Knowledge brokering:

An insider action research study in the

not-for-profit sector

By

Vipin Chauhan

Doctoral thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

October 2018

ABSTRACT

This study contributes an original, practice-based analysis of knowledge brokering in inter-organisational communities of practice in the not-for-profit sector. Defining characteristics of the not-for-profit sector include its social values, principles and practices. Existing literature understates or overlooks the significance of values and principles that are manifested in and enlivened through everyday social practices and practitioner encounters. The study contributes by presenting knowledge brokering as a knowledge sharing intervention which integrates people, processes, values and principles into practice.

Knowledge brokering and other practice interventions in the not-for-profit sector have to align with its social mission, if they are to be compatible and effective. This is especially so in multi-agency partnerships and inter-organisational communities of practice where collaboration and co-existence rather than assimilation are the primary objectives. This study finds that values-compatible knowledge brokering interventions, boundary bridging, co-creation, common artefacts and knowledge sharing, enable inter-organisational communities of practice to evolve without sacrificing individual autonomy.

Foundational knowledge brokering literature emphasises the structural position of the knowledge broker, their knowledge superiority and the benefits they accrue by operating on the periphery of a social network. The study contributes by arguing that knowledge brokering processes and roles can be examined through an alternative practice lens with the knowledge broker as an internal co-practitioner located within a network.

The study was carried out in a new, time-limited multi-agency partnership project in the not-for-profit sector. The partnership constituted an inter-organisational community of practice comprising advice, information and support agencies that had agreed to work collaboratively to improve local services. The author was employed as the project's Knowledge Management Officer and carried out the study over a two year period using an insider action research approach. As an insider practitioner-researcher, the author contributed to the project's objectives, worked collaboratively with practitioners and gathered rich data. Action and research occurred simultaneously and the iterative processes

enabled the cumulative learning to inform, develop and analyse the practice. The combination of using insider action research approach, an examination of knowledge brokering as a practice intervention and a multi-agency, not-for-profit setting, makes this a unique practice-based study untapping knowledge management lessons from the not-for-profit sector.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF CONTENTS

PART B: Explanatory note

CHAPTER 4: PRACTICE INTERVENTION 1: THE KNOWLEDGE HUB

CHAPTER 5: PRACTICE INTERVENTION 2: THE CHARNWOOD CONNECT FORUM

CHAPTER 6: EMERGING THEMES

PART C: Explanatory note

PART D

10. APPENDICES

ABBREVIATIONS

ARC	Action research cycle
ASTF	Advice Services Transition Fund
CBC	Charnwood Borough Council
CC	Charnwood Connect
CCF	Charnwood Connect Forum
CHSRF	Canadian Health Services Research Foundation
CI	Critical incident
CoP	Community of practice
CPD	Continuous professional development
CRF	Common referral form
IT	Information technology
JSA	Jobseeker's allowance
KM	Knowledge management
KS	Knowledge sharing
KMO	Knowledge Management Officer
NHS	National Health Service
PJ	Practice journal (author's reflective log of critical incidents, observations and interpretations)
PSG	Project Steering Group
ToR	Terms of reference
VCO	Voluntary and community organisation(s)
VCS	Voluntary and community sector
WN	Work notebook (author's work logs, records and notes of meetings, planning sessions and project activities)

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Introduction

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM OF THE THESIS

The aim of this thesis is to examine knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector[1] (Figure 1.1). The thesis is based on a study that was carried out by the author as an insider practitioner-researcher in a new multi-agency partnership project called Charnwood Connect. The author was employed as the project's Knowledge Management Officer and used Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) insider action research approach to undertake the study. While literature exists on knowledge brokering, research is limited on knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector.

Figure 1.1: Interface between the organisational context, the study's conceptual concern and knowledge management processes (adapted from the Evans, Dalkir and Bidian, 2014, p. 92).

---

[1] "Not-for-profit sector" is used as an inclusive term to refer to organisations that are driven by a social mission (Jeavons, 1992; Hume and Hume, 2016), self-governing, independent of the state, non-profit-distributive and reliant on voluntarism (Kendall, 2003).

Knowledge brokering provides an "enabling architecture" (Brown and Duguid, 1998, p. 103) for knowledge sharing, diffusion and application in organisations. Although recent contributions on the subject continue to extend our understandings (Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014; Kent, Sommerfeldt and Saffer, 2016; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016), academic thinking about knowledge brokering is still evolving (Ward, House and Hamer, 2009a, 2009b; Phipps and Morton, 2013; Ragab and Arisha, 2013; Haas, 2015) and gaps remain about how practice interventions actualise knowledge sharing (Robertson and Hammersley, 2000; Jashapara, 2005; Sun, 2010). Practice interventions are designed to impact on organisational behaviours and "….constitute the action thrust of organisational development; they make 'things happen' and are 'what's happening'" (French and Bell, 1990, p. 113). In this study the concern is about how knowledge sharing described as being "….probably the most important knowledge management practice as it embodies all the opportunities and challenges of managing intangible assets" (Jashapara, 2005, p. 142) can be actualised through knowledge brokering practice interventions.

The chapter begins with an overview of the motivation for the research, the research questions and the aims and objectives of the study. An introduction to the research approach and strategy is provided next, elements that are examined in greater depth in chapter 3. The presentation moves on to the research process and timelines. This is followed by an overview of the research site and the author's insider role. Before concluding, an overview of the structure of the thesis and summary chapter contents are presented to explain the format, flow and logic of the thesis.

1.2   MOTIVATION, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The conceptual focus, the scope of the study and the methodology were derived after critical consideration of several factors. Firstly, the literature review raised questions about how practice interventions such as knowledge brokering enable knowledge sharing to occur and be actualised in practice. Secondly, the literature review revealed that research was underdeveloped about knowledge brokering, knowledge sharing and knowledge management practices in not-for-profit organisations. This raised a curiosity about why this should be so in a sector that is knowledge intensive, practice-based and characterised by in-person, people-centred services. Thirdly, the author's position as the project's Knowledge

Management Officer provided an opportunity to examine knowledge brokering from an insider perspective. Finally, Charnwood Connect supported the study because it believed that the action research process and the learning would add value to its dual objectives of strengthening inter-agency collaboration and improving local advice services.

1.2.1 Research questions, aims and objectives

This inquiry was carried out in a "natural setting" (Herr and Anderson, 2005, p. 50) fusing action (i.e. the practice interventions) with research about the conceptual concern of knowledge brokering. The practice interventions (French and Bell, 1990; Rothwell and Sullivan, 2005) were led by the project's context and objectives while the conceptual focus of knowledge brokering was identified through the literature review, *in situ* observations and dialogues with practitioners. The core research question was framed after critical reflection on four factors: the gaps in literature, the author's insider practitioner-researcher position, Charnwood Connect's objective to share knowledge and take joint action to improve services and its multi-agency constituency. The resulting core research question was framed as **"how does knowledge brokering facilitate knowledge sharing, collaborative working and practice improvements in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector?"** The core research question was broken down into three corollary questions:

1. How does knowledge brokering facilitate communicative spaces for knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector?
2. How does knowledge brokering contribute to practice improvements in inter-organisational communities of practice?
3. What are the factors that inhibit and enhance knowledge brokering in the not-for-profit sector?

The research questions framed the aims and objectives of the study. In the organisational context of a multi-agency partnership in the not-for-profit sector, the aims of the study were to:

1. Examine knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice.

2. Investigate how knowledge brokering facilitates collaborative working, knowledge sharing and practice improvements.

3. Identify the factors that enable and hinder knowledge brokering and knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice.

The research aims were realised through five objectives:

1. To identify and deploy an appropriate research approach for an insider practitioner-researcher to study knowledge brokering in a not-for-profit multi-agency partnership.

2. To analyse critically the concept and practice of knowledge brokering and its interpretations and implications for the not-for-profit sector.

3. To implement a series of knowledge brokering practice interventions, review their outcomes and use the learning to inform practice.

4. To analyse the application of knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector.

5. To provide an interpretive account of knowledge brokering in the not-for-profit sector for wider discussion and dissemination.

1.2.2   The research approach

Insider action research approach (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005) enabled the study to be conducted in tandem with the author's work and those of other practitioners without impeding the project's objectives. The approach allayed practitioners' concerns about increases in their workloads resulting from a study that was disaggregated from their work. This was an important consideration in selecting the research approach as practitioners, managers and trustees faced increasing time and resource constraints due to austerity measures, social policy reforms and the growing scale and complexity of client needs. Finally, this approach enabled the research process to be managed effectively, maximised the possibilities of gathering rich data and ensured that the author was able to perform his role as the project's Knowledge Management Officer.

1.2.3   The research strategy

The research strategy was configured after an initial period of immersion in the research site. The immersion enabled the author to receive first-hand accounts of practitioners' hopes, needs and concerns. The author was able to gain deeper insights about the partnership and inter-organisational and inter-personal dynamics through relationship building and dialogues with practitioners. Building on his previous experiences of reflective practices (Schön, 1991), adult learning (Freire, 1972a), youth and community development (Henderson, Jones and Thomas, 1980; Chauhan, 1989; Factor, Chauhan and Pitts, 2001), the author established himself as a co-practitioner contributing to collective learning and co-creation. The early period marked the beginnings of joint working with other practitioners, arriving at shared understandings and becoming part of a team. The research pathway was an iterative process and Figure 1.2 presents an overview of the main phases and timelines, which are explained in further detail in the sections that follow.
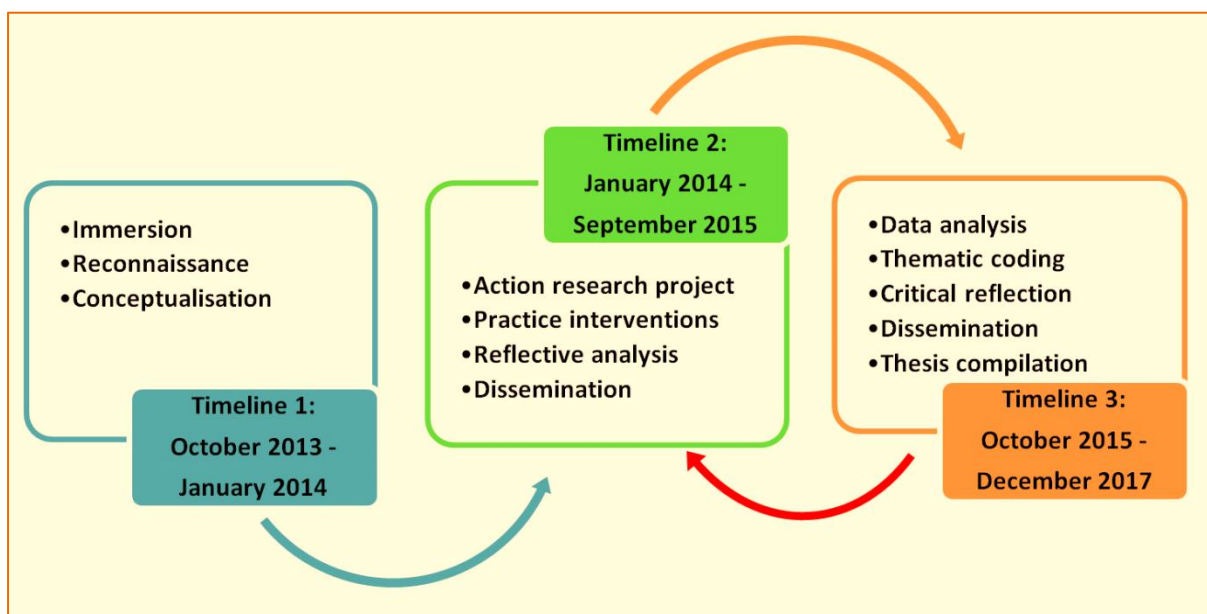
Figure 1.2: Overview of research timeline and critical phases.

1.2.4   Timeline 1: Reconnaissance and concept formation (October 2013 – January 2014)

The managing agency where the author was based was involved in a previous research project on volunteering conducted by Loughborough University (Ragsdell, 2009b). As a result of this earlier research initiative, there was an established relationship between the

managing agency and Loughborough University, extended further when the latter contributed its expertise to help conceive Charnwood Connect. Through Dr. Ragsdell's intervention, Loughborough University agreed to contribute further by sponsoring a PhD studentship attached to the post of the project's Knowledge Management Officer. After the start of the project, the University continued its involvement by sponsoring the PhD studentship, supporting and supervising the author and contributing its knowledge management and other expertise through the Project Steering Group and other means. The PhD proposal was composed and submitted during October 2013 – January 2014. Over the same period, baseline intelligence gathering was initiated and systems devised for recording, gathering and storing data (Figure 1.3).
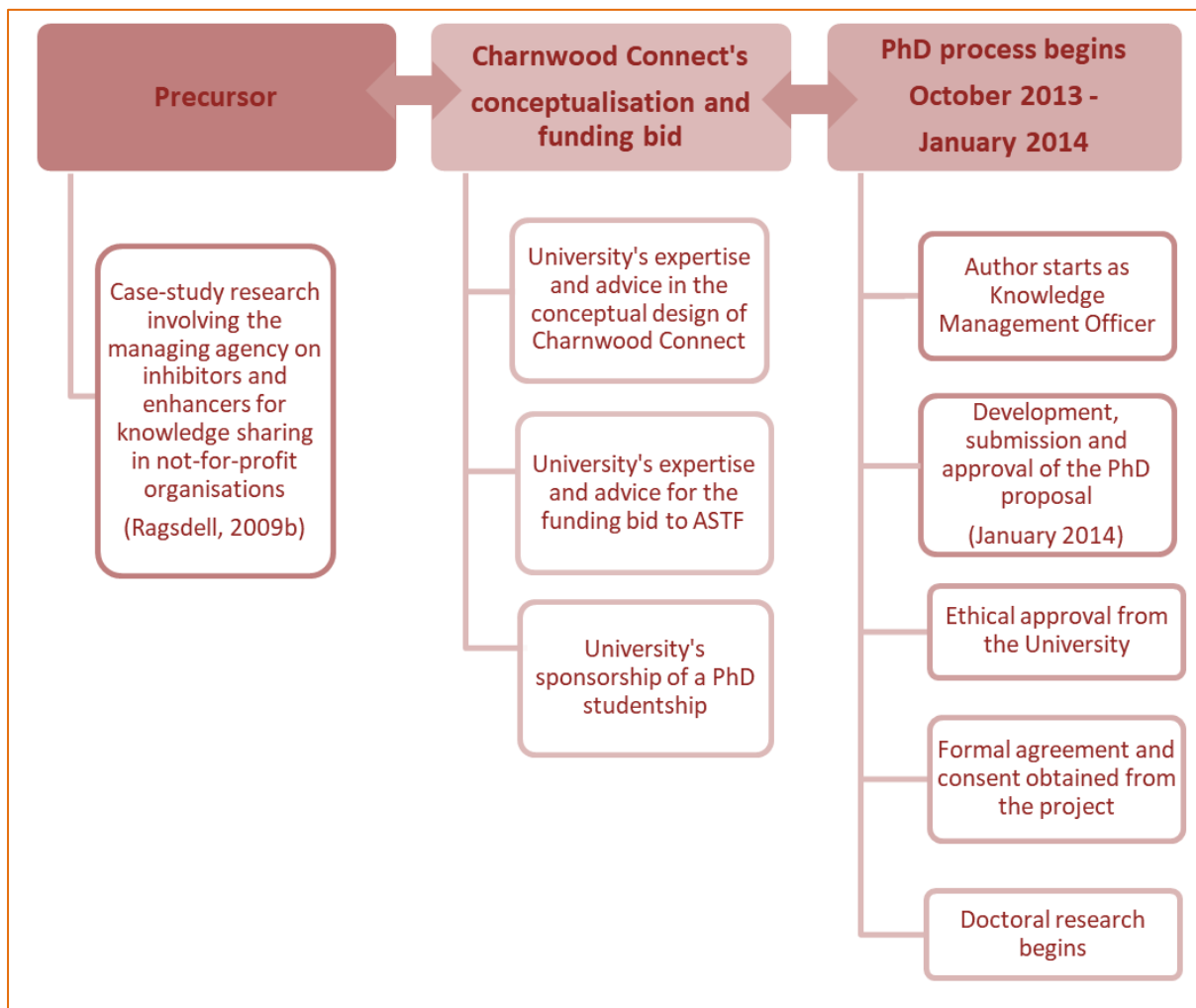
Figure 1.3: Timeline 1: Precursor, reconnaissance and concept formation (October 2013 – January 2014).

1.2.5 Timeline 2: Charnwood Connect action research project (January 2014 – September 2015)

Over this period, the author was *in situ* and undertook almost 2,700 hours of face-to-face practice, observations, data gathering, presentations and discussions plus academic research. A series of action research notes, both conceptual and methodological, were produced as critical reflection and discussion tools for the author's PhD supervision sessions. Once the research approach and the conceptual focus of the study were consolidated, a range of overlapping research and practice activities were undertaken, as summarised in Figure 1.4.
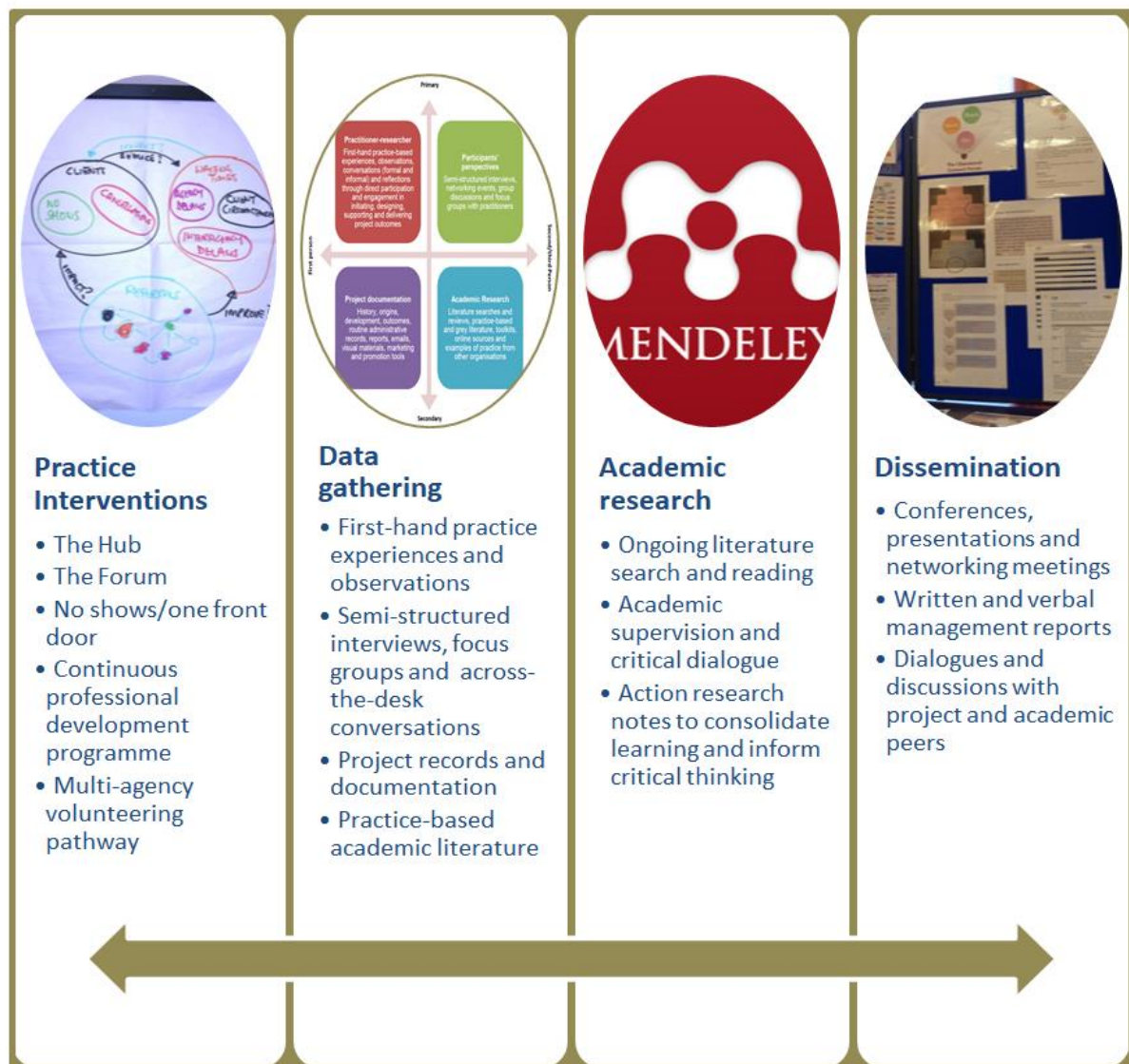
Figure 1.4: Timeline 2: Charnwood Connect action research project (January 2014 – September 2015).

1.2.6   Timeline 3: Data analysis and thesis compilation (October 2015 – March 2018)

During this period, the author consolidated the literature review, coded and organised the data (chapter 3, section 3.7.6; Appendices 3.1, 3.5 and 3.6), analysed the findings and compiled the thesis (Figure 1.5).
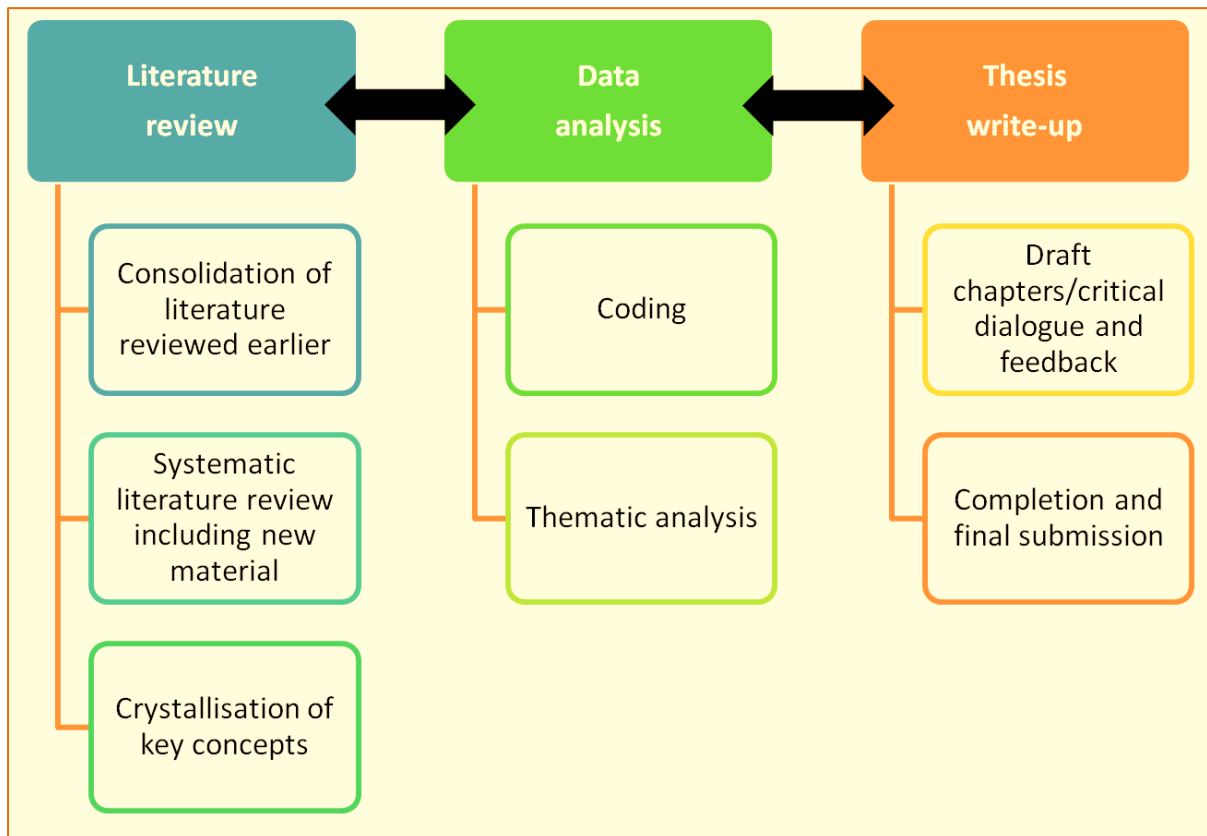
Figure 1.5: Timeline 3: Thesis compilation (October 2015 – March 2018).

1.3   THE ORGANISATIONAL SETTING

Advice, information and support[2] services play an important role in empowering citizens in democracies (Wiggan and Talbot, 2006; The Low Commission, 2014). Many not-for-profit organisations provide advice services but increasingly have to do so in a climate of declining public funding, austerity measures and the incremental privatisation of social welfare provision (Cabinet Office, 2012; Farr et al, 2014). The drying up of traditional sources of

---

[2] Although Charnwood Connect's constituent agencies comprised advice, information and support agencies, the overarching term "advice" is used interchangeably as the strategic focus of the Advice Services Transition Fund (ASTF) was the advice sector.

funding for the not-for-profit sector has led to organisational mergers, greater partnership working, take overs, the adoption of business models traditionally associated with the private sector and in some cases, closures (Advice Services Alliance, 2009; Sigafoos and Morris, 2013).

1.3.1 Advice work

Not-for-profit organisations provide free advice, information and support services to local communities on a range of issues including asylum, immigration, benefits, debt, employment, housing and consumer affairs (Cabinet Office, 2012). The advice, information and support sector is diverse, comprising specialist and generalist agencies. Not all not-for-profit organisations provide advice but they still form an important part of local provision as signposting and referral agencies to specialists such as the Citizens Advice Bureau (Advice Services Alliance, 2009). In its report, the Low Commission (2014, p. vii) cites examples of individuals who needed advice to help them resolve their situations:

- "A young couple are unable to get their landlord to undertake essential repairs
- A nurse who has worked in the NHS for 20 years cannot rent a new house because her immigration status has not been regularised
- A person in debt has started suffering from severe anxiety and depression and is in danger of losing his house and his job
- A person has been unfairly dismissed
- A disabled person loses her benefits after having been wrongly assessed as fit for work
- An older person living in a cold house is not able to get advice on income maximisation to enable her to heat the house properly" (The Low Commission, 2014, p. vii).

A review into the impact and value of advice offered by the Citizens Advice found that the social and economic circumstances of many clients and their wellbeing would have been worse if they had not managed to access advice (Farr et al, 2014).

1.3.2 The Advice Services Transition Fund (ASTF)

The Big Lottery launched its two-year ASTF programme for the advice sector in October 2012 with financial support from the Government. Governmental support was forthcoming because in its review of the not-for-profit advice sector in England, the Cabinet Office had found that the sector played "….a significant role in providing free information and advice to the public on a wide range of issues" (Cabinet Office, 2012, p. 4). Awards of between £50,000 and £350,000 were made to 228 projects with a total allocation of £65 million across England (https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/astf). Local advice services were funded to meet two core objectives: to improve service outcomes for clients and, to become more resilient, modern and enterprising with more diversified income streams to meet future needs (ASTF, 2012).

1.3.3 The Charnwood Connect partnership

The Charnwood Connect partnership was established through the ASTF funding and comprised advice agencies and other stakeholders in the Borough of Charnwood, Leicestershire. Charnwood Connect comprised three types of partner organisations: seven advice providers, a community centre functioning as a sign-posting and referral point and an advisory partner (Table 1.1). Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau was the project's managing agency with The Bridge East Midlands as its lead partner agency. Strategic steer for the project was provided by the Project Steering Group comprising all the partner agencies.

Table 1.1: Composition of the Charnwood Connect partnership		
Partner type	**Organisation**	**Expertise/niche**
Advice, information and support services	Charnwood Borough Council	Local authority
	Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau	Advice
	Human Rights and Equality	Equality
	Living Without Abuse	Domestic abuse
	ProActive Community Endeavours	Advice
	Student Advice and Support Services	Advice and support
	The Bridge	Housing and homelessness
	Youth Shelter	Housing and homelessness
Signposting and referral	John Storer House	Community centre
Advisory partner	Centre for Information Management, Loughborough University	Education, teaching and research

The project was established to "….enable people to take control of their lives by offering advice, information and support on social welfare law" and "….tackle deprivation and social

exclusion….and deliver services in a way that meets people's needs" (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a, p. 8-10). In their joint agreement, partners committed themselves to "….work and collaborate together in a spirit of openness and in good faith" (Charnwood Connect Partnership Agreement, October 2013b, p. 6) and abide by the principles of equality in the treatment of staff and the procurement of goods and services. The multi-agency project was an inter-organisational community of practice committed to the fundamental principles of mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoires (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998a, 2004). Extracted from their own documents, Table 1.2 summarises the principles and values that underpin the mission of each partner organisation.

Table 1.2: Extracts of partner organisations' mission statements	
Organisation	**Mission**
Centre for Information Management, Loughborough University	"….undertake internationally recognised research for the benefit of the individual, organisations, government and society"
Charnwood Borough Council	"….provides a range of services to its 171,000 residents"
Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau	"….provide the advice people need for the problems they face and improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives"
Human Rights and Equality Charnwood	"….works towards eliminating discrimination, campaigns for equality of opportunity and promotes good relations between all persons"
John Storer Charnwood	"….encourages, supports and develops individuals, groups and organisations involved in community action, promotes new initiatives, establishes partnerships"
Living Without Abuse	"….all people have the right to live safely, without fear of violence and abuse"
ProActive Community Endeavours	"….develop community initiatives that offer services"
Student Advice Support Service	"….provides advice, empowerment and support on a wide range of issues….support they need to help resolve their problems"
The Bridge East Midlands	"….delivering a range of housing related support services to homeless and vulnerably housed people"
Youth Shelter	"….provides support, accommodation, activities and education to the community"

1.3.4   Project objectives and the author's role

The partnership project was funded for two years (October 2013 – September 2015) and now continues as an unfunded network to improve local advice services. Charnwood Connect was funded to meet five objectives:

1. To develop an Information Technology Knowledge Hub (the Hub) for use by practitioners, clients and local communities.

2. To establish Charnwood Connect Forum (the Forum) as a face-to-face platform for knowledge sharing and networking by practitioners.

3. To improve access to preventative advice and specialist support to enable clients and communities to take greater control over their lives.

4. To develop and deliver a financial education training programme giving clients the skills, knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions about money management.

5. To establish a multi-agency volunteering pathway to increase the number of frontline advisers in response to a growing demand for advice services.

The author was employed as the project's Knowledge Management Officer with lead responsibility for developing the online Hub and the face-to-face practitioners' Forum. In addition to these two devolved responsibilities, the author worked collaboratively with other project co-workers and the partnership to meet the project's other objectives. The author was based in the offices of the managing agency for two years, sharing space with paid and voluntary advice practitioners, managers and project co-workers. This gave him the opportunity to build peer relationships, experience the daily work of a busy advice agency and participate in across-the-desk conversations, all of which informed the delivery of the project outputs and this study.

1.4   STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is presented in four parts. Part A comprises the literature review (chapter 2) and the research methodology (chapter 3). Part B consists of the practice elements beginning with chapter 4, an examination of the practice intervention to develop the Hub. Chapter 5 examines the practice intervention to develop the Forum and part B ends with chapter 6, a discussion of ten themes that emerged from the two practice interventions. Part C consists of chapter 7 "Discussion" and chapter 8 "Conclusion" and the thesis ends with part D, comprising the references and appendices.

1.4.1 Part A

Following this introduction, **chapter 2** is a critical review and analysis of the key literature on the concepts and practices of knowledge brokering and knowledge sharing within the broader discourse of knowledge management. The chapter discusses the knowledge economy roots of knowledge management and the under-representation of the not-for-profit sector in this discourse. The chapter examines existing analyses about knowledge management in the not-for-profit sector before going on to examine the concept and purpose of knowledge brokering and the role of knowledge brokers. The chapter concludes by identifying some key gaps in existing knowledge and literature which this study sought to address.

Chapter 3 "Methodology" starts with an analytic overview of action research followed by a discussion and declaration of the ontological, epistemological and philosophical stance taken in this study. A critical examination is undertaken of insider action research, a variant of action research, before a justification is provided for its use. Issues about validity, reliability and ethics are important considerations in any qualitative research especially action research and there is an in-depth discussion about how these were managed. This is followed by a detailed description and analysis about how the research was conducted, its key phases and, the data collection and processing strategies that were deployed.

1.4.2 Part B

Chapter 4 examines the use of knowledge brokering as a practice intervention to design and develop the Hub, an online knowledge sharing platform for practitioners, clients and local communities. The practice intervention is examined through the conceptual lens of critical incident analysis (Flanagan, 1954; Keatinge, 2002; Butterfield *et al*, 2005). The chapter provides an overview of the impetus behind the Hub, its purpose and intended target audience followed by an outline of the four action research cycles that were involved. Each action research cycle is examined through one critical incident using a uniform structure comprising six elements: a brief description of the situation, a summary of the actions taken, an overview of the resulting outcomes, the author's reflections in action, reflections on action and sense making after the incident and finally, the learning outcomes.

Chapter 5 examines the second practice intervention, the Forum, a face-to-face knowledge sharing platform for practitioners working for the partnership organisations. The chapter begins with an overview of the impetus behind the Forum, its purpose and targeted beneficiaries followed by an illustration of the iterative processes involved. The chapter then presents an illustration of the action research cycles through which the Forum evolved and their associated critical incidents. As with the Hub (chapter 4), four critical incidents are examined using the same uniform structure comprising six elements.

Chapter 6 discusses the main themes that emerged from the two practice interventions. Ten thematic areas are discussed: practice improvements, practice-based learning, shared practices, relational brokering, internal brokering, inter-organisational communities of practice, online and in-person communities of practice, brokering boundaries and values and principles.

1.4.3   Part C

Chapter 7 "Discussion" is an interpretive and discursive narrative examining and analysing the outcomes and implications of the two practice interventions (chapters 4 and 5) and the themed discussion (chapter 6). The discussion is conducted in relation to extant (chapter 2) and emerging academic literature as well as wider thinking about knowledge sharing and knowledge management. The analysis begins with an examination of the role of values, principles and human agency in knowledge brokering. Then it moves on to examine knowledge brokering as a form of practice and the role and positionality of knowledge brokers. Finally, the discussion considers the challenges and intricacies of developing and maintaining inter-organisational communities of practice in regressive social policy environments and what this means for collaborative working in the not-for-profit sector.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter bringing the thesis to a close by drawing together the main outcomes and conclusions from the preceding analyses. The research questions are reviewed followed by a summary of the main research outcomes. Next, there is a summary of the knowledge contribution followed by a discussion of the study's limitations and recommendations for further research, practice and policy. Finally, the author offers a

personal reflective statement about his experiences of undertaking the study before closing the thesis with concluding comments.

1.4.4   Part D

This part comprises the references and the appendices.

1.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter introduces the study and its conceptual focus, not-for-profit organisational context and research approach. The study examines knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector. The setting for the research was a newly established partnership project funded for two years where the author was employed as its Knowledge Management Officer. The study's research questions, aims and objectives were determined through critical reflection, the literature review, across-the-desk conversations with practitioners, the author's insider position and the organisation's context and objectives. The chapter provides an outline of the structure of the thesis and a summary content of each chapter. The next chapter is the literature review.

Part A

Part A comprises the literature review (chapter 2) and the research methodology (chapter 3).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present a critical review of the key literature on knowledge brokering in the context of the not-for-profit sector and identify gaps to guide the research aims and objectives (Appendix 2.1: Literature review strategy). Knowledge management is a relatively new academic discipline (Wiig, 1997; Jashapara, 2005; Jasimuddin, 2006; Hislop, 2010) and the concept and theory of knowledge brokering is even more recent (Hargadon, 1998, 2002; Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF), 2003; Pettit *et al*, 2011; Haas, 2015). The brokering concept has been in currency in disciplines such as sociology (Simmel, 1902a, 1902b, 1950; Park, 1928), social anthropology (Geertz, 1960), technology and innovation (Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Verona, Prandelli and Sawhney, 2006), industry and commerce (Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Hargadon, 1998; 2002), health and medicine (Lomas, 2007; Dhir *et al*, 2008) and politics (Christopoulos and Ingold, 2011). However, academic thinking about knowledge brokering as an organisational intervention is still evolving (Ward, House and Hamer, 2009a, 2009b; Phipps and Morton, 2013; Ragab and Arisha, 2013; Haas, 2015) although there have been some recent contributions (Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014; Kent, Sommerfeldt and Saffer, 2016; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016).

The literature review begins by establishing the knowledge economy roots of knowledge management and the relatively sparse attention paid to knowledge management in the not-for-profit sector. The chapter proceeds to examine existing literature and the emerging lessons about knowledge management in the not-for-profit sector. The concept of knowledge brokering and its contrasting orientations are examined next followed by an analysis of the role of knowledge brokers. This is followed by a summative reflection on the literature review identifying key gaps in existing knowledge and the contribution of this study, before ending the chapter with a conclusion.

2.2   KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR

This section examines the knowledge economy and private sector roots of knowledge management as an academic subject showing that literature about knowledge management

in the not-for-profit sector is limited. The section also examines the significance of institutional contexts on knowledge management behaviours and strategies.

2.2.1   The knowledge economy roots of knowledge management

Post-industrial societies and the knowledge economy are the "genesis" (Jasimuddin, 2006, p. 172) of knowledge management (Wiig, 1997; Dalkir, 2005; Jasimuddin, 2006; Lambe, 2011; Hislop, 2013). The academic roots of knowledge management lie in capitalising knowledge assets to improve the performance, competitive edge and profitability of private sector firms and businesses (Hovland, 2003; Awad and Ghaziri, 2004; Huck, Al and Rathi, 2011; Franssila, 2013). In pre-industrial societies, oral traditions and printed artefacts were prevalent as mediums for socialisation, intellectual development and knowledge sharing (Gordon and Grant, 2004; Jashapara, 2011). In the knowledge economy, knowledge is construed as an objectified, economic asset to optimise firm profitability (Franssila, 2013), no longer just a cognitive or socialisation pathway for learning and development (Shin, 2004; Mansingh, Osei-Bryson and Reichgelt, 2009).

Traditional economic activities such as manufacturing are outmoded (Bell, 1976; Jashapara, 2011; Hislop, 2013) by abstract conceptualisation and "....the ability to create, distribute and apply knowledge" (Defillippi, Arthur and Lindsay, 2006, p. 1). Information and knowledge-intensive service sectors are the main generators of economic wealth (Hislop, 2013) with communication and technological innovations offering new possibilities for stimulating "....rich, interactive, face-to-face knowledge encounters virtually" (Dalkir, 2005, p. 13). Drucker's (1999, p. 79) insightful proclamation that "....the most valuable asset of a 21st. century institution (whether business or non-business) will be its knowledge workers and their productivity" epitomises the knowledge economy and the shift from physical plant and manual labour to intellectual capital as the dominant asset base of organisations. The knowledge economy discourse assumes that prior to the structural realignment of post-industrial economies and the arrival of knowledge intensive organisations, traditional manufacturing industries and pre-industrial societies were knowledge light (Jashapara, 2011; Hislop, 2013). Moreover, the emphasis on knowledge work and the growth of the service sector implies that all occupations are equally knowledge intensive overlooking the increasing numbers of low-skilled, service sector workers (Hislop, 2013).

As an academic discipline and managerial concept, knowledge management is tied intrinsically to the discourse about the knowledge economy and the capitalisation of knowledge assets (Drucker, 1999; Awad and Ghaziri, 2004; Defillippi, Arthur and Lindsay, 2006; Brinkley *et al*, 2009; Hislop, 2013). Early knowledge management literature emerged from research in the for-profit sector and was pitched at academic and practitioner audiences that were interested in exploiting knowledge as a capital asset (Wiig, 1993, 1997; Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Riege, 2005; Meissner and Wolf, 2008; Bedford, 2012; Corfield, Paton and Little, 2013; Bloice and Burnett, 2016). However, debates continue about the definitions, understandings and interpretations of knowledge management, its application and effectiveness in different contexts, and whether or not knowledge management is here to stay (Scarbrough, Robertson and Swan, 2005; Hislop, 2010; Grant, 2011; Hislop, 2013; Serenko and Bontis, 2013).

2.2.2 Oversight of the not-for-profit sector

Knowledge economy discourse has tended to focus on its implications for the for-profit, commercial sector. Consequently, there is a bigger and more established volume of literature about knowledge management in the private sector and discourse is framed by the language, drivers and ethos of this sector. In contrast, analysis is underdeveloped about the knowledge economy and its implications for knowledge management strategies and practices in not-for-profit organisations, the public sector and small and medium-sized enterprises (Riege, 2005; Ragsdell, 2009b, 2013; Corfield, Paton and Little, 2013; Ragsdell, Espinet and Norris, 2014; Bloice and Burnett, 2016). Despite being the third sector (HM Treasury and Cabinet Office, 2007; Corry, 2010; Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016) juxtaposed with the private and public sectors, thinking about knowledge management in this integral third of the knowledge economy remains underdeveloped (Ragsdell, 2009b, 2013, 2016; Ragsdell, Espinet and Norris, 2014; Bloice and Burnett, 2016; Hume and Hume, 2016; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2016). A similar case exists for the public sector where knowledge is as critical as in the private sector (Amayah, 2013) although there have been some recent contributions (Ward *et al*, 2012; Jain and Jeppesen, 2013; Massaro, Dumay and Garlatti, 2015).

Even though similarities such as sectoral heterogeneity and efficiency drives exist between the private, public and not-for-profit sectors (Lettieri, Borga and Salvoldelli, 2004; Kong, 2007, 2010), the distinct impact of the knowledge economy on the not-for-profit, third sector is relatively unknown. Chauhan, Ragsdell and Olphert (2015, p. 2) state that "….though we live in a knowledge economy, increasingly undertaking knowledge-centric roles, the implications of this are not fully obvious for the VCS….voluntary work and unpaid efforts are defining characteristics of work within the VCS and any analysis of the knowledge economy needs to begin embracing the economic, social and cultural value of such work". The not-for-profit sector is founded on and driven by a social mission (Jeavons, 1982; Hume and Hume, 2016) with a concern for community development, not profit, collaboration not competitiveness, and human welfare not mass consumerism. In order to develop a more comprehensive insight about the knowledge economy and knowledge management practices, it is important to understand the nature of this sector.

2.2.3 The institutional setting of the not-for-profit sector

Conceptualisations about the not-for-profit sector, its structural niche within society and boundary demarcations are contested (Alcock, 2010; Macmillan, 2012; Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016). Salamon and Sokolowski (2016, p. 1525) argue that "….the plethora of terms and concepts in use raises questions about whether a coherent conceptualisation of the third sector is possible". Corry (2010) suggests that definitions about the voluntary sector tend to fall into two categories: ontological and epistemological. Citing the increasing use of the term "the third sector", Corry (2010, p. 13) suggests that ontological definitions tend to describe the voluntary sector as a "residual" phenomenon which is neither market orientated (private) nor a bureaucracy (local and central governments). Ontologically defined, the sector occupies a unique space between the state, the public sector and the free market (Mansell and Steinmueller, 2000; Kendall, 2003), does not come under direct governmental control, serves a public cause and engages citizens without compulsion (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016).

By contrast, epistemological definitions (Corry, 2010) conceptualise the not-for-profit sector as a social construction arising out of encounters with other societal institutions. The sector lies in an "intermediate area" (Evers, 1995, p. 159) contributing to "….the financial stability

and social reach of traditional welfare services without expanding the size of the public sector" (Mansell and Steinmueller, 2000, p. 420). The sector creates social value (Lettieri, Borga and Savoldelli, 2004; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2016) by providing social welfare services (Lettieri, Borga and Savoldelli, 2004; Renshaw and Krishnaswamy, 2009; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2016) and strengthening communities (Hudson, 1995; Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016). Hudson (1995) describes how the not-for-profit sector operates in a political economy intersecting with government and the market (Billis, 1991; Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016). As part of a political economy (Hudson, 1995), environmental factors such as new public managerialism, austerity measures and re-definitions of the local state (Pollitt, Birchall and Putman, 1998; Brinkerhoff, 2002; van der Val, De Graaf and Lasthuizen, 2008; Rees, Mullins and Bovaird, 2012) impact on the values, practices and service outcomes of the not-for-profit sector (Kong, 2007, 2010; van der Val, De Graaf and Lasthuizen, 2008).

