how they were helpful to them. Here is some of the comments as it was mentioned:

“I found it very helpful”

“The age limit should go up to about 10 years of age”

“I think the service I received was wonderful and it helped my daughter so much”

“ I have found it very beneficial and will definitely recommend Start well to friends who are in a similar situation to how mine was”

“Very helpful to me and my two children. P.S. will need you again”

“Found Start Well very good and very helpful to me and my family”

“ I have really enjoyed the visits, I found them very helpful, and I will miss Ruth visits”

“ Samira has been a great help and I would like her to come back in November.”

“ Debrah fitted perfectly with us. That is so important”

“My boys really enjoyed Cerys coming to visit, they got really excited when she was due to come.”

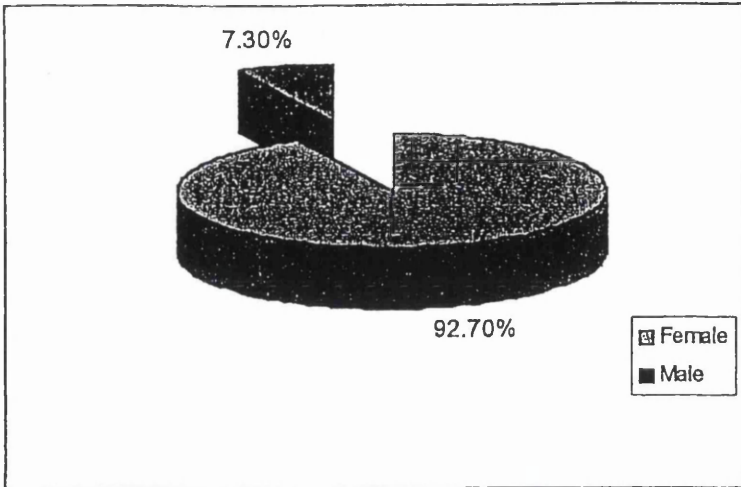


Figure No.1 Percentage of people access the project by sex

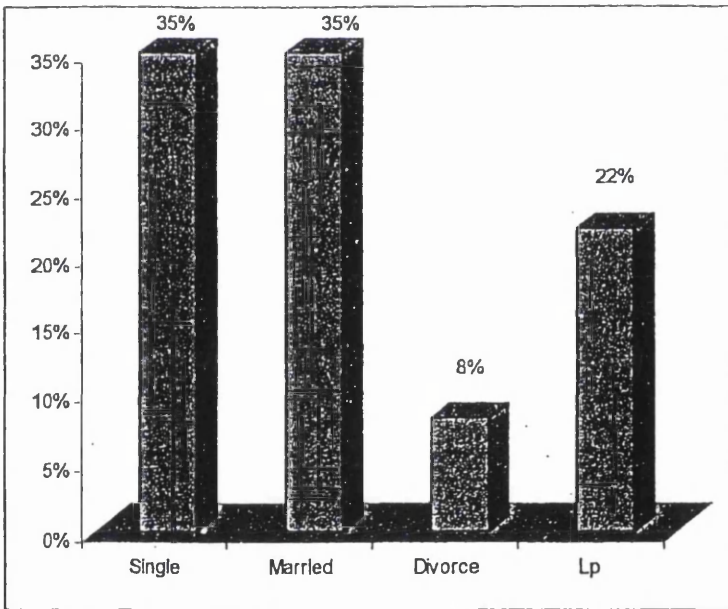


Figure No.2 percentage of People accessed the project by social status

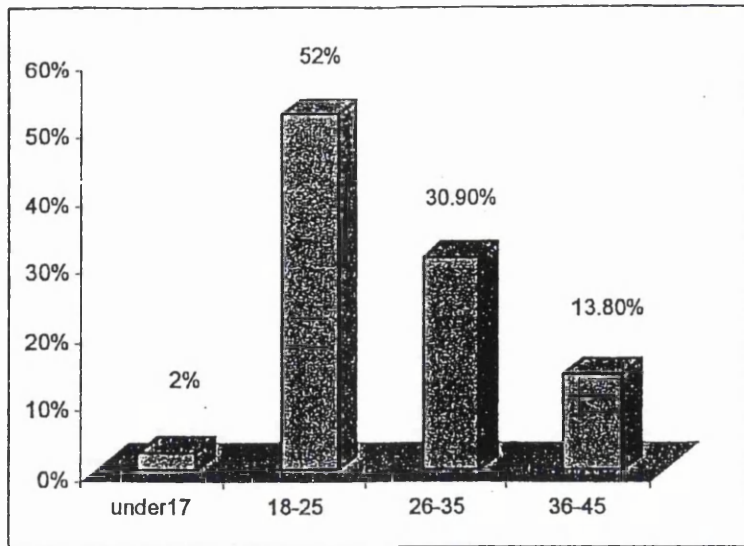


Figure 3: Percentage of people accesses the project by age

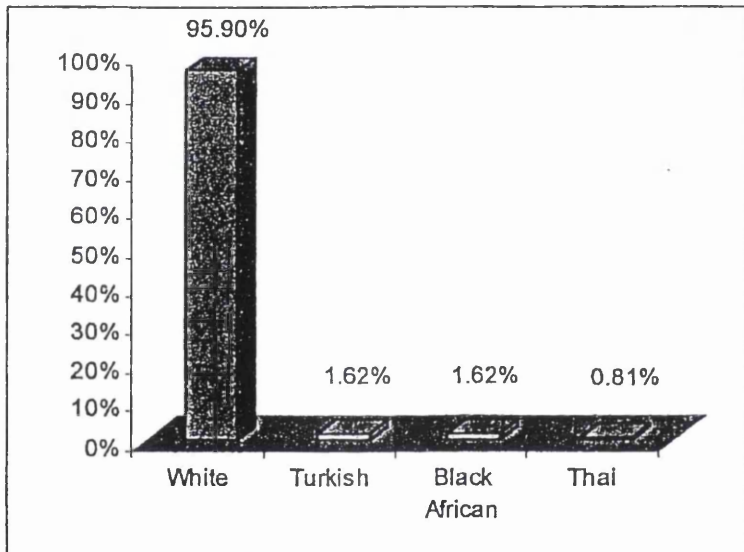


Figure 4: Percentage of people accessed the project by Ethnicity

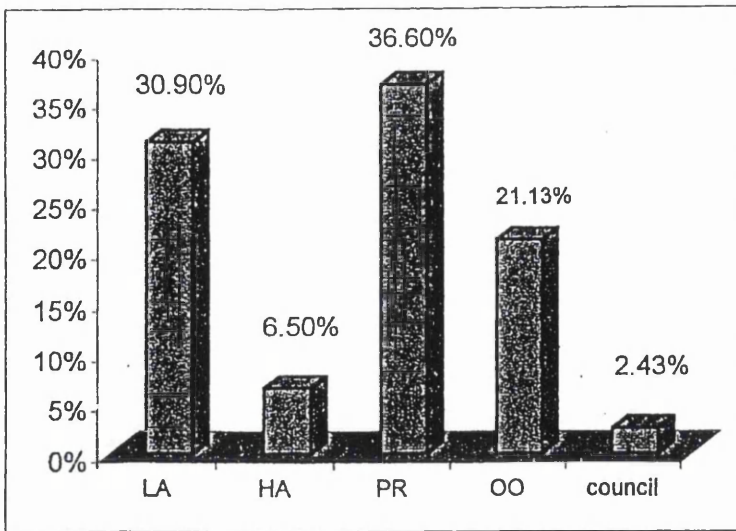


Figure 5: People access the project by the House Association

LA: Local Authority
 HA: Housing Association
 PR: Private Rental
 OO: Owner Occupied

