

Transcript

Elsbeth Boxall

Hello, and welcome to the next in our series of pharmacy podcasts from PSD. We are discussing the Scottish Clinical Leadership Fellowship at the moment, probably better known as the SPCLF programme, and we're going to continue that series today to talk a bit about the evaluation of the programme and thank you very much for joining us. We have Greg Logan, who's the operational lead for SPCLF, and Kristi Long, who is a librarian at PSD. So she's the person who helps us on our programmes to find the knowledge and find how to use it. So I'm really, really grateful for both of you to come along today to, to share your insight on the evaluation of the SPCLF programme. So I'll go to you both, really, about this question first, but maybe, Greg, you want to start. When we talk about the SPCLF programme, and we look at it, it does include a really diverse range of fellows from different backgrounds, different host organisations, and different project outputs. So from your perspective, make that programme like this important, but also quite challenging.

Gregg Logan

Well, thank you. It's great to be here today. So I suppose the honest challenge is the things that we most want to develop in our leaders, so like judgment, influence, and the ability to see kind of the larger whole system, are also probably the hardest things to measure. It's hard to be... So we have to kind of be realistic about what we're evaluating or what the evaluation can tell us, but also what it can't and I suppose from starting this process of thinking about evaluations, there's an inherent tension between the fellowship programme, maybe the organisations or the hosts, and what we want to see in individual units and evaluate.

And what we also want to actually develop in people, they aren't always the same thing, and probably there is maybe a bit of tension there. But pretending they're the same or they can be the same might lead to a bad evaluation and so being honest and upfront about that at the start is probably quite important and also, sometimes if it's easy to count, are we really evaluating the wrong things? And I suppose as a fellow, as someone who's been a fellow myself, I think sometimes it's actually those small changes in how I operate and how I take that back into the team that have probably been the most impactful for my career so far. Though I also feel very lucky to be an operational lead so early on. So yeah, there's a real pressure to demonstrate. I understand, though, for the host organisations it's about return of investment, especially because we all come from diverse backgrounds. You know, some hosts don't have backfills, but some, some SPCLFs require the payment of backfill as well as the payment of the SPCLF's time. So I understand there's a real need to know where the... how we're spending taxpayers' money. But I think we just need to be open to a broad understanding of what we're trying to achieve with the evaluation, just so we don't risk missing the point of what we're trying to do with SPCLF. But yeah, that's quite a long answer for a starter, sorry.

Elsbeth Boxall

No, that's great. I mean I think it's not a... I don't think there is an easy answer. I think that then you've demonstrated that, Greg. I don't know. Is there anything you would like to add, Kristi, to that?

Kristi Long

Yeah, I think, I think Greg's really hit that because in some sense, there's, there's an interesting question, I think, when you look at any programme like this, about what does success mean in the context of a particular programme, and who does... what does success mean for the people, all the various different stakeholders who might have a stake in the programme because it might actually have multiple meanings and so when you make a decision about evaluation, you might have to have some conversations about that and actually really stake out what you're, what you're able to measure, and also what you're going to measure, and also what you're able to measure, and what is meaningful to measure.

Because as Greg said, you can often count things, but that counting may not be meaningful, and it might not be meaningful in terms of explaining what the programme actually does, but it also might not be meaningful in explaining how you might manage the programme or improve the programme or make sure that you're managing it in a way that would make more difference in the future. So those are the kinds of considerations that's worth thinking about, and I think it becomes much harder when you have programs like SPCLF, which are really heterogeneous, both in terms of the people coming onto the programme, but also the context in which they're operating. And so you have heterogeneity at different points in the system that you need to take account of. And that means that you're at a very complex sort of real-world context, and you need to think about what that might mean for your evaluation design.

So when we started looking at evaluation design, we were really looking at what do people... how people actually dealt with that problem when they've gone to design evaluations. And that was actually when Greg and his colleague Leon came to me and said, "Actually, how have people dealt with this problem when they've gone to design evaluations?"