Despite multiple intersections with societal institutions, the not-for-profit sector remains distinguishable by its social mission to provide services that are free at the point of delivery (Jeavons, 1992; Hudson, 1995; Hume and Hume, 2016; Salmon and Sokolowski, 2016). Constituent organisations share the common historical roots and social mission of philanthropy, mutual self-help, direct action, plugging gaps in services and community association (Billis, 1991; Adirondack, 2006; Harris, 2010).

2.2.4 Institutional settings and knowledge management strategies

Knowledge creation is a situational process with organisations providing the contextual basis for the amplification of individual "personal, context-specific" tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995, p. 59). Currie and White (2012, p. 1335) concur that knowledge is situational and can "....never be removed from its context, as it is bound to its use, and its user within the organisation". Organisational philosophy, values, principles and practices frame the context for "....cultural values and norms, embedded in structural relationships, and reflected in strategic priorities" (Zheng, Yang and McLean, 2010, p. 764) with knowledge management facilitating the link between an organisation's internal interface with its external environment (Zheng, Yang and McLean, 2010). Institutional settings give meaning and value to knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995;

Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Currie and White, 2012) and influence knowledge management strategies (Kothari *et al*, 2011; Urquhart, Porter and Grunfeld, 2011). Hovland (2003, p. 8) asserts that "….organisations function in different ways in different cultural, political and economic contexts…the best KM, learning and evaluation strategies in the UK are not the best KM, learning and evaluation strategies in Uganda". Heisig's (2009) contribution on knowledge management frameworks reveals that successful implementation of knowledge management strategies is dependent on organisational circumstances and contexts. Table 2.1 summarises the contrasting circumstances and settings of the not-for-profit, private and public sectors for consideration when developing compatible knowledge management strategies.

2.2.5 Knowledge management in not-for-profit organisations

Not-for-profit organisations are knowledge intensive organisations (Bloice and Burnett, 2016) reliant on a combination of paid and volunteer practitioners (Hurley and Green, 2005), driven by a "social mission" (Hume and Hume, 2016, p. 106), committed to improving client-centric services (Downes and Marchant, 2016) and involved in community capacity building, knowledge co-creation and shared learning (Lettieri, Borga and Salvoldelli, 2004; Guldberg *et al*, 2013). Relationships, community capacity building, cultivating communal capital and facilitating social action are fundamental to the ethos and practices of the not-for-profit sector (Jeavons, 1992; Chaskin, 2001; Walter, Lechner and Kellermans, 2007; Renshaw and Krishnaswamy, 2009; Hume and Hume, 2016).

The not-for-profit sector operates in an increasingly competitive climate (Kong, 2007, 2010; Rees, Mullins and Bovaird, 2012; Bloice and Burnett, 2016). With reduced funding, the sector has to minimise knowledge outflows and maximise knowledge sharing to enable it to continue fulfilling its social mission (Hume and Hume, 2008; Renshaw and Krishnaswamy, 2009; Guldberg *et al*, 2013). Voluntary work and unpaid efforts are fundamental to service delivery and management in not-for-profit sector organisations. The dependency of knowledge intensive, not-for-profit organisations on the skills, competences and abilities of a "transient" volunteer workforce (Ragsdell, 2013, p. 1; Bloice and Burnett, 2016; Hume and Hume, 2016) means knowledge loss is tangible and can impair performance when individuals exit (Hurley and Green, 2005; Wynne, 2010).

Table 2.1: Contrasting features of the not-for-profit, private and public sectors			
Features	**Not-for-profit**	**Private**	**Public**
Core values	• Mainly social	• Mainly commercial	• Mainly social with a degree of commercialism
Operational drivers	• Client + community needs • Funders'/commissioners' priorities	• Consumer trends and demands • Market place • Profit/bottom line	• Government policy • Market place • Local electorate
State relations	• Autonomous	• Autonomous	• Quasi-autonomous
Ownership and accountability	• Community • Service users/clients • Members • Board of trustees/ management committees	• Shareholders • Executive boards	• Voters • Citizens • Elected representatives
Finance	• Grant-aid • Donations • Public fund-raising • Non-profit distribution • Surplus reinvested in services	• Profit • Distribution of surplus to shareholders • Investment	• Taxation • Public Finance Initiatives • Public-private partnerships
Governance	• Boards • Trustees • Management committees • User groups	• Boards • Chief Executives • Shareholders	• Boards • Chief Executives and paid officers • Trustees • User groups
Staffing	• Paid + voluntary	• Paid	• Paid + voluntary
Societal contribution	• "Cinderella" services • Difficult to decipher	• Engine for wealth creation and prosperity	• Provider of essential local services • Burden on state and taxpayers

Table 2.1: Adapted from Hudson, 1995; Billis, 2010; Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016.

In the not-for-profit sector, knowledge tends to be individualised, tacit and often accumulated experientially through active engagement in the community (Renshaw and Krishnaswamy, 2009; Cantu and Monragon, 2016). Knowledge is not always codified, documented or explicit (Lettieri, Borga and Salvoldelli, 2004; Ragsdell, Espinet and Norris, 2014) though not-for-profit organisations do manage both codified and uncodified knowledge (Renshaw and Krishnaswamy, 2009). Schatzki (2012, p. 14) explains how human behaviour is an "open-ended, spatially-temporally dispersed nexus of doings and sayings" which is not always expressed verbally. This raises a knowledge management challenge about how organisations absorb individual, informal and *ad hoc* knowledge (Haldin-

Herrgard, 2000; Baskerville and Dulipovici, 2006) and convert this into shared knowledge to improve practice (Amayah, 2013). Davenport and Prusak (1998, p. 90) describe how "….conversations at the water cooler or in the company cafeteria are often occasions for knowledge transfer" but acknowledge that "….tacit and ambiguous knowledge is especially hard to transfer" from its point of origin to elsewhere. This means that it is not possible to share fully or make use of the tacit or hidden knowledge (Kingston, 2012) from informal, exclusive spaces which are accessed only by some members. The next section discusses the implications of this for knowledge sharing behaviours in the not-for-profit sector.

2.2.6   Knowledge sharing inhibitors and enhancers

Teng and Song (2011, pp. 104-105) assert that knowledge sharing is "….a critical link in the KM value chain: knowledge acquisition, storage, dissemination, and application. Without effective KS, this value chain will break". In knowledge sharing processes, there is a presumptive relationship between two or more parties. Effective knowledge sharing requires "….an act of reconstruction" (Hendriks, 1999, p. 92) of the shared knowledge in a different setting following a willing exchange between a party with knowledge and another that wishes to acquire it. Dixon (2000, p. 13) argues that "common knowledge" that is "….generated from the experience of people engaged in organisational tasks….linked to action" is fundamental to creating a "shared belief system" (Dixon, 2000, p. 9), building reciprocal relationships and managing incongruities in knowledge sharing processes (Anand and Walsh, 2016; Trusson, Hislop and Doherty, 2017).

Knowledge sharing involves working with other practitioners "….to solve problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies or procedures" (Wang and Noe, 2010, p. 117). Knowledge holders can take more pro-active interpretive roles by re-presenting the knowledge so that it can be understood and absorbed by others (Ipe, 2003). Bloice and Burnett (2016) state that in the not-for-profit sector, knowledge sources can extend beyond practitioners with contributions from clients. This element is reflected in their definition of knowledge sharing as "….the process of sharing and applying personal knowledge, published knowledge and knowledge from other sources such as service users in a meaningful and useful manner" (Bloice and Burnett, 2016, p. 128).

In her literature review on knowledge management in a not-for-profit advice agency, Ragsdell (2009b) identifies several factors that inhibit and enhance knowledge sharing in the for-profit sector: organisational culture, valuing prior experiences, room for experimentation, relationship building, good communications, trust and user-friendly information technology and training and development. Ragsdell's (2009b) case-study reveals several specific inhibitors and enhancers to knowledge sharing in not-for-profit organisations. These include structural factors such as the physical layout of offices and open door practices by managers, cultural factors such as openness and cooperative ethos and procedural factors such as the use of meetings as reporting and decision making platforms.

Teng and Song (2011) argue that knowledge sharing is less effective when it is demand-led, enforced and primarily for the benefit of the organisation. By contrast, supply-led approaches can lead to more favourable knowledge sharing cultures, give practitioners greater self-worth and encourage them to share knowledge. This conclusion echoes with Downes and Marchant's (2016) finding that intrinsic motivations are key to knowledge sharing by practitioners in not-for-profit organisations. With a volunteer workforce, practice interventions in the not-for-profit sector have to focus on motivators other than financial rewards or promotion prospects. Wynne (2010) identifies several challenges that impede knowledge management strategies in the not-for-profit sector. These include funding shortages, limited potential returns from knowledge management activities, the disproportionate effect of knowledge loss, a lack of succession planning and breaches in role boundaries between board members, paid staff and volunteers. Other challenges of implementing knowledge management in the sector include the transient nature of a volunteer workforce and the enforceability of knowledge management obligations, the capacity to invest in technological solutions and limited opportunities to undertake longer-term planning due to funding and other uncertainties (Ragsdell, 2016).

Applying Riege's (2005) private sector-based framework to their study, Bloice and Burnett (2016) argue that existing analysis on knowledge sharing barriers does not align comprehensively with the impediments faced by the not-for-profit sector. Bloice and Burnett (2016) identify other supplementary barriers to knowledge sharing that prevail in

the not-for-profit sector. These include the fear of formalising knowledge sharing processes, a transient workforce, value conflicts between altruism and competition, doubts about the value of technological solutions in person-centred organisations and the impact of external factors such as government. Factors inhibiting knowledge sharing are not insurmountable and the very idea of knowledge brokering, knowledge sharing and knowledge management suggests that individual, collective and organisational knowledge can be brokered, shared and managed. Even the processes of identifying factors that impede or enhance knowledge sharing are inherently knowledge sharing processes (Ward *et al*, 2012). As Riege (2005, p. 32) observes "….knowledge sharing has no real value to individuals and organisations unless those people who are in need of useful knowledge receive it, accept it, and also (re-)apply it". Reaching similar conclusions to Ragsdell (2009b), Akhavan and Zahedi's (2014) multi-case study which includes not-for-profit organisations suggests that effective knowledge sharing is possible through events, senior managerial support, corporate strategies, staff development and nurturing knowledge sharing communities. Another study concludes that inter-agency working and partnerships in the not-for-profit sector can create spaces for social interaction and public knowledge sharing (Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2014).

Findings from other studies suggest that a combination of technological, social and managerial initiatives can support knowledge sharing in not-for-profit organisations (Hume and Hume, 2008; Huck, Al and Rathi, 2011; Downes and Marchant, 2016). Downes and Marchant (2016) suggest that knowledge management effectiveness in not-for-profit organisations can be realised through more proactive approaches such as celebrating employee and volunteer contributions to knowledge sharing, improving communications through formal channels such as meetings and training sessions and capitalising on client experiences, an important reservoir of local knowledge for not-for-profit organisations (Guldberg *et al*, 2013; Bloice and Burnett, 2016). In their review of literature on brokering and boundary spanners, Long, Cunningham and Braithwaite (2013, p. 1) link knowledge brokering interventions to knowledge sharing possibilities stating that brokers and spanners "….facilitate transactions and the flow of information between people or groups separated or hindered by some gap or barrier". Long, Cunningham and Braithwaite (2013, p.11) conclude that brokering roles are important "….for bringing useful ideas from one group to another, generating innovative ideas from the selection and synthesis of diverse sources of

information, and for increasing understanding and co-operation between groups". Understanding knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing is examined next.

2.3   KNOWLEDGE BROKERING

The purpose of this section is to discuss and analyse some key definitions and interpretations of knowledge brokering, their underpinning principles and implications for the not-for-profit sector.

2.3.1   Defining knowledge brokering

Theoretical conceptualisations of knowledge brokering stem from social networking studies about the transfer of learning and innovation through information and knowledge intermediaries (Burt, 1992, 2004; Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Hargadon, 2002; Obstfeld, 2005; Spiro, Acton and Butts, 2013; Faist, 2014; Malinovskyte, Mothe and Ruling, 2014; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016). Knowledge brokering is a practice intervention to facilitate knowledge sharing (CHSRF, 2003; Ward, House and Hamer, 2009a, 2009b), bridging boundaries (Wenger, 1998a), nurturing communities of practice (Wenger, 1998a, 2004), innovating (Hargadon, 1998; 2002) and improving practice (CHSRF, 2003). Knowledge brokers are human or organisational intermediaries that facilitate knowledge sharing, localise experiences to organisational settings (Raub and Ruling, 2002), facilitate collaborative learning and build social capital (Swan and Scarbrough, 2002). Even though knowledge is implicit in foundational literature on brokering (Burt, 1992; Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Wenger, 1998a; Brown and Duguid, 1998; Hislop, 2013), writers do not refer explicitly to this as knowledge brokering. Some use the terms broker, brokering and brokerage interchangeably (Verona, Prandelli and Sawhney, 2006; Meyer, 2010) while others use variations such as intermediary (Marsden, 1982; Gould and Fernandez, 1989; Franssila, 2013; Knight and Lyall, 2013). Knowledge brokering can be undertaken by individuals or organisations (Hargadon, 2002; Meyer, 2010; Haas, 2015) and knowledge brokers can be either. Other writers comment on how knowledge brokering can operate at different levels - individual, group, organisational and across countries (Dobbins *et al*, 2009; Karner *et al*, 2011).

Marsden (1982, p. 202) states that brokers are intermediaries who "….facilitate transactions between other actors lacking access to, or trust in, one another". Building on Simmel's (1902a, 1902b, 1950) sociological analysis and Marsden's (1982) definition, Gould and Fernandez (1989) conceptualise brokering as the flow of resources and social networking (CHSRF, 2003; Spiro, Acton and Butts, 2014; Aalbers and Dolfsma, 2015; Castro, 2015). Brokering is a "….relation involving three actors, two of whom are actual parties to the transaction and one of whom is the intermediary or broker….who facilitates transactions or resource flows as a broker whether or not the actor attempts to extract a direct reward" (Gould and Fernandez, 1989, p. 91).

Wenger's (1998a) conceptualisation of brokering forms part of his contribution on communities of practice and the social theory of learning, developed from an earlier work (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Brokering is a process of "….translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives" entailing "….ambivalent relations of multi-membership" with the broker facilitating connections across multiple communities of practice, boundaries and opening up "….new possibilities for meaning" (Wenger, 1998a, p.109). Brokering defines, reifies and communicates internal boundary demarcations in relation to the external environment in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998a). Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis (2014, p. 141) refine Marsden's (1982) definition conceptualising brokering as "….behaviour by which an actor influences, manages, or facilitates interactions between actors", disaggregating the process of brokering from the presence or absence of pre-existing ties between participants and viewing the broker as "….simply one of the parties".

Early organisational studies focus on the role of brokering in building trust and relationships, spanning structural holes and improving knowledge and information flows in networks (Marsden, 1982; Gould and Fernandez, 1989; Wenger, 1998a, 2004; Burt, 1992, 2004). These conceptualisations gravitate around brokering as a networking phenomenon to link disconnected parties (Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014) without acknowledging fully the (knowledge) content of that exchange (Obstfeld, 2005). Brown and Duguid (1998) state that "….those who participate in the practices of several communities may in theory broker knowledge between them". The explicit linking of knowledge and brokering by Brown and Duguid (1998), provides an initial basis to conceive knowledge brokering as a processual

medium for converting knowledge management strategies into operational realities, an underdeveloped organisational practice (Raub and Ruling, 2002; Haas, 2015).

2.3.2   An enabling architecture for practice

Wiig (1997), Dalkir (2005) and Serenko *et al* (2010) note that the impetus for knowledge management originated from practitioners who were tackling knowledge management challenges before academics took interest in the subject. Serenko *et al* (2010, p. 16) state that "….many of the initial academic papers were case studies and re-conceptualisations of what had already occurred in practice", a pattern that is observable about knowledge brokering research in the not-for-profit sector (Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2016).

Brown and Duguid (1998, p. 103) suggest that, together with knowledge translation and boundary objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989), knowledge brokering is a social strategy to diffuse knowledge and provides an "….enabling architecture for organisational knowledge". Similarly, Hargadon (2002, p. 41) suggests that knowledge brokering enables innovation and networking by bridging, applying and exploiting knowledge from different organisational settings. Central to Hargadon's (2002) premise is that by bridging domains knowledge brokering enables learning, knowledge sharing and innovation to take place. Hargadon (2002) proposes a five-step brokering framework that bridges learning and innovation: access (the preconditions necessary for innovation); bridging (moving knowledge and resources between different domains); learning (individuals transforming learning to practice); linking (applying external experiences and knowledge to solve internal issues) and building (moving from innovative ideas to implementation).

Gherardi and Nicolini (2002, p. 425) associate brokering with transferring practice from one setting or person to another, arguing that in doing so the broker initiates a "….social structure that reflects shared learning". In a similar vein, Obstfeld (2005, p. 100) describes knowledge brokering interventions as "social mechanics" to bridge knowledge gaps, share values, bridge boundaries and facilitate communities of practice. One of the first theorisations about knowledge brokering in the not-for-profit sector emerges from the CHSRF (2003). Drawing on developments in the Canadian health sector, the CHSRF (2003, p. i) defines brokering as "….bringing people together, to help them build relationships,

uncover needs, and share ideas and evidence that will let them do their jobs better….Knowledge brokering occurs even without individuals dedicated solely to brokering, so it's important to focus on the activities and processes, not the individuals". Also in the health sector, Long, Cunningham and Braithwaite (2013, p.11) highlight the significance of knowledge brokering in collaborative working "….for bringing useful ideas from one group to another, generating innovative ideas from the selection and synthesis of diverse sources of information, and for increasing understanding and co-operation between groups". Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis (2014, p. 136) describe the contemporary significance of brokering and how "….brokerage is a crucial means by which intra- and inter-organisational networks evolve, expand, and drive change".

In the health sector (CHSRF, 2003; Ward, House and Hamer, 2009a, 2009b; Dobbins *et al*, 2009), knowledge brokering is depicted as a practice intervention for spanning different domains, knowledge sharing, building communities of practice and innovating or developing practice. Blockages and barriers to knowledge sharing processes such as the transfer of public health information from health institutions to local communities are bridgeable "through a linking relationship" (Thompson, Estabrooks and Degner, 2006, p. 692). On a similar note, Verona, Prandelli and Sawhney's (2006, p. 767) conception of "technology brokering" involves bridging information technology knowledge gaps through better access, acquiring and absorbing knowledge, storing, memorising and retrieving. More recent research evidence shows a growing interest in understanding knowledge brokering in not-for-profit organisations as a facilitative mechanism for knowledge sharing and linking knowledge creators to users (Dobbins *et al,* 2009; Ward *et al*, 2009; Akhavan and Zahedi, 2014; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2014).

The analysis particularly from the health sector places emphasis on bridging knowledge gaps, developing shared understandings and nurturing social learning. This reflects Caplan's (1979, p. 459) conception of the "two-communities" knowledge divide whereby "….social scientists and policy makers live in separate worlds with different and often conflicting values, different rewards systems, and different languages". As argued by Star and Griesemer (1989), knowledge translation and the generation of common objects are necessary to bridge understandings and create a sense of commonality between different

communities. Compared to Caplan's (1979) two-communities deficit conceptualisation, Star and Griesemer's (1989) analysis describes the potential to create shared understandings between different communities through collective working and co-creation. Haas (2015) asserts that despite the longevity of the concept of brokering, knowledge brokering is relatively recent and less developed than other aspects of knowledge management such as boundary spanning and gatekeeping. Haas (2015, p. 1042) concludes that further research is needed on how individuals undertake knowledge brokering, spanning and gatekeeping roles and "….the levers that might stimulate knowledge transfer and diffusion within organisations over time".

2.3.3   Communities of practice

The conceptualisation of communities of practice is founded on the notion that learning and knowledge come from social encounters in the lived world not just through rote learning and inculcation of values, skills and knowledge (Lave and Wenger, 1991). As an interactive, collective medium for learning, a community of practice provides "….an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge" framed within a context, heritage and social relations (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 98). Knowledge brokers facilitate knowledge sharing, relationships and trust in communities of practice through joint working, mutuality and shared repertoires (Wenger, 1998a, 2004, 2010).

The conceptualisation of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) offers a shift in the pedagogy of learning from didactic, "banking" experiences (Freire, 1972a, p. 46) to more experiential, social and situational processes and practices (Swan, Scarbrough and Robertson, 2002; Osterlund and Carlile, 2003; Cox, 2012). The analysis places the person at the centre as "learning involves the whole person" (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 53) not just their cognitive or intellectual faculties. As mediums for social learning, communities of practice encapsulate the lived experiences and encounters of their members and provide a situated, context to experience and learn with others (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998a, 2004; Senge, 2006). Communities of practice enable practitioners to formulate their own worldviews and arrive at "….a shared understanding of what it does, of how to do it, and how it relates to other communities of practice" (Brown and Duguid, 1998, p. 96).

In communities of practice, interpersonal trust is less significant than the trust and mutual recognition which practitioners build through sharing experiences, knowledge and practices (Wenger, 2010). Ardichvili, Page and Wentling (2003, p. 547) found that organisations need to broker two forms of trust in virtual communities of practice: trustworthiness of social relationships between group members ("personal knowledge-based trust") and, a grounded belief that an organisation has in place the policies, protocols and practices to mitigate fear, ridicule or counter actions ("institution-based trust"). Kimble and Hildreth (2005) develop this further and argue that whether virtual or in-person, communities of practice have to strike a balance between the regularity of member contact, task clarity and members' motivations, if they are to be experienced as social processes.

Although the communities of practice literature has contributed to a pedagogical shift in thinking about learning and development in organisations and knowledge management studies, this is not without criticism (Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink, 2004; Cox, 2005; Zhang and Watts, 2008; Retna and Ng, 2011; Krishnaveni and Sujatha, 2012). Cox (2005) for instance, criticises the commodification of communities of practice and its application as a managerial tool of control and manipulation rather than an avenue for democratic exploration and expression. Gherardi and Nicolini (2002) criticise the communities of practice literature as veering towards a narrative of harmony and smooth passage without considering how such spaces address contestations, disharmony and diverse voices. In a similar vein, Osterlund and Carlile (2003) and Cox (2005) question Wenger's (1998a) emphasis on individual role identities being defined and bound by a community of practice without acknowledging power dynamics and the downsides of group thinking and uncritical knowledge reproduction.

2.3.4 Inter-organisational communities of practice

Practitioners who participate in several communities of practice are able to broker knowledge between them (Brown and Duguid, 1998). The process of working collectively through inter-organisational communities of practice provides learning and development spaces for practitioners to frame, adjust and adapt practices (Wenger, 1998a, 2004; Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink, 2004; Schatzki, 2012). Ishiyama (2016) found that a key challenge in inter-organisational communities of practice was the import and adoption

of practices from other organisations into settings where cultures and communities of practice existed already. Similarly, Kothari *et al* (2011) suggest that in collaborative initiatives and partnerships where individuals and organisations have established practices and approaches, unequal distribution of power and control can affect inter-organisational dynamics. As Vangen (2017, p. 263) argues, "….collaborations are complex, slow to produce results, and by no means guaranteed to deliver synergies and advantage". Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink (2004) suggest that greater risk-sharing, reciprocity and creating safe learning environments could mitigate ambiguities in inter-organisational communities of practice. Ishiyama (2016) argues that knowledge brokers can use their multi-membership status to broker diverse opinions between stakeholders and facilitate the integration of ideas.

Gherardi and Nicolini (2002, p. 419) extend their critique of communities of practice literature suggesting that extant literature does not account for practices which "….traverse the boundaries of several communities" such as inter-agency partnerships. Gherardi and Nicolini (2002) argue that understanding knowledge sharing in inter-organisational communities of practice can unravel the intricacies of knowledge sharing, learning exchanges and practice comparisons about "the way in which work gets done" (Brown and Duguid, 2001, p. 200) which may be restricted by only examining intra-organisational communities of practice. Wagner (2003) argues that knowledge sharing through partnership and inter-organisational work can transpose collective knowledge into feasible joint actions and generate knowledge which can be applied by organisations in their own settings. Wagner (2003) found that even if individual organisations struggle to apply shared knowledge to their own settings, partnership working enables joint processes and protocols to be developed. For not-for-profit organisations, inter-organisational cooperation and knowledge sharing is crucial particularly as they operate in political and social spaces (Hudson, 1995), are highly dependent on external funding and are vulnerable to public scrutiny (Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2014).

2.3.5   Boundaries and objects

Boundaries reify the internal and external parameters of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998a, 2004). Carlile (2004, p. 555) states that knowledge flows across boundaries are

"....progressively complex processes" and identifies three approaches. With a syntactic approach (Carlile, 2004) knowledge brokering involves the transfer of objectified information and knowledge for storage and future retrieval. The semantic approach (Carlile, 2004) attaches significance to subjective meanings and interpretations of knowledge by different practitioners. In this instance, knowledge brokering involves knowledge translation and facilitation of shared understandings. The pragmatic approach involves the transformation of knowledge at the boundary and "....a process of altering current knowledge, creating new knowledge" (Carlile, 2002, p. 445).

Although boundaries complicate knowledge flows, sharing and absorption (Carlile, 2004) they are also corridors where "....differences meet and exchanges occur" (Halley, 1997) providing opportunities "...to create and work in this shared collaborative space" (Phipps and Morton, 2013, p. 256). Boundaries provide spaces for different perspectives to meet, even conflicting ones (Halley, 1997), knowledge sharing to occur and the creation of common objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989; Wenger, 1998a, 2004). Boundary objects serve to maintain and reify boundaries but "....are plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites" (Star and Griesemer, 1989, p. 393). Diverse interests can converge through boundary objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989) and communities of practice enabling practitioners to become part of a shared system (Pawlowski and Robey, 2004). Objects such as documents produced jointly help to link diverse interests (Kimble, Grenier and Goglio-Primard, 2010), provide a focal point for knowledge sharing and enable practitioners to work together and separately (Smith and Ward, 2015) even where they have differences (Williams, 2002). Objects such as online portals provide a means to bridge boundaries and mobilise knowledge sharing in and between communities of practice (Kimble, Grenier and Goglio-Primard, 2010).

2.3.6   The significance of values

Organisations are not mechanistic, inanimate means of production devoid of human inputs and require attention to be paid to values, beliefs and principles that get played out in everyday practitioner encounters (Orr, 1996; Morgan, 1997). Values are fundamental in motivating individuals and organisations to work towards their goals for "when we think of

values, we think of what is important to us in life" (Schwartz, 2012, p. 3). Organisational values and beliefs have multiple manifestations (Blackler and Regan, 2009), are observable in "real behaviour" (Schein, 1996, p. 229) and influence knowledge brokering, knowledge sharing and knowledge management strategies and practices (Tushman, 1977; Schein, 1990; Ford and Chan, 2003; Zheng, Yang and McLean, 2010; Stadtler and Probst, 2012).

An inability to manage values can be a significant barrier to innovation leading organisations to "…..outsource part of their creative activity to knowledge brokers" (Verona, Prandelli and Sawhney, 2006, p. 775). Fisher (2010) argues that diverse ideas and worldviews within organisations can provide a springboard for brokering new ideas, defining different ways of working and creating stronger coalescence around core values. Otherwise, there is a "….risk of certain ideas dominating and being transplanted unquestioningly into contexts in which they are not appropriate" (Fisher, 2010, p. 5). In their examination of partnership working, Kothari *et al* (2011) found that although health researchers and policymakers had different values and norms, these were reconcilable through collaborative working. Similarly, Munro and Mynott (2014) argue that not-for-profit partnerships use specialist infrastructure funding to smooth out differences in values between partners to arrive at shared visions for improving local services. In organisations with multiple sites, competing member priorities and a large workforce, collaborative working, branding and reinforcing practices can contribute to an "….ongoing activity of calibrating and connecting with a set of shared values, goals, and expectations about what is important…." (Orlikowski, 2002, p. 257). Other writers (Brown and Duguid, 1998; Wenger, 1998a; Gherardi and Nicolini, 2002; Pawlowski and Robey, 2004) comment on how communities of practice help to negotiate, define and sustain common values and norms through joint working, mutuality and shared repertoires. The next section extends the discussion about the significance of values in knowledge brokering interventions.

2.4   KNOWLEDGE BROKERING ORIENTATIONS

This section examines three contrasting orientations to knowledge brokering and their underpinning values and principles: conduit, *tertius gaudens* and *tertius iungens* (Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014).

2.4.1 Conduit knowledge brokering

As with Marsden (1982) and Gould and Fernandez (1989), Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis (2014) describe conduit brokering as a relatively neutral act of brokering information between two or more parties. The knowledge broker does not seek to alter the relationship between two or more parties, the information content nor derive direct benefit. This is exemplified by the second stage of Hargadon's (2002) five-stage knowledge brokering process (see section 2.3.2). "Bridging" (Hargadon, 2002, p. 49) involves the movement of information and resources between individuals and organisations, leaving the recipient to decide how to moderate, adapt and absorb the information in their context without being influenced by the broker. The notion of conduit brokering aligns also with Spiro, Acton and Butts' (2013, p. 131) "transfer brokerage" involving information transfer between disconnected parties. This contrasts with two other brokering categories which involve greater intervention. "Matchmaking brokerage" involves the broker as the tie-maker between parties while in "coordination brokerage" the broker resolves information and resource needs without interested parties having direct contact with each other (Spiro, Acton and Butts, 2013, p. 131).

2.4.2 Disunion or *tertius gaudens* knowledge brokering (Figure 2.1)

Structural holes function as buffers "….like an insulator in an electric circuit" (Burt, 1992, p. 18) enabling third parties (individuals, organisations or consortia) to bridge these holes and create entrepreneurial advantage. In bridging structural holes, knowledge brokers create an advantage for themselves through the acquisition of new or different information and knowledge (Burt, 1992, 2004). Burt's (1992, p. 30) conceptualisation of brokering is founded on Simmel's (1902a, 1902b, 1950) sociological concept of *tertius gaudens* about how third parties change the dynamics of dyadic relationships. A third party changes the relationship between two parties by either mediating as a non-partisan, taking advantage of existing rivalries or deliberately creating conflict between the two (Simmel, 1902a, 1902b, 1950; Burt, 1992; Ahuja, 2000; Shi, Markoczy and Dess, 2009; Faist, 2014; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016). In a further analysis, Burt (2004) identifies four levels of brokerage, which enable brokers to create advantage when they bridge structural holes. The first involves making a group or an organisation aware of the issues, needs and challenges of other organisations within their network. The second one involves transferring

knowledge and learning. Thirdly, the broker raises awareness about what other organisations think and finally, the broker synthesises and combines ideas across different groups and organisations to aid interpretation and absorption of innovative ideas.
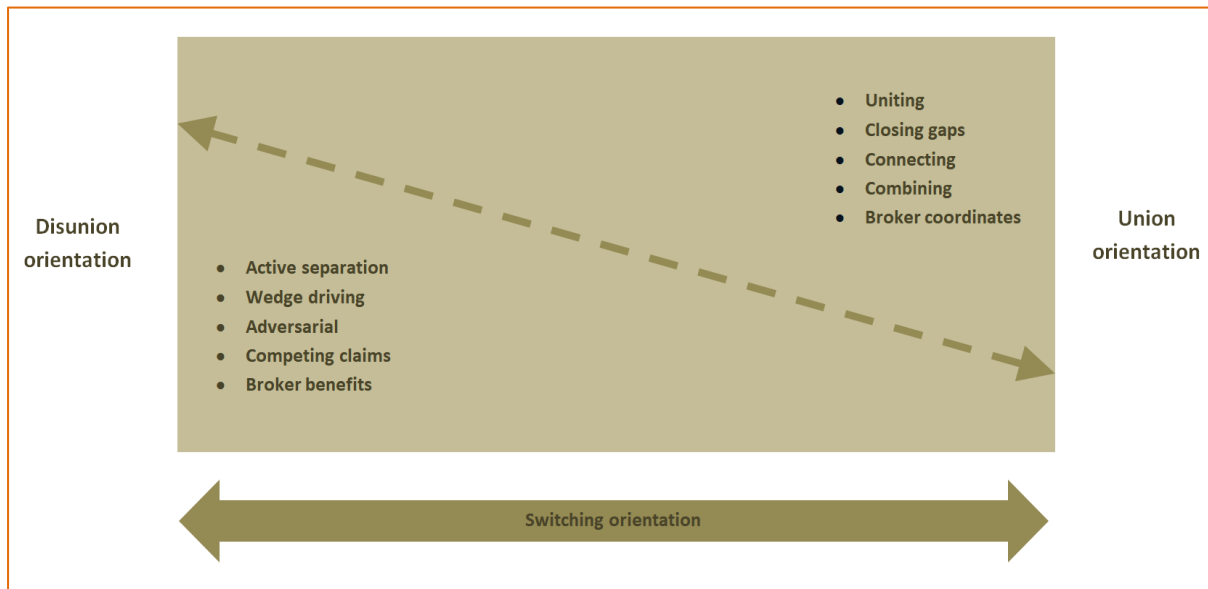
Figure 2.1: Behavioural characteristics of union, disunion and switching orientations.

2.4.3   Union or *tertius iungens* knowledge brokering (Figure 2.1)

Obstfeld (2005) questions Burt's (1992, 2004) adaptation of Simmel's (1902a, 1902b, 1950) *tertius gaudens* concept suggesting that this represents only one dimension of brokering. Building on Simmel's (1902a, 1902b, 1950) contrasting concept of non-partisanship, Obstfeld (2005, p. 102) proposes a uniting (union) *tertius iungens* alternative. *Tertius iungens* or union brokering is "….a strategic, behavioural orientation toward connecting people in one's social network by either introducing disconnected individuals or facilitating new coordination between connected individuals". Union strategies represent more unifying behaviours such as strengthening existing ties, supportive coordination, nurturing interdependence and working towards a common purpose (Obstfeld, 2005; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014).

2.4.4   *Tertius gaudens, tertius iungens* or both? (Figure 2.1)

Lingo and O'Mahony (2010) question the bipolar analysis that arises from Burt (1992, 2004) and Obstfeld's (2005) respective contributions on disunion and union knowledge brokering

orientations. Conceptions about brokering "….vacillate between two conceptions that vary in their understandings of the benefits of brokering….brokers who bridge structural holes tend to have better ideas and individually benefit from them" and the other one "….focuses on the benefits that accrues to the collective from connections among parties" (Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010, p. 47). Lingo and O'Mahony (2010) conclude that both union and disunion orientations can derive benefits for the collective not just for the broker. Knowledge brokers face ambivalence (Wenger, 1998a) in performing their roles and borrow from both *tertius* traditions to synthesise and integrate knowledge from multiple parties, a process described as "nexus work" (Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010, p. 47).

Similarly, in their study of middle management brokers, Shi, Markoczy and Dess (2009, p. 1474) conclude that the two *tertius* orientations are complementary not contradictory and constitute a "double-edged sword". Vernet (2012) describes the same phenomenon as switching behaviour between the two *tertius* orientations with brokers bringing participants together or keeping them apart contingent upon the situation. The idea of contingency brokering can be illustrated further by a recent study. Quintane and Carnabuci (2016) found that the behaviours of brokers were different from those of practitioners who were bedded in organisations. Brokers tended to undertake brokering activities more often than embedded participants. Brokers deployed disunion orientations when they were not embedded in organisations but adopted union orientations in situations where they had established relationships (Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016).

2.4.5   Overview of the orientations

Analysis of the three knowledge brokering orientations reveals that the commentary tends to revolve around four aspects: principles, the beneficiaries, the broker's role and characteristic brokering actions. Drawing on extant literature, Table 2.2 summarises the main features of the three knowledge brokering orientations using the four aspects as sub-headings and listing the key contributory authors. The analysis is extended in the next section through an examination of the role of knowledge brokers.

2.5   THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE BROKERS

The previous two sections examined definitions and conceptualisations about knowledge brokering processes. The purpose of this section is to examine the role of practitioners who broker knowledge.

2.5.1   Defining a knowledge broker's role

Hislop (2013) offers a dual conceptualisation of knowledge workers which provides a useful starting point for understanding a knowledge broker's role. The first conceptualises the knowledge worker as "….someone whose work is primarily intellectual, creative, and non-routine in nature, and which involves both the utilisation and creation of abstract/theoretical knowledge" (Hislop, 2013, p. 71). That is, knowledge work is the domain of a practitioner whose assumed or expressed job role is essentially cognitive. The second perspective views all work as involving knowledge and knowledge workers as "….anyone whose work involves the use of a reasonable amount of tacit and contextual and/or abstract/conceptual knowledge" (Hislop, 2013, p. 73). Adopting Hislop's (2013) dualistic analysis, a knowledge broker can be categorised respectively as a knowledge worker with niche or incidental responsibility for facilitating knowledge sharing in organisations. Franssila, (2013) argues that even if all knowledge workers broker knowledge as a routine part of their work, dedicated knowledge workers are required to facilitate knowledge sharing.

Table 2.2: Contrasting strategic knowledge brokering orientations			
	Conduit	**Disunion/*Tertius gaudens***	**Union/*Tertius iungens***
		Nexus work/contingent knowledge brokering	
		Borrows from both *tertius* orientations contingent upon the situation, choices and decisions made at the time	
Principles	• Neutrality • Non-committal	• Disunion • Division	• Union • Unity
Beneficiaries	• Mutual	• The broker	• The collective
The broker's role	• Ability to broker in dense networks • Acts as an intermediary	• Strategic advantage through ties with two or more parties • Generates/maintains competition between parties • Moderates information and knowledge flows • Knowledge superiority of the broker	• Uses knowledge superiority for the collective • Facilitates interactions and knowledge flows • Facilitates cooperation and coordination • Collective knowledge ownership and power
Characteristic brokering actions	• Structural holes are not a pre-requisite • Transfer of solutions between parties • Limited management of inter-party relations • Direct, indirect or no contact between parties • Information may be filtered, moderated or manipulated	• Exploitation of knowledge and information gaps • Movement of moderated knowledge and information between parties across structural holes • Strategic manipulation or active separation of unconnected parties • Builds individual social capital	• Synthesis of knowledge and information • Collective advantage created by closing knowledge gaps • Joins disconnected parties and new connections between existing stakeholders • Builds communal social capital
Contributory authors	• Marsden (1982) • Gould and Fernandez (1989) • Burt (1992) • Obstfeld, Borgatti & Davis (2014)	• Burt (1992, 2004) • Hargadon & Sutton (1997) • Baker and Obstfeld (1999) • Hargadon (2002) • Obstfeld (2005) • Fleming, Mingo and Chen (2007) • Shi, Markoczy & Dess (2009) • Lingo & O'Mahony (2010) • Vernet (2012) • Obstfeld, Borgatti & Davis (2014) • Kent, Sommerfeldt and Saffer (2016) • Quintane and Carnabuci (2016)	• Baker and Obstfeld (1999) • Obstfeld (2005) • Fleming, Mingo and Chen (2007) • Shi, Markoczy & Dess (2009) • Lingo & O'Mahony (2010) • Vernet (2012) • Obstfeld, Borgatti & Davis (2014) • Kent, Sommerfeldt and Saffer (2016) • Quintane and Carnabuci (2016)

Hargadon (1998, p. 214) defines knowledge brokers as individuals or organisations "….that profit by transferring ideas from where they are known to where they represent innovative new possibilities". Aalbers, Dolfsma and Koppius (2004, p. 10) describe knowledge brokers as practitioners who bridge "knowledge-islands" and nurture dialogues to link "….two or more employees and make transfer of knowledge possible". Knowledge brokers are a significant link in knowledge sharing processes in organisations as "….the process of spreading knowledge is believed to stimulate innovation" (Ward, House and Hamer, 2009b, p. 269). Long, Cunningham and Braithwaite (2013) argue that knowledge brokers are key catalysts in knowledge sharing and their absence affects the viability and functioning of networks. Knowledge brokers reduce the "knowledge distance" (Markus, 2001, p. 88) between the knowledge producer and re-user by preparing knowledge for its re-application, a perspective that is criticised for treating knowledge as an intact and transposable commodity.

Meyer (2010) defines knowledge brokers as link agents, knowledge managers and capacity builders who bridge knowledge producers and users. Meyer (2010, p. 118) argues that in facilitating knowledge sharing processes, knowledge brokers contribute towards the generation of "….a new kind of knowledge: brokered knowledge" creating a pathway "…towards a new world" (Schlierf and Meyer, 2013, p. 437). However, knowledge brokers are not just passive transmitters or translators of knowledge as they also contribute to knowledge co-creation. The material nature of knowledge changes through the knowledge broker's interventions, reinforcing the notion of knowledge as a subjective, socially constructed phenomenon (Meyer, 2010; Schlierf and Meyer, 2013).

Developments in knowledge brokering research in the field of health services reveal a number of trends. Lomas (2007) describes knowledge brokers as individuals who fill the knowledge gap between health research and its application in practice by clinical and other professionals. Similarly, Dobbins *et al* (2009) describe knowledge brokers as bridging the gap between those who produce health related knowledge and those who apply it. Ward, House and Hamer (2009a) argue for the deployment of knowledge brokers to bridge the gap between knowledge creators and users to help improve patient care. The works of Dobbins *et al* (2009) and Ward, House and Hamer (2009a) illustrate the growing interest in

developing a better understanding about the knowledge broker's role but also highlight how knowledge generation and diffusion are viewed as one-directional rather than co-creative processes.

2.5.2 The knowledge broker's positionality

Knowledge brokers are expected to "….manage carefully the coexistence of membership and non-membership, yielding enough distance to bring a different perspective, but also enough legitimacy to be listened to" (Wenger, 1998a, p. 110). Knowledge brokers must resist "….being pulled in to become full members and being rejected as intruders. Indeed, their contributions lie precisely in being neither in nor out" (Wenger, 1998a, p. 110). Like Wenger (1998a), other contributors also argue that knowledge brokers should sit remotely on the periphery or even outside the groups and domains where knowledge sharing is brokered (Burt, 1992; Wenger, 1998a; Hargadon, 2002; Aalbers, Dolfsma and Koppius, 2004; Haas, 2015). Meyer (2010) queries this stance wondering whether the knowledge broker acts as a bridge between adjoining communities of practice, sits on the periphery or resides in an in-between space. Gherardi and Nicolini (2002, p. 422) question the inadequacies of limiting the analysis to how brokers make connections or where they reside rather than how brokering accommodates a "plurality of discourses" in a "constellation of interconnected practices". Furthermore, the emphasis in existing analysis about the knowledge broker's peripherality fails to acknowledge the role of internal knowledge brokers (Cillo, 2005) and internal knowledge brokering processes where "….participants in any collective practice share understandings about what they are doing and what this means in real time, and knowledge is co-constructed" (Currie and White, 2012, p. 1335).