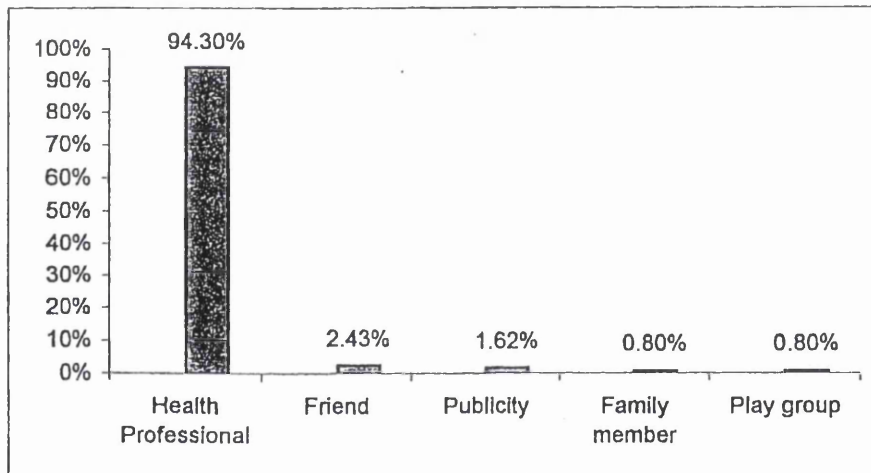


Figure 6: Way of referring families to start well project

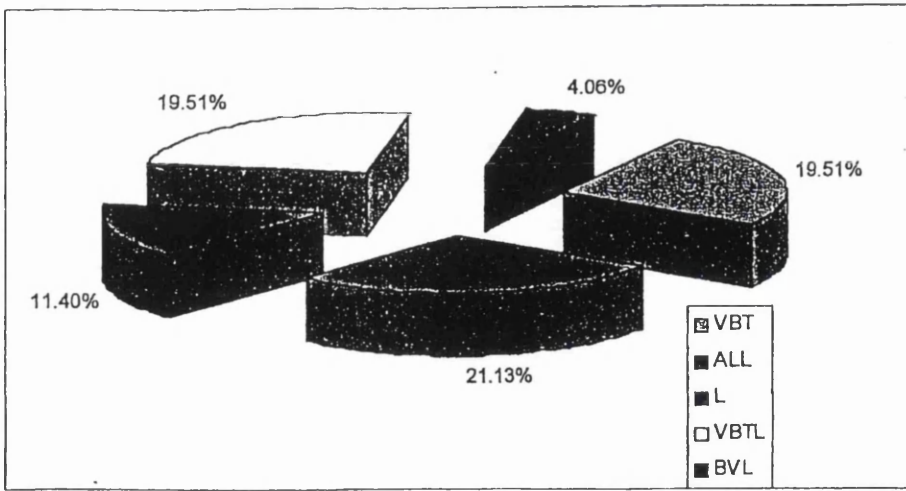


Figure 7: The most popular resources used by the project

- V: Is for Video
- B: Is for Book
- T: For Toys
- L: For Leaflets
- All: all the resource

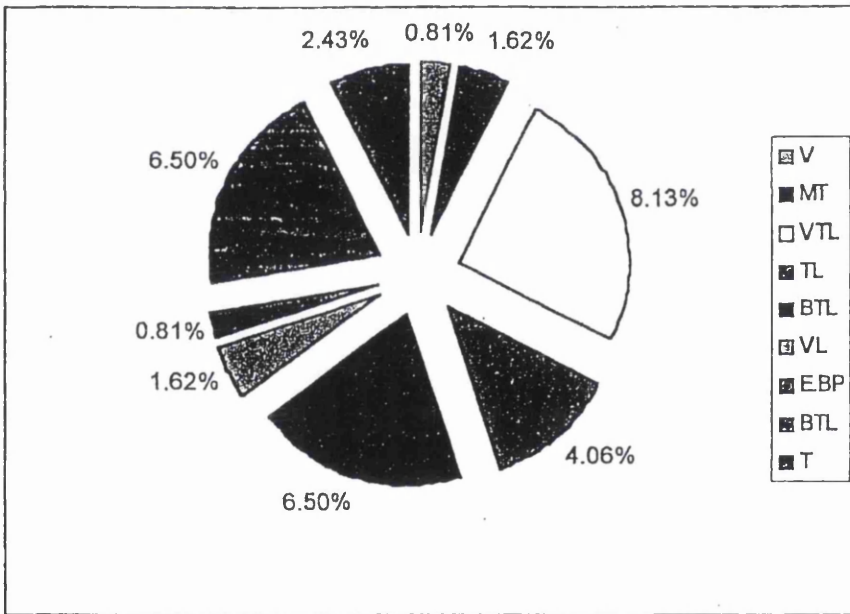


Figure 8: The Least popular resources used by the project

- V: Video
- M: Magazine
- T: Toys
- L: Leaflets
- T: Toys
- B: Books
- E.B.P: Electronic Breast Pump

