

Document name: Light Bulb Moment: Barbara Gelb on joined up thinking
Document date: 2016
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Light Bulb Moment: Barbara Gelb on joined up thinking

Barbara Gelb

<http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/light-bulb-moment-barbara-gelb-joinedthinking/management/article/1388263>

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29 March 2016

Light bulb moments can come from dark experiences. This was brought into sharp relief for me when I first became chief executive of Together for Short Lives, the charity that supports the UK's 49,000 children and young people with life-shortening conditions. I was listening to the experiences of the mother of a child who needed palliative care. She described how her search for help was like negotiating a minefield.

She spoke of the fear it evoked, the despair that services didn't join up and that people didn't explain things. Tragically, by the time she had made it all fit together her child had passed away. This is a damning indictment of service provision, yet sadly it is all too common. More than anything, it reinforces why people have to be at the centre of policy development and system change. It might seem obvious, but it is so easy to get preoccupied by process and forget that helping people in distressing circumstances is at the heart of what we are trying to do. It is vital that we ask them what they need, what they want and how we can be people-centred in the way that we support them.

The government has reaffirmed its commitment to delivering interconnected care across health, education and social services. Charities need to get even better at collaborating and sharing resources, so that the very best outcomes are achieved for those on whose behalf we exist. The whole is certainly greater than the sum of its parts.'

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