2.5.3 Role expectations and attributes of knowledge brokers

Literature about the skills and aptitudes of knowledge brokers falls into two categories: roles (what knowledge brokers do) and key attributes (the skills, knowledge and expertise of knowledge brokers). An illustration of the first (what knowledge brokers do) is Gould and Fernandez's (1989) typology, which identifies five distinct broker roles summarised in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Typology of broker roles (Gould and Fernandez, 1989)	
Gatekeeper	Broker has the discretion to grant access to knowledge to an external party or for distribution within their own group
Representative	An individual is delegated to be the broker to communicate information and exchange knowledge with external parties
Coordinator	A group member acts as the coordinator in a brokering relationship that is internal to the group
Cosmopolitan or itinerant	A broker mediates between group members but belongs to a different group
Liaison	A broker acts as an intermediary across groups but is not a member of any of them

Another example is found in the CHSRF's report (2003). Here, the knowledge broker is described as an individual who brings people together to exchange information, helps groups to understand different group needs, advocates for healthcare research, monitors and evaluates practices, synthesises and summarises knowledge to aid decision-making and guides research initiatives and developments. In an analytic report of the first discussion (September – October, 2010) of an online platform for international development intermediaries, the Knowledge Brokers' Forum (www.knowledgebrokersforum.org), Fisher (2010, p. 3) describes knowledge brokering roles as a "….nested set of roles, one encompassing the other like a set of Russian dolls. Each role is associated with purposes and functions that are increasingly engaged in change processes…." (Figure 2.2). Fisher (2010) acknowledges that the boundaries between each role can be blurred and the role definitions in Figure 2.2 are contestable. Chaskin (2001) extends the analysis about the role expectations of knowledge brokers to include infrastructure organisations that are established to strengthen local communities and build partnerships. Chaskin (2001) identifies three roles played by such bodies: matchmaking to bring organisations together, a clearinghouse to facilitate knowledge and information sharing, and an advocacy and representation function for local communities.

On the skills and attributes of knowledge brokers, the CHSRF (2003) lists a number of qualities. These include an ability to bring people together, use research to aid decision-making, assess and use evidence, marketing and communications skills and identifying management and policy issues for further research. From their comparative study in the higher education sector, Phipps and Morton (2013) identify several ideal type qualities that knowledge brokers should possess: nimbleness, fleet footedness, enthusiasm, creativity, communicative, enabling, courageous, tactful, committed and negotiation skills. The next

section discusses the gaps identified in the knowledge brokering literature, before concluding the chapter.
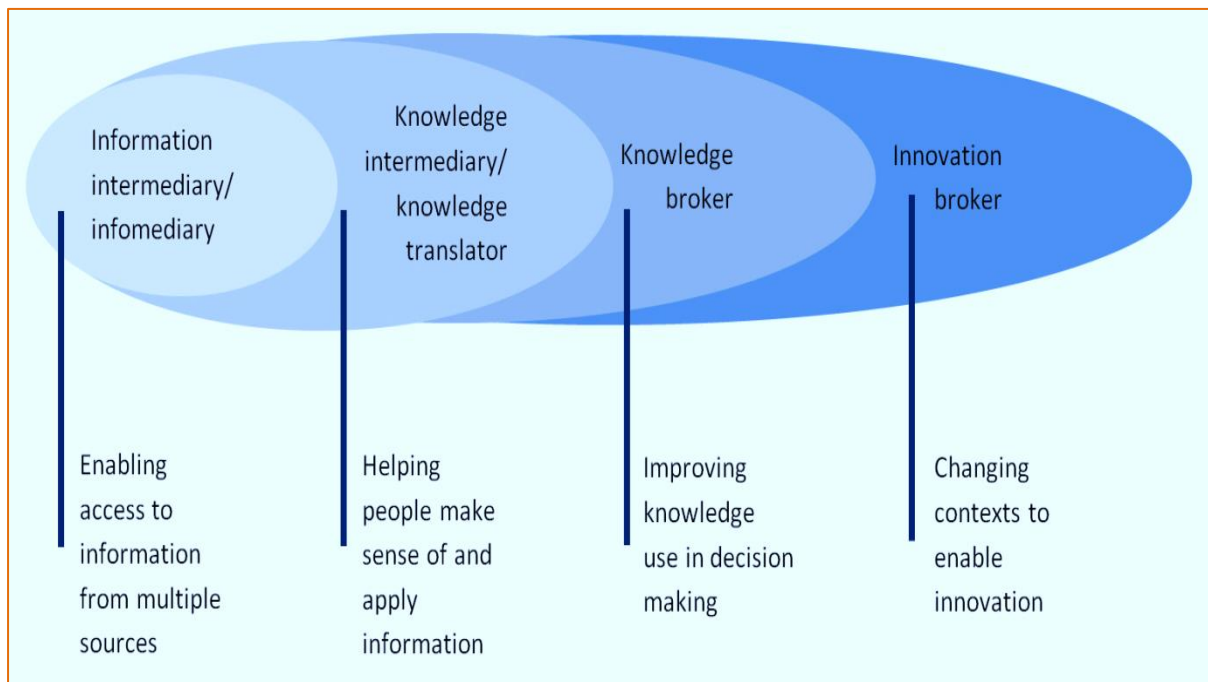
Figure 2.2: Knowledge brokering roles as Russian dolls (Fisher, 2010, p. 3).

2.6   GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE BROKERING LITERATURE

The literature review reveals that academic thinking about knowledge brokering is still evolving (Ward, House and Hamer, 2009a, 2009b; Phipps and Morton, 2013; Ragab and Arisha, 2013; Haas, 2015). More recent contributions continue to extend understandings about this particular aspect of knowledge management (Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014; Kent, Sommerfeldt and Saffer, 2016; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016). Nonetheless, a number of gaps exist offering opportunities for further research and examination.

2.6.1   Sectoral reciprocity and mutual learning

The literature review reaffirms established thinking that research about knowledge management in the not-for-profit sector is underdeveloped (Ragsdell, 2009b; Ragsdell, Espinet and Norris, 2014; Bloice and Burnett, 2016; Cantu and Mondragon, 2016; Hume and Hume, 2016; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2016). In a climate of austerity, competitive funding (Ragsdell, 2013; Bloice and Burnett, 2016; Cantu and Mondragon, 2016), the need to

continue providing social welfare services (Huck, Al and Rathi, 2011) and an increasing dependency on a transient workforce (Ragsdell, 2013; Bloice and Burnett, 2016; Hume and Hume, 2016), the not-for-profit sector is under sustained pressure to maximise its resources and knowledge base. In doing so, Ragsdell's (2009b, 2013) principle of sectoral reciprocity can be embraced more proactively with the not-for-profit sector learning from the private (and public) sectors about knowledge management to enable it to sustain itself and its social mission (Jeavons, 1992; Hovland, 2003; Hume and Hume, 2016). In turn, knowledge management lessons from the not-for-profit sector can help improve practices in the private (and public) sectors. Overall, such a mutual process can deepen academic thinking about knowledge management and benefit all sectors.

2.6.2   Knowledge brokering as practice

Interpretations of knowledge brokering that separate knowledge creation from knowledge sharing and its application in practice lead to "know-do" gaps (Greenhalgh and Wieringa, 2011, p. 503). Practice is a social phenomenon involving practitioners working with each other (Wenger, 1998a; Cox, 2012; Schatzki, 2012), the "materiality of social relations" (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2002, p. 421) and gives meaning to actions carried out in the real world (Cox, 2012). While a range of literature exists, research on knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing is limited. This is particularly so at the point of practical application where the dialectic of human agency (brokers and practitioners), organisational processes, client relations and the external environment interplay and where power and discretion surface (Lipsky, 1980; Hislop, 2003, 2010; Retna and Ng, 2011; Kent, Sommerfeldt and Saffer, 2016).

2.6.3   Inter-organisational communities of practice

Literature about communities of practice stems largely from studies on intra-organisational practitioner communities. Studies are limited on inter-organisational communities of practice especially in the not-for-profit sector. At a time when the sector is under growing pressure to work in partnership to maximise resources and continue providing services, this is a significant gap. Existing research shows that organisations are uncertain about participating in inter-organisational communities of practice due to ambiguities as to what they would gain and lose (Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink, 2004). Vangen (2017) argues

that such ambiguities and dilemmas can enable more open and comprehensive dialogues to take place between organisations and through this, success. Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink (2004, p. 11) conclude that "....research on inter-organisational communities proves a fruitful direction for refining the CoP concept or instrument".

2.6.4 The positionality of knowledge brokers

Analyses about knowledge brokers remaining on the periphery fail to acknowledge the role of internal knowledge brokers (Cillo, 2005; Currie and White, 2012) especially in inter-organisational communities of practice. This provides an opportunity to undertake academic and practice-based studies about the role and positionality of internal knowledge brokers and their implications for knowledge sharing.

2.6.5 Values, beliefs and principles

Knowledge brokering is a practice intervention involving human agency and in organisations that provide person-centred human services, account has to be given of the values, beliefs, principles and power dynamics that underpin interventions. Kent, Sommerfeldt and Saffer (2016, p. 96) argue the social network roots of knowledge brokering mean that power is constructed and deployed as a means of dominating others, "power over", rather than "power-as-access" for the benefit of a wider constituency. Haas (2015) argues that the power dimension is largely unaccounted for in literature about knowledge brokering. Research in this area would benefit from including "the power dimension" to understand the dynamics of knowledge sharing as an "....unfolding and articulation of personal agendas, relations, influence strategies and knowledge transfer and diffusion over time" (Haas, 2015, p. 1040).

2.7 CONCLUSION

Knowledge brokering is a practice intervention for bridging boundaries, knowledge sharing, situated learning and social practice. Practitioners can be niche knowledge workers who are dedicated knowledge brokers in organisations or knowledge workers who broker knowledge incidentally. Differences remain in academic viewpoints about whether the knowledge broker sits on the periphery (Burt, 1992; Wenger, 1998a; Hargadon, 2002; Aalbers, Dolfsma

and Koppius, 2004), is an integral member (Loew, Bleimann and Walsh, 2004; Cillo, 2005; Long, Cunningham and Braithwaite, 2013) or somewhere in between (Meyer, 2010).

Three broad strategic orientations to knowledge brokering are identifiable. The conduit orientation (Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014) is characterised by the knowledge broker acting as a non-partisan intermediary (Simmel, 1902a, 1902b, 1950). The disunion orientation (Burt, 1992; Obstfeld, 2005; Shi, Markoczy and Dess, 2009; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016) emphasises individual capital, the broker's knowledge superiority, the benefits accrued by the broker and the divisive separation of participants. The union orientation (Obstfeld, 2005; Shi, Markoczy and Dess, 2009; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016) emphasises communal social capital, collective sharing, knowledge and information synthesis and the broker as an indirect or co-beneficiary joining disconnected parties or establishing new connections between them.

Foundational literature on knowledge brokering stems from studies in the private sector. The CHSRF's report (2003) was one of the first attempts at theorising knowledge brokering in the public sector. Since then, there has been an intermittent flow of international research on knowledge brokering mainly in the public (health) sector (Cong and Pandya, 2003; Ward *et al*, 2012; Amayah, 2013; Massaro, Dumay and Garlatt, 2015). However, there continues to remain a noticeable gap in research and literature pertaining to knowledge brokering in the not-for-profit sector. Although some similarities exist between the private, public and not-for-profit sectors such as managing adversity, not enough is known about knowledge management in not-for-profit organisations (Ragsdell, 2009b; Ragsdell, Espinet and Norris, 2014; Bloice and Burnett, 2016).

The **dearth of research** on the dynamics of knowledge brokering and other knowledge management practices in the not-for-profit sector is one of the gaps in existing literature. Secondly, literature on knowledge brokering concentrates on the pragmatism of transferring knowledge from one domain (e.g. a research environment) to another (e.g. a clinical setting) without fully considering knowledge brokering as a **practice-based** intervention for knowledge sharing. Thirdly, literature on communities of practice which forms one of the bedrocks of knowledge brokering is underdeveloped in relation to the

dynamics of **inter-organisational** communities of practice. Fourthly, knowledge brokering involves **human interactions** raising questions about how values, beliefs and power dynamics manifest themselves in knowledge brokering interventions. Finally, literature about positionality concludes that the knowledge broker should remain on the periphery of group relations creating an opportunity to inquire about the role of **internal brokers** as complete group members and practitioners in *situ*. These gaps in literature helped to configure and develop the research strategy and methodology for this study which are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 contextualises, explains and rationalises this study's research methodology, strategy and process. Insider action research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005), a variant of action research was used in this study. Research approaches have to align with the fundamental nature of the subject and be "….commensurable with the nature of the subject being researched and, thus, remain effective" (Ragsdell, 2009a, p. 566). This chapter discusses how this was accomplished through the adoption of insider action research as an approach for examining knowledge brokering in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector.

The chapter begins with an analytic summary of action research as a form of participative research to contextualise the philosophical, social and theoretical foundations of insider action research. This is followed by a presentation of the study's parameters and the ontological, epistemological and philosophical assumptions made. The chapter moves on to explain the concept and characteristics of insider action research and the rationale for its use in this study. This is followed by a critical examination of how the dilemmas and challenges involved in using insider action research were managed. Next there is an explanation of how the data was organised and processed, before ending with a conclusion.

3.2   AN ANALYTIC OVERVIEW OF ACTION RESEARCH

This section discusses the origins and contemporary relevance of action research to help contextualise the roots and principles of insider action research. Action research is "….a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities" (Reason and Bradbury, 2006, p. 1). Reason and Bradbury (2006, p. xxii) describe action research as a "family of approaches" and the 2001 edition of their handbook was "ecumenical" (Dick, 2004, p. 426) for bringing

together contributions from a cross-section ("family") of action research thinkers and writers.

Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) is widely credited as the person who first shaped the theoretical principles of action research (Cassell and Johnson, 2006; Reason and Bradbury, 2006; Gustavsen, 2008; Bradbury-Huang, 2010). Lewin's interventions involved systematically executing actions and studying their outcomes "….adding to fundamental knowledge while solving practical problems" (Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985, p. xi). Lewin's (1946) action research theory was developed through his own direct involvement in social issues including post-World War 2 troop morale, psychological warfare, and race and ethnic relations. Collaborating with participants to enable them to resolve their own issues and influence wider social agendas also informed Curle's (1949, p. 269) early conception of action study which aimed "….not only to discover facts, but to help in altering certain conditions experienced by the community as unsatisfactory". Although Lewin is credited for conceptualising action research theory, McTaggart (1994) argues that social reformers in the early 1900s already involved participants as co-researchers citing research on prostitution in Vienna in 1913. Furthermore, Neilsen (2006) argues that John Collier, one of Lewin's colleagues, should be acknowledged as a co-founder as he had applied action research in an "ethnic laboratory" (Collier, 1945, p. 296) to improve the social welfare of American Indians.

In essence, action research has emerged in the global North, mainly the USA and UK from a social psychological tradition paved by the works of Dewey (1933), Lewin (1946), the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (Rapoport, 1970; Foster, 1972) and Stenhouse (1975) (Thiollent, 2011). However, this is only part of the analysis. Activists, community educators and academics in the global South questioned the ethnocentrism of conventional research interventions that failed to involve local participants in studies and knowledge creation about them (Fals Borda, 2006; Thiollent, 2011; Moretti and Streck, 2015). The main drivers for this were the liberation thinking and grassroots community development work in the global South, mainly Latin America, influenced in its early days by Paulo Freire's pioneering work on adult literacy (Freire, 1972a, 1972b; Fals Borda, 2006; Thiollent, 2011). The first World Symposium of Action Research in Cartagena, Columbia, 1977 crystallised participative

research as "….*vivencia* necessary for the achievement of progress and democracy, a complex of attitudes and values that would give meaning to our praxis in the field" (Fals Borda, 2006, p. 11). Subsequently, participative research and action research were intertwined conceptually and pragmatically to create participatory action research (Fals Borda, 2006). It is the fusion of the Northern social psychological and Southern liberationary traditions that gave birth to action research as a participative form of research and, as exemplified in Reason and Bradbury's (2006) definition.

The evolution of action research is part of a bigger impetus in social research to engage participants in knowledge creation as individuals and groups whose lived experiences form the basis of that knowledge (Genat, 2009). Participative research is about conjoining "….the knower with known in participative relationship" and a paradigm shift in understanding research from an "….operational measurement into a science of experiential qualities" (Reason and Bradbury, 2006, p. 4). In doing so, action research challenges positivistic orthodoxy in social research in which the lived experiences of participants are objectified and strict researcher-researched demarcations are stipulated. Instead, action research offers an alternative ontological and epistemological paradigm, acknowledging the overlaps in researcher-researched boundaries which create possibilities for participation, pluralism, collaboration and co-creation (Susman and Evered, 1978; Pretty, 1995; van der Riet, 2008; Thiollent 2011; Sandberg and Wallo, 2013).

Although action research is an established approach to social research, doubts persist about its credentials (Brown and Tandon, 1983; Bryman, 1989; Thiollent, 2011; Levin, 2012). The limited number of organisational studies using action research (Kock, 2004; Coghlan and Brannick, 2005; Galea, 2009), the lack of funders' support (Bryman, 1989; Thiollent, 2011), perceptions or misuse of action research as consultancy (Eden and Huxham, 1996; Bryman, 1989) and the dominance of positivistic reasoning (Susman and Evered, 1978; Friedman and Rogers, 2009; Maurer and Githens, 2010), contribute to the persisting doubts about action research as a research approach. Despite such misgivings, action research provides a commensurate approach to gaining deeper insights about organisational development and knowledge management phenomenon (Coghlan, 2007; Roth, Shani and Leary, 2007; Massingham, 2013; Ragsdell, 2009a).

3.3 FRAMING THE STUDY

This section discusses the theoretical and pragmatic considerations that framed this study. Organisational studies are concerned primarily with examining practical issues and generating practical knowledge (Bryman, 1989). In this case, the research focus was on knowledge brokering as a practice intervention in a multi-agency project in which the author was embedded for two years. Bryman (1989) identifies five approaches to organisational research. These are: experimental research using control groups in some cases, survey research using qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, qualitative research to gather interpretative and situational data from participants, case-studies examining specific organisational behaviours or scenarios and, action research in which the researcher collaborates with participants (Bryman, 1989). The next section examines further the use of action research for organisational studies as was the case in this study.

3.3.1 Action research for organisational studies

The phenomenon of people coming together to inquire and act on issues of concern to them is not new and "….participatory forms of inquiry aimed at solving practical problems have existed forever in human cultures" (Reason and Bradbury, 2006, p. 3). However, action research is more than a problem-solving instrument constituting instead, a qualitative approach to research founded on the traditions of interpretivism as an alternative to more positivistic approaches. Guba and Lincoln (1982) question the use of rational research approaches to studying naturalistic and interpretive human actions and behaviours. In their seminal contribution, Susman and Evered (1978) argue that positivistic approaches may improve organisational processes but fail to empower individuals and groups, build organisational capacity, solve problems and extract learning.

Organisational action research aims to enable practitioners to understand and change what they do in the context of their practice (Kemmis, 2009). Placing practice and the researcher-participant relationship at its core, Kemmis (2009) categorises three types of action research. Firstly, in technical action research participants are involved passively in a one-way research process controlled by the researcher to improve outcomes, efficiency and effectiveness. Secondly, practical action research in which the researcher guides the

research process and outcomes are informed by participants' interpretations. Finally, critical action research is conducted jointly by researchers and participants and involves consciousness raising and taking action. Shani and Pasmore (1985, p. 439) define action research as a process that "….is simultaneously concerned with bringing about change in organisations, in developing self-help competencies in organisational members and adding to scientific knowledge….an evolving process that is undertaken in a spirit of collaboration and co-inquiry". Shani and Pasmore's (1985) approach to organisational studies is of added significance as Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) insider action research framework is founded on this. According to Coghlan and Brannick (2005, pp. 3-4) action research is "….research *in* action, rather than *about* action; a collaborative democratic partnership; concurrent with action; a sequence of events and an approach to problem solving".

To reflect the dynamic and interactive characteristics of organisational action research, Susman and Evered (1978, p. 588) conceptualise a cyclical process comprising five stages (Figure 3.1). Although Susman and Evered's (1978) framework can be criticised for depicting a unidirectional five-stage sequence without explicitly specifying backflows or interflows between stages, their anti-positivistic contribution to organisational action research is significant (Davison, Martinson and Kock, 2004; Kock, 2004). As will be examined in section 3.4, Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) insider action research framework is an iterative process comprising a series of action research cycles (Figures 3.2 and 3.3) and chapters 4 and 5 provide practice-based insights about the application of such an iterative process.

3.3.2   Insider-outsider paradigms

Researcher positionality is a key consideration in action research especially when the researcher is an insider practitioner-researcher studying their own organisation, as was the case here. A researcher's positionality *vis a vis* the research site and participants, preconceptions and methodological rationale have to be considered in research design to anticipate and manage bias, rigour and validity. The issues of validity and reliability in this study are examined in section 3.6. For the time being, the issue of positionality is considered.
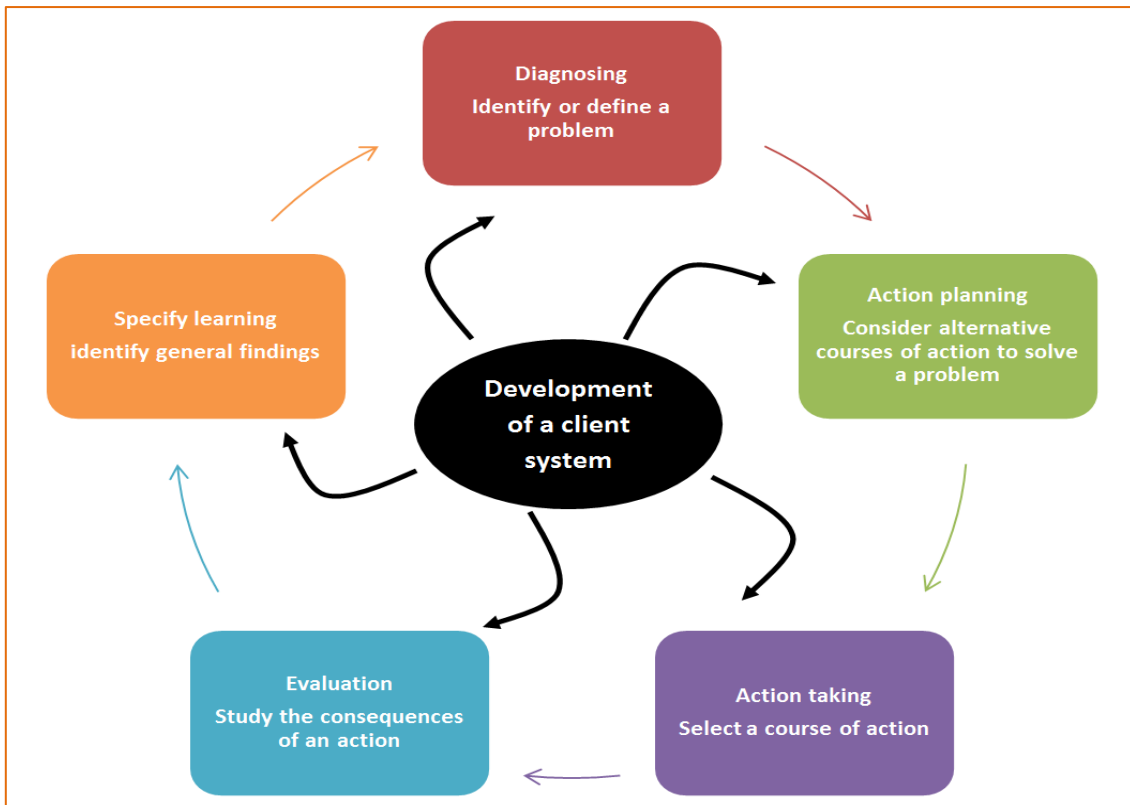
Figure 3.1: Organisational action research as a cyclical process (adapted from Susman and Evered, 1978, p. 588).

Evered and Louis (1981) compare and contrast two research paradigms for organisational studies: inquiry from the inside and, inquiry from the outside. As insiders, Evered and Louis (1981, p. 387) disclose that "….we were experientially and existentially rooted in the organisational system….that we were acquiring knowledge of, whereas the traditional researcher is experientially committed to another system (i.e. academia) and is at most a temporary visitor to the subject organisation". Both insider and outsider paradigms have their own epistemological underpinnings and pragmatic implications (Table 3.1) for organisational researchers to consider (Evered and Louis, 1981).

Table 3.1: Inquiry from the inside and the outside (adapted from Evered and Louis, 1981, p. 389)		
	Inquiry from the inside	**Inquiry from the outside**
Epistemological	• Knowing is through being there • Knowledge comes from human experiences	• Knowing is an external reality • Knowledge is an objective data collecting process
Researcher-participant relationship	• Immersion into the site • Being with participants	• Detachment from the site and participants
Analytical categories	• Iterative • Interpretive	• Hypothesis and *a priori* data collection categories
Inquiry aim	• Acknowledge the uniqueness of the situational context • Being in the here and now	• Universal laws drawn or implied from the particular
Types of knowledge	• Praxis and acting in the situation	• Theory building and universalisation
Data	• Meanings are developed from participants' perspectives	• Data coding and categorisation

Galea (2009, p. 3) notes that "....insider research has not been a widely reported approach for researching organisational settings" despite the fact that this approach has an established tradition in disciplines such as social anthropology and urban sociology. In any case, the insider-outsider boundary is not easy to define (Galea, 2009) and rather than viewing this as a dichotomy, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argue that researchers can occupy both insider and outsider positions. Trowler (2011, p. 1) observes that perhaps it is "....best to conceptualise a continuum between insider and outsider research rather than viewing them as binary opposites". As a further permutation, Humphrey (2007, p. 23) proposes that insider researchers should take ownership of the insider-outsider hyphen and acknowledge their "....uniqueness as an insider-outsider and to cultivate the art of crossing-over between life-worlds". Thus, it may be more plausible to view the insider-outsider dilemma as a fluid, boundary negotiating phenomenon where common purpose is established (Brown and Duguid, 1998; Wenger, 1998a; Carlile, 2002, 2004) rather than a matter of methodological polarity (Huzzard, Ahlberg, and Ekman, 2010). This discussion is developed further in section 3.4 where there is a specific examination of where the Coghlan and Brannick framework (2005) fits in an insider-outsider action research continuum.

As a practice-based study with the author as an insider practitioner-researcher, the insider-outsider conundrum did arise. As the project's Knowledge Management Officer, the author was committed to Charnwood Connect's mission and his practice interventions were

determined by the organisation's needs and objectives. As a researcher, the author had academic accountability to Loughborough University and wider academia. With the support of his PhD supervisors, the author was able to negotiate a common ground so that Charnwood Connect's organisational needs and Loughborough University's academic expectations were synchronised (Koshy, 2005; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). The next section extends the insider-outsider philosophical and pragmatic conundrum by examining other premises and assumptions that shaped the design of this research.

3.3.3   Ontological, epistemological and philosophical assumptions

Research design is informed and framed by assumptions, worldviews or paradigms about human behaviour and social reality (Creswell, 2007). A paradigm or worldview defines "….for its holder, the nature of the 'world,' the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). These worldviews and paradigms provide scaffolding for researchers to construct research frameworks, inform methodological choices and define research approaches (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Guba and Lincoln, 1982). The principle of worldviews and paradigms is not confined to specific research methodologies or inquiry methods. Both rational and naturalistic paradigms are informed by "….differing sets of assumptions about the phenomena into which they are designed to inquire" (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p. 233) and researchers have to make choices about these (Table 3.2). Arguably, naturalistic paradigms offer a richer alternative to rational ones for studying social behaviour as they are contextual, process sensitive, generate rich data, derive theory from data and acknowledge the "human-as-instrument" (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p. 235). However, paradigms do not represent the absolute truth as they are all socially constructed relying on "….persuasiveness and utility rather than proof in arguing their position" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). As socially constructed processes, research involves bias and researchers "will not be more objective than any other person in society" for "everyone proclaims values and political preferences that guide perception of the world and direct actions" (Levin, 2012, p. 144).

Table 3.2: Rationalistic and naturalistic paradigms (adapted from Guba and Lincoln, 1982)		
Subject of the axiom	**Rationalistic**	**Naturalistic**
Reality	• Single • Tangible • Convergent • Fragmentable	• Multiple • Intangible • Divergent • Holistic
Researcher-participant relationship	• Independent	• Interrelated
Nature of truth	• Context free generalisations • Focus on similarities	• Context bound • Working hypotheses • Focus on differences
Explanation of action	• Real causes • Probabilistic	• Interactive • Plausible
Role of values	• Value-free	• Value-bound

Extrapolating Guba and Lincoln's (1982, 1994) work on research paradigms, Creswell (2007) identifies four worldviews and their underpinning assumptions about research design (Table 3.3). Creswell (2007, p. 15) argues that "….the qualitative researcher chooses a stance on each of these assumptions, and the choice has practical implications for designing and conducting research". A study does not become invalidate just because a researcher's worldviews and assumptions have influenced their choice of methodology but only if accurate accounts of participants' realities are available from which inferences can be drawn (Creswell and Miller, 2000).

The frameworks of paradigms and worldviews (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, 1994; Creswell, 2007, 2009) provide reference points for framing the author's approach in this study. The **worldview** is informed by a constructivist, interpretivist perspective acknowledging practitioners' lived experiences, practices and the meanings they attach to their organisational realities. The **ontological stance** acknowledges reality as a social construction in which pluralism, multiple perspectives and varied lived experiences co-exist and are equally valid. **Epistemologically,** the study adopts an interpretivist worldview with knowledge sharing and creation as a social process rooted in practice with the author and practitioners as co-creators. Empowering clients, changing lives and improving access to advice, information and support services were fundamental values that shaped the partnership's social mission and programme of work (**axiology**). The narrative, **rhetoric and language** used by the author captures the qualitative nature of the study and the multiple

perspectives. **Methodologically,** data collection, summation and discussion tools included observations, field notes, management reports, administrative records, secondary data, desk research and PhD records (supervision notes, action research notes and end of year review reports). The next section on insider action research discusses further how these worldviews and paradigms provided the basic reference points for this study.

Table 3.3: Worldviews and research practices (adapted from Creswell, 2007)	
Worldview	**Research practices**
Positivism/post-positivism	• Scientific orientation • Deterministic with *a priori* theory • Reductionist • Logical • Emphasis on data collection • Cause and effect orientation
Social constructivism/ interpretivism	• Subjective meanings • Complex and multiple views • Phenomenological acknowledging participants' views and experiences • Meanings are socially constructed through dialogue and interaction • Inductive theory generation
Advocacy/participatory	• Action orientation • Paramountcy of power, oppression and marginalisation • Having a voice • Consciousness raising, improving circumstances and changing lives
Pragmatism	• Outcomes orientated and solution focused • Concern with application and what works • Context bound

3.4   THE COGHLAN AND BRANNICK INSIDER ACTION RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

In conceiving their insider action research approach, Brannick and Coghlan (2007, p. 71) sought to counter the "….the established tradition that academic-theory-driven research in organisations is conducted best by outsiders". Insider action research contrasts with research approaches in which an external person "….enters the organisation in some sort of temporary facilitative role, works with members of the organisation for the duration of the project and then leaves" (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005, p. xi).

In insider action research, "….a member of an organisation undertakes an explicit research role in addition to the normal functional role which that member holds in the organisation. Therefore, the researcher has to balance the membership role….with the additional role of

inquiry and research. Doing action research means being engaged in a more rigorous series of diagnosing situations, planning and taking action and evaluating than perhaps is the norm" (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005, p. xii). An insider action researcher is a complete member of an organisation who inquires "….into the working of their organisational system in order to change something to it" (Coghlan, 2007, p. 336). Complete members are individuals who contribute to an organisation's programme of work and affiliate to the values and goals of the organisation which they are studying (Adler and Adler, 1987; Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Coghlan, 2007). As an iterative process, Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) action research cycle shares a similar footprint to other conceptualisations of action research (Lewin, 1946; Susman and Evered, 1978; Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985; Zuber-Skerritt, 2001; Tripp, 2005). Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) framework comprises five interlinked steps (Figure 3.2).

Following the evaluation in the fifth step, and a review of the altered state of the original organisational need, the action research cycle begins again. The process continues until the organisational need has been addressed, de-prioritised or abandoned, providing a rich picture of the meta learning cycle (Figure 3.3). A meta learning cycle is a panoramic overview of an "….action research cycle about the action research cycle" (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005, p. 25) comprising content reflection about what was done and what happened, process reflection about how the activities and strategies were conducted and premise reflection about the underlying assumptions, values and beliefs.
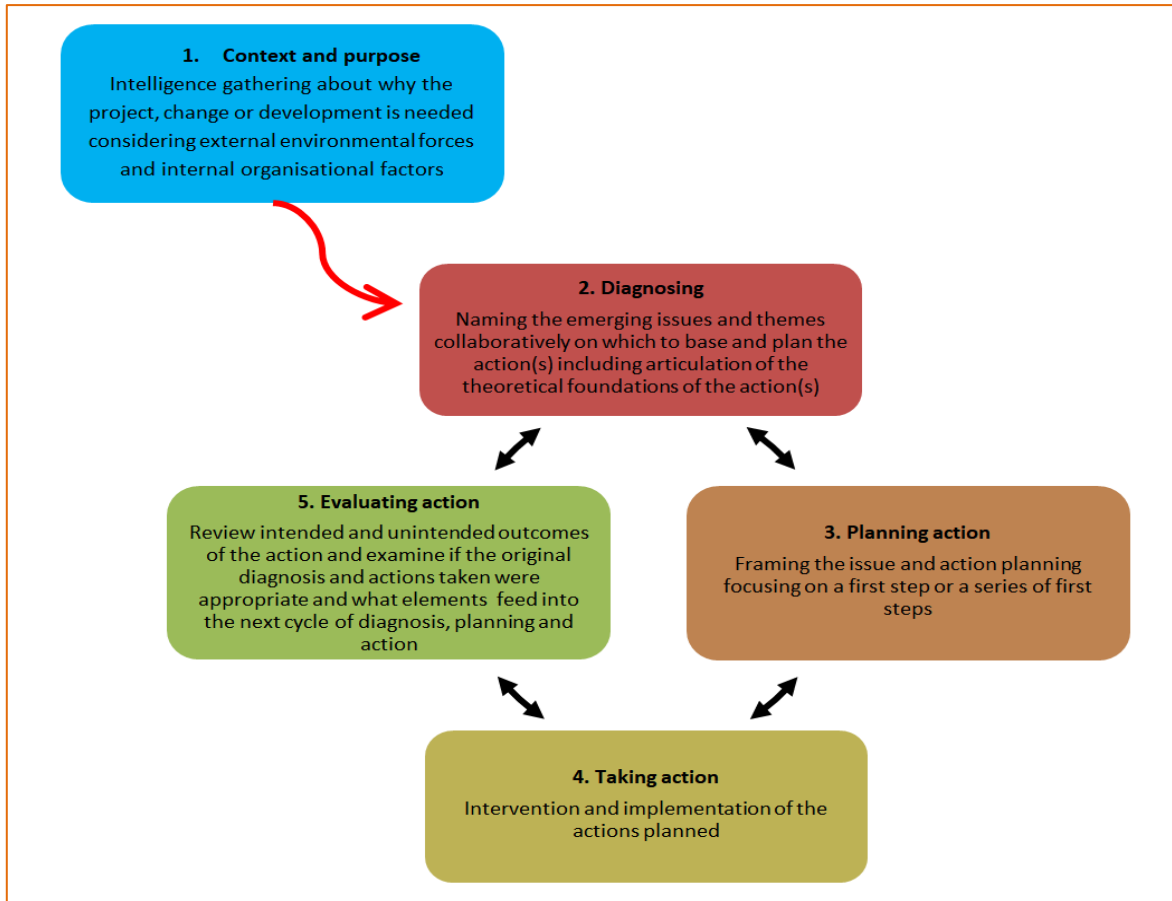
Figure 3.2: Insider action research cycle (adapted from Coghlan and Brannick, 2005, p. 22).
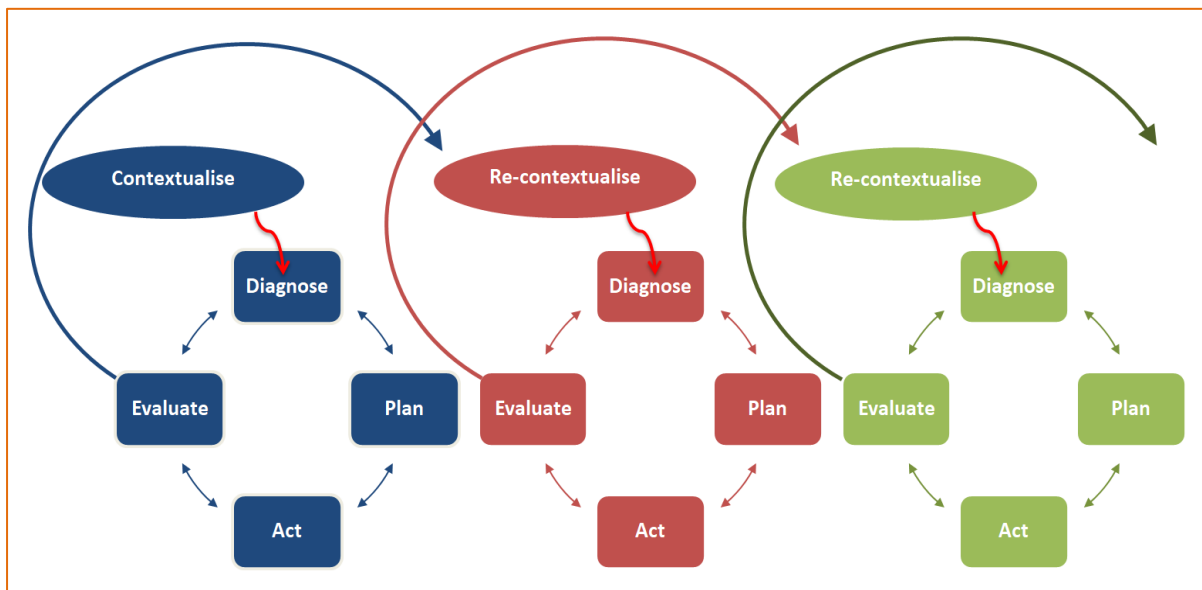
Figure 3.3: Meta learning cycle (adapted from Coghlan and Brannick, 2005, p. 24).

Herr and Anderson (2005, p. 31) suggest that there are different forms of insider-outsider action research and conceptualise these as a continuum (Figure 3.4). Three modes of insider research are identifiable – studying your own practice, co-researching with peers and collaborating with outsiders. As you move towards the right of the continuum, the researcher's role becomes increasingly one of an outsider. Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) insider action research framework aligns closer to modes 1 and 2 with the researcher as a complete member of the organisation and depending on the nature of the research contract, mode 3 could fit as well. In this study, the author's position on the Herr and Anderson (2005) continuum was essentially mode 1.
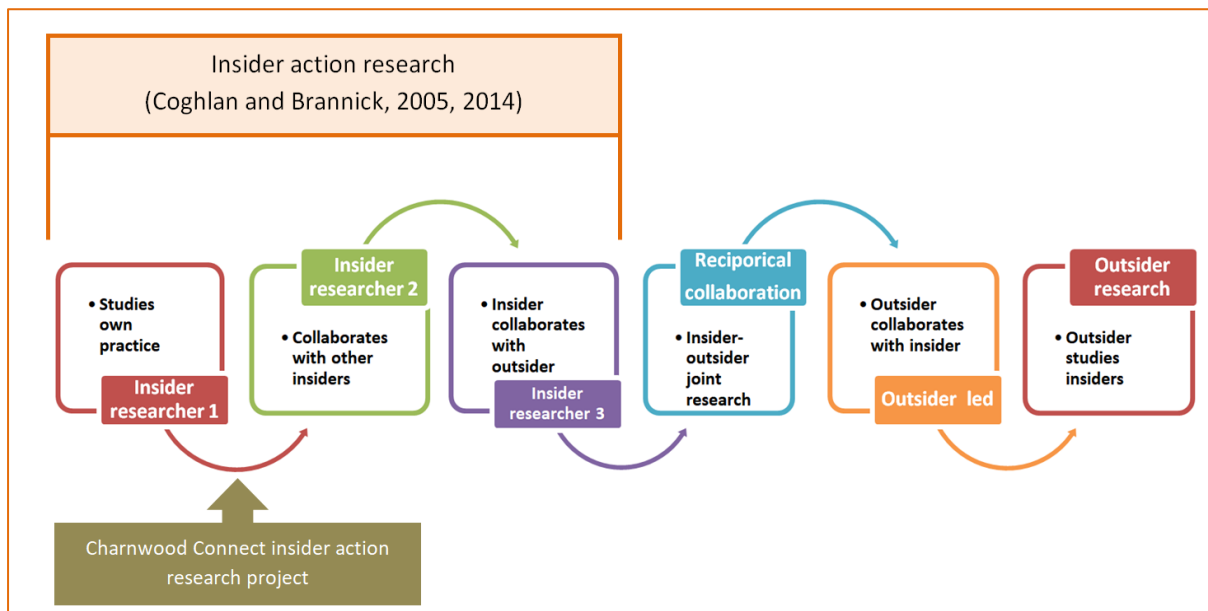
Figure 3.4: Continuum of insider-outsider researcher positionalities (developed from Herr and Anderson, 2005, p. 31).

3.5   METHODOLOGICAL RATIONALE

Insider action research "….provides important knowledge about what organisations are really like, which traditional approaches may not be able to uncover" (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007, p. 72). de Guerre (2002, p. 334), an insider action researcher, found that "….outsiders can never get the real depth of organisation-in-environments active adaptation". Similarly, Costley, Elliott and Gibbs (2010) argue that an insider researcher can capture organisational intricacies, the cultural specificity of the practices, multiple perspectives and situated

learning. As well as this, researchers point to other, more penetrative experiences of undertaking insider research and how these impact on thought processes and emotions. One researcher discloses that it "….was only when I recognised and embraced the subjectivity of my own special position and perspectives as an inside researcher that my studies started to have any real meaning or personal consequence" (Moore, 2007, p. 31). Marshall's (1999, p. 155; 2011a, p. 245) "living life as inquiry" recognises action research as a personal process, involving power dynamics and attending to "inner and outer arcs" (Marshall, 1999, p. 157). Heen (2005) argues that it is important for insider action researchers to acknowledge emotions as opportunities for striking a balance between an inquiring and a sensing mind and connecting inner and outer spaces (Marshall, 1999).

Building on the work developed originally by Marshall and Reason (1993) on me, us and them, Coghlan and Brannick (2005) and Coghlan (2007) state that an insider action research study can enable multiple voices to be expressed. First-person inquiry (me) is characterised by the researcher inquiring into their own actions and mindfulness. This can be "upstream" (Coghlan, 2007, p. 299) with the inquirer focusing on their own values, beliefs and assumptions or enacted "downstream" through everyday behaviours, interactions and practices. Second-person inquiry (us) involves dialogue, collaboration and co-creation with practitioners. Third-person inquiry (them) extrapolates, theorises and disseminates the learning (Coghlan, 2003). However, other contributors (Marshall, 2011a) construe third-person inquiry also as the politicisation and mobilisation of communities along the lines of Fals Borda's (2006) participatory action research. An ideal type inquiry should be an intersection of all three (Reason and Bradbury, 2006) enabling a study to reach greater depth, offer a panoramic analysis, absorb and reflect multiple viewpoints and make "….a distinctive contribution to the development of insider knowledge about organisations and organisational change" (Coghlan, 2003, p. 451).