Name of Project

Home - Starts

Cymorth Themes

M = Main Theme

C = Connected Theme

- A Family Support
- B Health Promotion
- C Play, Leisure and Enrichment
- D Empowerment, Participation and Active Citizenship
- E Training, Mentoring, Information
- F Building Childcare Provision

Set indicator(s) applied to project

MAIN	CONNECTED
Support up to 25 volunteers to support families	Provide training, supervision and support
Recruit up to 100 people to be a volunteer	Publicise and attract diverse range of people
Support referred families and assist within 2 weeks of referral	Provide a reliable, efficient service
dded Indicator(s) set by project	
AIN	CONNECTED
For the in contact with 60+ families	Materials for health, fitness, social and family activities

Aims of Project – What we want to do

Overall	Short Term	Long Term
To provide a quality service with reliability + freedom to volunteers to help families who are experiencing difficulties to overcome them to lead a fully functioning home once more.	Recruits + involvement of volunteers for a meeting over obj active target around NPT.	25 on board for support of families who are experiencing difficulties all around NPT through the community.

Measurements – What we are doing now

Inputs – Activities of Project i.e. Number of Sessions/groups/visits	Outputs – Numbers Accessing Project i.e. Number of attending/ completing/achieving	Outcomes – User Impact Benefits for individuals and families Evaluation methods
* providing copies of paper for each vol's 1st 40 hrs	Team - April 2004	16 families having supported
* regular newsletters, calls, visits to volunteers	8 people began course completed 4 and with 4 vol's for support families	9 families visited 3 families who are support now
* regular advertising for new volunteers	16 advice vol's with families setting vol's.	3+8 referred
* telephone advice lines + communication channels to vol's + families		evaluation through -
* DSE national materials		

Targets - What we set ourselves to do

Short Term 6 Months

Inputs - List activities to be set up - Numbers & Times

Outputs - Numbers of people to be accessed - Which activities to be involved

Outcomes - Benefits measured on 1-5 scale "Has this benefited your family?" "How?" Set target for positive responses @ 40% scoring 3 or above

Receive up to 6 new Vol's

Advertising within new forums Supervisors, Referrals, etc

Subsiding manager reports for M.C. visitation

Revise at least 3 existing Vol's.

Personal updates within 3 existing Vol's.

updating statistical data of families supported

Provide support to 20 families by befriending + support

Review lit's of existing families matched with to new Vol's to be arranged

families supported Vol's recruited relevant to cases

Involve a further 10 in Home - Short Family activities

Organise a family social event

Long Term - 18 months

List of activities to be extended

Target numbers or previously excluded groups

Increase number of positive responses to 80% scoring 4 and above

Extend 25+ Vol's activities

Why needs of previously "unreached" by Home - Short "initiatives"

Reasons for user benefits and also dissatisfaction or non participation linked to self evaluation

Data to be collected

GCG, Cyber, Coaches

be agreed objectives 2014.

Showing self evaluation procedures from families

Quality Assurance of Project – Self Assessment (apply every 6 months)

What are we trying to achieve?

Overall – Main Objectives of Themes

Working objectives are shared at front of Design Plans (linked to objectives)

Short Term – By this Project

- * acceptance + approval by families
- * enjoyment, support + advice by Vols in early recruitment + big changes
- * guidance by long standing Vols.
- * Acceptance by other organisations + services to establish as a provider of a service

Long Term – By this Project

credibility as an org's providing a quality service within of Cymorth Fawdd

Sustainability of the project with a strong foundation to continue

Who do we work with?	How often do we meet - are they formal or casual meetings
Current Partners	How often do we meet - are they formal or casual meetings
EYDCP	USIA
National + Regional Leave - Start	
Barristers	
CVS	
Toy Library	
Museum of Art	
NCH	
Start well	
Health Visitors	
Language + Play	
Who could we work with?	What basis would we meet - formal - casual - ad-hoc
Where are the gaps	
What do we need to do to improve? Action needed	
we need work with NCH	posters - reminders - News Act. year
we need Community groups	Joint resources
Playgroups	
Infant Schools	letters, visitors to visits.
Primary	with areas: parent learn.
Health Centres	
Basic Skills Academy	
ESTM	support on projects VPP and EYDCP.