Greg Logan

I think I'm always struck by this quote, and I fear it was some industrial capitalist who said it, 'but systems get what systems expect'. I'm paraphrasing. So I always want to make sure that when we're thinking about an evaluation of a system that's designed to provide opportunity and self-develop people to take on leadership, that what we're doing is the current system is applying a framework through which they think we should be developing leaders, but often what the system needs in 15 to 20 years will look very different. So we always have to be mindful to make sure that... that we have to be able to provide return of investment and understanding and development pathways for people that fit current needs. But we'd also have to be open to the possibility that how, what success looks like in 10 or 15 years will look very different and might need different people for that. So while it's important that the system is really involved, it's also important that

we honestly reflect back to that system what the benefit of SPCLF can be. But I'm very biased as a previous SPCLF. So yeah.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, I know. It's...it's just incredibly complicated. There's just so many different factors, isn't there, to consider? And we have touched on this a little bit already, but maybe we could go into a little bit more detail to explore with yourself, Greg, what, what outcomes or benefits should we be looking to capture? So I think we've touched on this, that that will be different for the fellows themselves, the host organisations, and the wider system. So what, what do you think we should be looking for?

Greg Logan

I think, yes, I do split it down into those three different areas. So I think about the fellows, and I love this cohort's, this year's SPCLF's mantra of 'you are the project'. The individual is the project. So how do we really look and think about how that operates and how those shifts operate in terms of like confidence, leadership, capability, and ability to influence beyond your immediate role? Because so much of, I suppose, the pharmacists come in at a very senior level to SPCLF, whereas some of the medics and dentists don't.

So I suppose sometimes it's about operating without that kind of credibility when you go back into your boards and your roles. But how we measure that change in ability, how we make decisions. So that for the fellows, I suppose is probably quite important. For the host, I suppose it would be... perhaps it's something much more tangible. So was there service improvements? Was there new ways of thinking? Did things change for merely the fellow being in that host organisation? Because I suppose there's a lot of two-way learning. Sometimes I was just learning so much, but I think sometimes the fellows do provide an honest reflection back to the hosts about current priorities and issues on the coal face. So that kind of practical value to the hosts. The systems level benefit. It's difficult, isn't it?

Because it's probably much more cumulative, and I suppose SPCLF is now this established thing. It's been running for 13, 16 cohorts for 10, 12 years. So we have this thing that's established, and I think now is the right time to be evaluating it because we are trying to build this pipeline for people who are just more systems aware for the future. But I suppose I'd also reflect back to the system. It's about how we show the connection across organisations and about how that contributes towards national priorities. But ooft, that's a very hard thing to measure. Very, very hard. But I suppose also, sometimes while it is the hardest thing to measure, it's probably where that true value lies for the hosts of the systems going forward. Feels like quite a circular answer. But yeah, I think those are just my thoughts on the three spaces we need to be evaluating.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah. No, that's really helpful. It's good just to break it down and, and help direct our thinking on that. So that's really, really useful, Greg. So Kristi, you've been looking at this maybe from a different point of view in your role as a librarian. Obviously an expert in, in evaluating literature and you were tasked at evaluating the literature available on this

topic of evaluation. Do you want to talk us through some of the approaches that you found in the literature when you were looking at that?

Kirsti Long

Yeah. So early on, I looked at some of the literature on two... several things. So evaluation of education programmes, leadership programmes, fellowships, but we also had previously done some mapping of fellowship programmes, the types of components they had, the extent to which clinical and non-clinical leadership programmes were similar or different, or components they might share. And we also had previously done some, some literature search on the impact of leadership behaviours on service change and how people had studied that, the approaches they had taken, what you find. So studying the... doing the literature review, I have to say, is really useful at the beginning, and it can be useful for several reasons. One is that you can see the types of approaches that others have taken. So you can see overall what types of methodologies might be useful or available to you. When you're constructing an evaluation, you can see are some more common than others? How are they applied, and also case studies of how they are applied in different types of contexts.

So you can see how do people construct a study of a particular type, what seems to work, what doesn't seem to work. Even practical things like what types of data might you need? How long do these things take? What sort of resources are required? So in general, I would say they kind of broke down into two main categories. One are the sort of theory-based methods, and the theory-based approaches are things like realist evaluation, contribution analysis, or other types of studies which are based around things like a programme theory or a theory of change. And the main things about these studies is that they're based on trying to understand the mechanisms by which programmes work. So this is trying to understand how does an intervention or a programme like SPCLF come about producing its outcomes?