The sources of the first, second and third-person voices in this study are summarised in Figure 3.5. Critical incident analysis (Flanagan, 1954; Keatinge, 2002; Butterfield *et al*, 2005) is used to frame and analyse these multiple voices as follows. In chapters 4 and 5, the author's voice and reflections in practice (Schön, 1991) are presented in the shaded columns in each critical incident. Second person voices of the practitioners with whom the author

collaborated are represented in the summative documentation of each critical incident under the headings of situation, actions and outcomes (Keatinge, 2002). Third person voices are represented in the reflections on practice following each critical incident. This is supplemented by the analysis of the emerging themes (chapter 6), the discussion chapter (chapter 7) and the thesis constitutes a further dissemination and action instrument (Reason and Marshall, 1987; Coghlan and Brannick, 2005; Reason and Bradbury, 2006). Further evidence of how multiple voices as data were sourced and then organised can be found in section 3.7.1 and illustrated in Figure 3.6.
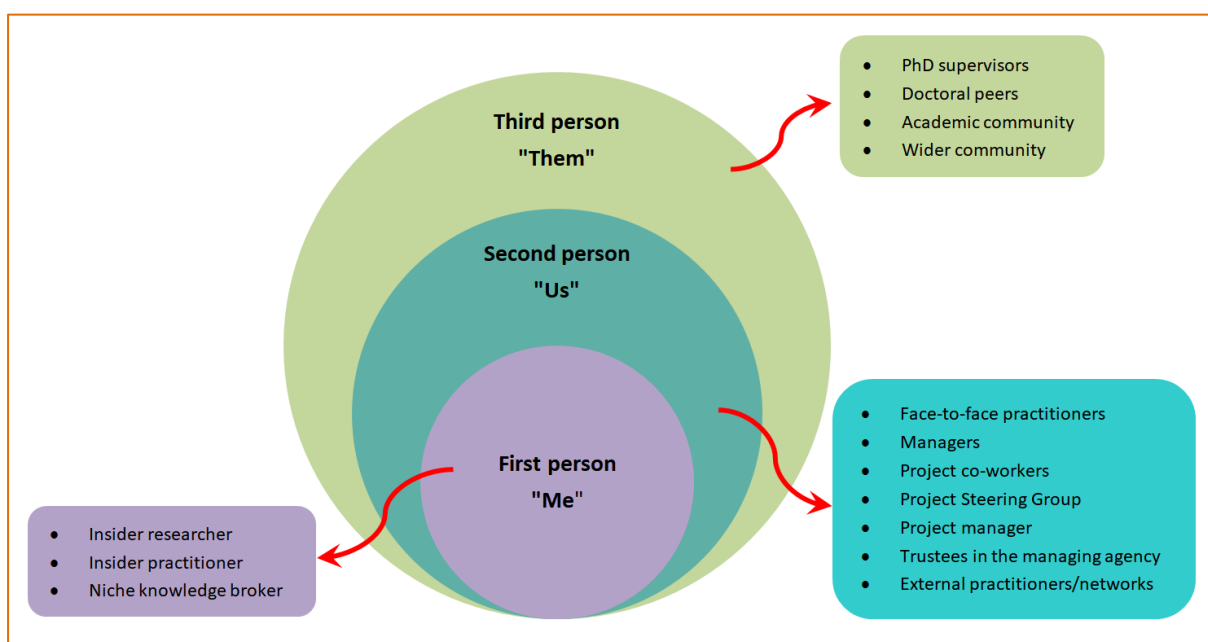
Figure 3.5: Me, us and them voices.

3.6   MANAGING THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

Practitioners' lived experiences, practices and interpretations provided the material evidence and research framework for this study. As a social constructivist/interpretivist study (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, 1994; Creswell, 2009) inductive reasoning is applied since "….meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community….with the inquirer generating meaning from the data collected" (Creswell, 2009, p. 9). Research data and observable patterns in organisational behaviour are not independent of the interventions by researchers (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009) especially in the case of insider practitioner-researchers who are studying their own organisation. It is

important therefore to acknowledge the challenges and dilemmas involved in interpretivist studies and how they are managed. Using a framework derived from the contributions of key writers (see section 3.6.1 and Table 3.4) this section verifies in some detail how the research dilemmas and challenges that arose in this study were managed.

3.6.1 An overview of the main considerations

Kock (2004) highlights three main threats that face insider action research projects. The naturalistic, inductive and iterative nature of a study can mean that the researcher is not able to maintain full control over the research process or its outcomes. Secondly, a contingency threat can arise when the researcher is unable to generalise and form conclusions from a study because of the volume of the rich data that has been gathered. Finally, data misinterpretation and misrepresentation can arise due to the close proximity of the researcher to the research site and its participants. However, none of these threats are insurmountable and they can be mitigated by having a clear unit of analysis, adopting coding processes similar to those used in grounded theory and using multiple iterations (Kock, 2004).

Because of contestations about the validity and reliability of action research, balancing the rigour expected by academia and the needs of the "client system" is an ongoing challenge (Rapoport, 1970, p. 505). Kvale (1995, p. 20) challenges the assumption that validity is attainable only through positivist research stating that together with reliability and generalisation, validity has accrued the status of a "scientific holy trinity". Positivistic research claims to be able to verify the cause-effect relationship in organisational phenomena, a stance that is unsustainable and unattainable in interpretive inquiries concerned with intricate human behaviours and actions (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002). That is not to suggest that because the principles of validity and reliability have been associated traditionally with positivist research traditions (Kvale, 1995; Golafshani, 2003), action researchers should disregard them.

Guba and Lincoln (1982, p. 246) argue that rationalistic language associated with positivistic research such as internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity can be replaced by alternative terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Similarly, Marshall (2011b, p. 176) asserts that action research has its own internal, principled coherence and researchers should "….use appropriate quality processes, not pale versions of scientific method". Action research is collaborative, participative, co-creative and inclusive of multiple perspectives (Reason and Bradbury, 2006) and as such, "….being value neutral is not a pretence action researchers uphold" (Bradbury-Huang, 2010, p. 99).

Susman and Evered (1978, p. 582) challenge the deficiencies of positivistic approaches to organisational problem solving and the "crisis of epistemology" proposing six strategies for validating action research. These are purposeful planning to create better futures for participants, greater collaboration between researchers and participants, developing problem solving and communication infrastructures to drive action research processes and generating knowledge, deriving theory from action, relying on emergent research objectives and methodology and, acknowledging contextual significance.

Checkland and Holwell (1998) state that action research cannot simply replicate the core principles of positivist, scientific research namely, reductionism, repeatability and refutation. Instead, Checkland and Holwell, (1998) advocate the principles of recoverability and declared-in-advance epistemology to enable external scrutineers to trace and recover the research process. Advance declaration of assumptions and approaches is not tantamount to pre-judging the outcomes of a study, the nature of intervention to resolve a practice situation or the likely learning (Champion and Stowell, 2003). Champion and Stowell (2003, p. 26) propose an "intellectual device" to appraise collaborative inquiries at the heart of which is the principle of authenticity. The resulting PEArL framework offers a tool with five inter-related features to appraise validity in collaborative research. These are participation, engaging and interacting with participants, transparency about the authority and control of the research process, acknowledging the role of relationship building, boundaries and power within groups and the learning process. Table 3.4 collates and ascribes (asterisks) issues of validity and reliability in action research identified by key contributors, followed by a discussion about how validity, reliability and ethics were managed in this study.

Table 3.4: Validity and reliability considerations in action research	Rapoport, 1970	Susman & Evered, 1978	Checkland & Holwell, 1998	Champion & Stowell, 2003	Coghlan & Brannick, 2005
Goal dilemmas	*				*
Problem solving and future orientation	*	*			*
Participation and collaboration	*	*		*	*
Learning and system development	*	*		*	*
Grounded in action		*			*
Emergent approach		*		*	*
Situational relationship building		*		*	*
Managing ethics					*
Recoverability			*		

3.6.2 Goal dilemmas

Rapoport (1970) identifies goal dilemmas as one of the challenges involved in action research. Typically, the dilemma lies in the tension between meeting the organisation's needs and the rigour demanded by the academic community. In insider action research considerations about goal dilemmas and bias can be more pronounced due to the researcher's prior knowledge, their duality as a practitioner-researcher and organisational politics (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005; Coghlan, 2007). The study was conducted at a time of austerity measures, regressive social policies and threats to practitioners' livelihoods. The pressure on frontline practitioners, senior managers and management boards was to generate viable, sustainable solutions that could improve local services. As a multi-agency project, formal partnership working was a new experience and pre-existing tensions existed amongst some members.

The research strategy was developed without becoming disaggregated from practitioners' core work and Charnwood Connect's mission to improve local services and strengthen inter-agency collaboration. The author was conscious that any research activity that was not connected directly to practice or service improvements could be seen as a drain on organisational resources. The insider action research approach blended in with the author's role and Charnwood Connect's objectives, mitigating any concerns about a resource drain or goal conflicts. Furthermore, the project's pre-existing relationship with Loughborough University and its agreement to support a PhD researcher ensured that there was a shared

pre-understanding about the research's potential to contribute to the project's programme of work.

At a personal level, the author managed goal dilemmas in the initial stages by refraining from continually vocalising his doctoral studies. The author wanted to assure his peers, project managers and partners that the research was not going to be conducted at the expense of project outputs and anticipated service improvements. The author wanted to demonstrate social affinity with established practitioners and be a full member of an inter-organisational community of practice working towards shared objectives. Finally, the author wanted to be received as an experienced and skilled practitioner with previous experiences of advice work and the not-for-profit sector rather than just a remote, external researcher.

3.6.3   Problem solving and future orientation

Susman and Evered (1978) discuss action research as a future orientated process which seeks to improve people's lives and organisational practices. Charnwood Connect was funded to develop more sustainable organisational approaches to advice services and make the sector more resilient and less dependent on external funding. The practice interventions that are discussed in chapters 4 and 5 illustrate how future-proofing was a prominent part of Charnwood Connect's strategy and the contribution of the action research to this. The practice interventions that are discussed in those two chapters demonstrate the iterative nature of the actions that were taken, their inter-relationships and how learning from one intervention informed the planning of further changes or transposed to other project objectives.

My Charnwood Connect Card, for instance, was developed in direct response to concerns about the wastage of advisers' time and organisational resources when clients failed to show up for their appointments. Its development was in line with the project's objective of improving local services and undertaking preventative work. The Hub was another example of a practice initiative that was developed to improve access to advice, information and support services as well as offer an online knowledge sharing platform to practitioners. Other interventions such as the away day, practitioner discussions at the Forum and the establishment of the strategy group by the Project Steering Group were all interventions to

plan ahead and sustain the project beyond the ASTF funding. Finally, as a future orientated intervention, collaborative work with practitioners and embedding practices were designed to build individual and organisational capacities, leaving behind a legacy for the future.

3.6.4 Participation and collaboration

Participation and democratic engagement are key tenets of action research (Berardi, 2002; Reason and Bradbury, 2006; van der Riet, 2008) though "the messiness of participatory research should not be polished into nice smooth paragraphs" (Snoeren, Niessen and Abma, 2011, p. 201). Often an "illusionary consensus" prevails (Cook, 2012, para. 3) about what constitutes participation in action research (Reason and Bradbury, 2006; Cornwall, 2008; Thiollent, 2011) and researchers can overstate the participative quality of their research at the expense of scientific integrity (Thiollent, 2011). van der Riet (2008, p. 551) advocates the "transformative potential" of participative research but for this, participants have to be involved actively, co-own the process and the research needs to build on existing knowhow.

The practice interventions that are discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6 were founded on the principles of democratic participation and creating safe dialogical spaces for knowledge sharing (Bergold and Thomas, 2012). Collaborative inquiry with participants, acknowledging the complementary expertise and experiences of researchers and practitioners, a mutual agreement of research objectives and the reiteration of participants' voices and lived experiences in the findings were key considerations in this study (Berardi, 2002). The author was embedded in the research site and "....socially located in relation to that which is the focus of the research" (Braithwaite *et al*, 2007, p. 64). The author became part of the social reality of the partnership and was exposed to multiple voices and perspectives, formally and informally (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005; Coghlan, 2007). As a practitioner-researcher the author wanted to remain true to his own professional values, the principles of cooperative working, reflective practices and incremental change through the research process. The practice interventions were conceived, designed and implemented collaboratively with practitioners to remain true to the principles of participative practices and approaches. Working collaboratively maximised the opportunities to gather rich data and practitioners were able to contribute to the research without creating additional time and work pressures for them.

3.6.5   Learning and system development

Practice-based experiential learning is integral to insider action research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). In interpretivist studies "….learning is undertaken in an iterative cycle and is ideally never-ending" (Champion and Stowell, 2003, p. 32). As an active contributor in reiterative action research processes, the insider's duality enables "….the generation of new scientific knowledge and simultaneously helps the organisation to continuously examine existing capabilities and develop new ones" (Roth, Shani and Leary, 2007, p. 44). Learning and other outcomes arise directly from practice interventions and the actions of practitioners not independently (Herr and Anderson, 2005) especially in studies designed to enable organisations to solve problems rather than just generate knowledge for research purposes (de Guerre, 2002). Knowledge sharing and collective learning contribute to problem solving as well as providing mediums for co-creation and practice improvements. Such experiential and participative approaches help to secure practitioner participation, build consensus and demonstrate inclusion (Braithwaite *et al,* 2007; Roth, Shani and Leary, 2007). Ongoing relationship building and communications with practitioners during the research process helps to authenticate the evidence base, strengthen communications, negotiate role boundaries and derive learning (Ravitch and Wirth, 2007).

The research approach in this study was configured after an initial period of immersion, observations and dialogues with the practitioners, the project manager and the author's PhD supervisors. In the first instance, the author used a basic plan-do-observe-review framework as an "intellectual device" (Champion and Stowell, 2003, p. 26; Champion, Stowell and O'Callaghan, 2005, p. 214) to plan, implement and document the practice interventions. As an established practitioner, the researcher was versed in the principles of collaborative working, participative learning and reflective practice. He was familiar with Kolb's (1984) experience-reflect–abstract–do experiential learning cycle, Schön's (1991) reflecting in and on practice, Freire's (1972a, 1972b) banking, conscientisation and praxis and Argyris, Putnam and Smith's (1985) action science framework, situation – consequence – action. As the momentum to develop and pilot different practice interventions speeded up and became more intense, Charnwood Connect began maturing as an inter-organisational community of practice. As the project matured so did the study as it became further grounded in the practice enabling learning to be derived to improve practices. Chapters 4

and 5 about the study's two core practice interventions as well as other offshoots demonstrate how the iterative action research process contributed to organisational learning and practice improvements.

3.6.6 Grounded in action

In insider action research, practitioner-researchers exercise dual roles and have to be able to verify practice-based evidence for their findings and interpretations (de Guerre, 2002; Braithwaite *et al*, 2007; Roth, Shani and Leary, 2007; Galea, 2009). Research outcomes are tied to practice interventions (Herr and Anderson, 2005) creating a dialectic between the researcher and participants (van der Riet, 2008) and research and action (practice). The dialectics between participants, an organisation and a practitioner-researcher provide the "….strength and veracity to insider research….that is relevant to the needs of an organisation, pragmatic in its approach and holistic in its application" (Galea, 2009, pp. 6-7). However, researcher-practitioner boundary negotiations and action re-alignments have to be recognised as an ongoing process in any action research study (Braithwaite *et al*, 2007; Ravitch and Wirth, 2007).

As a practice-based inquiry, the process involved initial immersion, orientation and incremental absorption into the research site. This meant observing, analysing and reflecting critically on existing patterns of behaviours, organisational dynamics, environmental influences and what practitioners knew and did already. The practice interventions were founded on understanding what worked or did not work already, the lessons from existing practices and improving what and how things were done by practitioners. Communicative and knowledge sharing spaces such as the Forum, the online private zone and the Task and Finish Group were designed to give a voice to and elicit practitioner experiences. However, these dialogical, learning processes were not as inclusive as intended as not all practitioners were able to participate due to other work pressures. In such instances, there is the danger that knowledge sharing and co-creation by a limited cohort of practitioners can lead to the generation of "hegemonial knowledge" (Bergold and Thomas, 2012, para. 20) serving the interests of the few rather than the whole collective. To counter this and nurture an inclusive inter-organisational community of practice, starting from strengths and practice-based experiential learning approaches were deployed

continuously and the practice interventions were documented, disseminated and discussed as widely as possible. Above all else, the emphasis was on developing and maintaining relationships with practitioners and building on what was known and done.

3.6.7   An emergent approach

Action researchers study organisational phenomenon as it manifests itself and emerges from practice (Shani and Pasmore, 1985; Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). Theory is derived from the emergent practice (Susman and Evered, 1978; Champion and Stowell, 2003). As a practice-based study, an understanding of Charnwood Connect and its context had to be developed before a research strategy could be defined. Like his project co-workers, the author was newly appointed as a niche knowledge worker and had to develop an understanding of the organisation's goals as well form relationships with practitioners with whom he was going to work. Although the author was an experienced practitioner, this was a new practice context which required a period of orientation, relationship building and learning.

Following a period of immersion and more in-depth critical reflection with his PhD supervisors about the research approach, Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) insider action research approach was adopted. This framework aligned closest to the author's insider position, the focus on practice-based research and the opportunity for the research to contribute to Charnwood Connect's objectives. Riemer (1977, p. 469) describes how "opportunistic research" can enable researchers to use their insider status to study what they "….know rather than know about" and such opportunities can arise through circumstances, familiarity of a situation or alignment with a particular expertise (Riemer, 1977; Avison, Baskerville and Myers, 2001). The emergent approach in this study was possible because of the opportunities that were available. These included the agreement of Charnwood Connect to engage in the research, the doctoral supervisors' expertise and interest in action research methodology, knowledge management and the not-for-profit sector and, the encouragement to the author to adopt a research approach and identify a research area that was compatible with the organisational context and his knowledge management role.

3.6.8   Situational relationship building

As researchers and reflective practitioners (Schön, 1991, 1995), insider action researchers need critical situational awareness of their organisation. Rooney (2005) suggests that researchers should anticipate the impact of their presence on participants' behaviours as well as any misinterpretations or false assumptions arising out of their insider knowledge. Insider researchers should be aware of the subconscious distortion of information and data due to personal loyalties, politics and affinities (Rooney, 2005). Insider action research is a political act for it "….stresses listening. It emphasises questioning. It fosters courage. It incites action. It abets reflection and it endorses democratic participation. Any or all of these characteristics may be threatening to existing organisational norms" (Coghlan, 2007, p. 298). Despite such challenges, political dynamics can be mitigated through participative processes, working across organisational hierarchies, making an impact, contributing to organisational memory and ensuring that the organisation benefits (Roth, Shani and Leary, 2007). In any case, the risks involved in insider action research have to be weighed up against those of bringing in an external researcher who may take longer to gain access and internalise the organisation's needs, environment and dynamics (Roth, Shani and Leary, 2007).

In the initial stages of this study, the author experienced sporadic innuendos from one or two practitioners alluding that he sought to gain personal benefit. In response, the author continued to reiterate that the research focus on knowledge brokering would benefit the project. The practitioners concerned were not involved in the project's delivery or decision-making processes and the author was able to fend off these swipes. Additionally, the author had the comfort of knowing that the project manager, the Project Steering Group, PhD supervisors and his other co-practitioners gave unconditional support to the research. Apart from some minor passive resistance in the early stages, interpersonal and inter-professional relations with the author were not impeded during the study. On the contrary, practitioners were receptive to receiving updates about the research either formally through platforms such as the Project Steering Group meetings or informally through the across-the-desk conversations. Practitioners complimented the author on adding value to their work because of the skills and experiences which he was able to share. Additionally, the knowledge brokering practice interventions tied directly to the project's activities which

helped to cement relationships and give confidence that practitioners' were not going to be diverted from their demanding workloads.

3.6.9   Managing ethics

In insider action research, ethical issues and tensions are inevitable as "….the ethical demand stems from the recognition of the social nature of practice" (Nilsen, 2006, p. 26). At a personal level, managing ethics and confidentiality can create personal guilt, vulnerability and emotional drain when undertaking an insider action research project (Kenneally, 2013). Ethical infringements can invalidate or at the very least, question research integrity and impact on practitioner participation rates and depths especially when the researcher is in close proximity as an insider. Galea (2009) suggests that when considering ethical dilemmas, an insider action researcher should take a common sense approach to weigh up if more harm than good is being done. Coghlan and Brannick (2005) suggest a more pragmatic strategy including keeping a journal to record, reflect and plan actions about controversial political incidents and ethical dilemmas.

The ethical challenges in the current study were managed in a number of ways. First and foremost, ethical clearance was obtained from Loughborough University to conduct the research confirming that the study's remit complied with accepted academic standards for such research. Secondly, permission to undertake the study was obtained via the project manager, participants were informed and ongoing communications were maintained via the project manager as well as the Project Steering Group, staff meetings in the managing agency, the Forum and less formally, through the across-the-desk conversations with practitioners. Thirdly, ethical issues were discussed with the author's PhD supervisors, one of whom was also a member of the Project Steering Group, providing a further loop for ethical scrutiny between the project, the author's practices and Loughborough University's protocols. Once ethical clearance was granted by Loughborough University, the author began maintaining a practice journal to record and reflect his own thoughts and interpretations as advised by Coghlan and Brannick (2005). The practice journal complemented the extensive note-taking in his work notebooks, work diary and administrative records, all of which were available for wider scrutiny (Appendices 3.1: Observations; 3.2: Interviews; 3.3: Documents; 3.4: Audio-visual materials). In sum, the

ethical challenges of being an insider action researcher were managed through maintaining transparency, ongoing communications, being open to scrutiny and constantly reflecting on practice and practitioner feedback.

In practice scenarios, the main ethical issue was about observing the boundaries between being a researcher and a co-practitioner and deciphering which aspects of the practice to include in this study. For example, the author witnessed derogatory exchanges between practitioners about clients, other practitioners as well as partner organisations. While many of these were recorded in the author's practice journal, as a researcher, the author had to make decisions about which data was central to the study's focus on knowledge brokering (Appendices 3.1, 3.5 and 3.6). When these instances arose, in the moment, the author had to make a decision about whether to collude with such exchanges, confront them or keep out. Depending on the circumstances, the interpersonal dynamics at the time and how the author was feeling, as a matter of principle, the author tried not to collude by agreeing with any sentiments expressed. Instead the author chose to keep out, tactfully confront or go into a questioning mode hoping to create a breathing space to reconsider what was being expressed.

3.6.10 Recoverability

Checkland and Holwell (1998) cite a researcher who had used an interview protocol for her study but did not include this in her publication. Checkland and Holwell (1998) argue that without the inclusion of this protocol, other researchers are unable to recover the research pathway and the correlation between the method(s), the data and the reported outcomes. As an insider action research project, the principle of recoverability was observed through regular face-to-face and written communications with individual practitioners as well as bodies such as the Project Steering Group. The principle of recoverability was observed also through extensive documentation which was available to practitioners throughout the action research process. At the end of the two years, the author created a comprehensive electronic archive of the documentation which was left with the project for any cross-checking and future reference. The data management strategy which is discussed in the next section was grounded in the practice and explicitly documented in project and academic records (action research notes, supervision notes and annual review reports).

Finally, Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) advice about keeping a practice journal was taken on and this was complemented by extensive work notebooks and diaries recording the author's planning and reflective processes relating to his practice and the research.

3.7 THE DATA MANAGEMENT PROCESS

This section details and examines the processes for gathering, organising and analysing the data.

3.7.1 Sourcing the data

In this naturalistic inquiry, as an insider practitioner-researcher, the author was able observe, document critical incidents and gather rich data before conducting an in-depth analysis and drawing conclusions (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, 1994; Herr and Anderson, 2005; Creswell, 2007, 2009). Gathering and collating impersonal data such as project documentation, electronic communications and development plans began when the author first joined the project. Following formal registration, ethical clearance by Loughborough University and agreement with the project, the author began maintaining a practice journal (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). As the study unfolded, data was streamed from four sources: the author's first-hand experiences and reflections, second-person experiences and perspectives of practitioners, project documentation and academic research. The data streams are captured in a grid with four quadrants across two axes: primary-secondary data sources and, first person-second/third person perspectives (Figure 3.6).

As the research evolved, the ability to compare and contrast data from the four quadrants continued to enrich the analysis, evidence base and academic rigour. In action research, data processing is a varied and continuous activity (Susman and Evered, 1978; Coghlan, 2013) and the reflections, insights and analysis from these instruments and data sets remained live for the duration of the research. The conception of the data streaming and organisation grid helped to synchronise and synthesise the actions, the research, reflections and analysis as "....reflexive iteration is at the heart of visiting and revisiting the data and connecting them with emerging insights, progressively leading to refined focus and understandings" (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009, p. 77). After completion of the study, Creswell's (2007) four categories of collected data and information was adopted to re-lay,

organise and analyse the data gathered. Qualitative data can be grouped "….into four basic types of information: observations (ranging from non-participant to participant), interviews (ranging from close-ended to open-ended), documents (ranging from private to public), and audio-visual materials (including materials such as photographs, compact discs, and videotapes" (Creswell, 2007, p. 129). The next four sections discuss the organisation of the evidence into the four categories of data.
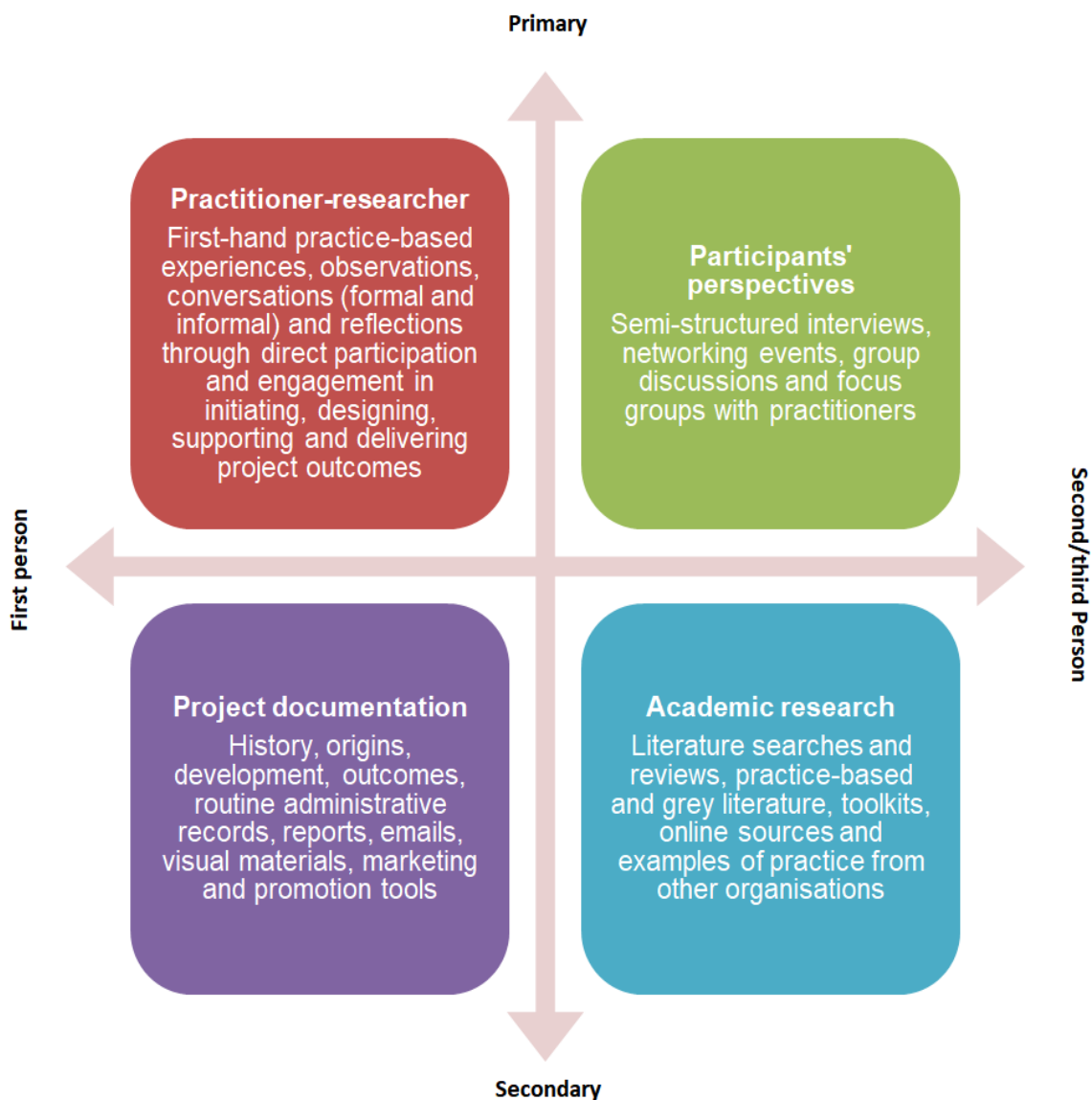
Figure 3.6: Data streaming and organisation grid.

3.7.2 Data collection: Observations

By observing, documenting and reflecting an action researcher can capture rich data "….through the eyes of the people studied….and is a keynote of the tradition" (Bryman, 1988, p. 63). The challenges of using observations as a research tool include the need to account for multiple viewpoints and perspectives (Bryman, 1988) as well as managing the practicalities of data recording, ethics, absorption into the research context (Creswell, 2007) and managing organisational politics (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). The author captured his reflections and observations in a practice journal documenting accounts of critical conversations and incidents arising from internal and external meetings and across-the-desk conversations about the project, service improvements, professional practices, staff dynamics and inter-agency relationships (Appendix 3.1: Observations). The maintenance of the journal helped to triangulate data from the practice, work notebooks, diaries, communications, project reports and administrative records. The objective of maintaining a comprehensive range of field study documentation was not just to record administrative details but make active use of them as instruments for reflective analysis, reviewing interventions and forward planning (Ravitch and Wirth, 2007).

3.7.3 Data collection: Interviews

Interviews and focus groups enabled in-depth information and a "lived response" (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p. 96) to be obtained directly from practitioners and provided a further medium for interaction and relationship building (Appendix 3.2: Interviews). Face-to-face semi-structured interviews, an e-questionnaire and focus groups were used as interview instruments. These tools were used to seek practitioners' views about their needs and expectations at the beginning of the project, the impact of the project towards the end, the gaps in local advice services, training needs and participating in project activities such as the Forum. Data was generated also from working groups set up to help design and develop two of the project initiatives, the Hub and improving inter-agency referrals. The outcomes of all these initiatives were reported to and discussed with the project manager and at Project Steering Group meetings providing a managerial and strategic loop for consideration and action. Ongoing dialogues and interactions with practitioners ensured their continuing participation and influence in the project (Ravitch and Wirth, 2007).

3.7.4 Data collection: Documents

An extensive range of documentation was gathered including contextual information about the project, administrative records, project reports, development plans, discussion papers and academic literature to inform the practice and research (Appendix 3.3: Documents). The information that was gathered became a repository and tool for tracing the evolution of the project and its various elements, and identifying who was involved during which phase of the project (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002). At the end of the project, the documentation (but not the practice journal) was archived electronically and handed over to the project for its future use.

3.7.5 Data collection: Audio-visual materials

A range of audio-visual materials was generated to bind the inter-organisational community of practice, promote the project, engage internal and external practitioners, inform stakeholders about key developments, and fulfil the project's objectives (Appendix 3.4: Audio-visual materials). The Hub, for example, involved producing artwork and visuals and the website itself represented an audio-visual artefact (chapter 4). The tube-map of local advice, information and support services and the My Charnwood Connect Card were practical aids issued to clients to improve inter-agency referrals (chapter 5).

3.7.6 Data processing

The research evidence was processed in two main phases. When the researcher was *in situ* "living with the data", formative data gathering, processing and analysis were undertaken as the knowledge brokering practice interventions were made. During this phase, interviews and focus groups were used to gather data relating to specific interventions such as the mapping study. The data was analysed thematically and presented as practitioner and management reports for discussion and further action. Also during this phase, the author made mental notes and kept a practice journal to reflect on and analyse the practice interventions, their outcomes and practitioner dynamics.

When Charnwood Connect came to an end, the author re-laid the data using Creswell's (2007) four categories, immersed himself further into the data and carried out a summative analysis. The summative data processing involved a deeper cross-analysis of the raw data

against academic literature and project documentation. Both the formative and summative processes were intertwined but discernible. The formative data analysis informed the practice and research during the project and this thesis represents the summative analysis, generalisable findings and contribution to knowledge. In both the formative and summative phases, coding and thematic analyses were undertaken manually led by the data that was collected and lodged in documentation such as the personal journal, work notebooks, interviews, audio-visual materials and project documents (Boyatzis, 1998; Blaikie, 2000; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The coding process (Figure 3.7) involved generating initial categories from the data, organising them in relation to each other and developing thematic topics for analysis and presentation in this thesis (adapted from Gibson and Brown, 2009). Although a range of data and documentation was gathered, data selection and the coding processes were determined by the research aims and objectives and Charnwood Connect's five objectives (chapter 1). As stated by Gibson and Brown (2009, p. 136) "….the details of coding are only relevant and useful as far as they can help the researcher to deal with their research issues". Appendices 3.1, 3.5 and 3.6 provide a selection of practice examples and samples of coding from which the themes were derived.
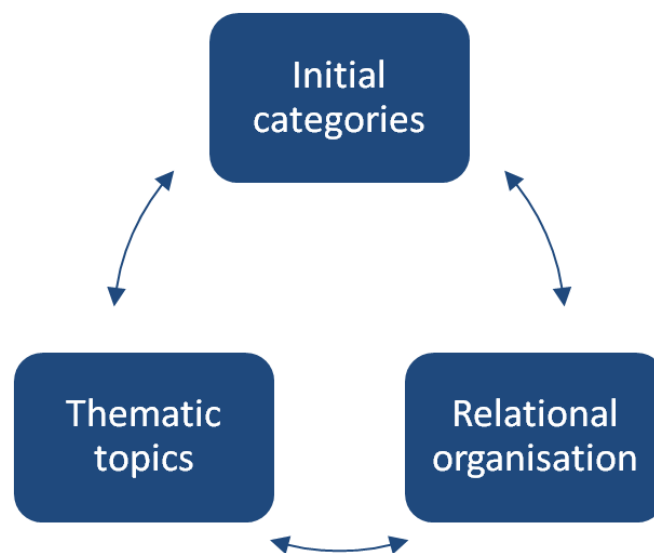
Figure 3.7: The thematic coding process.

3.7.7 Data presentation

The presentation of the data took place sequentially. In the first phase when the author was *in situ,* documents and audio-visual materials were produced to record the practice interventions (e.g. the mapping study), synthesise academic thinking (e.g. action research notes) and fulfil project objectives (e.g. the Hub). In the second phase, this thesis represents a fuller academic analysis and theorising about knowledge brokering as a practice intervention and insider action research as a research approach. During the second phase, the researcher consolidated the literature and academic credentials of the study, analysed the findings, constructed and wrote the thesis.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the insider action research methodology of this study, an approach to studying organisational phenomenon by a practitioner-researcher who is a complete member of that organisation (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). The analysis in this chapter includes an examination of the genesis of insider action research as a variant of action research, its conceptual and philosophical underpinnings, core principles, strengths and limitations and how research dilemmas and challenges were managed. The author was able to gather naturally occurring data (Trowler, 2011), gain deep insights (Trowler, 2011), construct thick descriptions (Creswell and Miller, 2000) and create shared spaces for researcher-practitioner collaboration (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). As a study in a naturalistic setting, the research blended in unobtrusively with everyday work practices, engaged practitioners without diverting them from their responsibilities and contributed to Charnwood Connect's goals. Pragmatically, as an insider inquiry, the study created spaces for knowledge sharing, joint problem solving, experimenting and improving practices in real-time. The next chapter examines and analyses the practice intervention to develop the Knowledge Hub, an online knowledge sharing portal for practitioners and the local community.

Explanatory note

The practice interventions in chapters 4 and 5 are examined and analysed through the critical incident analysis framework conceptualised by Flanagan (1954) and interpreted by Keatinge (2002). A critical incident is "….any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act. To be critical, an incident must occur in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects" (Flanagan, 1954, p. 327). Focusing on a single critical incident enables the action research cycles for the Hub and the Forum to be interrogated more intensely to help draw out the learning about knowledge brokering as a practice intervention. The format for presenting the critical incidents is:

<table>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">

Named critical incident

"….any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act" (Flanagan, 1954, p. 327).

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>

Situation

"A brief description of the scenario that is concise and sufficiently descriptive for subsequent analysis" (Keatinge, 2002, p. 35).

Actions

"The action/s in context identifying the significance of the event, describing the issues or concerns involved" (Keatinge, 2002, p. 35).

Outcomes

"A review of the actual or potential outcome of the incident" (Keatinge, 2002, p. 35).

</td>
<td>

Reflecting in practice

Commentary in first person of the author engaging in a "….reflective conversation with the situation" (Schön, 1992, p. 125) as the critical incident unfolds. The commentary is presented in the first person to authenticate the experiences of the author as an insider action researcher and a knowledge broker in the "action-present" (Schön, 1992, p. 125) intuitively performing everyday tasks, extracting learning and using the knowledge generated to inform practice.

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">

Reflecting on practice and sense making

A "post-mortem" on practice (Schön, 1991, p. 61) conducted after the event enabling the practitioner to make sense of the experiences and constitutes an act of looking back and analysing. This presents an overarching interpretive and sense making analysis, interfacing practice and theory and making knowledge claims (Schön, 1991; Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005; Levin, 2012).

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">

Learning outcomes

A summary of the key emerging learning outcomes or "inferences" (Flanagan, 1954, p. 327) for further consideration and generalisation.

</td>
</tr>
</table>

CHAPTER 4: PRACTICE INTERVENTION 1: THE KNOWLEDGE HUB

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 discusses and analyses the first of two practice interventions that form the evidence base for the thesis. The Information Technology Knowledge Hub (the Hub) was designed and developed for practitioners, clients and local communities. As with other Charnwood Connect's activities and outputs, the Hub was funded through the ASTF for a period of two years. Beyond then, Charnwood Connect was responsible for securing external or internal funding for the Hub. Although the analysis in this chapter focuses on the Hub, the brokering intervention impacted on other project outputs such as the multi-agency volunteering pathway and *vice versa,* as will be seen in the critical incident analysis. The chapter begins with an introduction to the purpose and intended target audience of the Hub. This is followed by an overview of the four action research cycles (ARCs) and their associated critical incidents. Then, four critical incidents are examined and analysed: assessing practitioners' needs, co-creation, improving access and sustaining the Hub, before ending the chapter with a conclusion.

4.2   BACKGROUND TO THE KNOWLEDGE HUB

As stated already, Charnwood Connect was funded for two years through a pump-priming national programme to enable local agencies to develop more sustainable advice services. The partnership was funded to deliver five outputs including a "….multi-faceted bespoke Knowledge Hub….with two distinct areas….One aspect will be to support practitioners in terms of specialist learning, policy and procedural updates and legislative updates. The second aspect will be a client facing resource which will include information on all available services within the locality, access to online advice and information resources and information about referrals and sign posting" (Charnwood Connect Big Lottery ASTF Funding Application, 2013a, p. 8). In its funding bid, Charnwood Connect made a commitment to have the Hub operational within six months of the start of the project. As identified in the tender specification, in descending order of priority, the target audience for the Hub is portrayed in Figure 4.1. The lead responsibility for developing the Hub lay with the author and the online facility was an integral component of Charnwood Connect's knowledge

sharing strategy to improve advice services (Appendix 4.1: Knowledge Management Officer: Role summary).
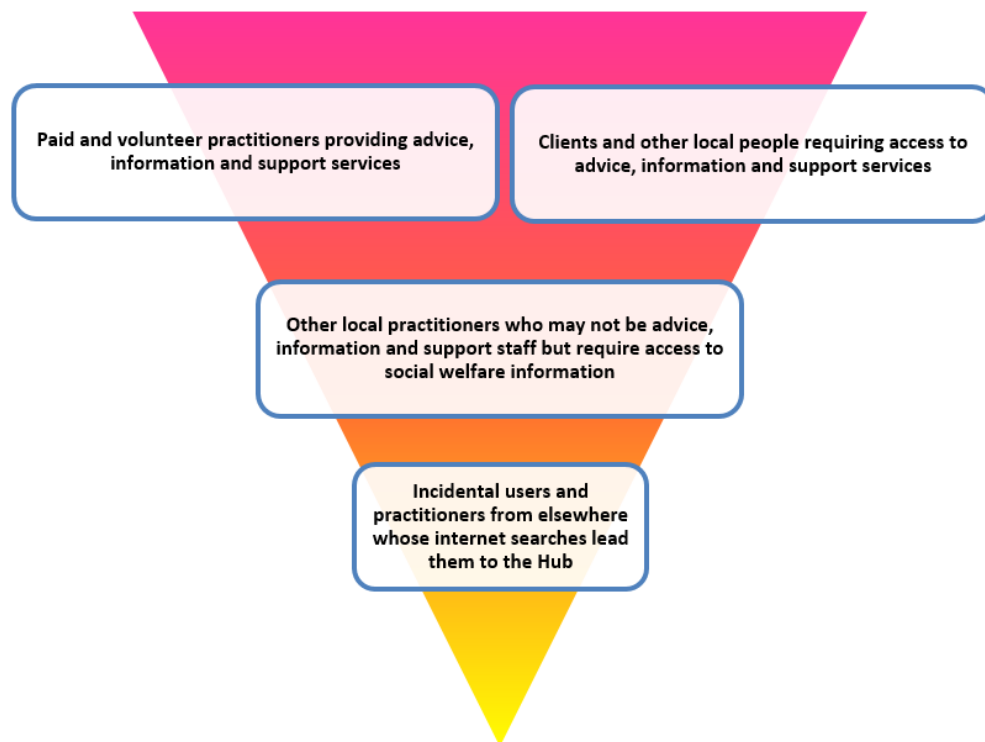
Figure 4.1: The Knowledge Hub's target audience.

4.3   DEVELOPING THE HUB

The Hub was developed from scratch in an inter-organisational setting which had an underdeveloped and underfunded information technology infrastructure (WN1: interview notes, October 2013-April 2014). There was not a pre-defined strategy for realising the Hub prior to receiving the ASTF funding. Over the two years as an ASTF funded project, the Hub was developed through a series of phased practice interventions, which are presented as four action research cycles (ARCs): conceptualisation, design, adoption and sustainability (Figure 4.2; Table 4.1). Each action research cycle comprises at least one or more critical incidents (Flanagan, 1954; Keatinge, 2002; Butterfield *et al*, 2005) and in the analysis that follows, one critical incident is examined in each of the four action research cycles. In terms of the timeline, the first two ARCs took place primarily in the first year of the project and the third and fourth ARCs, mainly in the second.
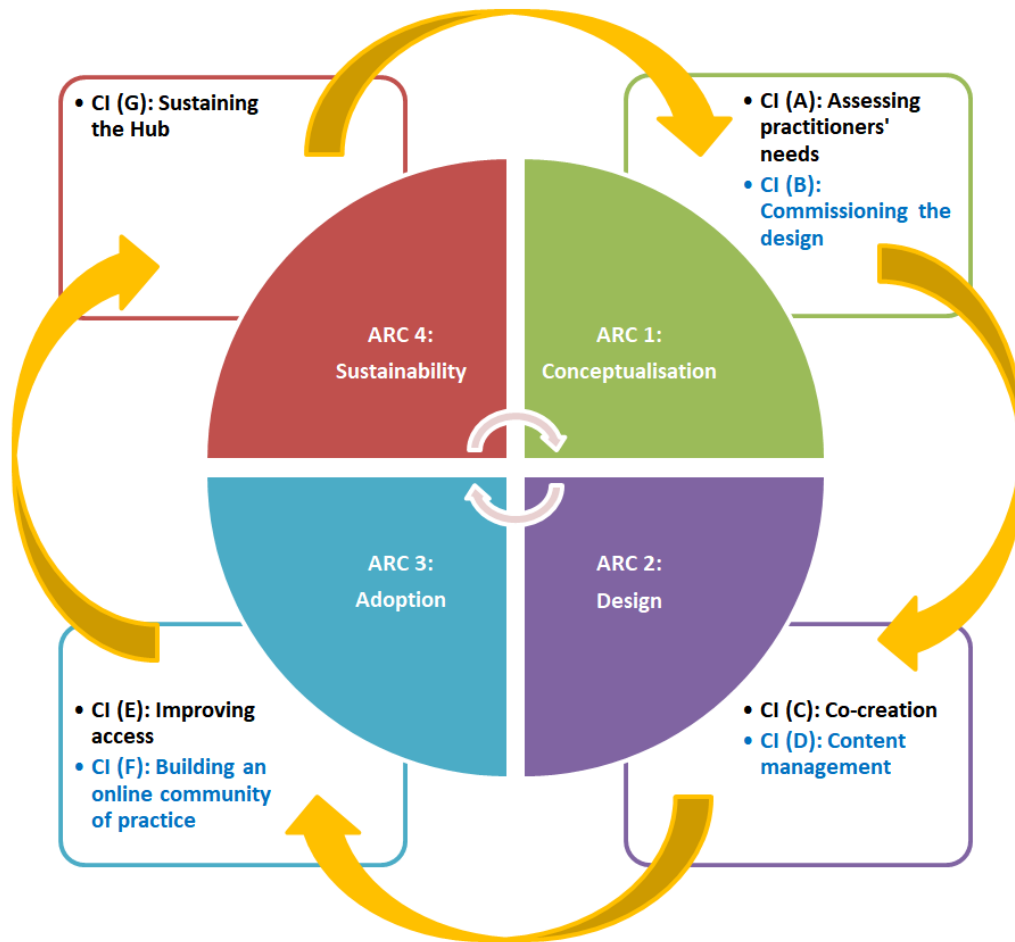
Figure 4.2: The Hub's four action research cycles and associated critical incidents.