What do we know?

Knowledge of local conditions – Knowledge of needs of local communities – Data on national & Local needs and conditions

- Transport routes roads & sewers
- Community events & activities
- Employment statistics
- Play groups & clubs

What do we need to do to improve? Action Needed

- Review of bus routes
- Yearly calendar of events held in NPT.
- Statistics volume statement operators

Participation of Users

How are users included in work of the project? – Encouragement of Volunteers

User needs – how are these identified? By users?

- Vol's have a rep on the M.C.
- Vol's raises asked & answered by Vol's Rep.
- Vol's are asked to & their needs & views are made
- Qualitative bk for Vol's avail.

How can we improve? – Action needed

have a website to contact.

Long Term – By this Project

See all of the above

Who do we work with?

Current Partners Professional and Strategic partners are: Play Working Group; CVS; EYDCP; Children's Network; Basic Skills Agency; NATLL; Clubiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs	How often do we meet – are they formal or casual meetings Formal meetings in the main but also informal contact maintained
---	--

Partners who are also clients: MEWN, WPPA, MYM, NCH, NCMA, TWF, EDS, Nutrition and Health Team; short term care facility in The Laurels.	Formal and casual meetings; discussions as part of the visit to the group concerned with toys and books
--	---

Who could we work with?

Where are the gaps What do we need to do to improve? Action needed	What basis would we meet – formal – casual -
--	---

Unregistered playgroups	Formal meetings to discuss potential services and to evaluate followed by casual discussion during visits.
Home Tutors	
Looked after children	
Traveller children	
Asylum seekers	
Children/adults with learning difficulties	

What do we know?

Knowledge of local conditions – Knowledge of needs of local communities – Data on national & Local needs and conditions
Population figures
Data on childcare providers
Social deprivation figures
Birth rate figures
Cultural diversity: language needs
Profiles of individual user group(s)
Expertise and advice on toy suitability; professional knowledge of 'product'
Guidelines and criteria via National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries.

Participation of Users

How are users included in work of the project? – Encouragement of Volunteers
User needs – how are these identified? By users?
Encourage users to visit the Toy Library and become more actively involved in the selection of toys
Encourage more feedback both formally and informally

Encourage discussion of the importance of the toy library during related professional forums.

Encourage volunteers from any of the sectors currently served.

How can we improve? – Action needed

The service is growing at a very fast rate and requires accommodation which is more suited to its needs. It would be advantageous also to have a 'lounge' area where people could meet, have coffee/tea etc and discuss requirements in comfort.

An improved van delivery service which did not involve professional staff time.

(These are both dependent on external factors and budget but are high on the priority list for future developments)

Benchmark Evaluation

COHESIVENESS	NO. OF CONTACTS WITH OTHER AGENCIES/PROJECTS	NATURE OF CONTACTS	MONITORING OF CONTACTS	ACTION NEEDED
CONTINUITY	SCHEMES/PROJECTS REFERRED TO	ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES TAKEN UP	MONITORING OF PROGRESS	ACTION NEEDED
OVERALL VISION	PRIMARY FOCUS - LINKS WITH OTHER THEMES	NATURE OF LINKS	MONITORING- EXTENSION OF LINKS	ACTION NEEDED
KNOWLEDGE	RANGE OF NATIONAL/LOCAL STATISTICS ASSESSMENTS	RANGE OF COLLECTED DATA	MONITORING OF COMPARATIVE DATA	ACTION NEEDED
UNMET NEED	RANGE OF INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY NEED IDENTIFIED	INTERVENTION (SCHEME - PARTNERSHIP-NAFW	MONITORING	ACTION NEEDED
MENTORING TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS/USERS	NO. OF LIFE LONG LEARNING SCHEMES, SKILLS TRAINING,	NATURE OF SCHEMES	MONITORING OF TAKE UP AND QUALIFICATIONS ATTAINMENT	ACTION NEEDED
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATION	NO. OF PARTICIPATIVE SCHEMES	NATURE OF PARTICIPATION	MONITORING STRENGTH OF PARTICIPATION	ACTION NEEDED
INFLUENCING POLICY	NO. OF POLICY GAPS	NATURE OF POLICY GAPS-PROJECT, PARTNERSHIP, NAFW	MONITORING AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT POLICIES	ACTION NEEDED
MEASURABLE OUTPUTS IDENTIFIED OUTCOMES	RANGE OF THEMES	NATURE OF BASKET OF INDICATORS	MONITORING OF OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES	ACTION NEEDED
CONTINUAL REVIEW	NEEDS IDENTIFIED	PLANS FORMULATED	INTERVENTIONS PLANNED	ACTION NEEDED