So what works under what circumstances for which people to produce these kinds of outcomes? And you're trying to make your, your logic model, your programme theory, or your theory of change really explicit. So if SPCLF is producing improvements, that it's producing change and it's producing different types of outcomes, how does that work, basically? And these theories can become quite complex, particularly in things like a realist evaluation, where you are trying to construct theoretical models around what's called a mechanism... I'm going to restate that. So some of these theoretical models can become quite complex, particularly in a realist evaluation where you're doing a context mechanism outcome model, and you're potentially devising quite a series of these, of these interactions, and you're trying to see how does the context and the mechanism interact to create different types of outcomes? And that might work really well in the case of something like SPCLF, where you have... you're looking at the outcomes for a heterogeneous group of SPCLFs themselves and also these different boards in the system and different types of clinical contexts. And Greg also talked about the fact that you might be looking at this over time. So, you know, this programme has been running for a number of years.

You're starting to look at cumulative impact. There's a second bucket, though, of different types of just that you see quite a lot in these types of evaluations, which are the return on investment. And the return on investment is trying to look at what the overall system impacts are and basically are we investing our funds and our resources and our energy in the right ways. So if I'm producing... if we're investing in a programme, is it giving us the kind of outcomes that we want? Now, that might work better if you are interested in measuring a more defined set of outcomes and you have a clearer sense of what those outcomes would be. So some of the decision to be made here has to do with the complexity of what you're trying to measure, the extent to which you understand what the outcome... you have a defined set of outcomes that you want to measure, and also how you go about making decisions about the attribution of your intervention to making the changes that result in those outcomes. And where the attribution is more complex, then the theory-based models are a better option. And I'm sorry if that sounds a little overly complicated, but that, that's what the literature is really telling you. And then the literature has a whole series of guidance about how you might go about doing these and different types of approaches and lots of examples that you can find. So it's really helpful to go and read and see what others have done. But ultimately, the real answer to that is finding the methodology that best suits the question that you want to answer. And that, that's the thing I would probably really stress is that there are multiple options you can take, but what you want is you want the methodology that's going to suit the question that you want to answer. So what is it meaningful to you to answer, and what is it meaningful to you to measure?

Greg Logan

Mm-hmm. That's a great answer. Like- ... it's a great summary of the complexity of trying to evaluate such a programme.

Elsbeth Boxall

Absolutely. I think, you know, that was just incredible, and you've got such a deep knowledge of this, Kristi, that I really appreciate you taking the time to explain that to us. But I suppose, yeah, that does bring us round to what does that mean for us, Greg? What is the next stage in your work in evaluating the SPCLF programme, and how, how will that shape the future of the programme, do you think, having done all this work?

Gregg Logan

Yeah, I know. It's interesting, isn't it? And I suppose... I suppose I come back to the first principle of why we're doing this. And I suppose what we're trying to do is as a collective, so for fellows, for hosts, for organisations that are involved, but also for the team, the operational team, it's about making sure the evaluation doesn't just serve us, but it's also making sure the evaluation serves fellows, future fellows, hosts, future hosts, and the wider system to help us make decisions about how we train and develop tomorrow's leaders. And even just people who can go back and make meaningful change, because I often want to make explicit that it's not about volume of change or activity that the fellows go back to do. Sometimes even simply a reframing of a problem that can shift and shape policy is just as important as a complete service redesign.

So I suppose it's about the next steps are quite structural in a way. It's about the operational board, the hosts, and the kind of wider stakeholders going through the plan of how we want to decide and how we're going to figure out the right methodologies that Kristi's talked about to start the evaluation, then carry out the evaluation. So those are the kind of the three big things. There's a bit more to say about that, but I suppose one of the things I want to do as well is on that journey, have a way to share the learning, because sometimes it's about the individual fellows having a platform continuously as the programme develops to be able to have a repository of learning. So we're trying to do a little bit of work on that. And I suppose having that visibility of learning might also make that communication to organisations who find the concept of SPCLF a bit nebulous because it doesn't fit into this nice development pathway of we have a dentist, they're a consultant or a GDP, now they're a NES employee doing the kind of like dental evaluation work, or they're a consultant who's now a training programme director, or in pharmacy it's not a pathway directly to be a DOP or director of pharmacy. But just being able to communicate the value and impact of the programme in relation to different roles, not necessarily as following a particular structure.