Table 4.1: The Hub's action research cycles and associated critical incidents	
Action research cycle (ARC)	**Critical incident (CI)**
ARC 1: Conceptualisation Defining the concept and parameters of the Hub as a technological facility required developing a shared vision of the Hub's design and functionality. Face-to-face interviews were conducted by the author with practitioners to identify their needs and aspirations, establish working relationships and encourage them to participate in shaping the Hub. The results of the preliminary interviews, across-the-desk conversations, participation in the in-house meetings in the managing agency, external information technology expertise and secondary research provided raw data for the Hub's specification.	**CI (A): Assessing practitioners' needs** Assessing and analysing practitioners' needs and expectations of the Hub, relationship building with practitioners and becoming familiar with the research site. **CI (B): Commissioning the design** The processes and decisions relating to the development and design of the Hub's tender specification and the commissioning of the design team.
ARC 2: Design Once the concept of the Hub was captured in the form of a tender specification and the designers were commissioned, the next stage was the dual process of creating a visually appealing website and configuring the Hub's technical capabilities.	**CI (C): Co-creation** The consultation, participation and collaborative interventions to design the Hub and develop its technical functionality. **CI (D): Content management** Collaborative design and development of content for both the test and released sites with contributions from practitioners.
ARC 3: Adoption Following the release of the Hub, the author made several incremental interventions to persuade practitioners to use the Hub as part of their work routines especially the private zone as an online knowledge sharing facility. The interventions included efforts to encourage practitioners to start promoting the Hub as an advice, information and support resource to their clients and the local community.	**CI (E): Improving access** The strategy of increasing the usage of the Hub by practitioners in Charnwood Connect and widening access for clients, the local community and other agencies. **CI (F): Building an online community of practice** The incremental process of having in place user agreements with individual practitioners and their organisations, agreeing the terms of use and building an interactive, online inter-organisational community.
ARC 4: Sustainability As a time-limited project, future funding of Charnwood Connect and continuity beyond the ASTF were topics of ongoing discussion. These grew in intensity and urgency as the project entered into its second year. This ARC involved interventions to sustain the Hub as part of a package of measures to secure funding for the whole project through external sources, partner contributions, or both.	**CI (G): Sustaining the Hub** Exploring strategies for maintaining and sustaining the Hub beyond the two-year ASTF funding.

4.4   CRITICAL INCIDENT (A): ASSESSING PRACTITIONERS' NEEDS (ARC 1)

Defining the concept and parameters of the Hub as an online knowledge sharing platform involved making interventions and working with practitioners to develop a shared vision of the Hub's functionality, visual appearance and user accessibility.

Critical incident (A): Assessing practitioners' needs (ARC 1)	*Reflecting in action*
Situation	*I had a rich background in the not-for-profit sector, in the UK and overseas, Black community development, equality and inclusion, higher education, professional training of youth and community workers and the cooperative movement. Charnwood Connect's commitment to collaboration and partnership working aligned comfortably with my own values, principles and practices about starting from strengths and building on existing knowhow.*
1. Charnwood Connect had to demonstrate that collaborative working, stakeholder engagement and sustainability were integral to its activities (ASTF, December 2012).	
2. The project manager, a key visionary who helped realise the project was the chief officer of the managing agency that had led the funding bid. Her agency had experienced first-hand the impact of austerity measures and was facing the threat of a merger when Charnwood Connect started. Like other senior managers in the project, she recognised the significance of partnership working to protect local services (WN1: meetings with the project manager, 17/10/13 & senior manager in the managing agency, 21/10/13; PJ, 4/2/14, 26/2/14).	
3. Charnwood Connect comprised a range of paid and voluntary practitioners with a rich mix of skills and experiences in advice work, the private and public sectors and niche social welfare issues such as housing and immigration (WN1: interview notes, October 2013-April 2014; The Hub: Partners' pages: http://charnwoodconnect.org.uk/partners/).	
Actions	*Rather than superimposing my own values, principles and practices about what*
1. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with practitioners (Appendix 4.2: Questions for practitioners)	

Critical incident (A): Assessing practitioners' needs (ARC 1)	Reflecting in action
to gather rich data about their practices, the work of their agencies and their needs, expectations and aspirations about the Hub (WN1: interview notes, October 2013– April 2014).	*Charnwood Connect needed or the direction of its evolution, I wanted to find out directly from practitioners about their hopes and expectations of the Hub. These early interventions would help me build relationships with practitioners and give me direct and deeper insights about local advice services, organisational structures, practices and personalities. (WN1: 22/10/13, author reflection and planning session). I was fortunate to be based in an open plan office with advisers and project workers in the managing agency. This provided further opportunities to forge relationships and engage with the day to day issues involved in providing social welfare advice.*
2. The on-site visits and preliminary interviews with partners complemented the discussions at staff meetings, the corridor chats and across-the-desk conversations in the open plan offices in the managing agency.	
3. To get deeper insights about local advice work and start building relationships with practitioners in the managing agency, the author shadowed advisers who did face-to-face casework with clients (WN1: 6/11/13; 20/11/13).	
4. In the initial absence of a team structure for the project, the author and two other project workers started meeting to discuss strategies for co-working, relationship building with practitioners and encouraging partner agencies to participate in the project (WN1: 28/10/13).	
5. The author prepared an early work programme for the delivery of the Hub including plans for visiting partner agencies, which was agreed with the project manager.	
Outcomes	*The visits to individual partners proved to be extremely fruitful and*
1. The preliminary round of visits to partners provided raw data about practitioners' views, expectations and	

Critical incident (A): Assessing practitioners' needs (ARC 1)	*Reflecting in action*
aspirations about the Hub and the project as a whole. The emerging consensus was that technological options were an important means of improving access to social welfare advice services, confirming the original vision of the project's founders.	*interesting. By meeting practitioners on their own territories, I was able to build personal relationships, get an inside*
2. The preliminary interviews helped to capture practitioners' needs and expectations of the Hub and compose a credible tender specification. The main outcomes were that Hub should:	*perspective about the neighbourhoods in which their organisations were operating as well as*
a. Give clients and the community direct access to social welfare advice, information and support, empowering them to take greater control of their lives	*understand the working styles and priorities of*
b. Provide a user-friendly technological platform, accessible through social media	*individual organisations. At the same time, I was able*
c. Provide a medium for knowledge sharing amongst practitioners including managers and trustees	*to discuss with practitioners their knowledge needs and how the Hub could help*
d. Raise the profile of Charnwood Connect, social welfare needs, local advice services and the work of individual partners	*them in their work, ideas which validated most of the aspirations expressed by*
e. Help pool partnership resources and facilitate inter-agency referrals (WN1: interview notes, October 2013-April 2014; WN1: 21/10/13; WN1: 23/10/13, 24/10/13)	*the project's founders (WN1: interview notes, October 2013-April 2014).*
f. Promote and complement existing advice services and not have the Hub as a standalone information technology platform.	*To share the results of Charnwood Connect's work on the Hub and other*
3. The preliminary interviews revealed that, although some partners had established mutual working relationships with each other and other local agencies, as an advice sector, partnership working was weak. This was	*developments and learn from other experiences, I began networking nationally with other ASTF*

Critical incident (A): Assessing practitioners' needs (ARC 1)	Reflecting in action
exacerbated by a competitive funding climate and inter-organisational politics (WN 1: meeting with the project manager, 17/10/13; meeting with managing agency and lead partner agency, 23/10/13; WN1: interview notes, October 2013-April 2014).	*projects through an online community of practice (WN1: 22/10/13; 23/10/13; 6/11/13).*
4. The preliminary visits to projects, participation in in-house meetings, shadowing advisers and the across-the-desk conversations helped to build relationships with practitioners and enabled the concept of the Hub to be converted into a tangible design specification.	
5. Expertise was secured through Loughborough University to guide the technical aspects of the specification.	
6. The collaborative conceptualisation process enabled the knowledge and information that was gained to be translated into design decisions.	
7. Feedback from practitioners and acknowledgement by the Project Steering Group confirmed that the efforts to be participative and inclusive were appreciated (Project Steering Group minutes 12/8/14).	

4.4.1 Reflecting on practice and sense making: Assessing practitioners' needs

A comprehensive assessment of practitioners' needs and expectations had not been conducted prior to the submission of Charnwood Connect's ASTF funding bid. This presented an opportunity to gather data directly from practitioners to understand their needs and expectations and compose a more authentic and coherent specification for the Hub. At this early stage in the development of the Hub as an online knowledge sharing portal, a demonstrative commitment to practitioner participation was essential. As stated by Davenport and Prusak (1998, p. 129) "….since it is the value added by people – context, experience, and interpretation – that transforms data and information into knowledge, it is the ability to capture and manage those human additions that make information technologies particularly suited to dealing with knowledge". The project manager was a key

practitioner who was involved in conceiving and conceptualising the Hub as a service medium and online knowledge sharing platform. The discussions between the project manager and the author confirmed that partnership working amongst advice providers was limited, compounded by a competitive funding climate, as revealed during an orientation meeting:

"We have tried previously to develop advice networks but these have not worked well….we are involved in some limited partnership work at the moment but the ASTF funds allowed discussions to be opened up with other partners. There was an email consultation on the draft bid and partners had seen and agreed the partnership agreement. Following this we had a partnership meeting to say that the bid had been successful. The vision is for agencies to work together, share ideas for their own development including policies, for clients to have a more holistic service and to develop a better cross-agency referral system" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 17/10/13). In this context, the Hub was a vital online resource to establish an inter-organisational community of practice, share knowledge and practices and provide more seamless services. As the project's overseer, the project manager was able to provide rich insights and information about the locality and as an insider, was able to broker relationships between partner agencies, practitioners and the author.

Charnwood Connect comprised a variety of agencies with skilled personnel and niche social welfare expertise. The author was keen to tap into this to help inform the development of the Hub. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with practitioners as potential Hub users and advocates to understand their needs and aspirations, build researcher-participant relationships and become familiar with the locality, as illustrated below:

"We need a concept and a specification for the Hub which includes its maintenance and further development. Protocols will be needed for data sharing perhaps along the lines of those used by other inter-agency groups….the Hub will need to be outward-facing as well as act as a forum for professionals" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 23/10/13).

"The IT resource of Charnwood Connect will help to increase access to information, collaborative working and the training and capacity building of existing services providing advice" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 29/10/13).

"Charnwood Connect can act as a joint resource….strengthen knowledge about what all partner agencies do and provide an update of current priorities….it could also offer a database of the skills and experiences available e.g. that of volunteers" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 30/10/13).

"We receive regular downloads from a national housing charity but do not use an online advice guide….maybe there should be Knowledge Hub champions in each organisation who can show others how to use the Hub?" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 12/11/13).

"We provide quite generic services but refer clients to other agencies with more complex issues. Charnwood Connect could provide a named contact for each client. There could be one inquiry form, a chance to develop a better understanding of the roles of different agencies perhaps through shadowing their work" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 18/11/13).

"We should be able to offer a direct number and named contact….perhaps a simple, single inquiry form which can track the client. There could be a case-load area on the Knowledge Hub" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 19/11/13)

The on-site visits were complemented by informal across-the-desk conversations in the open plan offices where the author was based. Being in shared, open plan offices enabled the author to develop professional relationships, have a shared purpose and engage with his peers in critical reflection, analysis and learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Orr, 1996; Wenger, 1998a, 2004, 2010; Kimble and Hildreth, 2005; Senge, 2006). In one instance, "….a practitioner started talking to me about the funding plight of one of the partner agencies and whether or not Charnwood Connect could help. I said that we could support them but the partner agency needs to talk to other senior managers for support. I said that I was happy follow this up and ring the agency concerned. I spoke to a practitioner there but it

turns out that the request was not for a letter of support but about putting information updates on the Hub about potential funding" (PJ entry: 24/2/14). In another instance, the author had "….an interesting passing conversation with a volunteer practitioner about a case they were working on….the case involved an exploitative landlord who continually moved on families especially new arrivals and putting them into worse accommodation. The volunteer stated that perhaps the Hub had a role to play in monitoring such trends and taking action" (PJ entry: 2/4/14).

Initially, in the absence of a team structure, the author and his two project co-workers started to meet to plan the delivery of project objectives and encourage the participation of practitioners from all the partner agencies. Straddling across the managing and lead partner agencies, the trio were able to share insider knowledge about how to progress the project, encourage practitioner participation and manage intra- and inter-organisational politics. In one of these meetings in the early stages of the project, there was a discussion about how "….we needed to think about how best to make use of the Project Steering Group….what do other partners need or want from it and how can its target group, reach and diversity be improved?" (Notes of meeting, project workers, WN1: 28/10/13). Six or so months into the project, "….as yet project staff had not had a team meeting, after discussion with a couple of practitioners I sent out an email invitation to initiate a team meeting. The meeting will help us crystallise our achievements to date and plan for the future" (PJ entry: 9/4/14). The email stated:

"Colleagues. Hope all is well. Charnwood Connect has now been running for just over 6 months. We have just submitted our six monthly report to the Big Lottery. How about a CC project team meeting involving all 5 project staff plus senior managers to review our experiences so far, discuss any issues/challenges faced and think ahead about what is planned over the next six months or so? I am attaching a table with some options for a possible meeting and would appreciate it if you could let me know of your availability. Thank you and best wishes. Vipin Chauhan, Knowledge Management Officer" (Email: 9/4/14).

Engaging directly with practitioners, starting from what was known, working inclusively and soliciting practitioners' views were essential to building inter-professional relationships and trust. Wenger (2004, p. 1) states that practitioners are best placed to manage their own knowledge and "….know how it affects their ability to do their work. They know what needs to be documented and what should be left as tacit understanding". In fulfilling his role as a Knowledge Management Officer, the author had a responsibility to acknowledge and understand the assumptions and tacitness of what partners thought in order to improve knowledge sharing and joint working in the development of the Hub. In one interview with a senior practitioner in a partner agency, concern was highlighted that "….some partner agencies think that work is being taken away from them by other partners…..instead we should be working together to improve services" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 25/11/13). In an observation about the state of the partnership in the early stages of the project, the author noted that "….we are at the starting point….we need to convince people that the time spent on Charnwood Connect project is part of their work and that improved referral systems and other ideas will make things easier….the more we do and practice, the better it is" (Observation note from a PSG meeting, WN1: 11/2/14).

The on-site visits and face-to-face interviews with practitioners enabled the author to build inter-professional relationships, understand the context in which different partners and practitioners worked as well as receive their views about the Hub and Charnwood Connect. The partnership comprised a range of agencies each with its own particularity and specialism but bound by a shared interest in social welfare and a common bond through Charnwood Connect. A collective repository of knowhow, information and skills (Matschke, Moskaluik and Cress, 2012) existed already and the needs assessment undertaken by the author strived to "….articulate the existing knowledge" (Boder, 2006, p. 83) and create new knowledge, in this case to shape the Hub. One element of the author's knowledge creation work involved identifying examples of practice, getting inspiration and sourcing ideas from other schemes and agencies:

"Spent some more time looking at the possibilities of using the Hub to host a common referral form or system. Found out about a County Council scheme which acts as an entry point for vulnerable people to be referred to the services and agencies they require. Also

had a telephone discussion with another external agency about their common referral and logging system used by housing organisations" (PJ entry: 20/2/14).

Baseline planning for the Hub involved studying project documents and examples of other knowledge hubs. Academic research and reading was undertaken on topics such as creating effective information technology platforms to build and sustain online practitioner communities (Ardichvili, Page and Wentling, 2003; Taylor and Burt, 2005; Burnage and Persaud, 2012; Matschke, Moskaluik and Cress, 2012). The background preparation coupled with the extensive discussions with the project manager, practitioners, trustees in the managing agency and project co-workers enabled the knowledge gained to be converted into operational decisions (Rivinus, 2013). The dialogical processes ensured that the Hub's design and development were informed by practitioners' expressed needs and aspirations and, for the author's practices to be scrutinised by other practitioners. Champion, Stowell and O'Callaghan (2005, p. 228) argue that action research can facilitate shared understandings through action-orientated conversations, generate rich data and help steer technological initiatives towards "purposeful action". The co-creation of a competent, client needs-based Hub tender specification and its collaborative execution were designed to understand the root issue (client or system needs) rather than just construct a technological interface (aesthetics and functionality) (Champion, Stowell and O'Callaghan, 2005), through various practical strategies including:

"Achievements….Delay in receiving credible and affordable tender submissions for the IT Hub – perseverance and good relationship building with a local supplier paid off" (Big Lottery Fund, 6 month draft project update form, October 2013-March 2014).

"Mapping questionnaire….A questionnaire has been drafted to scope out duplication and gaps in local advice services. The outcomes of this may be used to fill some of the content of the IT Knowledge Hub" (Big Lottery Fund, 6 month project update form, October 2013-March 2014),

Additionally, the strategy included networking and learning from other organisations. The author participated in a national round of networking and knowledge sharing events for

ASTF-funded projects where concerns were expressed about the short-term, transitional nature of investment in IT infrastructure for local advice services. The composite notes of the three events record that there was a "….broad concern that each partnership is spending a lot of money (£000s) on individual IT-based referrals systems which may fall into disuse at the end of our funding" (Notes of ASTF roundtable national discussions, April-June 2014).

The preliminary interviews with practitioners, the across-the-desk conversations, co-working with other project staff and participating in internal meetings in the managing agency demonstrated the author's commitment to collaborative working. Effective collaboration in a new partnership project where the majority of the partners had not drawn down any direct funding was challenging. A telling comment emerged from a preliminary visit to one of the partner agencies where a practitioner commented that "….we had not seen the bid….we signed up to the partnership agreement without seeing the bid" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 30/10/13). Without the cooperation and participation of these partners, the project was highly unlikely to achieve its objectives. The cooperation of partners and their willingness to share their skills, knowledge and expertise were fundamental to embarking on a joint enterprise, developing a purposeful Hub and creating a common bond (Wenger, 1998a, 2004; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Vangen and Huxham, 2003; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2014; Vangen, 2017), as illustrated by this comment from a senior practitioner who stated that "….we do not give advice but are able to signpost people to various advice-giving organisations" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 30/10/13). The issue of knowledge sharing, joint enterprise and creating a common bond is highlighted also in the following entry made by the author:

"A practitioner caught me at the end of the day out of the blue….Message had come from one of the partners to visit the managing agency to see how it works and sit in on client interviews….I had a long discussion with the practitioner about whether a partner agency should be allowed to sit in on a client interview as an observer and whether they would have to sign a confidentiality clause. I said that as long as a mutual process was agreed and our practitioners could also observe their client interviews, then as a learning exchange this should not be problematic" (PJ entry: 9/6/14).

As a knowledge broker, the union orientation (Obstfeld, 2005; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014) of the author (and his co-workers) involved building equitable relationships with practitioners in the partner agencies, understanding their needs and concerns and finding out about their aspirations for Charnwood Connect. As a knowledge broker, the author worked with practitioners and his project co-workers to convert a visionary concept (the Hub) into a tangible outcome (a fit-for-purpose tender specification) to help realise the Hub. The union brokering orientation that was adopted was vindicated as some partners expressed underlying tensions about not drawing down any ASTF funding. This justified the author's approach not to rush into firm inter-organisational and inter-practitioner actions without fully appreciating intra- and inter-agency politics.

4.4.2 Learning outcomes

1. Visionary leadership by the project's founders was fundamental in exploiting the external funding opportunity and conceiving an achievable and purposeful Hub.
2. Establishing cooperative and reciprocal relationships with practitioners in all the partner agencies was key to developing the Hub and ensuring that it was fit for purpose.
3. Practitioner mistrust and resistance can arise when perceptions exist about inequitable distribution of seemingly collective funding.
4. At the beginning of new projects, relationship building, brokering ideas and expectations, creating a common bond and striving for consensus, are important components of effective partnership working.
5. Laissez-faire managerial styles symbolise confidence in project workers and their abilities to make professional judgements and realise project objectives.
6. Physical locations such as open plan offices provide opportunities for intense across-the-desk conversations, relationship building and co-creation and the integration of short-term, niche project workers with core staff.

4.5   CRITICAL INCIDENT (C): CO-CREATION (ARC 2)

Once consensus was reached on the core requirements of the Hub, captured in the tender specification and the designers' contract, the process of co-creating and co-designing the Hub began.

Critical incident (C): Co-creation (ARC 2)	Reflecting in action
Situation	*The start of the design work on the Hub heralded its impending arrival and provided another opportunity to work with practitioners. Having spent time on resolving the administrative aspects of establishing the Hub (especially the tender specification), the design stage provided a refreshing opportunity to engage with practitioners in more creative processes (WN2: 25/2/14; 26/2/14).*
1. The appointment of the designers marked the involvement of another external party in the evolution of the Hub and for the partnership, a further indication of the collaborative and inclusive approach adopted.	
2. The preliminary interviews with the practitioners provided rich primary data to conceptualise and develop the Hub's design and functionality.	
3. To supplement the primary data, secondary research and academic reading helped to identify examples of other knowledge hubs, ideas for creating effective information technology-based knowledge sharing platforms and growing online, inter-organisational communities of practice.	
Actions:	*I was keen to ensure that practitioners felt assured that concrete work had started on the Hub especially as there had been a delay in appointing suitable designers. This delay would have a consequence on the deadline for completion and I wanted to assure practitioners, especially the project and other senior managers, that work was*
1. In advance of his meeting with the designers to agree the contract for the work and discuss tentative design ideas, the author met the project manager and the lead partner agency's deputy manager to discuss their expectations (WN2: 25/2/14; 26/2/14).	
2. The author continued to use platforms to which he had ready access to solicit views about the Hub's design (staff meetings in the managing agency, WN2: 5/3/14; Trustees of the managing agency, PJ1: 11/3/14, Charnwood Connect team meeting, WN2: 28/4/14, WN3: 22/7/14; Project Steering Group (WN2: 11/2/14, WN2: 13/5/14, WN3: 12/8/14; volunteers' meeting in the managing agency, WN2: 2/4/14; Hub Task and Finish Group, WN2:	

Critical incident (C): Co-creation (ARC 2)	*Reflecting in action*
18/3/14 and the Forum, PJ2: 29/7/14).	*underway. The design stage*
3. The designers proceeded with first stage designs and artwork with the author monitoring their progress, feeding in emerging ideas from practitioners and agreeing changes.	*provided a timely and opportune moment to demonstrate that work on the Hub was underway. I*
4. The author asked all the partner agencies to produce texts about their agencies for inclusion on the partners' pages (The Hub: Partners' pages: http://charnwoodconnect.org.uk/partners/).	*was able to share tangible concepts and initial artwork and designs for the logo and the Hub and start gathering practitioners' feedback about the early stage designs.*
Outcomes:	*The separate design*
1. The Hub had to be stand-alone, distinguishable from the websites of the managing and lead partner agencies, accessible to different users including visually impaired people and have a confidential private zone for practitioners (Meeting with the lead partner agency's deputy manager WN2: 25/2/14).	*planning meetings with the two senior managers provided me with managerial perspectives and expectations about the design and functionality of*
2. The project manager emphasised the need for a distinct logo for Charnwood Connect, the linking of the Hub to the managing agency's website as the project came under its authority and the need to ensure that client data was not compromised when partners shared knowledge (WN2: 26/2/14).	*the Hub. The meetings provided me with a further opportunity to inform them that the design and developmental work on the Hub was under control and*
4. The Task and Finish Group agreed the choice of colours, the logo and the preferred artwork.	*underway. From a professional point of view,*
5. Once produced, first stage draft designs Hub (Figures 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5) were displayed in the staff area in the managing agency, circulated via staff in-trays with a pro-	*these meetings served to diffuse and demarcate their managerial responsibility*

Critical incident (C): Co-creation (ARC 2)	Reflecting in action
forma for feedback and displayed at a Forum meeting (Appendix 4.3: Hub feedback invitation). 3. Feedback from other practitioners included support for the two distinct zones, the need for content moderation in case of any breaches, the use of filters to categorise blogs and the availability of a Q&A section. 4. All the partner agencies contributed content about the work of their own organisations. 5. The Hub was signed off and released at the end of September 2014, six months later than originally planned (Project Steering Group, 13/5/14). 6. Once the Hub was released, partners were encouraged to link their respective websites to the Hub, publicise its arrival to their clients and encourage their staff to register on the private zone (Figure 4.6).	*for the Hub from my developmental one as the project's Knowledge Management Officer (WN2: 25/2/14; 26/2/14). Sitting in the offices of the managing agency, participating in its routine activities and having an array of across-the-desk conversations daily with practitioners continued to provide me with informal peer support, opportunities to share knowledge and consolidate ideas for the Hub. I reciprocated by offering my help and support in their work, on occasions by talking through client cases and problem-solving (PJ1 & PJ2; Appendix 3.1).*

Figure 4.3: First stage designs.

Figure 4.4: Draft Hub designs displayed for feedback.
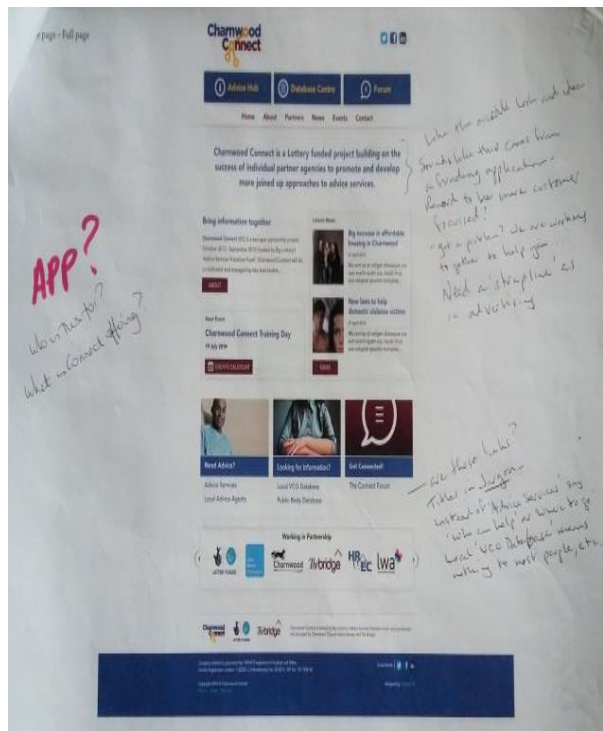
Figure 4.5: Sample feedback on the Hub's first stage designs.
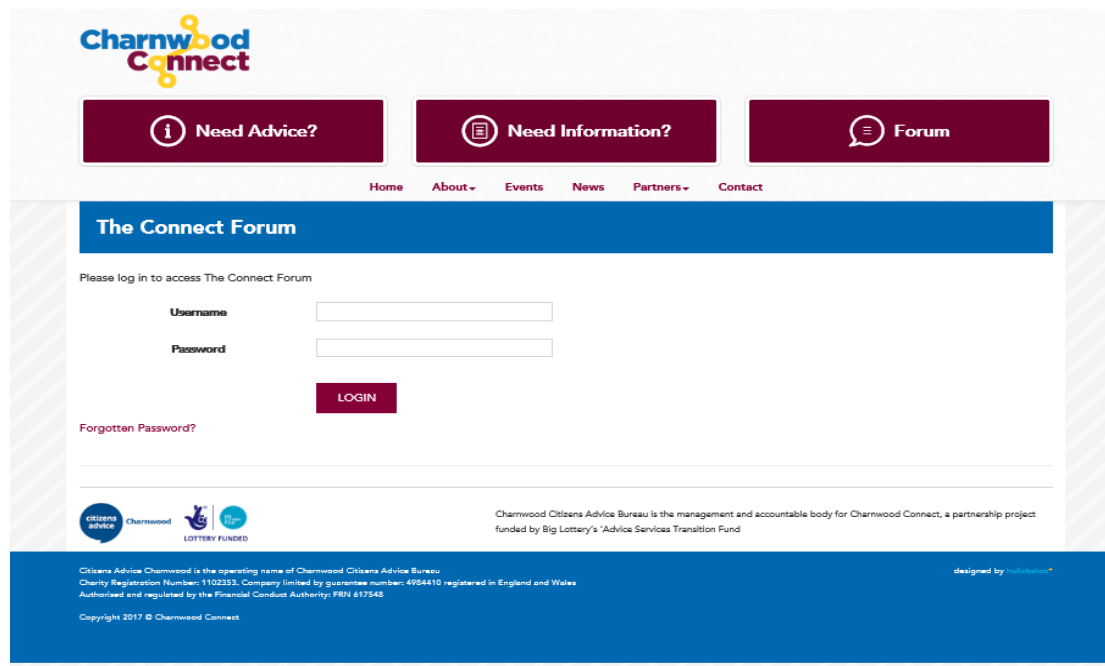
Figure 4.6: Private zone signing-in page.

4.5.1 Reflecting on practice and sense making: Co-creation

The Hub was designed and developed through the participation of the project's founders as well as practitioners who were not involved in its origination. The practice interventions involved using a range of dialogical platforms to secure practitioner participation (staff, volunteer and trustee meetings in the managing agency, project team meetings, the Project Steering Group, the Task and Finish Group and the Forum). In doing so, the author was able to broker ideas and knowledge between the different platforms in order to develop an online portal that was based on a synthesis of viewpoints (Obstfeld, 2005; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014). This sense of synthesising multiple viewpoints and co-creation is captured in this comment from a senior practitioner who stated that "….Charnwood Connect offers an opportunity to raise the profiles of partner agencies, create a shared ethos, improve joint working by focusing on clients and empowering people through early interventions….in the short-term additional capacity in the form of workers will be created through Charnwood Connect….there will be shared learning, improved collaboration and less duplication of services" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 19/11/13). Other examples of co-creativity and nurturing a shared ethos are illustrated by two further observations:

"After the photo changes on the home page (a senior practitioner requested different images), the Hub was finalised and eventually signed off today ready to go live on Friday" (PJ entry: 25/9/14).

"I was busy trying to get the Hub Information Pack drafted….took much longer than planned but completed it nonetheless and sent on to the Task and Finish Group for feedback….I think the pack will again illustrate good practice" (PJ entry: 10/11/14).

Hargadon and Sutton (1997, p. 741) describe how brokers use their network positions to gain knowledge about new technology or products and disseminate these where there is a need or a demand. The preliminary round of visits to partners had exposed varying levels of inter-organisational tensions. The interviews with the practitioners confirmed that the rates and depth of partner participation in Charnwood Connect were going to vary, potentially impacting detrimentally on the Hub's development and other project activities. As a counterbalance, the encouraging across-the-desk conversations with practitioners in the managing agency and the support of the Project Steering Group provided reassurance about the workability of the Hub's strategy. This was made possible by numerous across-the-desk conversations such as this one where the author "….had an interesting discussion with two practitioners about a posting on the Hub signposting readers to another website….issue….is a practitioner writing on the Forum doing so in their own capacity or as an employee and therefore bound by their organisation's policies and practices?" (PJ entry: 10/11/14).

The design cycle was a key milestone as it marked the first visual manifestation of the Hub. After the initial difficulties in contracting a designer, the design process provided an opportunity to work with practitioners in the more creative process of generating a showcase but functional knowledge management tool. The preliminary interviews had interlocked the author, practitioners and other stakeholders. Now, the designers became part of an inter-organisational community of practice as practitioners with a creative flair and information technology skills shared knowledge with advice practitioners. The interlocking of different practitioners is illustrated in the following two observations recorded by the author and the minutes of a meeting of the PSG:

"I had emailed the draft data sharing paper outlining the protocol for using the Hub. A practitioner came to my desk soon after to discuss the draft and gave some useful feedback about data control protocols and details of a website to check this out further" (PJ entry: 1/4/14).

"Agreed with a senior practitioner about putting up the draft Hub designs in the staff area and inviting practitioners to write their comments directly on the designs and/or on an accompanying feedback sheet" (PJ entry: 3/4/14).

 "The first quarterly report to Big Lottery was accepted. All work is to target so far, except the IT Hub which is slightly behind, as there were no satisfactory returns after the initial tender. Agreed that the initial timescale was too ambitious, now progressing" (PSG minutes of meeting, 13/5/14).

Design ideas to co-create the Hub were sourced online also from external sources including other ASTF funded projects. Verona, Prandelli and Sawhney (2006, p. 766) describe how knowledge brokers are in a position to "….leverage the unique capabilities of the internet to absorb valuable market knowledge for innovation". Based on these ongoing inputs and the tender specification, the designers were able to proceed with first stage designs with the author monitoring their progress and continuing to feed in any new ideas from practitioners. The initial artwork (Figure 4.3) was discussed and concluded by the Task and Finish Group with decisions made about Hub's corporate colours, logo and aesthetics. Following this, the revised artwork was approved by the Task and Finish Group via email and later shared with the Project Steering Group as well as staff in the managing agency:

"KMO report….A report was previously circulated by Vipin. To add to this he shared designs for pages of the IT Hub. A prototype will be available in June. Well received by those present, confirmed that partners will be able to change content, add news and events. There is a 'Terms of Use' policy – previously circulated. A strategy with regard to data on third parties needs to be developed" (PSG minutes of meeting, 13/5/14).

"Design issues with the Hub….delay. As a trade-off the tube map came through from the designers and has been well received….good feedback from a number of practitioners ….now waiting for a wider response" (PJ entry: 11/6/14).

Boundary objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989) such as the tender specification, draft artwork and Hub provide reference points for common knowledge (Dixon, 2000) "….around which communities of practice can organise their interconnections" (Wenger 1998a, p. 105). In the early to mid-stages, objects such as a project leaflet, the tube-map and the Hub's logo symbolised boundary objects which helped to infuse a collective identity. In their study of virtual communities of practice, Kimble and Hildreth (2005) found that although documentation plays a significant role in reifying a shared identity and ensuring administrative coherence, face-to-face interactions remain critical. Kimble and Hildreth (2005, p. 113) conclude that the "….importance of the social context of knowledge, and the lack of success of IT as a solution to the problems of KM, all indicate the importance of the human aspect to the management of knowledge". As illustrated by the following observations, as the knowledge broker, the author was one (human) interface for negotiating boundaries, co-creating shared objects and building network relations:

"A practitioner asked if I needed help with any of my work….we needed to populate the private zone of the Hub before its release and I briefed them about producing some original text, both questions and useful information for the private zone" (PJ entry: 11/8/14).

"Useful meeting with a practitioner to discuss the draft Hub….totally unexpected offer from them to provide feedback but some useful points were made which were then worked into the Hub….the main concern was about the legal implications and administrative rights such as copyright and ownership of the website" (PJ entry: 13/8/14).

"Got an email from a senior practitioner about the Hub's design….they had come up with a number of changes…eventually thought of ways in which some (not all) of their needs could be addressed….phoned the practitioner to talk this through and arrived at some potential solutions which I needed to discuss with the designer" (PJ entry: 19/8/14).

In the development and design phase, practitioners had a range of opportunities to contribute through platforms such as staff, volunteer and trustee meetings in the managing agency. Draft designs of the Hub were displayed to receive feedback in the staff area of the managing agency and at a Forum meeting (Figure 4.4 and 4.5). A link to the near complete version was emailed to the Project Steering Group and the Forum for their comments:

"Hi all....Apologies for the delay on this, but below is the link to the Advice Hub - please have a look at it and see how you like it....You should have independently received an email with log-in details to the forum - if you haven't seen it please check your spam filter for and email from 'Charnwood Connect' with the subject 'Charnwood Connect Forum'....The detail in here is only sample information and can be easily cleared - so please try creating post/topics in the forum and commenting etc. (none of it will appear on the live site once we launch unless you want it to)....Please note that not everything is perfect yet - we are still fine tuning, but please have a look and feedback" (Email from the design team, 11/7/14).

The author engaged in other less formal dialogues and across-the-desk conversations to seek practitioners' opinions and views about the draft Hub designs. In one of his entries in his practice journal, the author noted that "....link to draft Hub....trying to work through it....looks okay....could have been more refined but will have to do as a draft....showed it to a couple of practitioners for their feedback who were slightly underwhelmed by it" (PJ entry: 14/7/14).

The project manager and one of the author's PhD supervisors facilitated workshops in South Africa for practitioners from the not-for-profit sector where the draft Hub was demonstrated and feedback received (Figure 4.7). This unique opportunity to showcase the Hub and share knowledge overseas was noted in the project's draft first six-monthly report "....leaders in the practice of information and knowledge sharing in the voluntary sector. UK and international events attended to highlight the benefits of academic/practitioner collaboration by showcasing Charnwood Connect. Examples include facilitating seminars and workshops for academics and voluntary sector organisations in Cape Town" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 1 draft project monitoring form, October 2013-September 2014).
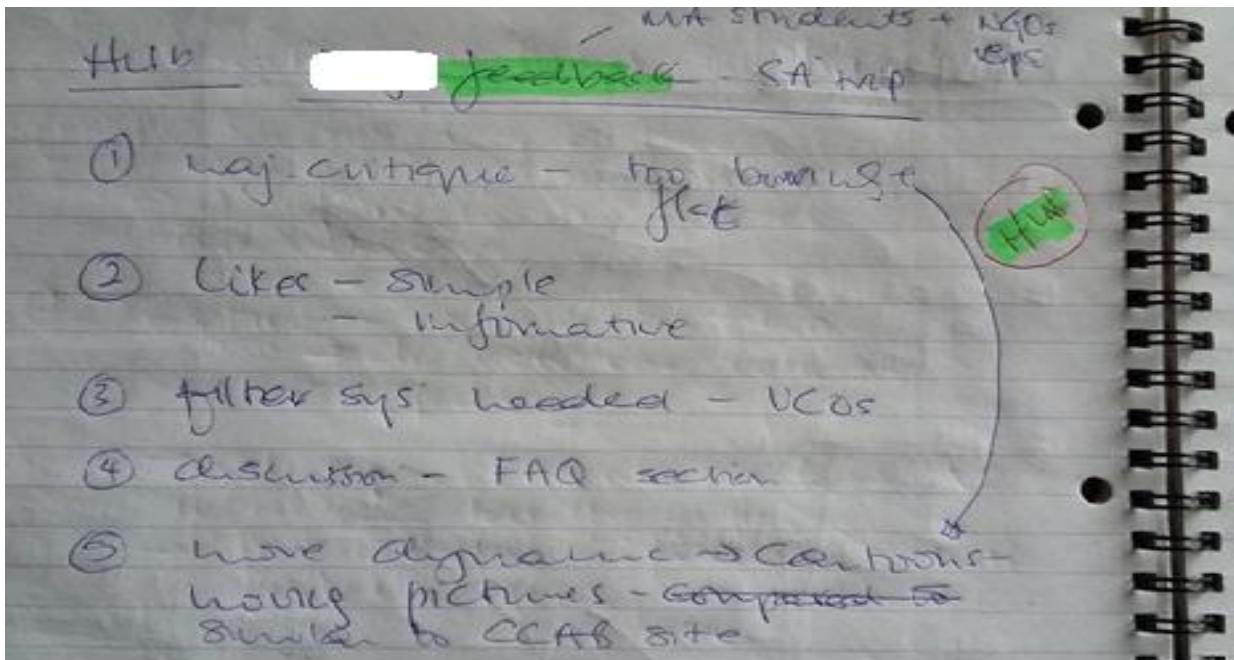
Figure 4.7: Author's notes of feedback by the project manager from the workshops in South Africa.

The design stage provided a further opportunity to broker working relationships between two different sets of practitioners: a design team from the private sector and advice practitioners from the not-for-profit sector. Hargadon and Sutton (1997, p. 741) describe brokers using their positions to get access to and disseminate knowledge about new developments across organisational boundaries thereby contributing to the creation of "….new products that are original combinations of existing knowledge from disparate industries". In this field-study, this is illustrated in the following two recordings made by the author:

"Spent most of today on finalising the Hub and summarising the comments for the designer. Looks like finalising this is going to take more time….the designer seemed to be fine about the changes we had proposed but time was going to be taken by the looks of things. Also bank holidays coming up which is likely to mean further delays….need to get the Hub in a reasonable enough state for a release and then modify as we go along" (PJ entry: 20/8/14).

"Afternoon training at the designers with three other practitioners….we now have a team of people who have been through editorial training to act as an editorial team, perhaps meet

monthly? We can all take responsibility for the Hub….also the sustainability factor….got people who can manage the Hub after I leave" (PJ entry: 16/9/14).

Knowledge sharing across practitioner, organisational and in this case, sectoral boundaries is laden with different levels of complexity (Carlile, 2002, 2004). This is due in part to how boundaries reify internal identities of communities of practice and define relationships with external parties or other communities of practice (Wenger, 1998a, 2004). Arriving at a composite vision about the Hub and the collaboration between the design team and Charnwood Connect through the author's brokerage illustrate how different organisations and sectors are able to work towards a common purpose. At another level, the experience illustrates the interface between information technology experts, designers, advice practitioners and knowledge brokers collaborating in a process that, took "….into account human behaviour and issues such as language, culture and team chemistry toward the end game of getting people to more frequently share and take action on what is shared" (Rivinus, 2013, p. 197).

Despite the overall success of developing a functional Hub, the design process did raise some challenges. The Hub's designers needed baseline content to enable them to test out its functionality and aesthetics. Developing the content for the Hub's pre-release phase was challenging as none of the partners, including the managing agency had dedicated practitioners to manage their own websites or social media activities. Some partners continued to see the Hub as an initiative that was external to the core business of their own individual organisations. This was apparent in a number of instances including the delays in populating the Hub with self-compiled profiles of partner agencies which prompted the following observation "….regarding the agency content for the Hub….I had still not heard from a number of agencies….this raises a question about the quality of the partnership….perhaps this is an area where further work needs to be done….how do you build a sustainable and high quality partnership? Is there scope for some action research here?" (PJ entry: 28/5/14).

Although the process of generating data to populate the site was not as collaborative as intended, once released, the Hub was appreciated and acknowledged for its design and

functionality. "Vipin showed the current version of the Knowledge Hub which is now open to the general public as well as members of the agencies comprising Charnwood Connect. Everyone was impressed by the sections providing lists of local organisations able to offer information and support services: this will be useful for us for our own reference and a resource to which we can signpost our clients" (Managing agency's newsletter, November 2014).

The author made a number of interventions to encourage practitioners to provide information and ideas to populate the Hub before its release. Although some practitioners had given feedback about the Hub's design and provided content about their organisation's work, relatively little input was received about social welfare stories and news items. In the end, the author compiled the pre-release content with the help of practitioners in the managing agency and from social welfare news and e-bulletins. A further constraint in the co-creation process related to the design team. Although the designers were prompt in getting stage one artwork underway, their productivity rate depleted over time as they took on other work.

4.5.2 Learning outcomes

1. The Hub's design process interlocked the author, practitioners, external stakeholders and designers to work towards the common purpose of realising the Hub.
2. Distributed leadership proved to be effective in realising the Hub with budgetary authority lying with the project manager, the Task and Finish Group as a reference group, the Project Steering Group as a strategic collective, the designers' technical expertise and the author as the broker.
3. Although detailed feedback to the first stage draft designs came only from a small number of practitioners, it was important to continue dialoguing with all practitioners as a means of reinforcing Charnwood Connect's collaborative mission and being transparent.
4. Interlocking advice practitioners from the not-for-profit sector with designers and information technology experts from the private and higher education sectors capitalised on collective knowledge and enriched co-creation.