Before implementation of evaluation model in 2003

1. Did the project have a method of evaluation prior to the present one?

Yes No

2. If a model was in use what was its origin?

Used by own organisation Constructed by project Elsewhere

3. Were there measures in place for you to construct **targets** for future services?

4. Were there measures in place for you to obtain **users views** of services?

5. What were these ? Consultative Evaluation

6. How did you calculate the effectiveness of practice ?

Putting this model into practice

7. Did you attend the training workshops on use of the model ?

8. How useful were they?

Very Useful Neither Quite Useless

9. Did you receive a follow-up visit – useful?

10. What was most difficult part of the model for you to fill in ?

11. Most helpful?

12. Least helpful? Most difficult? Why?

After

13. Has model helped you plan strategically ?

14. Altered practice ?

15. Caused you to analyse your practice ?

16. Where were you weakest? –

17. Plans for participation of users

Appendix Seven

Usefulness Of Monitoring Model

Questionnaire to assess the perceived usefulness of the Monitoring Model

This Questionnaire is designed to determine your views on the usefulness of the Monitoring Tool that you helped to design. Please answer the questions by circling the number that you believe most represents the usefulness of the tool on a scale of 1-5 where 1 represents the most negative answer and 5 the most positive.

Question	Score
1. Has the model helped you to monitor policy implementation?	1 2 3 4 5

Comments

2. Has the model helped you to adopt new Cymorth Themes?	1 2 3 4 5
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Comments

3. Has the model helped to identify new indicators ?	1 2 3 4 5
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Comments

4. Has the model helped to identify new aims for your programmes?	1 2 3 4 5
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Comments

5. Has the model helped you gain confidence in applying a monitoring tool and measuring inputs, outputs and outcomes?	1 2 3 4 5
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Comments

6. Has the model helped you to identify new target activities?	1 2 3 4 5
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Comments

7. Has the model helped you to document what works well? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments

8. Have you made changes to your programme because the model helped you understand what works well? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments

9. Did the model help you implement policy benchmarks? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments

10. Has the model encouraged you to use local data to identify user need? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments

11. Has the model encouraged you to use appropriate assessment tools? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments

12. Has the model helped you focus on Prevention as well as problems? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments

13. Has the model helped you to increase user involvement in your Programme? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments

14. Has the model helped you develop skill training in your programme? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments

15. Since using the model have you included the community in Programme activities?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments

Appendix Eight

Pestieau's steps for analysis of policy implementation

- **Structure** - Were all the policy goals being addressed by programmes ?
 - Who generated the service goals [service users /providers]
 - How was this process achieved ? [participation / dictation]
 - What were the facilities/resources required to achieve the strategic goals or policy thrusts ?
- **Process** - What Project theme /s were appropriate to demonstrate that the programmes were implementing policy?
 - What aims and objectives were most suited to the implementation of policy goals ?
 - What interventions were necessary to attain aims and objectives?
 - To what extent were service users involved in this process ?
 - To what extent was the process empowering service providers and users ?
 - To what extent was the process collaborative ?
 - To what extent was the process capable of achieving the main policy thrust of social inclusion ?
 - To what extent could the process be measured ?
 - To what extent did users control the programme ?
- **Output** - Could outputs of programmes be identified , and how was this being achieved?
 - Were there aims and objectives for this purpose
 - To what extent did aims and objectives meet strategic goals ?
 - Numbers of outputs that could be related to aims and objectives ?

- Numbers of interventions that were appropriate ?

- Number of appropriate needs addressed ?

- Numbers of social inclusion factors addressed ?

Outcomes - Was there conflict between provider and user goals ?

- Did users perceive the benefit of the service ?

- Was social inclusion /community development being achieved?

- Were users more empowered?