So I suppose that means agreeing that kind of general framework of how we're going to measure and identify the fellows, host, and organisational change, and try and capture that in practice. Share the learning so we're more consistent, and yeah, just make it more visible. I often come back to one of the things I've been doing this year that I think actually reflects my learning from SPCLF. So I've been involved in a group A strep point-of-care testing pilot in Glasgow with Community Pharmacy Scotland, pharmacy team from Scot Gov, GGC, and I think my learning from SPCLF has just been about how to work in a kind of cross-organisational way, and I think that's been this big thing. I don't know how you metric that, but like, I think that's probably the thing that I've taken the most from SPCLF is just bringing... being part of groups being brought together and working really well together. I've never worked with CPS before or the pharmacy... It's been fantastic. So yeah. I'm not saying that because it's a pharmacy podcast, it's just been really eye-opening for me this year.

Elspeth Boxall

That's absolutely brilliant, Greg. Thank you so much. And I think, Kristi, you wanted to add something there.

Kristi Long

Yeah, I think, Greg, what you've just highlighted is something that really came through in some of the literature on leadership. So there's often a gap in the evaluation of leadership outcomes and leadership programmes, where on the one hand, people will study sort of immediate outcomes for, for people who've gone through programmes, or they'll study, oh, but there are some sort of big system changes. But actually, it's that intermediate bit that you're talking about. So in developing leadership skills or leadership behaviours or leadership changes, what are the more intermediate effects that people experience when they go back into the system and they're working in new ways and they're making those kinds of changes?

In their work environment and working maybe across different systems and starting to make those changes. And that links those sort of personal changes to the bigger system changes, and that's the bit where it's been highlighted we actually don't have an enormous amount of evidence. So that's an area where actually that type of evaluation could be really valuable in terms of developing a wider evidence base about how you start to make change through that kind of intermediate process system. Everyone likes to go for the big, you know, big impact outcome because it looks like big money and it's quite interesting to people. But actually, that process understanding is really important, especially if you're talking about how in, in 15 years we may be looking for a different set of outcomes. We may be looking for outcomes we don't know yet. So that process understanding can be quite important for understanding how we might get to outcomes that we don't yet know what they are. And that... So that is something that can be quite useful in some of these more theoretically based evaluation methodologies. So just wanted to sort of highlight that's a really good example of where we have a current gap in the literature and there might be some interesting opportunities there.

Greg Logan

No, absolutely. I often think, and I often reflect about this idea that we have all these AI ambitions, but we live in a very paper-based world, and I think there's that kind of thing about the systems and what we think they might want to be probably a lot further away than perhaps where we are right now. But I think this evaluation is a great opportunity to take a pause and reflect on the outcomes, but also reflecting on the inputs and all the kind of pedagogical understanding. I hate these big words, but that kind of framework of understanding of how we've built the system. Also reflect and thank the people that set it up and think, right, is the structure right as well? So like, as part of the evaluation and reflecting back after it, we'll be thinking about what other things are we learning through this that can affect how we structure and design and deliver.

Because I suppose for me, there's also that, maybe not talked about in this piece, is about one of the big bits of SPCLF isn't necessarily always about the hosts or the fellows, but sometimes about the fellows as part of the leadership development management programme with the team who are fantastic, who give you that space, time, and practice and learn new skills. And I think their involvement in evaluation will be crucial. But yeah, I just always want to kind of shout out to that because I think we often think about the time we spend reflecting back and [...] is a nice space where that definitely happened for me and my cohort, and hopefully still happens.

Elsbeth Boxall

I would absolutely agree, Greg, as I'm living it at the moment. And yeah, it's still happening and it's very much key to the whole program. But you've both given us so much to reflect on there. It is such a complex issue on evaluation, so many factors to consider, and also the changing, moving goalposts with time as well to take into account.

So thank you so much for explaining that all so well, and hopefully that's been useful for anyone who has any involvement in the programme, either as a fellow themselves or a potential fellow, host organisations, and really for the wider health system to understand

what the programme is doing. So thank you both very, very much, and thank you for those of you who are tuning in to listen today. The links, as always, to our SPCLF resources will be in the podcast notes and also a link to our evaluation. So thank you very much, everyone.

Greg Logan

Thank you.

Kirsti Long

Thank you.