4.6 CRITICAL INCIDENT (E): IMPROVING ACCESS (ARC 3)

Critical incident (E) involved improving access to the Hub and widening its use by practitioners, clients and local communities.

Critical incident (E): Improving access (ARC 3)	*Reflecting in practice*
Situation: 1. The design stage was largely internal to the partnership with the exception of the contributions of the designers and technical expertise from Loughborough University. Once the Hub was released, the challenge was its promotion and wider use. 2. The preliminary on-site visits to partner agencies and the early decision by the Task and Finish Group about the Hub's logo, corporate colours and artwork enabled some initial marketing to be undertaken. 3. Extending publicity and encouraging clients and local communities to use the Hub would require frontline practitioners and managers to get involved in publicising the Hub through their routine work.	*At the beginning of the project, to extend understandings about the purpose and functionality of the Hub and Charnwood Connect, following discussions with my peers, I produced a simple A4 publicity leaflet. Even though the design and developmental work had not been completed, I was keen to promote the Hub to help realise its full potential as it was one of Charnwood Connect's main outputs. Simple artefacts such as leaflets proved to be valuable for raising awareness about the project, local advice services and symbolised the act of organisations coming together.*
Actions: 1. To raise awareness about the impending arrival of the	*As a practitioner, I joined the national ASTF online*

Critical incident (E): Improving access (ARC 3)	*Reflecting in practice*
Hub and widen participation, the Hub's website link was publicised through, a pop-up banner, display stands at public events such as the 2014 Community Heroes day and the 2015 Loughborough Mela and an A5 leaflet with the Charnwood Connect tube-map (Figure 4.8).	*forum to develop my own practice, share knowledge, offer and seek support and publicise the Hub and the project to a national, inter-organisational community of practitioners.*
2. The Hub was publicised extensively through community magazines, Streetlife (an online facility to access neighbourhood services), radio interviews, leaflet drop-offs at the library and partner agencies, the ASTF online forum, presentations at local, national and international events and routine administrative tools such as email signatures.	*I continued to produce or contributed to the production of simple marketing tools such as the A4 handout, the A5 flyers, professional business cards,*
3. Outreach work was undertaken with small community groups outside the partnership to make them aware of the Hub.	*the tube-map, the pop-up banner and cotton goodie bags as visual artefacts to*
4. In response to advice from the information technology expert on the Task and Finish Group, two versions of the Hub users' pack, one for practitioners and the other for the wider public and external agencies were produced (WN3: Task and Finish Group meeting on 6/11/14).	*promote the Hub and the project. Media exposure including radio interviews and adverts in community*
5. The idea of hosting a launch event for the Hub which was mooted at a Task and Finish Group was approved by the Project Steering Group (12/8/14) and the author drew up skeletal plans for this.	*magazines and "name-dropping" at internal and external events, helped to*
6. To achieve economies of scale and sustain the multi-agency volunteering pathway, plans were drawn up to use the Hub as an online recruitment and training portal.	*raise awareness about the Hub and the project.*
7. Google analytics was built into the administrative arm of the Hub to monitor user trends and generate statistics to help decision-making (Knowledge Management Officer's	

Critical incident (E): Improving access (ARC 3)	Reflecting in practice
report, 6/11/14 for Project Steering Group meeting, 11/11/14 and PSG strategy meeting, 3/6/15).	
Outcomes: 1. The work of the Hub and the project was profiled at academic events including a workshop in South Africa (autumn 2014), the Knowledge Management and Voluntary and Community Sector conference (Loughborough University, April 2015), a seminar by Operational Research in the Third Sector (November 2014), the European Conference on Knowledge Management (September 2015) and the Knowledge Management Research Group seminar (September 2015). 2. The author's attendance at local networking events such as the Housing and Homelessness Group, staff meetings in the managing agency, public events and external conferences, and a drive to mention the project when opportunities rose, helped to raise the Hub's profile. 3. The Hub users' pack was emailed to all partner agencies who were encouraged to familiarise themselves with its contents and keep copies next to their computers for ease of access. 4. The Task and Finish Group (6/11/14) confirmed an earlier decision by the project manager and the lead partner agency's chief officer to cancel the launch event as, in a time of austerity, this could be seen to be extravagant. Instead, the proposal was to have a celebratory event when the project reached an end as an ASTF entity. In the event, this did not happen either as the march towards securing further funding to sustain the project took precedence.	*I had invested quite a bit of time to ensure that the Hub, the project and the work of my project co-workers received the attention and publicity deserved. I regretted that the project decided not to go ahead with the decision to hold a high profile launch event, which meant that the arrival of the Hub was not marked with the loud bang as I had hoped. To compensate for this, my project co-workers and I continued with the strategy of incrementally marketing Charnwood Connect through presentations, networking meetings and small-scale or output specific publicity drives (Knowledge Management Officer's report for Project Steering Group from the task and Finish Group's meeting, 6/11/14).*

Critical incident (E): Improving access (ARC 3)	Reflecting in practice
5. The author co-facilitated a hands-on orientation session about the Hub for incoming volunteers recruited through the multi-agency volunteering pathway who had expressed an interest in developing their reception and information management skills (Figure 4.9).	
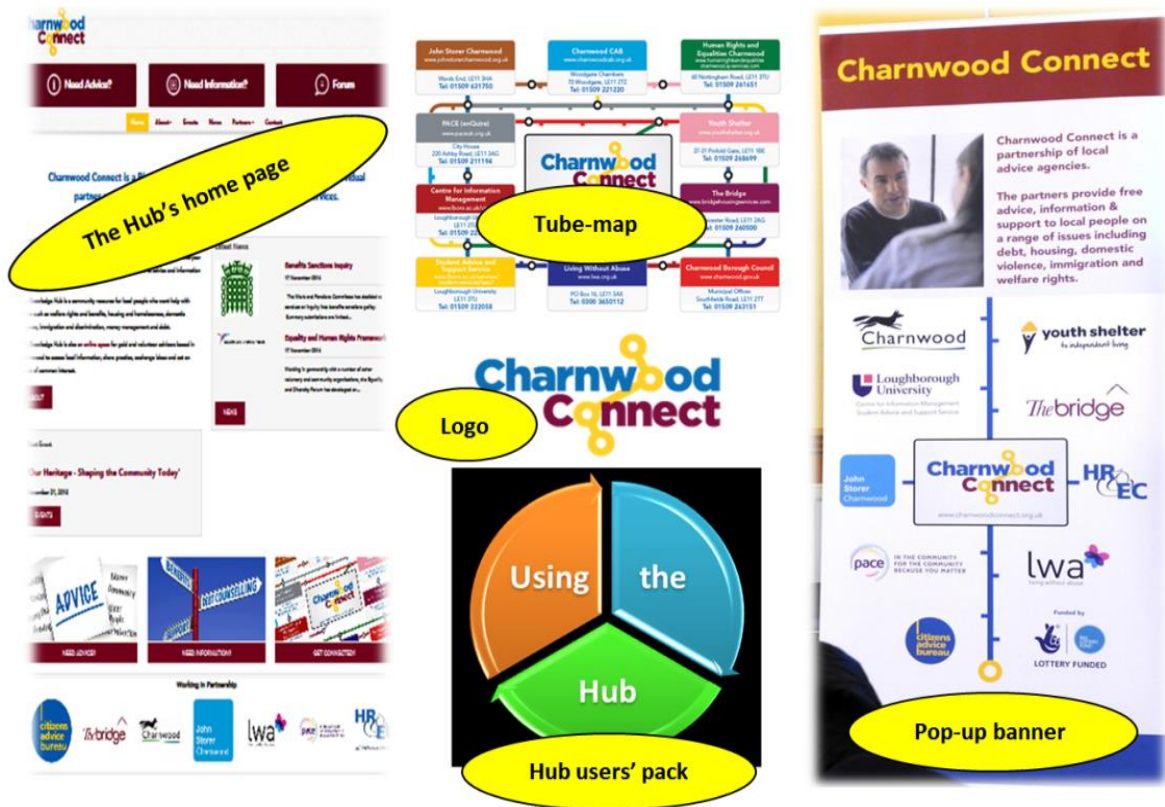
Figure 4.8: Sample of Charnwood Connect's widening access artefacts.

Figure 4.9: Letter of invitation to incoming volunteers.

4.6.1   Reflecting on practice and sense making: Improving access

The preliminary visits and interviews had alerted practitioners and their agencies to the impending arrival of the Hub. This was followed up by other interventions such as discussions at the Forum, across-the-desk conversations and publicity materials (Figure 4.8). Promoting the Hub and widening its access to clients and local communities required a range of practitioners to contribute. The chief officer of the managing agency and the researcher's PhD supervisor facilitated workshops in South Africa and London. To promote the Hub and the project, co-workers helped with the leaflet drops, media interviews and produced articles for community magazines. The chief officer of the lead partner agency and the chair of Project Steering Group actively promoted the project at influential meetings. The orientation session for incoming volunteers gave a new batch of recruits the chance to experience the Hub first-hand. They contributed also to its evolution by giving feedback about its design, functionality and sustainability, thereby integrating into a virtual inter-organisational community of practice, as illustrated by the following observations:

"Unusual day with three external appointments starting with an organisation outside the partnership, a community facility based in a local authority housing estate….very fluid meeting….got to the discuss volunteering and the Hub….clear that the organisation needs further infrastructure support and funding to develop" (PJ entry: 16/7/14).

"Today a practitioner was going to help with improving the content of the voluntary and community database for the Hub….at the moment this not in a consistent format as different details are recorded for some organisations and not others such as emails, websites and telephone numbers" (PJ entry: 26/7/14).

"I attended the daily volunteers' briefing to explain the Hub and how it was going to work….need to get them to engage with the content. Useful session as it provoked a longer debate about the specialisms of each agency….who should we refer clients to on what matters? There were no specific protocols for making referrals….for the private zone perhaps there should be a champion who can cajole people to contribute to the forum's debates….issues of confidentiality could arise if the forum is used to discuss local cases as the community in Loughborough is small and people may recognise each other from the casework profiles" (PJ entry: 11/8/14).

"Partners involved in shaping Hub securing early buy-in. Summary of core services of partners plus their website links are on Hub for clients. Volunteer and paid advisers signed up for private zone. Clients able to access IT Hub. Database of local VCOs and national advice websites for client use" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 1 draft project monitoring form, October 2013-September 2014).

"Training session with volunteers who were frontline and reception staff to look at their roles and responsibilities and also use of the Hub….training session was well run and interesting when people were working on the Hub….some really useful feedback about its use and applicability and how it could be improved" (PJ entry: 24/3/15).

Overall and as illustrated above, the diffused approach to promoting the Hub connected different practitioners to each other, communicated a sense of belonging to an inter-

organisational community of practice and widened ownership. The principle of participation is fundamental to technological interventions in the not-for-profit sector to strengthen choices, reaffirm the principle of voluntariness and create stronger affinities (Matschke, Moskaluik and Cress, 2012). Solutions such as a "participation-internet" (Matschke, Moskaluik and Cress, 2012, p. 161) through which practitioners actively create and share knowledge are important means for adapting to information technology in this sector. A variety of means were used to promote a participative and co-creative culture in the development and maintenance of the Hub as an online facility as can be gleaned from the practice journal entries below and the coverage in the managing agency's newsletter:

"Concentrated on the prep work for the volunteers' meeting on Wednesday….spoke to a practitioner about this….it was an open agenda and down to me to run the meeting….needed to concentrate on the Hub and getting volunteers to use the private zone" (PJ entry: 3/11/14). "Volunteers' meeting went really well – lots of interesting discussion about the Hub and seemingly lot of interest in what it able to offer" (PJ entry: 5/11/14).

"Blank diary today but by the time I got through the day I had ended up spending quite a bit of time on the Hub. Most of the morning was spent trying to get local organisations such as libraries to host a link to the Hub and the afternoon was spent trying to understand Google analytics and how we could track traffic on the site….interesting and useful day in the end" (PJ entry: 8/12/14).

"We discussed thoughts about how best to publicise the website to members of the public. One idea currently being piloted by one partner is to use an appointment card when clients are given appointments which 'advertises' the Knowledge Hub and provides contact information. Ideally, this card would be retained by the client and used for any further appointments, being signed off each time the client actually turns up. As many of our clients appear incapable of holding on to any paperwork, there may be some practical issues here" (Managing agency's newsletter, November 2014).

The promotion and widening participation strategy included emailing the Hub Users' Packs to partner agencies. These were designed to encourage practitioners to start using the Hub as their first port of call and promoting it to their clients. The practitioners' pack included clauses about confidentiality to assure practitioners that the private zone was a secure online facility for knowledge sharing and practice exchanges. Partner agencies and their staff had to sign a declaration of fair and proper use of the Hub to instil collective responsibility and mutual accountability:

"I spent time today getting the data sharing policy completed. This will establish a protocol for how the private zone on the Knowledge Hub is to be used by practitioners. Once completed, it will have to be signed by all partners before they can use the Hub" (PJ entry: 21/5/14).

"Spent most of the time today on sorting out the Hub Information Pack….trying to improve its presentation and design so that it is usable and something that will encourage people to use to its full potential….little things take a long time - noisy environment – difficult to concentrate when proofing" (PJ entry: 18/11/14).

"Thanks for your feedback on the Charnwood Connect Hub at today's workers meeting. It's clearly already proving useful as an information and signposting source and the more we all use it the better it will be as we continue to add information to news items and the discussion forums. If you've lost your username/password or need any help do get in touch with Vipin who can sort you out….Charnwood Connect plans to run training for those in reception type roles across the agencies to improve signposting and help provide a more informed service to clients, in part through making regular and full use of the Hub! We'll be offering this to CCAB volunteers alongside those from our partners and will be coming back with some dates shortly" (Email summarising outcomes of a staff meeting, 7/1/15).

After considerable collective effort, six out of the nine eligible partners had signed up to the organisational agreement and practitioners from four agencies had signed the individual agreements. Although practitioners from eight partner agencies had submitted their email details to access the private zone, not all of them signed the agreement forms. In the end,

out of the projected 150 practitioners that were eligible, 125 practitioners (83 per cent) from eight partner agencies subscribed to the private zone. The arrival of the Hub and the initiation of the online practitioners' community marked the beginning of a different type of relationship between the author and Charnwood Connect's practitioners. "I got on with forwarding the Hub link to partners and also started getting together a list of users for the private zone….quite an exciting moment as this will allow a different type of engagement with partners….using it to share information and knowledge not just resolving design and functionality issues" (PJ entry: 22/7/14).

To help the Project Steering Group monitor more detailed user trends, data was gathered through Google Analytics. The statistics showed that overall 54.8 per cent of the practitioners who had signed up and had authorisation to use the private zone, made use of the facility at least once. As recommended by the designers, to kick-start the private zone, the author and his co-workers contributed some opening postings on relatively contentious social welfare topics. The across-the-desk conversations and the regular scanning of e-bulletins from external social welfare agencies provided further baseline information and story leads to put online. However, the key challenge, which continued to plague the Hub's life, was the lack of sustained contribution of content from other practitioners curtailing the idea of a fully functional "participation-internet" (Matschke, Moskaluik and Cress, 2012, p. 161). In her study on the use of technology to nurture online communities and service access, Griffith (2007, p. 32) concludes "….the most significant strategic challenges for VCOs moving forward are cultural ones. The tools themselves are becoming increasingly easy to use". The establishment and release of the Hub demonstrated the ability of Charnwood Connect to adapt new technology to improve service delivery despite the fact that "….the development of the IT Hub was time consuming and technically challenging. It is now in the public domain and is a useful tool to both practitioners and service users. Feedback from users has already been encouraging" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 1 draft project monitoring form, October 2013-September 2014).

Moreover, despite the earlier challenges of securing the continuous engagement of partners in the co-creation of the Hub, the online portal was "…. launched ….providing a locus for up to date news, opportunities and practitioner discussions. Hub engagement and

improvement is being pro-actively addressed through training and feedback sessions….Information on the IT Hub is provided at every internal and external meeting or event that partner agencies attend. Articles have been disseminated via local media and links to the Hub are included in every written communication. Local libraries and community bases have been leafleted with access information for the Hub, a summary of the services we provide and relevant contact numbers/addresses"(Big Lottery Fund, 18 month draft project update form, October 2014-March 2015).

Information technology is an interpretive medium to connect people, ideas and knowledge (Kim, Suh and Jun, 2011) but is more than just the process of organising and diffusing knowledge or "techknowledgy" (Davenport and Prusak, 1998, p. 123). Nooshinfard and Nemati-Anaraki (2014) suggest that information technology has a role to play in knowledge sharing, mainly explicit knowledge but tacit as well. Information technology can provide a medium through which barriers to knowledge sharing such as poor communications, time and organisational structures can be minimised or even eliminated (Nooshinfard and Nemati-Anaraki, 2014; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2014). Griffith (2007, p. 9) states that the not-for-profit sector has the potential to use information technology to facilitate face-to-face and virtual reciprocal dialogues without distorting its social objective as "….the lifeblood of civil society".

Burnage and Persaud's study (2012, p. 23) on information technology in the not-for-profit sector found that social media is an effective communication tool for generating dialogues and discussions about "….important issues across professional and geographical boundaries". The principle of using social media was recognised in the design and evolution of the Hub but wider issues prevailed as the author discovered when he had "….a meeting with a practitioner to try and resolve the issue of the Hub and social media….the practitioner was happy to contribute to this but needed additional hours and funding to be allocated….I said that I would try and see if any cash can be freed up for this from Charnwood Connect's budget" (PJ entry: 13/8/14). The commitment to investing in social media was noted also in the project's report to its funders which stated that "….future developments include the inclusion of social media facilities and exploring the possibility of

the Hub being used as a training resource so that partners can access materials" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 1 draft project monitoring form, October 2013-September 2014).

However, effective adaptation to information technology requires greater efforts than merely grafting new technological features onto existing platforms. Even the act of having a password or username to join an online community indicates the presence of boundaries, which can act as a barrier for some practitioners (Griffith, 2007). Rathi, Given and Forcier (2014) argue that the introduction of technology on its own does not lead to effective knowledge sharing in organisations. This is because the collectivisation of knowledge increases in complexity as the diversity of stakeholders, communities and decision-makers grows. Furthermore, it may not be possible to develop shared repertoires (Wenger, 1998a) through technology where "….knowledge-in-use has become so ingrained by daily routine and practice that it is, in parts, often implicit knowledge" (Matschke, Moskaluik and Cress, 2012, p. 161). The efforts made to enable practitioners, clients and communities to embrace the Hub as a localised advice resource, a knowledge sharing facility and a corporate symbol of Charnwood Connect, attempted to counter such implicitness and over time, started to be seen as "….a useful resource for volunteers that use it, the more it is used the more value it has….Use the Hub to get each partner organised to promote the services….Commence training on the use of Knowledge Hub….Use feedback from training to improve the Hub….Introduce e-learning for volunteers and staff….Use the Hub more" (Away day notes, 18/2/15).

4.6.2   Learning outcomes

1. Access to the Hub was widened and improved by raising its profile constantly through platforms such as the Project Steering Group, the Forum, staff meetings in the managing agency and seizing internal and external presentation opportunities.
2. The across-the-desk conversations in the managing agency and the regular scanning of social welfare e-bulletins from external agencies became vital to generating story leads for the Hub.
3. There were limited direct storyline contributions from practitioners, suggesting that even though the Hub was desired as a localised knowledge resource, enthusiasm to contribute to its content and maintenance was deflated.

4. Even though user trends were monitored through Google Analytics, making operational decisions based on the data required a more emphatic and robust decision-making structure if practices and services were to change.

4.7   CRITICAL INCIDENT (G): SUSTAINING THE HUB (ARC 4)

As a time-limited project the future of the Hub beyond the ASTF funding was a topic of ongoing discussions. These grew in intensity, urgency and activities as the project entered its second year.

Critical incident (G): Sustaining the Hub (ARC 4)	*Reflecting in action*
Situation: 1. For the chief officers of partner organisations and their management boards, financial options for contributing funding from their own budgets to sustain Charnwood Connect had to be reconciled with protecting the future of their own agencies and staff due to public sector cuts (KMO exit and handover report, 28/9/15; Away day notes, 18/2/15). 2. As the ASTF funding came towards its end, some of the project workers were already searching for their next jobs, as there were no imminent signs of Charnwood Connect securing further funding. 3. The issue of sustaining the Hub as a stand-alone, low maintenance portal was in doubt as no further funding remained to enhance the Hub's technical functionality or aesthetics or pay for staffing.	*Although positive feedback was received from practitioners about the value of the Hub as a knowledge sharing portal and service medium, I remained concerned about its future. When I visited the partner agencies to carry out the impact assessment, I found that due to austerity measures, practitioners' priorities were about securing their own survival rather than that of Charnwood Connect or the Hub for that matter (WN4&5: impact analysis interviews with practitioners, 22/6/15-22/9/15).*

Critical incident (G): Sustaining the Hub (ARC 4)	Reflecting in action
Actions: 1. The Project Steering Group set up a working group to coordinate an away day with the support of an external consultant to consider the project's future and produce a business plan (Project Steering Group minutes, 12/8/14). 2. The draft business plan (Charnwood Connect business plan, 2013c) was considered at a follow up strategic planning meeting where it was proposed that the trustee boards of each partner agency should make a contribution from their own budgets to sustain Charnwood Connect. 3. The Hub's sustainability journey had begun in year 1 when project workers and staff from the managing and lead partner agencies were trained by the design team to maintain the Hub's content (three co-workers including the author on 31/7/14; three more on 16/9/14). 4. Agreement was made at a project team meeting (1/7/15) for the author to undertake a qualitative study to assess the impact of the project on partner agencies (Appendix 4.4: Impact analysis interview guide). 5. A national under spend in the ASTF's funding led to an invitation for Charnwood Connect to bid for some top-up funding for which a proposal was put together by the author.	*My original strategy to put together a team of practitioners who could share responsibility for maintaining the Hub's content was deliberate. Apart from developing a shared responsibility amongst project co-workers and mainstream staff for the ongoing maintenance of the Hub, the strategy aimed to embed this function into routine work especially for the practitioners who would remain after the project ended.* *Apart from submitting an end of project report to the funders, Charnwood Connect did not have any formal plans to evaluate the project's impact. As a practitioner-researcher, I thought this would be important and proposed conducting a small study to gather data from partners*

Critical incident (G): Sustaining the Hub (ARC 4)	*Reflecting in action*
	about the impact of the project and what their hopes and aspirations were for the future of the partnership (Appendix 4.4: Impact analysis interview guide).
Outcomes: 1. The away day was instrumental in affirming the achievements of the project, the strategic value of the Hub and the desire to continue collaborative working (Charnwood Connect business plan, 2013c). 2. Specific proposals to continue and extend the Hub were contained in two funding proposals, the business plan (Charnwood Connect business plan, 2013c) and an options analysis (KMO report for the Project Steering Group meeting on 3/6/15). 3. The call for partner financial contributions to sustain Charnwood Connect resulted in only one promissory note from the lead partner agency (Project Steering Group minutes, 15/9/15). 4. Despite the training received by project co-workers and mainstream practitioners to edit and maintain the Hub's contents, the author undertook the vast bulk of this work. The across-the-desk conversations with the trained co-workers and advice practitioners revealed that they did not feel technically competent to carry out this work. 5. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken by the author with nine partner agencies to understand the impact of the project, the summative results of which	*By the time the ASTF project had ended, future funding for the Hub and other elements of the project had not been secured. The bid for the additional funding from the ASTF had not amounted to anything. This was due in part to a lack of consensus about how to spend the funds and partly due to the changing dynamics between the managing agency and the lead partner agency in the absence of the project manager. My ongoing attempts to enable project co-workers to upload content on the Hub about their respective areas of work did not materialise*

Critical incident (G): Sustaining the Hub (ARC 4)	Reflecting in action
were presented by the author in his exit report (Appendix 4.5: Summary results of the impact analysis; KMO exit and handover report, 28/9/15). 6. The opportunity to secure the top-up funds from the ASTF was not taken up.	despite the support that was made available. As the ASTF project reached its last quarter, project co-workers had already started seeking other job opportunities and the incentive to continue contributing to the project waned.

4.7.1 Reflecting on practice and sense making: Sustaining the Hub

Discussions about the continuity of Charnwood Connect beyond the ASTF funding formed part of recurring conversations amongst practitioners about the state of the not-for-profit sector and the future funding of social welfare services (Cabinet Office, 2012; Sigafoos and Morris, 2013; The Low Commission, 2014). For chief officers, strategies for continuing the partnership had to be reconciled with the funding cuts which were threatening their own survival (National Audit Office, 2014; Jones *et al*, 2015; Kippin, 2015; Panel on the Independence of the Voluntary Sector, 2015). At its third meeting, the Project Steering Group discussed the issue of sustainability and continuing funding and the minutes noted that "….one practitioner identified the need to focus on an exit strategy for Charnwood Connect, resources for now and funding to continue the work. It was acknowledged that there are some difficulties and barriers to funding a joint project in the current climate….will convene a working party to look at possible barriers and solutions and ways to capitalise on the good work of Charnwood Connect so far. All are invited to nominate themselves for this working party" (PSG minutes of meeting, 13/5/14). At its next meeting, the PSG noted that "….we are doing particularly well on some of our targets however, the Knowledge Hub is slightly behind target but this is not seen as a major issue. We are working towards having a fully functional Knowledge Hub at the beginning of year 2 of the Charnwood Connect Project. Overall the project is very successful….positive reference to some of the work being

delivered….especially around the reports being created to evidence our work" (PSG minutes of meeting, 12/8/14).

In its draft first year report to the funders, it was noted that "….a great deal of work has gone into this by all partners, key staff and web designers. We have a user friendly and easy accessible information platform that will become self-sustaining over a longer term with the minimum of resource input" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 1 draft project monitoring form, October 2013-September 2014). Subsequently, the Project Steering Group had submitted two unsuccessful funding bids creating further uncertainty about the future of the project beyond ASTF. Efforts to raise funding internally from the partnership resulted in only one promise, illustrating the degree to which partnership organisations had small reserves, if any, and their high-level dependency on external funding.

Data about the Hub's impact was gathered through the impact review, the away day, Project Steering Group meetings, dialogues with the project manager and the across-the-desk conversations. All the discussions verified that the Hub was a significant contributor to delivering and improving advice services in Charnwood. In its draft second year report to funders, it was noted that "….the Knowledge Hub has continued to offer an accessible, online, locality-based advice, support and information resource on social welfare issues, enabling local people to access services before they reach crisis points….The availability of the Hub has demonstrated the value of locality-based online platforms as important resources for empowering communities and creating better access to advice, information and support services" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 2 draft project monitoring form, October 2014-September 2015). Furthermore, one of the outcomes of the away day was the commitment to sustaining and developing the Hub beyond the ASTF funding. As minuted by the Project Steering Group "….four key areas for continuation have been identified in the business plan: Knowledge Hub, volunteer pathway, practitioners' Forum and the Project Steering Group….Knowledge Hub….the website is hosted until December 2016….suggested as an option to recruit a student volunteer as web editor….Any agreement was deferred" (PSG minutes of meeting, 15/9/15).

However, once the Hub was operational, motivating partner agencies to exploit its full potential and help sustain it was an ongoing challenge. There seemed to be an underlying belief that once the Hub was released, it would be self-regulating, financially and operationally. In any case, the efforts of partner agencies were concentrated on sustaining their own staffing and services. Kwok (2014, p. 11) notes that "….while developing a technology–based innovation, charities can find themselves navigating unknown and challenging terrain, and the process can take people and organisations out of their comfort zones". Kwok (2014) suggests that not-for-profit organisations could consider developing partnerships with other organisations that have information technology expertise to manage such challenges. As with the early stage technical and aesthetic design of the Hub, through the Knowledge Management Officer, Charnwood Connect maintained a healthy and productive relationship with the design team:

"Started work on the Hub technical issues….trying to ensure that I address some of the technical changes people have been asking for….this is part of the ongoing development of the Hub….also need to find tricks to be able to get a proper online community going" (PJ entry: 23/2/15). "Afternoon….more work on technicalities….it was good that the designer was able to do everything that we needed including email links when a new posting was put on….online community here we come!" (PJ entry: 24/2/15).

As a contribution to creating a sustainable Hub, in its design, the Hub was engineered to function for at least two more years after the ASTF funding ended. Accompanying this, the strategy was to train mainstream practitioners and project workers to edit and manage the Hub's content in the spirit that "….everyone in the labour force, regardless of hierarchical level, must now be more of a technician" (Saidel and Cour, 2003, p. 12). The training was led by the Hub's designers, backed up with an operating manual and ongoing support from the author. The idea of creating a team of editors was to ensure that there were enough trained personnel available to help with the upkeep and maintenance of the Hub, a point that the author noted at the time "….I spent the afternoon spent at the designers' offices to learn how to edit the Hub….two other practitioners came with me to take part and I now need to get another two on board….perhaps set this group up as a Hub editorial group? Really useful training….now need to create the time to manage the Hub, its contents especially the

private zone" (PJ entry: 31/7/14). Soon after the Hub was released and the author went on leave, he communicated and agreed cover arrangements "….the Hub is underway – just had to ensure that there was cover to look after the Hub content while I am away – emailed two senior practitioners to help with this, copying in the practitioners who had been on the editorial training" (PJ entry: 2/10/14).

Despite the training, encouragement and offers of support, the author undertook the bulk of the editorial and maintenance work and this pattern persisted right until his departure. As the two project workers responsible for the multi-agency volunteering pathway were due to leave, ideas for sustaining this pathway were considered. One of these was to develop the volunteering pages on the Hub as a self-contained toolbox providing volunteers with direct access to application forms, role descriptions and training and support resources. However, time pressures, the imminent departure of two project staff and the lack of additional resources to develop the online content meant that in the end, the new pages for the multi-agency volunteering pathway were left unfinished. Across-the-desk conversations with other members of the editorial back-up team suggested that they did not see themselves as technically competent to edit the Hub and were reluctant to engage with technology beyond the use of word processing and email for their own areas of work.

In their study on information technology and performance enhancement in the not-for-profit sector, Burt and Taylor (2003, p. 125) found that organisations had embraced technology only to a limited extent and a "….paradigm shift in organisational values" was required to overcome the resistance to change. Although, the reticence of the author's co-workers was not attributable to overt resistance, the experience highlighted the difficulties of bolting on additional responsibilities to the roles of busy practitioners even when they agree to be one of the "technicians" (Saidel and Cour, 2003, p. 12). In a key moment of realisation about the need to continually follow-up on agreed actions, "….a practitioner pointed out that one of the partner agencies was using the old Charnwood Connect logo and also did not have a direct link to the Hub on their site….I had assumed that this would have been done some time back….I sat down and checked the websites of the other partners and turns out that none have inserted the link or used the new Charnwood Connect logo on their sites" (PJ entry: 21/1/15). Later reflections about this instance and

other blockages made the author ask himself "….the lack of feedback so far about the Hub starts to raises doubts about how we really want to use it – is it the right configuration as it is? I decided that like some of the other work programme issues I'd leave it till the away day and see which direction we need to be heading" (PJ entry: 9/2/15).

Charnwood Connect had no plans to undertake an evaluation of the project apart from submitting an end of project report to the funders. The author was keen to gather intelligence and evidence about the project's impact directly from the practitioners particularly their experiences of the Hub and the Forum. There were some informal discussions about this and the author had "….an interesting discussion with a practitioner about project evaluation and sustainability….perhaps visit partner organisations again and get a sense of what they think Charnwood Connect has achieved or not and what difference it has made to their work and practices….also discussed getting a student placement over summer to do some evaluative work" (PJ entry: 20/4/15). Eventually, a proposal to conduct an impact study was agreed at a project team meeting and the exercise was carried out through face-to-face, semi-structured, on-site interviews mirroring the approach taken for the preliminary interviews. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with nine partner agencies, the summative results of which were presented by the researcher in his exit report (Appendix 4.4: Impact analysis interview guide; Appendix 4.5: Summary results of the impact analysis). Two snippets from practitioners who responded to the impact analysis, illustrate the inherent tensions that Charnwood Connect had to manage as partnership body. One practitioner stated that "….it was apparent that their own future and the work of their own organisation were more important to them compared to their role and contributions to Charnwood Connect. Perhaps all partners are in this situation?" (PJ entry: 21/7/15). Another two commented that "….their managers had not really engaged with the Charnwood Connect project….their priority has been on the funding of their own organisations….they liked the idea of Charnwood Connect in principle….but it was just there and had not really added value to their work" (PJ entry: 4/8/15).

Feedback revealed that the Hub was user-friendly, a useful resource for frontline practitioners, provided e-alerts about new blogs and was a resource for their clients. Concerns about the Hub included operational matters such as forgetting login details, not

getting into the habit of using the Hub, not becoming accustomed to logging into the private zone as a matter of routine and a general lack of time to make full use of it. Some practitioners were used to accessing their own organisation's website or Google as the first port of call whilst others phoned someone or approached their team colleagues rather than use the Hub. Some practitioners expressed a lack of confidence about using information technology beyond routine word processing and emailing whilst others expressed their vulnerability of going online to seek the help of a practitioner from another agency. In terms of sustainability, practitioners suggested that the Hub should be promoted beyond the partnership, its user base on the private zone should be increased and the site should be made more accessible for social media users. Some of this work had begun already with the local library which had agreed to "….put a shortcut to the Hub on their staff desktops….they agreed to do this for all fourteen libraries including the new community libraries which local people will be running….they will also brief their staff about the Hub and display our posters" (PJ entry: 20/1/15).

In terms of widening access and sustaining the Hub through social media, the author had "….a meeting with a partner agency to try and get them signed up for the Hub. They are always welcoming despite being busy….had a useful meeting and they encouraged me to start using twitter a bit more as a way of promoting Charnwood Connect….came back to the office and got on with loading practitioner's names for the private zone on the Hub and further stories as well as playing with twitter" (PJ entry: 4/3/15). In an induction meeting with two postgraduate students on placement there was an "….interesting discussion about organisational culture (iceberg) and whether greater privatisation in the voluntary and community sector could help increase competition….discussed the difficulties of getting people to engage in online communities….they suggested that practitioners do not engage because they do not know each other….perhaps using social media such as Facebook or twitter might be more effective?" (PJ entry: 17/3/15).

Developing and introducing the Hub to complement existing advice services raised deeper questions about the impact of information technology solutions in social welfare contexts potentially compromising the personalised nature of the work, displacing human contact with technology and leading to job substitution. The author was involved in an interesting

conversation with a practitioner about the financial capability training element of the project's work. The "….conversation was prompted by the entry of this item on the Hub….another practitioner joined in disagreeing with such training as this diverts money from frontline face-to-face advisory services….good and valid point prompting a longer conversation about finding ways of helping people who are not financially literate or have not been brought up in an environment of financial literacy or thrift" (PJ entry: 18/9/14).

Although the increasing use of information technology such as social media may create efficiencies in information dissemination, it is difficult to state conclusively if this impacts on community empowerment and social justice (Harris and McCabe, 2017). Other writers suggest that the not-for-profit sector is able to make use of information technology to sustain services and knowledge sharing without compromising its social mission (Te'eni and Young, 2003; Eimhjellen, 2014; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2014). Te'eni and Young (2003) suggest that the advent and saturation of technology can diminish the information advantage of the not-for-profit sector as clients and communities gain direct and independent access to information from multi-various sources. Simultaneously though, the sector can enhance its role as a knowledge intermediary in a changing service environment by improving its information technology capability.

In this critical incident, the immediate priority for partnership organisations was to secure continuing funding to sustain existing services without compromising their social mission (Jeavons, 1992; Hume and Hume, 2016). The experiences show that there were real limitations in the ability of a two-year partnership project to propel social welfare services largely through technological solutions. As noted by the author, just over a year into the project, "….need to think about future funding for the Hub. Long discussion with a couple of practitioners about funding bids….one practitioner had a dilemma as to which one to go for….their primary concern was about protecting their jobs and so there was no choice….I stated that sometimes you have to do these things because people's livelihoods are at stake….spoke to another practitioner about needing to lock down and concentrate on bid writing otherwise we were not going to succeed with any bids" (PJ entry: 1/12/14). Also, just as Charnwood Connect began winding down as an ASTF entity, the author noted "….getting ready for meeting with Hub's designers to extend the functionality of the website….meeting

was productive….they were up for different ways of improving the Hub….I fear the crunch will come when they send us a quotation for this additional work….we only have a limited budget" (PJ entry: 5/8/15).

4.7.2   Learning outcomes

1. The sustainability of the Hub was dependent not just on its functional integrity but also on the ability of partners to devote resources to sustain Charnwood Connect as well as their own agencies in a rapidly deteriorating funding environment.

2. The funder's expectations that within a two-year time-frame, Charnwood Connect would adopt alternative service delivery models, diversify its funding and develop more resilient services was too magnanimous a challenge for a relatively immature project.

3. The failure to make early decisions about how to spend the ASTF top-up funding illustrated the need for incisive leadership and efficient decision-making processes, perhaps something that was more challenging in a voluntary association of partners.

4. Although an inter-organisational community of practitioners was nurtured to help maintain the Hub, the reluctance to undertake this role suggested that bolting on responsibilities, which fall outside practitioners' immediate bands of expertise, was ambitious, even in advice agencies where multi-tasking was the norm.

5. Online facilities such as the Hub were seen as a panacea for countering the negative consequences of funding cuts, improving local services and promoting knowledge sharing amongst practitioners but such technological facilities require sustainable funding and dedicated staffing.

4.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter examines knowledge brokering as a practice intervention to design and develop the Hub, an online facility for knowledge sharing for practitioners and a more direct medium for providing advice services to clients and communities. Developing the Hub as a collective, partnership-wide platform with a common purpose required the author to broker pre-existing intra- and inter-organisational dynamics and deliver the Hub as a joint enterprise. Learning has emerged from this practice intervention about the challenges of developing and maintaining a technological facility with a short-term investment, a diffused project management structure and an organisational context comprising a voluntary

affiliation of partners. The design of the Hub took longer than planned and once released, required technical glitches to be tidied up, the content on the public zone to be maintained and users of the private zone to be encouraged to contribute. Though the idea of the Hub was credible, the extent to which the private zone was used, at least in its first year of operation, was underwhelming.

Reflecting on the insider action research process, the sequence of cycles and the detail of what happened in each illustrate that not all cycles had the same level of activities, depth of participation and there was a spill-over between cycles and critical incidents. As an iterative knowledge brokering process, the practice interventions to realise and maintain the Hub could not be fenced off from other project activities and knowledge brokering involved a series of to-ing and fro-ing processes, in themselves iterative. Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher (2007, p. 427) state that action research is a messy, multilinear process, more akin to a winding journey through "….a mountain road, with many side tracks, road blocks, detours and cul-de-sacs" and perhaps the same can be said of Hub's development.

The next chapter develops some of these themes further by examining a contrasting face-to-face practice intervention, the Charnwood Connect Forum.

CHAPTER 5: PRACTICE INTERVENTION 2: THE CHARNWOOD CONNECT

FORUM

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 discusses and analyses knowledge brokering as a practice intervention to develop, maintain and sustain the Charnwood Connect Forum (the Forum), a face-to-face knowledge sharing platform for practitioners. In contrast to the Hub which was for a combined target group of practitioners, clients and local communities (chapter 4, Figure 4.1), the Forum was a knowledge sharing facility dedicated to advice, information and support practitioners, both voluntary and paid, who worked in Charnwood Connect's partner agencies. The chapter begins with an introduction to the purpose and targeted beneficiaries of the Forum, followed by an overview of the iterative nature of the Forum's interventions and activities. The analysis moves on to illustrate the phases through which the Forum was developed, summarily organised by the author into three action research cycles (ARCs): starting out, knowledge sharing and joint action and, beyond ASTF. Next, four critical incidents are examined and analysed using the critical incident analysis technique (Flanagan, 1954; Keatinge, 2002; Butterfield *et al*, 2005) (Explanatory note, Part B), before concluding the chapter.

5.2 BACKGROUND TO THE CHARNWOOD CONNECT FORUM

In its funding bid to the ASTF, Charnwood Connect had made a commitment to improve local advice, information and support services by strengthening inter-agency communications, cooperation and collaboration. The Forum (Figure 5.1) was set up as a platform for the "….exchange of ideas, experiences and continual improvement….to gather intelligence at a locality level and enable us to identify any gaps in service provision" (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a, p. 17). The plan was to establish a sustainable practitioners' forum "….at an early stage of the project and quarterly meetings" to take place locally with agendas to be agreed by practitioners and the Forum was to "elect from amongst its number, a chair, vice chair" (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a, p. 20). As with the Hub and the project's monitoring and evaluation activities, the lead responsibility for establishing the Forum lay with the author.

The Charnwood Connect Forum
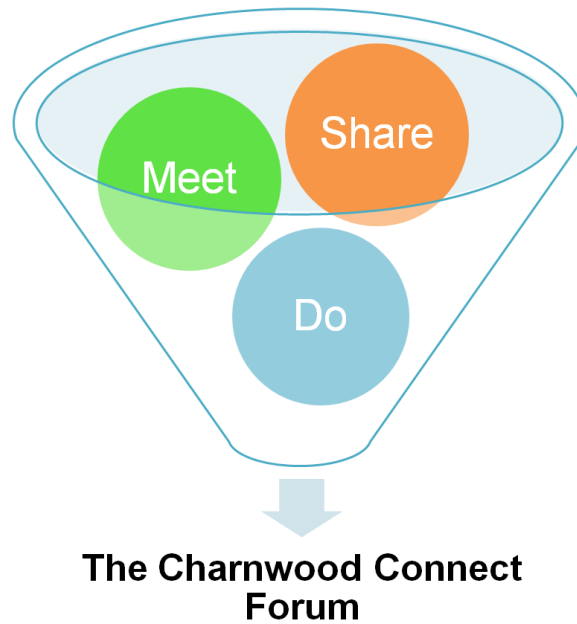
Figure 5.1: Purpose of the Forum.

5.3   OVERVIEW OF THE FORUM'S CORE ACTIVITIES

Over the two years, the Forum met eight times with practitioners sharing skills, experiences and practices and, taking action on social welfare issues. Each forum meeting lasted for an average of two hours and Figure 5.2 illustrates the iterative working style of the Forum and the interflow of interventions over the two years. Each meeting was reviewed at the end through a discursive round robin exercise to find out what practitioners thought and to help plan the next meeting. At the end of the first year, an e-survey was conducted to gather practitioners' views about the effectiveness of the Forum and how the Forum should function in the second year (Appendix 5.1: Year 1 Forum review e-questionnaire). Towards the end of the second year, the Forum's work was reviewed at the last two meetings (29/4/15 & 28/7/15) and through the impact analysis (Appendix 4.5: Summary results of the impact analysis).

Year 1

Meeting 1: January 2014	Meeting 2: April 2014	Meeting 3: June 2014	Meeting 4: July 2014
• Introduction/ purpose/group introductions/agree programme • Introduction to the Forum • Market place: learning about each other's work • Forum's purpose and terms of reference • Ground rules • Agenda building for future sessions • Roundup, review and next meeting	• Introduction/ purpose/ group introductions/ agree programme • Newsround/catch-up • Prioritising issues from meeting 1 • What actions can be taken • Items and priorities for the next meeting • Roundup, review and next meeting	• Introduction/ purpose/group introductions/agree programme • Newsround/catch-up • JSA sanctions • No shows, cancellations, waiting times and referrals • Roundup, review and next meeting	• Introduction/ purpose/group introductions/agree programme • JSA sanctions case-studies • No shows, cancellations, waiting times and referrals - report from the working group • Volunteer support and training • A Hub is born • Roundup, review and next meeting • How should we work together in the coming year?

End of year 1 e-survey review

Year 2

Meeting 5: October 2014	Meeting 6: January 2015	Meeting 7: April 2015	Meeting 8: July 2015
• Introduction/purpose/ group introductions/ agree programme • Newsround/catch-up • Improving referrals, facilitated by deputy manager of the lead partner agency • Roundup, review, next meeting and forward planning	• Introduction/ purpose/ group introductions/ agree programme • Improving referrals (common referral form/My CC Card) • Volunteer support and training • Future of the Forum beyond September 2015 • Roundup, review, next meeting and forward planning	• Introduction/purpose/ group introductions/ agree programme • Making a case for the advice sector • The Forum beyond September 2015 • Workshop on Universal Credit facilitated by external speakers • Roundup, review, next meeting and forward planning	• Introduction/purpose/ group introductions/ agree programme • Strengthening the advice sector • Reviewing the Forum's work against its objectives • The Forum beyond September 2015 • Roundup, review and open forum

Year 2 review as part of the impact analysis

• Charnwood Connect's away day and business and strategic planning process (18/2/15)
• KMO exit and handover report, September 2015

Figure 5.2: The iterative approach of the Forum.

5.4 DEVELOPING THE FORUM

As with the Hub (chapter 4), the Forum was started from scratch in a partnership setting where mistrust existed between some practitioners and their organisations, often more prominent between some though not always mutual (WN1: interview notes, October 2013-April 2014; WN1: meeting with the project manager, 17/10/13, 24/10/13). The development, administration and facilitation of the Forum went through a number of iterative phases (Figure 5.2) which are organised by the author into three action research

cycles (ARCs): starting out, knowledge sharing and joint action, and beyond ASTF (Figure 5.3). As with the Hub, critical incidents (Flanagan, 1954; Keatinge, 2002; Butterfield *et al*, 2005) in each action research cycle are defined to provide a conceptual lens to examine the interventions in the Forum. As highlighted in Figure 5.3 and Table 5.1, each action research cycle comprises at least one or more critical incidents (CI) and as with the practice interventions in the Hub, four critical incidents are examined. To provide an indication of the timeline, action research cycle 1 occurred in the first year when the project started and cycles 2 and 3 ran over the two years of the project.
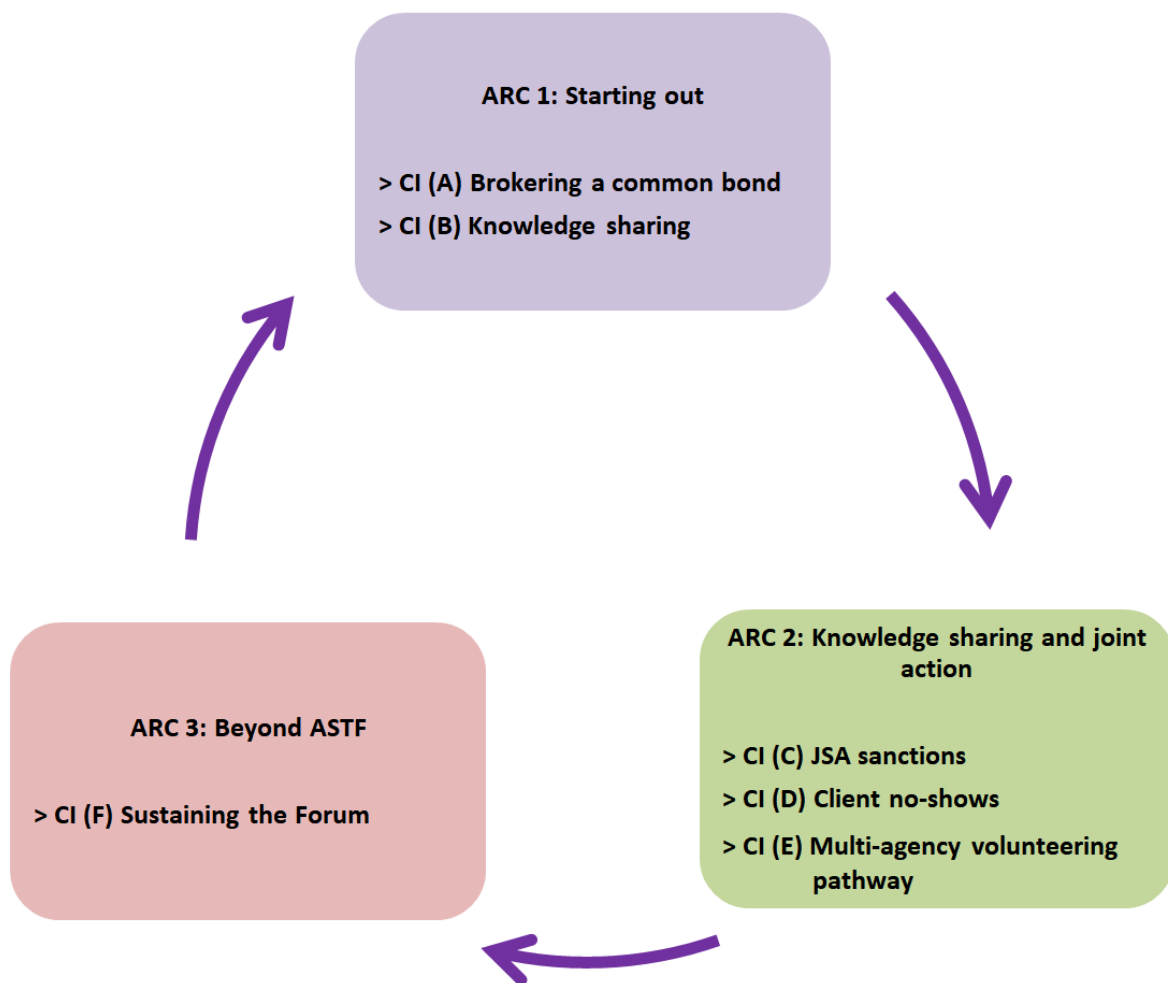
Figure 5.3: The action research cycles and associated critical incidents of the Forum.

Table 5.1: The Forum's action research cycles and associated critical incidents	
Action research cycle (ARC)	**Critical incident (CI)**
ARC 1: Starting out Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted by the author with practitioners to identify their needs and aspirations of the Forum. The outcomes of these preliminary interviews (WN1: interview notes, October 2013-April 2014), agreement of the terms of reference by the Project Steering Group, discussion and ratification of the terms of reference by the Forum at its first meeting, enabled the knowledge sharing network to get underway.	**CI (A) Brokering a common bond** This critical incident is about establishing a common framework and code of conduct for the operation of the Forum through practitioner participation. **CI (B) Knowledge sharing** This critical incident concerns the setting up and facilitation of a market place for practitioners to share practice and information about the work of their organisations.
ARC 2: Knowledge sharing and joint action Once established, the Forum prioritised a number of social welfare isssues which required more systematic evidence gathering and collective action.	**CI (C) Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions** The Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) was an incoming social welfare reform impacting on clients and this critical incident is about the case-studies that were produced by practitioners. **CI (D) Client no-shows** This critical incident concerns reducing the number of clients who failed to show up for their appointments and the one front door initiative. **CI (E) Multi-agency volunteering pathway** This critical incident concerns the use of the Forum to strengthen the multi-agency volunteering pathway.
ARC 3: Beyond ASTF The challenge facing the project was sustaining the Forum beyond the two-year ASTF funding and devising viable succession arrangements to continue providing practitioners with an inter-agency, face-to-face knowledge sharing and networking facility.	**CI (F) Sustaining the Forum** This critical incident examines the interventions made to continue the Forum beyond the ASTF funding.

5.5 CRITICAL INCIDENT (A): BROKERING A COMMON BOND (ARC 1)

Critical incident (A) "Brokering a common bond" examines the knowledge brokering practice interventions that were made to initiate a face-to-face inter-organisational community of practice by agreeing a common purpose and framework for collaboration and joint action.

Critical incident (A): Brokering a common bond (ARC 1)	Reflecting in practice
Situation 1. The objective was to establish the Forum as a face-to-face facility for practitioners to share knowledge, network and improve individual and collective practices (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application; WN1: meeting with the project manager, 17/10/13, 24/10/13). 2. Although the intention to develop the Forum was expressed in Charnwood Connect's funding bid, the terms of reference for the Forum were not specified. As the project's Knowledge Management Officer, it was the author's responsibility to broker this. 3. During the preliminary visits made by the author, practitioners endorsed the idea of having a face-to-face knowledge sharing facility to strengthen inter-agency working and improve client experiences (WN1: interview notes October 2013–April 2014). 4. Existing inter-agency relationships between some practitioners and agencies were fragile or underdeveloped. As advice workers, practitioners were not accustomed to collective or structured inter-agency knowledge sharing (WN1: interview notes, October 2013–April 2014; WN1: meeting with the project manager, 17/10/13, 24/10/13).	*As with the development of the Hub, as a practitioner-led platform for knowledge sharing, I was committed to ensuring that the development and maintenance of the Forum was a joint enterprise. To start the Forum, the terms of reference had to be agreed by practitioners to ensure that the Forum's internal boundaries, code of conduct and relationships with the rest of the project were explicit. The early stages of developing the Forum and drafting and collectively agreeing the terms of reference and the ground rules, ensured that working protocols were made explicit, discussed, agreed and documented.*
Actions 1. The draft terms of reference for the Forum were produced by the author for discussion and agreement by the Project Steering Group (14/11/13). 2. Subsequently, the draft terms of reference were discussed and agreed by the Forum at its first meeting	*To get the Forum underway, I drafted the terms of reference for consideration by the Project Steering Group, deliberately leaving gaps for the Project*

Critical incident (A): Brokering a common bond (ARC 1)	Reflecting in practice
(notes of the first meeting, 28/1/14). 3. At the first meeting, practitioners also agreed ground rules about how the Forum should be run and how participants should conduct themselves. 4. The agenda of the Forum's first meeting (Figure 5.2) was organised so that practitioners had sufficient time and opportunity to get to know each other, share information about their organisation's work, priorities and practices, identify issues of common concern and, build an agenda for future meetings and further action (Figure 5.4; Appendix 5.2: Summary of key issues from the first Forum meeting).	*Steering Group to discuss and fill (e.g. should the forum have open or fixed membership?). From my point of view, this was partly an empowerment strategy and partly one designed to get members of the Project Steering Group to become involved in shaping one of the project's key outputs. The process would also provide members to gain a deeper and more personal insight into a knowledge sharing facility in which practitioners from their organisations and even they may participate.*
Outcomes 1. At the Forum's inaugural meeting, practitioners endorsed the terms of reference, which had been agreed already in principle by the Project Steering Group. The terms of reference stated that the Forum would: • Provide a platform for mutual support and share practice • Examine the issues and challenges involved in providing advice services • Share experiences of working with other	*The feedback from the practitioners after the first meeting was encouraging and positive. I was really pleased with how the meeting went and the buzz and energy in the room. Fourteen practitioners from seven different agencies took part including my two*

Critical incident (A): Brokering a common bond (ARC 1)	Reflecting in practice
organisations providing advice services - Explore strategies for strengthening collaboration and developing more joined up approaches to delivering advice services - Act on issues of common concern. 2. Also at the Forum's first meeting, a code of conduct (ground rules) was agreed by participants including: - Valuing each other's specialisms, knowledge and opinions - Listening to each other and allowing others to speak - Being open to acknowledging the professional difficulties of being an advice, information and support practitioner - Being committed to taking action on agreed outcomes - Managing conflict constructively - Acting professionally - Using the Forum as a platform to address collective concerns not self-interest.	*project co-workers. My two project co-workers supported me in the planning and facilitation of the first meeting. After enabling practitioners to get to know each other, one of the priorities was to create space for practitioners to share practices and information about their organisations' work. Participants produced creative illustrations and flipchart notes to communicate information about their work, the challenges faced by their clients and their expectations of the Forum and Charnwood Connect. A shared agreement was reached about how practitioners should conduct themselves professionally at the Forum, putting the interests of clients and the sector above those of individuals and their agencies. I was*

Critical incident (A): Brokering a common bond (ARC 1)	*Reflecting in practice*
	pleased with this as this indicated a mature approach, more likely to help establish a cohesive inter-organisational community of practice, take joint action and encourage much deeper reflective knowledge sharing.

Figure 5.4: A sample of flipchart work from the Forum's first meeting.

5.5.1 Reflecting on practice and sense making: Brokering a common bond

The Forum was an integral component of Charnwood Connect's mission to strengthen inter-agency collaboration and improve local advice services (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a). As a new partnership, in the early stages, relations between some of the partners in Charnwood Connect were fragile (WN1: interview notes October 2013–April 2014). The external environment of the advice sector was precarious with public sector cuts impacting directly on the livelihoods of practitioners, organisational sustainability and the lives of clients (The Low Commission, 2014; WN1: meeting with the project manager, 17/10/13, 24/10/13). At the second meeting of the Forum "….there was a vibrant discussion about the challenges posed for advice services because of the increasing shortage of funding and its implications for joint working. The discussion illustrated the extent to which the challenges posed by cuts in funding were uppermost in people's minds. Despite the fact that most members found the discussion useful it was agreed that at subsequent meetings the Forum should focus more on operational issues" (Charnwood Connect Forum, notes of the second meeting, 1/4/14). Concerns about the funding environment and its consequences were discussed by the Project Steering Group as well where in a review of partner engagement in Charnwood Connect, it was noted that "….partners are currently engaging well, so far as other constraints allow. One partner has particular difficulties and restricted capacity at present, following major budget cuts and changes in the way they can offer advice to clients" (PSG minutes of meeting, 13/5/14). The Forum was established in this context and expected to mitigate some of these effects through knowledge sharing, joint action and improving practice.

The initial discussion and agreement of the Forum's terms of reference and ground rules and the ongoing opportunities for knowledge sharing defined the Forum's parameters, shared repertoires (Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink, 2004) and processes for co-creation (Brown and Duguid, 2001). Communities of practice are "….groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise….people in communities of practice share their experiences and knowledge in free-flowing, creative ways that foster new approaches to problems" (Wenger and Snyder, 2000, pp. 139-140). The preliminary round of interviews helped to identify the hopes, expectations and concerns that practitioners had about the Forum, other project objectives as well as

Charnwood Connect as a whole. In these interviews, the themes of mutuality and reciprocity, collective learning and knowledge sharing were apparent. One practitioner stated that "….Charnwood Connect should enable advisers to share experiences about different ways of working and enable them to learn from each other….perhaps there should be presentations from each agency about what they do and who their named contacts are" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 20/11/13). Another practitioner suggested that "….we could have learning exchanges where we put staff into other organisations to observe and promote mutual learning" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 25/11/13). The theme of learning exchanges and knowledge sharing was raised and noted at a practitioners meeting, a record of which stated that "….Vipin is organising a forum to be held at 1.45 – 4.30 pm on 28th January. It is hoped that at least three people will attend from each partner agency and that it will be the first in a regular series over the next two years. The aim is to form a network of advice workers to exchange ideas and issues. Volunteers are invited" (Managing agency's newsletter, January 2014). The theme of the Forum as a platform for learning and exchange was reported also in the project's first six-monthly report to the funders which stated that "….CCF and the IT Hub are key learning and exchange instruments….Achievements: High level of participation by CC partner agencies in the Charnwood Connect Forum (CCF) and Project Steering Group (PSG)" (Big Lottery Fund, 6 month draft project update form, October 2013-March 2014). Apart from expressing the hopes and expectations that practitioners had of the Forum, there were also offers of support with one partner agency stating that "….the Forum would be good and we are happy to support it, even prepared to host it" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 12/11/13).

As an inter-organisational community of practice, the Forum was bound by three compounds: firstly, practice as "….the body of knowledge, methods, tools, stories, cases, documents, which members share and develop together" (Wenger, 2004, p. 3); secondly, a shared sphere or knowledge domain, and thirdly, a community of practitioners for whom that domain is relevant (Wenger, 2004). In the case of the Forum, practice was shared and developed not just as an abstract or intellectual pursuit (Wenger, 1998a) but as a tangible solution to social welfare issues and improving services; the domain constituted advice, information and support services and the community comprised practitioners working for

Charnwood Connect's partner agencies. Thus, as an inter-organisational community of practice, the Forum provided an in-person space for practitioners from different organisations to engage voluntarily in mutual dialogue in a joint enterprise to improve local services. The principle of enabling different partner organisations to contribute to establishing a reciprocal and mutually beneficial knowledge sharing in-person platform was established from the outset when the Project Steering Group was asked to consider and shape the Forum's terms of reference:

"One element of the Charnwood Connect Project is to develop a Forum for partner organisations. Vipin Chauhan created a draft paper which was circulated prior to the meeting with some considerations to be discussed by the PSG. Considerations and decisions made by the PSG are detailed below. Considerations in the draft Charnwood Connect Forum (CCF) paper were:

1. Size of the Forum – one person per organisation? Fixed membership? Open/fluctuating membership?
2. Current proposal is to restrict membership to partner organisations –should membership be extended if interest in the work of the Forum is expressed by other organisations (statutory and voluntary)?
3. Target – paid staff only or open to volunteers as well?
4. Chair/facilitator – fixed or rotating?
5. Secretariat support.

Decisions made by the PSG regarding the above were:
1. It was agreed the CCF would remain open and flexible.
2. It was suggested that we initially restrict membership to partner organisations but would consider inviting other appropriate organisations.
3. It was decided that both paid staff and volunteers would be invited.
4. This can be discussed at the first meeting.
5. Vipin Chauhan to offer the secretariat support for the CCF"
    (PSG minutes of meeting, 14/11/13).

Wenger and Snyder (2000) suggest that communities of practice evolve independently and at some distance from wider managerial or organisational processes. However, this is not always the case as knowledge sharing does not occur in isolation from the wider setting in which communities of practice operate and often, requires managerial cooperation (Wenger, 2004). In one instance, in an across-the-desk conversation with other practitioners it became apparent that "....a partner agency seemed to be hesitant about participating fully in the project....we concluded that perhaps a good counter-strategy might be to go and meet the staff team as well as the trustees of the organisation concerned to make sure that they were clear about the project's objectives and broker internal communication between them" (PJ entry: 24/2/14). The project's founders proposed the establishment of the Forum as a knowledge sharing platform for practitioners to contribute to the improvement of local services (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a). In this respect, although the Forum did not originate organically from frontline advisers, the visionary foresight of senior officers as managerial practitioners paved the way for developing a face-to-face, inter-organisational knowledge sharing platform. Once established, the control of the Forum remained with the practitioners as per the project's vision. The approach concurs with Wenger's (2004) later analysis about relying on managerial leverage to initiate and sustain a community of practice with practitioners maintaining control over how it is facilitated, a principle which was upheld in this case:

"A client came in with a support worker from a partner agency for their appointment with an adviser....however neither the relevant paperwork nor the client had been prepared for the appointment by the support worker and the appointment had to be re-arranged....we had a discussion about why the client had been inadequately prepared and how support workers and advisers could better appreciate each other's roles and boundaries....it was suggested that this could be done through a workshop or a training event via Charnwood Connect Forum" (PJ entry: 12/8/14).

 The Project Steering Group also recognised the differentiation in its role as an inter-agency managerial body and the operational aspects of the project "....PSG strategic meeting started slowly but picked up and had a positive outcome – to develop a business plan....also agreed for the team meeting to be resurrected for resolving operational matters....also

decided to stick to PSG as a strategic body to plan especially the business plan" (PJ entry: 3/6/15).

The brokering strategy established relationships and communications between different sets of practitioners to enable them to contribute towards the project's objectives. In the first instance, practitioners were connected with each other through the negotiations and agreements about the Forum's terms of reference, which bridged managerial tiers (the project manager and the Project Steering Group) with frontline practitioners. Following this, the first Forum meeting was a platform for boundary setting, reifying parameters and connecting frontline practitioners with each other, marking the beginning of an inter-organisational face-to-face community of practice. In establishing the Forum, the needs of the frontline practitioners, the primary target group, had to be counterbalanced with the Project Steering Group's obligations to develop the Forum in accordance to the commitment made to the funders e.g. meeting four times a year and working specifically on advice related activities. This inter-change between the network of practitioners who were involved in the Forum and its associated activities can be illustrated by a discussion that took place at a Project Steering Group meeting:

"A discussion took place around standardising client approaches at respective organisations including a joint referral form. Are referral processes streamlined, do organisations effectively signpost or just offer information? Are telephone calls made between respective organisations to book appointments for clients? A piece of work could take place at the next Charnwood Connect Forum which looks at 3 areas which are: mapping - what currently happens, practitioners' perspective - what does a professional service look like? And, client perspective - what should our clients expect from our services? This information can then be fed back to the Project Steering Group so they can better understand where the partnership is at, the support partner agencies may need in terms of training and increasing knowledge, and how much work may be needed to have a standardised way of dealing with client approaches" (PSG minutes of meeting, 12/8/14).

For the author, such dialogues in formal meetings as well as in across-the-desk conversations prompted him to reflect critically on how to broker his practice interventions.

After one episode, he wrote that "….sharing information about what colleagues did over their bank holidays made me realise that if knowledge management and transfer are to be taken seriously then personal relationships must also be important….the idea that people are prepared to share personal information must mean that knowledge management and transfer at professional levels must be possible also, but under what conditions?" (PJ entry: 27/8/14).

Instruments such as the Forum's terms of reference represented knowledge artefacts (Star and Griesemer, 1989) for joint decision-making and brokering conversations between frontline practitioners and the Project Steering Group. As a knowledge broker, the author provided a "participative connection" Wenger (1998a, p. 109) between practices creating spaces for new interpretations, meanings and knowledge. The critical incident demonstrates how knowledge brokering interventions can initiate and maintain communities of practice especially in environments where pre-existing tensions prevail or where inter-organisational collaboration is imperative:

"CCF 5 today….good turnout though most were from one partner agency….good meeting….overran on time as always….improving referrals session went well….feedback from a couple of practitioners was that they enjoyed the meeting and found it useful" (PJ entry: 29/1/15).

"The Continuous Development Programme and Forum meetings provide opportunities for shared learning and development and their design and contents are based on ongoing feedback gathered through our monitoring processes" (Big Lottery Fund, 18 month draft project update form, October 2014-March 2015).

5.5.2 Learning outcomes

1. Enacting participative working styles from the outset is fundamental to developing inter-organisational communities of practice, joint enterprises, multi-agency partnerships, a common purpose and artefacts such as the Forum's terms of reference and code of conduct (ground rules).

2. Incongruities, actual or perceived, about the role and purpose of inter-organisational communities of practice such as the Forum have to be reconciled and consensus built between different stakeholders such as the project's founders, funders, management bodies and frontline practitioners.

3. Initial groundwork, relationship building and willingness to take time to listen to and understand the individual and collective needs of practitioners are fundamental to establishing and maintaining inter-organisational communities of practice especially where pre-existing tensions exist.

5.6 CRITICAL INCIDENT (C): JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE SANCTIONS (ARC 2)

This critical incident examines the concerns raised by practitioners about the effects on clients of the incoming changes to the Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and the actions they could take.

Critical incident (C): JSA sanctions (ARC 2)	*Reflecting in practice*
Situation	*The work on the Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions was a great opportunity to use my skills to support frontline practitioners to work together on an issue about which they were concerned and had direct experiences. This work also provided an opportunity to test out the extent to which the Forum could develop as a knowledge sharing and joint working facility for the partnership. The fact that there was a clear concern*
1. The Jobseeker's Allowance was a benefit for people of working age who were out of work, seeking employment, worked less than 16 hours a week, not in full-time education and under the state pension age. In 2012, the Government introduced new Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions regime comprising three levels of severity: high, intermediate and low: https://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance.	
2. At the Forum's first meeting (28/1/14) practitioners expressed concerns about seeing an increasing number of clients who had been sanctioned.	
3. At the Forum's second meeting (1/4/14), Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions were identified as a priority for further action by the Forum.	
4. At the Forum's third meeting (3/6/14), practitioners	

Critical incident (C): JSA sanctions (ARC 2)	Reflecting in practice
shared their knowledge and experiences about the challenges faced by sanctioned clients and the Forum concluded that concrete action was needed.	*expressed about the sanctions and a consensus reached to take further action made me think that the Forum had already started to achieve its objectives without a lot of direct brokering intervention by me.*
Actions 1. At the Forum's third meeting (3/6/14), participants agreed to compile further evidence about the effects of the Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions, the outcomes of which would be used to inform local politicians and decision-makers. 2. A template to record client cases was developed by the author in collaboration with practitioners and distributed within the partnership to monitor trends for a period of two months (Appendix 5.3: JSA sanctions case-study template). 3. Further discussions about the impact of these sanctions continued at the Forum's subsequent meetings (29/7/14; 29/10/14).	*Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions constituted a technical subject about which I had little knowledge apart from learning about it through secondary research and across-the-desk conversations. Because of the technical complexity of the subject matter I would need to seek help to develop the case-study template before it was disseminated. Forum members were emailed (11/6/14) for their feedback on a draft template following which the template was revised and disseminated for use (email: 18/6/14).*

Critical incident (C): JSA sanctions (ARC 2)	Reflecting in practice
Outcomes	*Although collecting the case-studies and writing them up was useful and interesting, the overall response from practitioners was slow. I was able to cajole and follow through for responses but it soon transpired that although JSA sanctions were significant for the individual clients who had experienced them, the overall scale of the problem was much smaller than originally suggested by the anecdotal evidence.*

1. Eleven cases of JSA-sanctioned clients were submitted to the author by practitioners from four partner agencies.

2. The evidence that was submitted was synthesised and produced as a summary report by the author for wider dissemination and discussion by the Forum (meeting on 27/1/15).

3. Although the Forum continued to monitor the impact of the JSA sanctions, the work of the Forum moved on to other areas of concern such as the introduction of Universal Credit, another social policy initiative.

5.6.1   Reflecting on practice and sense-making: Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions

As a community of practice, the Forum discussed the issues faced by clients who were JSA-sanctioned and participants decided to take collective action starting with gathering documentary evidence to substantiate their claims. In an ethnographic study, Orr (1996, p. 125) describes how photocopier repair engineers share "war stories" of their experiences "with as much context and technical detail as seems appropriate to the situation of their telling". Orr (1996) argues that recalled stories constitute knowledge objects which enable experiences to be recounted and reiterated by others. The use of the Forum's meetings as a platform for recounting the experiences of JSA-sanctioned clients through the eyes of frontline practitioners was tantamount to such sharing of war stories (Orr, 1996). As noted by the Project Steering Group, the Forum was evolving into a platform where practitioners were able to share knowledge and experiences about key social welfare issues "….other priorities which emerged were: JSA sanctions, referrals ('One Door' idea), waiting times and

do not attend. These were discussed at the CC team meeting where it was agreed that a working party would need to take this forward before the next Forum" (PSG minutes of meeting, 13/5/14). On the morning of the third Forum meeting, as the author was finalising his preparations, he noted that "….one practitioner asked me how the planning was going and I said that the meeting was going to be more or less self-running….the groundwork had been done and the priority was to go through the work on JSA sanctions and the setting up of a working group to look at no shows" (PJ entry: 2/6/14).

Recounting war stories (Orr, 1996) also reflects Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Wenger's (1998a) analyses about how new practitioners on the periphery (e.g. someone who does not have a story to tell about JSA sanctions) are inducted into communities of practice through knowledge sharing and situated learning processes. One example of inducting peripheral practitioners was when the author "….attended the volunteers' daily briefing to talk about the Hub….let them know that it was arriving soon and also about the work on JSA sanctions" (PJ entry: 28/7/14). Another example of such drawing in from the periphery involved a practitioner who was involved in a totally different area of social welfare advice. The author's discussion with them revolved around email and web-based advice work and its impact on vulnerable clients such as individuals who were JSA-sanctioned. "….The practitioner's experiences were that the questions asked online by advisers overwhelmed many clients and not all clients were able to give the necessary information in one go….so the toing and froing cause delays….some clients cut off and stop engaging (PJ entry: 29/9/15).

Learning is a social process in which "legitimate peripheral participation" provides opportunities for practitioners, new and old, to have conversations about "….activities, identities, artefacts, and communities of knowledge and practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29). As a partnership project, the Forum was a site for inter-organisational situated learning enabling practitioners to connect to each other through their work, have conversations about their tacit or assumed practices, explicate their knowledge, skills and expertise and co-create new knowledge (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink, 2004; Wenger, 2004). In a meeting with a senior practitioner about the continuation of a pilot monitoring process of clients who had been JSA sanctioned, the

author noted that "....a useful meeting with a practitioner about continuing to monitor referral categories on the back of the reception forms....Also the practitioner had told advisers to flag up inquiry forms to alert us about JSA sanctions....advisers will use the JSA sanctions template to record cases....this was a good outcome and shows that it is possible to work together" (PJ entry: 24/6/14).

The process of recounting and sharing war stories with other practitioners about JSA sanctions can be overlaid with Schön's (1991) notion of reflecting on practice. The moments in the Forum meetings when practitioners recounted critical incidents about client experiences of JSA sanctions were symbolic of practitioners having a "conversation with the situation" (Schön, 1992, p. 125). Examples of such situational conversations are illustrated in the following practice journal entry and a news item in the managing agency's newsletter:

"Quiet time generally....Interesting discussion with a practitioner about JSA sanctions and clients not knowing that they have to inform housing benefit if they have been JSA sanctioned. The Department of Work and Pensions informs Housing Benefit anyway and the latter assumes that the client has a job and is sanctioned....this results in an accumulation of debt" (PJ entry: 26/6/14).

"Vipin reported that Charnwood Connect Forum wants to collect some case studies of clients who have experienced sanctioning from JSA. In such cases....please consider referring the client for this study – there is a pro-forma available to record details. The Forum hopes to use the case studies to get a dialogue with local decision makers" (Managing agency's newsletter, July 2014).

For some practitioners such encounters may be literal conversations and anecdotal sharing of "war stories" (Orr, 1996) without in-depth conscious reflection whereas for others, more systematic and deeper reflections may be involved (Schön, 1992). As a collective activity, compiling and analysing evidential data about JSA sanctions were opportunities for both critical reflection and social learning enabling practitioners to consider what further actions to take. Nicolini (2012 p. 2) states that practice-based approaches to understanding and acting on organisational phenomenon is demonstrative of how practitioners make use of

everyday routines and artefacts which are "….knotted together in such a way that the results of one performance become the resource for another". Like Schön (1991), Nicolini (2012, p. 2) challenges the merits of technical rationality approaches to understanding practice and suggests instead that "….things seem to fall into place much better if we think of the fluid scene that unfolds in front of us in terms of multiple practices carried out at the same time". Such fluidity is illustrated in the following entry which discusses how a Forum meeting covered multiple items including JSA sanctions, the no-shows work, an end of year verbal review and a validatory gesture. The author noted that "….day of CCF 4….a good discussion related to the key agenda items including JSA sanctions and no shows….also reviewed CCF given this was the fourth and final one of the year….review did not reveal anything new except people saying that they valued the time together….I acknowledged their contributions and highlighted the importance of CC connecting and staying connected with practitioners" (PJ entry: 29/7/14).

The principles of fluidity and multiple practices emerged again in the project's draft year 1 monitoring report to the funder which stated that "….training and sharing expertise is at the heart of CC. This sits well with our drive to promote social policy work. We have now included an information exchange session at forum meetings and are encouraging partners to gather evidence so we can influence policy makers. This is a new work stream which came out of the specialist benefit sanctions training which was commissioned in August 2014" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 1 draft project monitoring form, October 2013-September 2014).

The practitioners' commitment to record case-studies of the impact of JSA sanctions on clients transformed the war stories from anecdotal conversations to cataloguing war records. The war records would catalogue evidence and hope to verify the claims and experiences of practitioners. The following anonymised vignettes which are extracted from the case-studies of JSA-sanctioned clients that were submitted by practitioners, illustrate this principle of transitioning from anecdotal war stories to verifiable war records:

"Jamal is 58 years of age and has a learning disability. His benefits were sanctioned because when he completed a form online, he was unable to read it properly and had ticked the wrong box".

"Anthony was sanctioned for not looking for work on the approved database even though he had been looking elsewhere and had attended interviews".

"Carlos, a Spaniard, was in his mid-50s and had a joint JSA claim with his wife. He was told that he had not supplied enough evidence that he was looking for work and was sanctioned for two weeks. Although he was notified about this, he was unaware of another two week suspension that had also been imposed….the client suffered emotional stress as he was unsure about who he needed to speak to and this was made worse by the fact that he was unable to access any information in Spanish".

"Sam is a young white British male, unemployed and a single parent. The first that he was aware that his benefits had stopped was when he found that the benefits had not been paid into his bank account….He had no money and with a toddler to support, he came to us for help. We were able to give him some money from our hardship fund and also advised him to go to the job centre to get a hardship payment. We are not sure what happened after that".

("The effects of Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions: Summary evidence from Charnwood Connect", KMO report, 8/1/15)

Although the primary purpose of the investigation about JSA sanctions was to gather evidence, the Forum was a learning exchange and knowledge sharing platform for practitioners about social policy issues such as JSA sanctions. As experiential processes, practitioners were able to consider what actions to take, individually through their own practices and collectively through platforms such as the Forum and partnership bodies such

as Charnwood Connect, ensuring that knowledge, learning and doing were not disjointed or disaggregated (Swan, Scarbrough and Newell, 2010; Narayanaswamy, 2013). In his theory of adult learning and conscientisation, Freire (1972b, p. 31) states that consciousness raising through reflecting on practice can contribute to the transformation of social conditions but all participants should be viewed as "equally knowing subjects" engaging in an "authentic dialogue". Reflection (conscientisation) and action need to be connected (Freire, 1972b), a phenomenon that is often "….decoupled within organisations, leading to reactive or routinised responses rather than learning" (Swan, Scarbrough and Newell, 2010, p. 326). The author had an "….interesting meeting with a senior practitioner about JSA sanctions….only two possible cases have emerged in the last month….far below the scale of what we were expecting" (PJ entry: 28/7/14) leading the author to consider recommending to the Forum and the Project Steering Group "….to put a stop to the JSA sanctions work if we do not get any more cases….need more substantial evidence if we are going to present a case to politicians and decision-makers" (PJ entry: 28/7/14). As a further illustration of how learning was coupled to organisational routines, in its report to the funders, the project noted that "….four CCF meetings held providing facilitated opportunities for practitioners to work jointly, share experiences, improve collaboration and act on issues of client concern e.g. JSA sanctions. Working group established to examine options for tackling no shows, referrals and improved advice pathways" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 1 draft project monitoring form, October 2013-September 2014).

As discussions at the Forum and outside continued, it became apparent that the issue of JSA sanctions was not a priority for all practitioners and their agencies. For some practitioners, this social welfare measure was not an explicit part of their organisation's remit or expertise and others had not dealt with any JSA sanctioned clients. In turn, this realisation contributed to disappointment for the author and his reticence to complete the JSA sanctions report. The author noted in his practice journal that "….needed to get on with the JSA sanctions report….been putting it off for ages. Disappointing that despite the fact that Forum members thought that this was a big thing, only a handful of cases have appeared or at least reported as part of the survey Charnwood Connect Forum decided to carry out" (PJ entry: 10/12/14). Once completed however, the JSA sanctions report was well-received and when it was "….sent to some practitioners….good feedback from both….another practitioner

suggested we put it on the Hub to start a further discussion" (PJ entry: 16/12/14). This was on the back of earlier "….feedback from a practitioner about the JSA sanctions case-study template….they commented that it was very good" (PJ entry: 17/6/14).

Working on this social welfare measure provided this inter-organisational community of practice with an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences, provide mutual support and act collectively. The drafting and finalisation of the case-study template, evidence gathering and compilation of case studies by practitioners, ongoing discussions at the Forum and the dissemination of a summary report of the outcomes reinforced the Forum as an inter-organisational community of practice. As a broker, the coordination of the case studies and the summary report provided artefacts for practitioners to establish further connections with each other, client experiences of social welfare reforms and Charnwood Connect's objective of improving advice services, an achievement that was noted in the project's draft year 2 report to the funders:

"Eight quarterly meetings of the CCF have taken place over the two years. The CCF has proved to be a useful platform for face2face networking, training, exchanging knowledge, sharing expertise and taking joint action on social welfare issues e.g. JSA sanctions and one front door approach" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 2 draft project monitoring form, October 2014-September 2015).

5.6.2   Learning outcomes

1. Frontline advice, information and support practitioners face profound challenges when confronted with social welfare legislation and changes over which neither they nor their clients have much control.
2. Situated learning and knowledge sharing through platforms such as the Forum are profound for practitioners who may experience individual and collective exasperation, burnout and powerlessness when they do not have control over their work due to external changes.
3. Face-to-face and online platforms for frontline practitioners such as the Forum and the Hub provide individuals with validatory spaces to learn, share knowledge, exchange experiences and advocate for clients on key areas of social welfare such as JSA sanctions.

4. Evidence-based practice through the compilation of client case-studies is important when undertaking advocacy work on social welfare issues to mediate between different communities of practice of managers, practitioners and policy makers.

5.7 CRITICAL INCIDENT (D): CLIENT NO-SHOWS (ARC 2)

Critical incident "Client no-shows" captures the interventions that were developed and implemented by practitioners in collaboration with the author to improve inter-agency referrals and reduce wastage when clients failed to attend appointments.

Critical incident (D): Client no-shows (ARC 2)	*Reflecting in practice*
Situation	*As a community activist, I was involved in establishing a law centre in Leicester, worked for the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux on a special project to improve access to advice services and worked as an Information Worker in a young people's advice and information service. I had not worked directly in the advice sector for some time and the opportunity to improve existing appointment and referral systems was refreshing and exciting. The excitement was topped by the fact that the Forum had grasped the opportunity to work on the*
1. Charnwood Connect was committed to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of client appointment systems and advice services by "…reducing waiting times and number of lost appointments" (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a, p. 13).	
2. The Forum was established as a knowledge sharing platform for practitioners to contribute to Charnwood Connect's vision of improving practices such as appointments and inter-agency referral systems.	
3. Effective management of client appointments, reducing no-shows and a number of associated concerns emerged as priority issues at the Forum's second meeting (Notes of the second meeting, 1/4/14):	
• Managing the increases in demand for services and growing complexity of client needs and expectations	
• The lack of time and other resources to meet increasing needs	
• Adviser time loss due to clients not showing up for appointments	
• Long time-lags for client appointments when inter-	

Critical incident (D): Client no-shows (ARC 2)	*Reflecting in practice*
agency referrals were made • The need to keep up to date records of staff changes in partner agencies to ensure that delays in inter-agency referrals were kept to a minimum.	*issue of client no-shows quite early on without over-pondering what to do and how, yet again suggesting that the Forum could become a valuable platform for knowledge sharing, experimentation and improving practices.*
Actions 1. At the first meeting of the Charnwood Connect project team (WN2: 28/4/14), members decided to set up a "No-shows Working Group" to develop more effective strategies for managing client appointments. 2. The team meeting (WN2: 28/4/14) also considered a proposal to introduce a reminders by text system to improve client attendance. 3. A proposal by the project manager to produce an appointment card ("passport") to monitor client journeys and inter-agency referral systems was agreed (WN2: 28/4/14). 4. The proposal by the project team to establish a "No-shows Working Group", to be facilitated by the author, was considered, agreed and set up at the Forum's third meeting (3/6/14). 5. The working group's membership comprised three partner agencies that had agreed to pilot a set of initiatives to reduce no-shows and improve the efficiency of client appointment systems.	*At the project's first team meeting, the chair of the Project Steering Group gave encouraging feedback about the inclusive work style adopted by the project workers. Having the meeting in itself was encouraging as no steps had been taken previously to convene a meeting of project workers and managers. The positive start to the first meeting set the scene for the rest of our time together. A number of different and exciting ideas emerged from our free-flowing discussions during the meeting including how to improve client*

Critical incident (D): Client no-shows (ARC 2)	*Reflecting in practice*
	appointment and referral systems. The idea of the My Charnwood Connect Card, for instance, was suggested at this meeting.
Outcomes 1. The author drew up the terms of reference for the "No-shows Working Group" and ratified by the Forum (3/6/14). The objectives of the working group were to: a) Explore the experiences of partner agencies of managing no-shows, cancellations, waiting times and referrals b) Examine the impact of no-shows, cancellations, waiting times and referrals on advice agencies and clients c) Identify examples of good practice and successes in managing no-shows, cancellations, waiting times and referrals d) Suggest strategies for improving the management of no-shows, cancellations, waiting times and referrals and developing a one-door-approach. 2. The working group agreed to pilot three initiatives: the My Charnwood Connect Card, appointment reminders by text and an electronic screen in the reception area of a partner agency displaying local information, a running total of client no-shows and a summary of the money wasted due to no-shows (Project Steering Group minutes, 4/8/14). 3. The author worked with the Hub's technical design team to produce the My Charnwood Connect Card (Figure 5.5)	*As work progressed on the issue of client no-shows, I felt that the initiative was going to be a great example of an integrated, inter-organisational approach to tackling an issue of common concern. Through my brokering interventions, the initiative weaved between the commitments made to the funders, the discussions at the Project Steering group, the team meeting, the Forum, the No-shows Working Group and the piloting of concrete initiatives (Figure 5.6).* *I was disappointed that the partners that had agreed to participate in the working group and the pilot initiatives did not show up*

Critical incident (D): Client no-shows (ARC 2)	*Reflecting in practice*

to log appointments, provide contact details for all the partner agencies and monitor client journeys.

4. The My Charnwood Connect Card was piloted by the lead partner agency but not as coherently and systematically as envisaged. Review meetings between the agency's managers and the author suggested that frontline staff had not been briefed fully about how to use the card and some were hesitant to use such a formalised system with vulnerable clients (WN4: meetings with the lead partner agency, 13/1/15; 3/2/15 and the managing agency, 15/1/15).

5. The reminders by text appointments system was piloted by paid advisers in the managing agency which had purchased software for this. The initiative fizzled out after early results showed that text reminders were not making any significant impact on reducing no-shows (WN4: meetings with the managing agency, 12/11/14; 17/12/14).

6. The idea of piloting the electronic display was shelved as no partner agency was able to progress this (No-shows Working Group, 30/7/14).

7. At the Forum's fifth meeting (29/10/14) a senior manager from the lead partner agency co-facilitated a workshop to consider the adoption of a Common Referral Form to improve inter-agency referrals.

8. Although a Common Referral Form was developed, it was not put into use by the time the ASTF project came to an end. It was proposed that post-September 2015, the lead partner agency should coordinate its implementation (email from the lead partner agency, 28/8/15).

to all the meetings. As the lead worker for this area, this was frustrating for me as work on this issue and drawing out the learning for other practitioners could not progress without partners piloting and implementing initiatives in their own organisations.

Critical incident (D): Client no-shows (ARC 2)	Reflecting in practice
9. The working group met on two occasions but stopped meeting as attendance petered out despite the original commitment by several agencies to take part and pilot initiatives (Project Steering Group minutes, 4/8/14).	
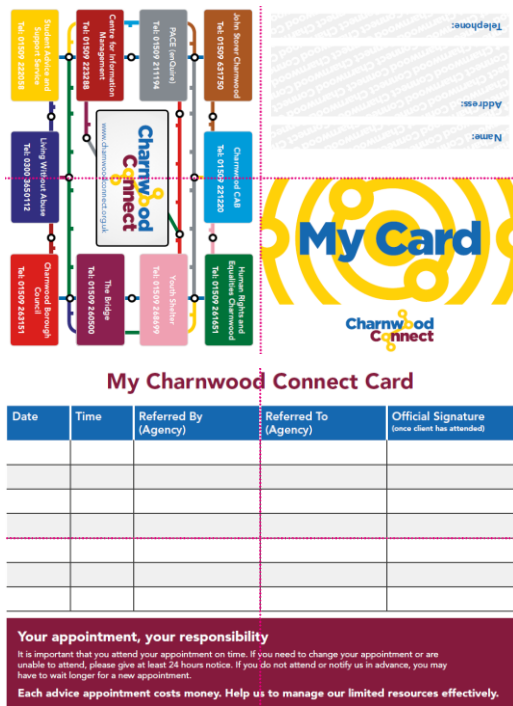
Figure 5.5: My Charnwood Connect Card.

Figure 5.6: No-shows working group: Planned intervention strategy.

5.7.1 Reflecting on practice and sense-making: Client no-shows

In this critical incident the author as a knowledge broker worked collaboratively with the Forum and the Project Steering Group on managing client no-shows. This included piloting innovations such as the My Charnwood Connect Card, appointment reminders by text and the development of a Common Referral Form. Capturing the essence of this element of Charnwood Connect's work, one interviewee commented that "….for the customer there will be one front door and they will be able to get to the right place at the right time" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 19/11/13). Wenger (1998a, pp. 77-78) describes

such collaborative initiatives as "joint enterprises" involving practitioners in a "collective process of negotiation….defined by participants" creating "relations of mutual accountability". One illustration of such collective processes involved the No-shows Working Group and how at one meeting it emerged that when we were "….looking at referral systems….an interesting challenge is posed and we need to distinguish between referrals and signposting….perhaps we are not talking about developing a referral system but a more systematic sign-posting process" (PJ entry: 30/7/14). Such collective thinking and ideas for further exploration emerged also from across-the-desk conversations. In one such conversation the author had an "….interesting across-the-desk discussion about no-shows….a number of clients especially those who were meant to be accompanied by support workers or had appointments made by them failed to show up or cancelled….one practitioner suggested that it might be a good idea to research why clients who use free services feel it is okay to miss appointments or cancel at short notice" (PJ entry: 9/7/14). In another speculative across-the-desk conversation about why a particular client may have failed to show up:

"So this client has six children and does not have the time to find work….another practitioner intervened stating that client confidence was important to take into account as some clients do not feel able to go out to look for work or make an effort because of the situation in which they find themselves….This made me think that perhaps KM-related research could be done with clients sharing their stories with advice staff" (PJ entry: 7/5/14). The author had a further discussion about this with two practitioners and "….getting clients to share their stories and whether these would be useful….the answer was yes but advisers may not listen attentively as they do not always have the time" (PJ entry: 14/5/14).

Developing a joint enterprise does not imply consensus, group harmony or that all practitioners contribute equally to decision-making. Wenger (1998a, p. 79) recognises the inherent tensions of reaching negotiated agreements and argues that joint enterprises are not always consensual and practitioners are able to develop "a collective product" by working through diversity and differences. "Where is the one front door? Who is included? What does it mean? One referral form? One inquiry form? Issues of confidentiality arise

when you are gathering data….how much data can you share? (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 18/11/13). Such rhetorical questioning by this practitioner symbolises the self-searching and ambiguity that face practitioners who are trying to work and gel together in communities of practitioners across organisational, professional and even personal boundaries.

In this critical incident, initially at least, practitioners were able to connect with each other, establish mutual accountability and express a collective intention to address a practice issue of common concern rather than prioritising their own individual or organisational interests (Wenger, 1998a). The managing and lead agencies were involved through conceiving this intervention as part of Charnwood Connect's funding bid, the piloting agencies became involved through the working group, chief officers and senior managers through the Project Steering Group and frontline practitioners through the Forum. Because inter-agency relations were underdeveloped, there was a general recognition that "….we need to identify the specialisms of each organisation and the gaps that exist….case-workers from all agencies should be able to get together and share and the client should get a holistic service through one front door" (Interview notes, partner agency, WN1: 19/11/13). Furthermore, as a new development, work on no-shows and one front door had to be promoted amongst practitioners to secure their buy-in. Records of the Project Steering Group meeting show how on one occasion "….Vipin gave a brief overview of the 'one front door' initiative which is being taken forward by a task and finish group. The aim of this task and finish group is to look at do not attends and waiting times including ways of reducing them. There are a number of pieces of work being trialled including a 'Your Charnwood Connect Card' and text services. We are still awaiting feedback from our colleagues in a partner agency regarding another piece of work" (PSG minutes of meeting, 12/8/14).

Joint enterprises, knowledge brokering interventions and practice improvements have to be located within their wider organisational and environmental contexts (Wenger, 1998a). In the context of this critical incident, the funding cuts experienced by the advice, information and support sector (Kenrick, 2009; Trude, 2009), the increasingly complex needs of clients (Kenrick, 2009; Trude, 2009) and the limitations of existing inter-agency referrals (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013) incentivised Charnwood Connect to

arrive at collective solutions to reduce client no-shows. Part of this journey involved self-education and understanding the challenges and issues faced by clients who Charnwood Connect was trying to help, support and advise. The No-shows Working Group noted that "….it was important to draw a line between a client demonstrating responsibility to turn up for appointments and no-shows resulting from an agency's failure to meet client needs….Need for balance between a client's right to advice and their responsibility to be a good client by honouring appointments and other commitments when seeking advice" (Notes of the No-shows Working Group, 1/7/14). In their evaluation of money advice services in Scotland, Gillespie *et al* (2007, p. 3) argue for joined up working and "managed referrals" by advice, information and support agencies and "regular and robust formal and informal engagement" in partnership projects to review the initiatives taken. However, this critical incident demonstrates the difficulties for practitioners to meet their commitments to act and the practicalities of brokering ideas and intentions into concrete practice outcomes. A critical review following an ineffective implementation of the My Charnwood Connect Card resulted in the issuance of more specific and formal guidance to pilot agencies about its application:

"The client fills in the details of their appointment(s), either with support or independently….This is to enable them to take greater personal responsibility and ownership for showing up for their appointment(s). The idea has been tried and tested in the health sector, with some success….The Card should be carried by the client from one appointment to the next, whether this is with the same agency or elsewhere….The Card should be counter-signed when the client turns up for their appointment to confirm that they did show up….Once signed, the client will record their next appointment (if applicable) and retain their Card to present the next time….Reception staff and others responsible for making appointments in all partner agencies need to be briefed about the reason for introducing the Card and how it is to be used" (Guidance notes issued following a progress update meeting with a piloting agency, 13/5/15).

The guidance had to be issued in spite of the fact that there was broad-based support for the principle of improving inter-agency referrals and reducing no-shows and as reported to the funders "….Forum meetings support frontline practitioner development, enable

information exchange on common client issues and support work to improve access to services e.g. the common referral system which has been trialled; the common registration form now being ratified; introduction and evaluation of new systems to monitor waiting time and reduce DNAs; providing specialist technical briefings….There is enthusiasm and support for the idea of a Common Registration Form as a tool for rationalising signposting services as well as client journeys"(Big Lottery Fund, 18 month draft project update form, October 2014-March 2015).

Knowledge objects or artefacts developed through shared processes are demonstrative of joint enterprises (Star and Griesemer, 1989; Wenger, 1998a; Kimble and Hildreth, 2005). Kimble and Hildreth (2005, p. 104) state that boundary objects act as "common representations in worlds that border one another" and Wenger (1998a) argues that objects represent boundary demarcations as well as reifying identities of communities of practice. My Charnwood Connect Card was one in a collection of shared artefacts that were developed by Charnwood Connect, in this case, to address the issue of clients not showing up for appointments. Financial investment was made by the project to design and print the appointment cards, which were piloted initially by the lead partner agency. During the initial stages there was a problem about the pilot's implementation. Debriefing meetings by the author with the lead partner agency revealed that frontline practitioners (receptionists in this case) had not been inducted or instructed sufficiently into its use (WN4: meetings with the lead partner agency, 13/1/15; 3/2/15 and the managing agency, 15/1/15). The experience highlighted the challenges of introducing and managing new practices in organisations, expecting their implementation by practitioners who did not participate in their creation, as illustrated in the following two reflections and the minutes of the Project Steering Group:

"Meeting to discuss the use of the My Charnwood Connect Card….do not attend rates consistently at 25% despite texting and the card….is raising a question about the merit of using these tools if they do not reduce the do not attends in any meaningful way….but PR use of the card is still important" (PJ entry: 3/2/15).

"Meeting to review the My Charnwood Connect Card and where things were at….clear that the card has not really taken off….not sure if this was a design or implementation problem….clear that some practitioners are not totally sold on the idea….need to check" (PJ entry: 3/6/15).

"One practitioner proposed a client record function on the IT Hub, to capture data, however there is currently no agreement to share data and this function is not included in the current IT Hub specification….Another practitioner suggested a cloud based spread sheet may be a useful resource in capturing client pathways, referrals etc." (PSG minutes of meeting, 13/5/14).

In theory, the creation of the My Charnwood Connect Card provided the project with an artefact that bridged the practices of different partners, the piloting agencies with their clients and the clients, with the agencies to whom they were referred. This was achieved through the Forum where "….frontline advisers are proactive and willing to share experiences in order to find solutions. There are a number of work streams taking place which include a targeted reduction in client no shows and the development of a 'one front door' referral system" (Big Lottery Fund, 6 month draft project monitoring form, October 2013-September 2014). Bridging between multiple agencies and practices was possible also through making use of orientation and knowledge sharing opportunities:

 "The next Charnwood Connect Forum meeting will be on Tuesday 27 January 2-4 pm at the university – please let Vipin or me know if you want to attend and if you're looking for a lift there. An agenda will go out shortly but will include an update discussion on referrals. Thanks….for highlighting the level of 'traffic' between ourselves and another partner agency and the value of making this a priority with regard to an efficient process for making appointments & referrals" (Email summarising outcome of a staff meeting, 7/1/15).

In reality though, the initial lack of impetus and subsequent piecemeal use of the My Charnwood Connect Card meant that, as a boundary management and knowledge sharing object, it was not used to its full potential. In their seminal work, Star and Griesemer (1989) describe the challenges of creating coherence in interpretation and meaning across

different communities and suggest that this can be managed by standardising methods and developing boundary objects. Arguably, as shown in this critical incident, although the My Charnwood Connect Card had the potential to function as a credible boundary object, the impetus to implement and sustain its use as a standardised method for inter-agency referrals was weak. In one interaction with the author "….a practitioner approached me and stated that they did not know what the My Charnwood Connect Card was about and whether it would work. I reiterated that it was really like an appointment card in the first instance and then could develop into something more sophisticated….could be part of a bigger strategy to get money into the pockets of partner agencies e.g. by Charnwood Connect purchasing a referral system software as a legacy of the project" (PJ entry: 20/5/14). In another exchange, the author "….spoke to a practitioner about the My Charnwood Connect Card….the practitioner's immediate reaction was that they did not like it….looked like a youth card….nonetheless agreed to give it a go even if not all sections of the card" (PJ entry: 28/1/15). Furthermore, such feedback and conversations were taking place in an environment where there were increasing pressures on practitioners and the circumstances of many clients were becoming more complex due to multiple social welfare changes. In one across-the-desk conversation, it emerged that "….the increase in referrals meant that advisers had to phone clients to work out if their situation was urgent or not and also reassure the client….part of the increased pressure at the moment was due to the fact that clients were turning up thanks to text reminders…..practitioners were limiting how many clients they saw every day to give them time to write up the cases" (PJ entry: 16/2/15).

As the project worker with lead responsibility for this aspect of Charnwood Connect's work, the author was intrinsic to the no-shows initiative. The author's brokering interventions included setting up and coordinating a working group, facilitating practitioners to share their practices and experiences at Forum meetings and encouraging partners to share responsibility for piloting the no-shows initiative. The record of one Project Steering Group meeting shows that "….CC Forum….Actions from this were….to set up a working group….Vipin to draw up Terms of Reference….Begin a trial of a 'Your Connect Card' to give clients ownership of appointment process, reduce 'losses' between agencies, gather data on client pathways between partner agencies" (PSG minutes of meeting, 13/5/14). In one of his

practice journal entries, the author observed that "....had a no shows meeting....quite productive though the discussion was organic and semi-structured....good dynamic discussion and good generation of ideas and possibilities" (PJ entry: 1/7/14). In another entry, he observed that "....right at the end of the day, a practitioner decided to sit down by my former desk and chat about the appointment card....the practitioner liked this and also the improvements planned to the referral processes" (PJ entry: 10/11/14). However, initiatives such as the My Charnwood Connect Card were not always received enthusiastically, at least on all occasions and one practitioner expressed their concerns "....after the project team meeting. The practitioner was quite forthcoming and participative at the meeting but today seemed a bit negative saying who was going to make things happen? The concern was that a lack of money would be used as an excuse to stop things from happening e.g. the one door referral system" (PJ entry: 30/4/14).

The brokering process was challenging as the working group petered out, there was incoherent implementation of the My Charnwood Connect Card and the adoption of a Common Referral Form was delayed. As a broker and in the interests of maintaining an inter-organisational community of practice as well as achieving the project's objectives, the author had to cajole practitioners to fulfil their commitments to pilot the client no-shows, attend the working group meetings and help Charnwood Connect gather relevant data. For many practitioners and their organisations, the priority obligation was to their own work, funders, clients and trustees rather than Charnwood Connect. Issues such as no-shows were not of equal concern to all partners and many had accepted this as a way of life in a sector that worked with vulnerable clients who led insecure and uncertain lives:

"Morning meeting to discuss the texting pilot....texting discussion was fine but the discussion moved onto professionalism and the spirit with which you work....the practitioner believed that if you put the customer first then you should be able to perform and provide the best services for the client...had an interesting discussion about power relationships....in the private sector the customer is in control....in the VCS the adviser is in control because of the power and knowledge they have and the leverage they have over vulnerable clients....they might not all acknowledge or act out this power out but the potential for exploitation is always there" (PJ entry: 11/11/14).

"Needed to check how well we were using the My Charnwood Connect Card….turns out that the whole card business is a bit shoddy and haphazard….perhaps just need for this element to reach a natural conclusion wherever it takes us rather than engineering it in a certain direction" (PJ entry: 8/6/15).

5.7.2   Learning outcomes

1. With effective support and resourcing, practitioners are able to work together in joint enterprises to generate creative solutions to tackle issues such as client no-shows.

2. Implementing and sustaining changes in practice is challenging even where an initiative is experimental and does not oblige a practitioner or their organisation to make a long-term commitment.

3. Decisions made at managerial levels to involve organisations in pilot initiatives have to be reinforced through comprehensive induction and orientation of frontline practitioners. After all, it is these practitioners who are expected to introduce and implement improved procedures and practices such as the My Charnwood Connect Card and the appointment reminders by text.

4. Shared artefacts such as a Common Referral Form can help to synchronise practices between different agencies but require proportionately greater managerial and practitioner commitment and supervision to translate into everyday practice.

5.8   CRITICAL INCIDENT (F): SUSTAINING THE FORUM (ARC 3)

The Forum was one component in Charnwood Connect's strategy to improve local advice services and strengthen collaborative working. As with other aspects of the project's activities, the challenge was to sustain the Forum, beyond the ASTF funding.

Critical incident (F): Sustaining the Forum (ARC 3)	*Reflecting in practice*
Situation	*Having worked with a*
1. The Forum had a limited lifespan of two years and succession arrangements had to be considered about its future as the ASTF funding drew to a close (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013).	*number of different practitioner support groups and networks over the years, I knew that*

Critical incident (F): Sustaining the Forum (ARC 3)	Reflecting in practice
2. The Forum had achieved its objective of meeting eight times over the two years as per Charnwood Connect's funding application. 3. Attendance at the Forum varied from one meeting to the next although a core group of practitioners attended regularly and participated more actively than others during the Forum's meetings and outside. 4. Patterns of participation and an overview of the achievements and shortfalls of the Forum were presented by the author in his exit and handover report (28/9/15).	*sustaining the Forum was going to be challenging - not so much in terms of funding but more in relation to the active participation of practitioners. From my previous experiences, practitioners like the idea of such groups and are keen to join, but participation levels drop due to other work pressures or they feel they have already got what they want from a network. Sometimes practitioners overlook the fact that such groups and networks are not just there to take and receive knowledge but are there also to support other practitioners to develop their skills and knowledge, for the collective good.*
Actions 1. In the lead up to discussions about whether or not to sustain the Forum beyond the ASTF funding, at the seventh Forum meeting (29/4/15) there was a lengthy discussion about how advice services in Charnwood could be strengthened.	*As part of my own work programme, I produced a set of options about the future of the Forum for consideration and decision by the Project Steering*

Critical incident (F): Sustaining the Forum (ARC 3)	Reflecting in practice
2. At the final Forum meeting (28/7/15), there was a follow-up discussion about the value of the Forum as an in-person knowledge sharing platform and how it could help to strengthen the position of individual advice agencies and the sector as a whole. 3. The author undertook an impact analysis, part of which included investigating practitioners' views about the impact and future direction of the Forum (WN4 & 5: impact review face-to-face interviews, June – September 2015; Appendix 4.4: Impact analysis interview guide; Appendix 4.5: Summary results of the impact analysis).	*Group (9/6/15). My report and the options analysis were noted by the Project Steering Group but there was no time for an in-depth discussion as this was a shorter meeting than usual. In any case, the steering group had established a strategy group to consider the future of the whole project including the Forum.*
Outcomes 1. The discussion at the Forum (29/4/15) about improving and strengthening advice services in Charnwood identified a number of areas for further consideration and action, possibly by a sub-group of the Forum: • Providing more convincing arguments about the benefits of advice services and their positive effects on local communities • Persuading funders and policy makers to be more compassionate when making funding decisions about social welfare services • Using success stories of clients who have benefitted from advice, information and support interventions to persuade funders about the value of this work • Breaking down stigma in local communities about seeking advice and support • Feeding the outcomes of the Forum's deliberations	*I had meetings with a representative of the Charnwood Borough Council about the future of the Forum and he was positive that his organisation would be prepared to host and coordinate the Forum. This practitioner had attended the last meeting of the Forum where there was a discussion about how the new arrangements could work. For the time being, I was satisfied that an interim arrangement was in*

Critical incident (F): Sustaining the Forum (ARC 3)	*Reflecting in practice*
about strengthening the advice services into Charnwood Connect's business planning process. 2. The Forum's review of its activities at the final meeting (28/7/15) recommended that the Forum should continue beyond the ASTF funding and: • Membership should be extended to include other information and support organisations not just those with an explicit advice brief • Concentrate on strategies for improving local advice, information and support services • In-service training for practitioners should form a more integral part of future meetings • Further consideration should be given to sustaining the Forum through the Charnwood Borough Council and the re-emerging Charnwood Voluntary and Community Sector Forum. 3. The outcomes of the interviews (Appendix 4.5: Summary results of the impact analysis) with practitioners as part of the impact review revealed that: • Forum meetings should be a combination of training and advice, information and support sector business • Meetings should be limited to twice a year • The cumulative time spent by practitioners at Forum meetings should count towards their continuous professional development hours • Plans for the Forum's future should be considered alongside the plans to revive the Charnwood Voluntary and Community Sector Forum • Being coordinated and hosted by the Charnwood Borough Council would enable the Forum to draw in	*place to sustain the Forum beyond the ASTF funding. However, I remained pessimistic about mainstreaming short-term, project-based initiatives into core organisational practices. I had worked previously with projects and continued to doubt the merits of service provision through short-term projects as a substitute for mainstreamed, core-funded services.*

5.8.1 Reflecting on practice and sense making: Sustaining the forum

The Forum was an in-person knowledge sharing facility with specific terms of reference, goal orientation and time span and in effect, was a project within a project (Lawrie, 2002). The temporary nature of the Forum as an ASTF initiative was not in question but the hope remained that the Forum would continue beyond the two years. The principle of having an in-person knowledge sharing platform had been established from the outset and celebrated by the project as noted in an early draft report to the funders: "….CCF year 2 schedule of meetings planned - exit strategy will be developed jointly with practitioners to sustain CCF. Hub editorial team created to maintain Hub content beyond project lifetime. Private zone as virtual forum will continue and will interface with the CCF over time. Strong CC brand" (Big Lottery Fund, 6 month draft project monitoring form, October 2013-September 2014). Discussions about sustaining the Forum continued right till the end and even practitioners who did not have much of a say over their organisation's finances or that of Charnwood Connect, explored the feasibility of its continuance as part of a broader strategy to protect advice services. In preparation for a Forum meeting, the author noted "….need to finalise CCF paper especially planning the session on the future of CCF and making a case for the advice sector….identified some literature and handouts which could be used" (PJ entry: 28/4/15).

In principle, an agreement had been made with one of the partners to coordinate and host the Forum but as with other aspects of the project, this did not translate into reality. The fundamental challenge seemed to be the lack of designated personnel to oversee the transition of the Forum and arguably Charnwood Connect as a whole, from an ASTF funded initiative to one that came under the corporate ownership of the partnership. Pemsel and Wiewiora (2013, p. 31) describe projects as "….temporary organisations, with an intentional death" and perhaps it was unrealistic to convert a two-year project into a sustainable partnership. In his progress report (1/6/15), the author presented an options analysis summarised below, to the Project Steering Group to help decide the future of the Forum and the Hub:

a) **Option 1:** Full function is designated to one partner who takes responsibility for this on a permanent basis.

b) **Option 2:** Full function is rotated between partners who take it in turns for set periods (say, a year).

c) **Option 3:** Both functions (Hub and Forum) are split further into their constituent parts and shared out on a permanent or rotating basis. For example, with the Hub, one partner could maintain the public domain and the other the private one. Or with the Forum, one partner chairs and facilitates the meetings and another acts as the secretariat.

d) **Option 4:** Archive/termination.

In the event, a full discussion was deferred to the strategy group of the Project Steering Group which was taking increasing responsibility for determining how to sustain Charnwood Connect including the Forum.

Arguably, it is not that projects fail but that organisations fail to absorb the lessons and innovative practices that emerge from projects (Swan, Scarbrough and Newell, 2010). Swan, Scarbrough and Newell (2010) argue that adaptive shortfalls are due to the failure by organisations to extract the learning from projects and the decoupling of action and reflection. Through the collective business and strategic planning process, discussions at the Project Steering Group and the author's impact review, lessons did emerge about the value of the Forum and other aspects of the project. However, there remained a fundamental blockage to converting the learning and knowledge into a new set of arrangements for the Forum and Charnwood Connect as a whole. This was due largely to the lack of further external funding and the unfeasibility of partner organisations absorbing the costs.

As a platform for practitioners, the issue of future funding for the Forum was already on the agenda at one of its early meetings and reported to the Project Steering Group: "….CC Forum….feedback from Vipin. The second forum was held on 1 April and built on areas of interest from the first. A major concern which practitioners wanted to flag up to senior managers and PSG was funding of all projects, with a desire to look at joint bidding" (PSG minutes of meeting, 13/5/14). Other formal and informal discussions also unveiled the

concern that practitioners had about the future viability of the partnership. In one corridor chat with a senior practitioner "….about the away day…..concern was about acknowledging that each partner had their own priorities and needed to maintain their own organisation….trustees had a legal responsibility to keep their organisations afloat" (PJ entry: 25/2/15). Again related to the outcomes of the away day and the future sustainability of the project, the author noted that "….PSG meeting to discuss the results of the away day and plan ahead….good range of free-floating ideas but some pots of funding did not fit the advice agenda….on reflection need to make a distinction between which elements of the project should continue as joint venture and which should be rooted in individual partner organisations…..but still need frontline staff for bread and butter work" (PJ entry: 10/3/15). Discussions also took place in individual organisations. Trustees in one organisation discussed the matter and a representative reported that "….sadly, Charnwood Connect funding is due to finish at the end of September. We are anxious to make full use of their services in the meantime to help provide evidence of their usefulness in pitching for an extension of the funding" (Managing agency's newsletter, April 2015).

Swan, Scarbrough and Newell (2010, p. 325) argue that although projects enable organisations to "….respond more flexibly and more speedily to external demands", the learning from projects does not extend to organisational practices. However, Swan, Scarbrough and Newell (2010) observe that the learning and knowledge gained are not lost as individuals carry these with them into other projects or personal networks. Similarly, Revans (1982) argues that once a practitioner learning community comes together, the community survives beyond the end of a project. Evidence of such optimism can be gleaned from the following two entries made by the author:

"CCF 6 was generally fine….changed the format somewhat….got people to share news about their agencies, themselves, clients and Charnwood Connect on flipcharts…..generally well received meeting and discussion about how to improve attendance at future meetings….agreed to have a combination of training and a business meeting….my idea of reflective practice has not really taken off….deep conversations about practice are not really taking place" (PJ entry: 27/1/15).

"CCF 7….less to prepare though did spend quite a bit of time accumulating information about how you make a case for a strong advice sector. The meeting is in two parts – the first a business meeting on strengthening the advice sector and the second, a workshop on Universal Credit. The CCF was attended well and got some additional participants from one of the partner agencies….does this mean that combining a business meeting with a social welfare topic is going to work best? Perhaps there is a case for seeing CCF not just as a networking but also a CPD facility….Does this mean that people are less interested in the internal mechanisms and systems used by CC e.g. the common referral form?" (PJ entry: 29/4/15).

Evidence from the evaluation of the Forum at the end its first and second years (Year 1 report and notes of the Forum 8; the impact review - WN4 & 5: interview notes, June-September 2015) and discussions at the Project Steering Group meetings (Charnwood Connect business plan, 18/8/15) confirmed the value of the Forum as a collective learning exchange and knowledge sharing facility. There is wide-ranging research and knowledge about learning in groups which relates to the way in which the Forum operated including action learning (Revans, 1982, 1983), adult literacy (Freire, 1972b, 1985), situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991), reflective practice (Schön, 1991, 1992, 1995), communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998a, 2004), action research (Ortrun, 2002; Coghlan and Brannick, 2005, 2014), learning organisations (Senge, 2006), practice-based approaches (Nicolini, 2012) and project-based learning (Swan, Scarbrough and Newell, 2010). The extracts below illustrate the interactive and participative style of the learning exchanges and knowledge sharing that took place in the Forum and the optimism with which it was viewed:

"Started planning the delivery of CCF 8….should we do something different? Keep the same formula? Last meeting of the ASTF contract….need to spend some time on reviewing the Forum's achievements as well" (PJ entry: 13/7/15).

"Four keys areas for continuation have been identified in the Business Plan: Knowledge Hub, volunteer pathway, practitioners' Forum and Project Steering Group….One partner can offer rooms for the Forum….Another will work jointly with them to provide secretariat

support….proposed that the group agree these arrangements and all present were in favour" (PSG minutes of meeting, 15/9/15).

"The CC Forum has continued to be a key networking and knowledge sharing face2face meeting point for practitioners and managers….a programme of continuous development and training on key aspects of social welfare was delivered successfully providing another critical platform for networking, knowledge sharing and joint working" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 2 draft project monitoring form, October 2014-September 2015).

"The lessons from the Hub and Forum form part of a research project being undertaken by the project's KM Officer, the results of which will be shared more widely. A research paper was presented recently at a European conference on knowledge management" (Big Lottery Fund, Year 2 draft project monitoring form, October 2014-September 2015).

Rushmer, Hunter and Steven (2014, p. 553) discuss how "interactive workshops" are used increasingly as "default mechanisms" for knowledge sharing in professional circles and conclude that one-off workshops are limited in their impact. Instead workshops should form part of an "extended approach" (Rushmer, Hunter and Steven, 2014, p. 558) with elements such as joint working opportunities, appreciative feedback, critical reflection, learning and practicing different ways of working and developing communication skills. The participative and iterative working style of the Forum constituted such an extended approach (Rushmer, Hunter and Steven, 2014), but the challenge remained about sustaining a practitioners' forum where membership was voluntary, participation was not a priority for all practitioners or their agencies and fundamentally, there was a lack of continuity funding. The following record almost a year into the project captures the continuing challenge that faced the Forum but also reflects a belief that the situation could be improved through further dialogue "….attendance at the last Charnwood Connect Forum was disappointing but this could be as a result of the holiday season. This has raised some questions around what partner agencies would like to get out of the forums – a questionnaire regarding this was distributed to colleagues" (PSG minutes of meeting, 12/8/14). The author's own entry in the first year observed and noted optimistically that there was "….ok turnout today (CCF3) but really good meeting especially the discussion around housing benefits and

enforcements….the advisers really know their stuff and are prepared to share in this kind of arena….did raise the issue about doing meetings and focusing on topics that are more directly relevant to all practitioners" (PJ entry: 3/6/14). Similarly, as the Forum came towards the end of its ASTF-funded life, the author noted "….CCF 8 meeting….not many people have responded to say they will come….should not have fretted too much….though attendance was low, good discussion about what was happening to the advice sector, individual agencies and new developments….some new people gave the meeting greater depth and the overall feedback to the meeting and work of the Forum was encouraging" (PJ entry: 28/7/15).

Collective efforts to consider the future of the Forum and empowering all the partners to take a shared responsibility were of high priority as there would not be a servicing officer for the Forum once the author had left the project at the end of the ASTF funding. Brokering interventions to sustain the Forum became a collective effort with practitioners discussing future possibilities, the Project Steering Group making a commitment in Charnwood Connect's business plan to continue the Forum and at least two partners offering to coordinate and host the Forum. Through the impact review and the business and strategic planning process, the author sought practitioner views about the future of the Forum even if some of these individuals had not participated in Forum meetings or only sporadically. As the project came to a close, the author's interventions were less intense as practitioners had begun to connect directly with each other as a result of the Forum, the Hub, the Project Steering Group and the business and strategic planning process. Additionally, as the business and strategy planning process progressed, the Project Steering Group started to take increasing responsibility for the future of the Forum as part of a wider effort to secure further funding for the whole project. The author held a meeting with two practitioners "….to discuss the possibility of a new Big Lottery bid….proved interesting – two hours of brainstorming….a bit directionless but productive….agreed that one partner should lead the bid….I urged for this to be checked out to preserve the might of the partnership after all that is what Charnwood Connect was about and we had an interest to present a new bid as a continuance/sustainability aspect of the ASTF work" (PJ entry: 13/7/15).

In other related entries, the author noted that he "….decided to do some further planning on the sustainability of the project and my core responsibilities….really use the PSG meeting to raise a discussion about how I close/sustain my activities….must get on and complete this" (PJ entry: 20/5/15). It feels "….like it has taken some time to realise the brand value of CC and the work staff have put in to make the project come alive" (PJ entry: 25/8/15). Finally, "….a week to go before the end of the project and my departure….feels strange but not too fussed….seems and feels like business as usual….spent the morning and a bit of the afternoon completing my exit report. Felt odd trying to capture so much in a 12-page report (PJ entry: 23/9/15).

5.8.2   Learning outcomes

1. Short-term, time-limited projects are not always the answer to tackling deep-seated social needs especially in communities blighted by poverty, disadvantage and discrimination.

2. Mainstreaming innovations and practices emerging from short-term projects requires resources, skills, dedicated brokers as well as sheltered periods to enable the transition to take place.

3. Laissez-faire management styles can be empowering in the early stages of a new project by giving workers the discretion to define strategies for their work but as projects reach their peak, greater managerial control and strategic coordination are necessary for projects to become more sustainable.

5.9   CONCLUSION

The analysis in this chapter focuses on knowledge brokering as a practice intervention to develop, maintain and sustain the Forum as a face-to-face knowledge sharing platform for practitioners. Through the lens of critical incident analysis (Flanagan, 1954; Keatinge, 2002; Butterfield *et al*, 2005), four critical incidents are discussed and analysed. The analysis shows that, while the idea of a face-to-face knowledge sharing platform was valuable for some practitioners, not all individuals were able to participate fully, or if at all, due to work pressures and financial uncertainties in their own agencies (Cabinet Office, 2012; Sigafoos and Morris, 2013; The Low Commission, 2014). Even though not all the practitioners participated, Forum communications (meeting notes, case-studies and information updates)

continued to be disseminated to all practitioners as a symbolic gesture to show that they all belonged to an inter-organisational community of practice.

As with the Hub (chapter 4), the Forum was developed and run over a two year timeframe and had its own challenges. The most significant challenge facing the Forum as a knowledge sharing platform was the lack of continuity in attendance and participation due to practitioners' work demands. There was the difficulty also of concretising transitional arrangements for the Forum after the ASTF funding raising questions about the feasibility of sustaining such platforms without adequate funding or dedicated brokers (Year 1 review report; notes of the 8th meeting, 28/7/15; KMO exit and handover report, 28/9/15). More successfully, the Forum proved to be a useful practitioners' platform for knowledge sharing and networking, undertaking collaborative work on social welfare issues, acting on client needs and developing practices to improve local services. The Forum was able to promote Charnwood Connect to a range of practitioners and highlight the significance of advice, information and support services (Year 1 review report; notes of the eighth meeting, 28/7/15; KMO exit and handover report, 28/9/15). Together with the Hub, the multi-agency volunteering pathway, Charnwood Connect's training programme and the Project Steering Group, the Forum provided a means through which the project was able to fulfil its core objectives.

The next chapter presents an overview of the key themes to emerge from the two practice interventions.

CHAPTER 6: EMERGING THEMES

6.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 presents an analytic overview of the main themes that have emerged from the practice interventions discussed in chapters 4 and 5. The overview also provides a preview to the themes that are examined in greater depth in relation to extant and emergent literature in chapter 7 "Discussion". As discussed in chapter 3 (section 3.7.6) the themes that are discussed in this chapter were identified through a coding process. A selection of practice examples and coding samples which helped to derive the ten themes that are discussed below can be found in appendices 3.1, 3.5 and 3.6. The first three themes that are examined are practice as a medium for service improvements, practice-based learning and knowledge sharing as a paradoxical phenomenon. The thematic discussion proceeds to examine relational knowledge brokering as a social process and the importance of brokering inter-practitioner relationships in a multi-agency setting. Internal knowledge brokering and the role of internal knowledge brokers are examined next. The next three themes relate to inter-organisational communities of practice including online and face-to-face communities. Brokering boundaries is an important consideration in communities of practice and inter-agency settings and is examined next. One of the defining characteristics of the not-for-profit sector is its social value base and this section examines how values manifested in the practice interventions, before ending the chapter with a conclusion.

6.2   BROKERING PRACTICE IMPROVEMENTS

Charnwood Connect was funded to improve local advice provision (client-facing practices) and strengthen collaborative working (inter-agency, inter-practitioner work practices) building on existing expertise, knowledge and experiences (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a; Charnwood Connect partnership agreement, 2013b). Practice provided the nexus around which inter-practitioner and inter-organisational relationships were constructed, dialogues conducted and ideas merged with innovations (Hub critical interventions A, C and G; Forum critical incidents A, D and F). In advice work, practice is at the heart of the practitioner-client relationship and the medium through which clients experience improvements and changes in services. For Charnwood Connect, only through

tangible changes in practices would it be possible to demonstrate that as a partnership, it had improved and changed advice services. Even the act of constructing and sustaining the partnership as a collaborative initiative was a form of practice with the Project Steering Group providing a forum for senior managers to consider strategic improvements (Charnwood Connect partnership agreement, 2013b). Specific practice interventions such as the Hub and the Forum provided dedicated spaces for practitioners to share practices, combine learning and doing (Swan, Scarbrough and Newell, 2010; Narayanaswamy, 2013) and derive collective, partnership-wide approaches. Not only did the Hub and the Forum constitute knowledge artefacts but they encapsulated practitioner participation, produced demonstrative practice examples to improve client-facing practices and stimulated inter-organisational knowledge sharing. As can be seen from the critical incident analyses, especially the Hub (incidents E and G) and the Forum (incidents D and F), good ideas do not always lead to implementation in an inter-organisational community of practice with limited enforcement powers. Huxham and Vangen (2001, p. 1160) describe how, despite good intentions joint initiatives peter out or come to a sudden stop because of "collaborative inertia".

6.3   PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING

Each partner agency had its own niche expertise providing a basis for mutual learning, deepening practices and developing shared approaches. The managing agency for instance, had niche expertise in social welfare advice and was licensed to provide debt counselling. One partner specialised in domestic abuse and violence while another had expertise in equality and human rights (Tables 1.1 and 1.2). As a new partnership, the challenge was to build relationships of mutuality and broker spaces through which such niche expertise, skills and knowledge could be shared. Knowledge sharing strategies enabled practitioners to learn from each other and reframe their own practices without attempting to distort the core purpose, client base and priorities of their own organisations. The Forum nurtured collective knowledge sharing and developed tangible ideas (Figure 5.2) to improve advice services, but the solutions generated were not mandatory. For instance, the working group on no-shows generated tangible piloting options to improve services but their implementation was voluntary (Forum critical incident D). The principle that underpinned the knowledge sharing and service improvements was for practitioners and their agencies to compare and contrast

approaches, derive the learning and make their own decisions about reframing their practices. However, this raised a question about how inter-agency collaborative practices can be introduced without altering the custom and practice of participating organisations. Reflective practice as part of a knowledge sharing process involves introspection and self-reflection as well as disclosure, reciprocity and comparability (Schön, 1991) but not necessarily enforcement. Instead, as was the case here, peer dialogue, citations of good practice and persuasion were used to convince practitioners to introduce changes to their practices and approaches (refer to Forum critical incident A, the terms of reference and ground rules).

Practitioners are not always able to express what they know or want to know (Polanyi, 1967). However, developmental processes such as those deployed in the Hub and Forum provided opportunities to share knowledge and experiences, develop new or different practice strategies and create common knowledge and purpose (Dixon, 2000). Although Polanyi's (1967) classic truism about individuals knowing more than they think they know was apparent in Charnwood Connect where extensive experiences, skills and knowledge co-existed, the articulation of all that was known was never going to materialise fully owing to time and other constraints. Knowledge brokering interventions such as the Hub and Forum created dialogical spaces for disclosures and knowledge sharing. However, the continuing reticence by practitioners to seek support from their peers or technology (the Hub) and the reality of knowing more than what they could share in time-limited scenarios (two-hour Forum meetings), restrained fuller exploitation of the opportunities and highlighted the limitations of knowledge brokering even with a union orientation (Obstfeld, 2005; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014).

6.4   THE PARADOX OF SHARING PRACTICES

The announcement of the ASTF (Advice Services Transition Fund, 2012) and the establishment of Charnwood Connect were direct products of the prevailing social policy measures and noticeable reductions in legal aid provision (Cabinet Office, 2012). Government social welfare reforms had an adverse impact on social welfare clients and communities (Sigafoos and Morris, 2013; Cookson and Mold, 2014; The Low Commission, 2014). Not-for-profit organisations are known for collaborating in partnerships and other

joint initiatives not just to fulfil collective objectives but also their own, especially when they do not have the means to do so by themselves (Brinkerhoff, 2002). The ASTF funding provided Charnwood Connect with the opportunity to work as a formal partnership to improve and develop more sustainable advice services. Before this, although Charnwood Connect's partners yearned to work collaboratively, none of the partners had residual funding to invest in a partnership venture (Hub critical incident A). The priority and legal obligation for trustees of the individual partners was the sustainability of their own organisations, the welfare of their staff and the maintenance of their respective services and client bases (Charity Commission for England and Wales, 2015; Hub critical incident A).

With reduced funding for advice work and the growing complexity of client needs (Cabinet Office, 2012; Swift *et al*, 2013; Patel and Mottram, 2014), Charnwood Connect provided project partners with the opportunity to maximise their collective resources and pilot alternative work practices. Practice interventions such as the Hub and the Forum were not standalone, inward-looking knowledge sharing platforms for practitioners but hooked directly into improving outward-facing client services (Hub critical incident A). As a time and budget-limited project, the effectiveness and sustainability of Charnwood Connect was contingent upon resolving the paradox of creating a collective advantage for all partners yet allowing them to protect their own resources, niche expertise and location in the social welfare market place (Huxham and Vangen, 2001; Vangen, 2017).

6.5   RELATIONAL KNOWLEDGE BROKERING

The establishment of Charnwood Connect marked the formal beginning of partners working together in an environment driven by austerity measures and where inter-organisational trust and relationships were underdeveloped (Hub critical incident A). Funded to strengthen inter-agency collaboration, the organisational need was to transit Charnwood Connect from an underdeveloped disunion to one which was coherent and capable of delivering the partnership's stated objectives (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a; Charnwood Connect Partnership Agreement, 2013b). A union knowledge brokering orientation (Table 2.2) enabled inter-agency working, relationship building and knowledge sharing to take place, which in turn helped to develop and realise the Hub and the Forum. The knowledge brokering approach reflected the person-centred nature of advice work and

involved a complex matrix of inter-personal, inter-professional and intra- and inter-organisational relationship building and maintenance. The knowledge brokering approach required working horizontally with peers (project co-workers and advice practitioners) and vertically with the project manager, trustees in the managing agency and senior managers in partner agencies.

Improving access to the Hub by a cross-section of practitioners in the partnership and widening access to the local community required working with project co-workers and advice practitioners. Examples included working with the Volunteer Support and Training Officer to extend the use of the Hub as an online resource for potential, incoming and established volunteers (Hub critical incident E). The author worked with the Volunteer Coordinator to design and produce a pop-up banner and cotton bags to publicise the work of Charnwood Connect at an annual community event (Hub critical incident E). The author worked as a peer and support worker with Forum members on practice interventions such as the case-studies on Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions and the working group on client no-shows (Forum critical incidents C and D).

Vertical activities involved working primarily through managerial hierarchies. An example of this was the work undertaken with senior managers to sustain the Hub and the Forum (Hub critical incident G and Forum critical incident F). Another example was when the author took the responsibility for coordinating the much delayed continuous development programme involving liaison with the chief officer and administrative staff in the lead agency. Some of the practice interventions were a mixture of horizontal and vertical activities. Assessing partner expectations and aspirations of the Hub, the Forum and the project as a whole through the preliminary round of agency visits involved interviewing frontline practitioners and their managers (Hub critical incident A). In the case of the Forum, the terms of reference were first drafted and agreed by the strategic body for Charnwood Connect, the Project Steering Group which comprised senior managers and subsequently discussed and agreed by frontline practitioners at the Forum's first meeting (Forum critical incident A). The design and agreement of the artwork for the Hub was another example of mixed brokerage involving the Project Steering Group, frontline practitioners, and information technology specialists and their managers from the design company (Hub critical incident C).

6.6 INTERNAL KNOWLEDGE BROKERING

As an internal knowledge broker, intense work was conducted with different practitioners to create knowledge sharing spaces and counter the mistrust that existed at the start of the project (Hub critical incident A; Forum critical incident A). As incoming project employees in a new partnership project, all the project workers had to manage the residual disgruntlement expressed by practitioners who had felt left out of the bidding process and whose agencies did not receive any direct funding. Pre-existing inter-agency dynamics meant that listening to practitioners' concerns and voices was an important part of the knowledge brokering strategy that was adopted. This helped to take a more inclusive approach, manage tensions and ensure that resistance did not threaten the project's objectives (Hub critical incident A).

As an insider practitioner-researcher, a rich network of people, organisations, knowledge and information across the partnership and beyond was accessible. As a practitioner-researcher, the author brokered knowledge and information about Charnwood Connect and encouraged practitioners, senior managers and trustees in the managing agency to participate through presentations, meetings, across-the-desk conversations and corridor chats (Hub critical incident C; Forum critical incident C and D). In fulfilling his role as the Knowledge Management Officer, the author was able to broker relationships between Charnwood Connect and external bodies such as the Charnwood Voluntary Sector Forum and the Housing and Homelessness Forum through representation and presentations (Hub critical incident E and G; Forum critical incident F). The author's internality and insider knowledge strengthened his capability to develop the Hub and the Forum as symbols of a strategic partnership that was committed to knowledge sharing, co-creation, relationship building and cohesion.

Through his direct intervention to develop the Hub and the Forum, the author was able to broker knowledge sharing and co-creation not as a remote broker but as an interested party, an insider practitioner and an internal broker (Cillo, 2005; Currie and White, 2012). There was no imperative for the author to peripheralise his role or position and become remote from the situation where knowledge sharing and co-creation occurred. The author did not seek personal benefit through his brokering position and interventions even though

he had information and knowledge advantage through his multiple access points to participants within and outside Charnwood Connect. Arguably, working inclusively, developing trustworthy relationships and fulfilling the project's objectives would not have been as effective for a transient or external broker with intermittent access to the practice context, the research site and most of all, the practitioners (Cillo, 2005; Currie and White, 2012). Nor would it have been possible to maintain a union approach from a distance as continuous knowledge brokering and relationship maintenance was fundamental to the project's ethos. Although virtual knowledge brokers may be in a better strategic location to access information from a wider variety of sources compared to "traditional knowledge brokers", the former are less effective in relationship building and capitalising on learning because of their distance from client systems (Colombo *et al*, 2016, p. 1).

Contrary to the conclusions reached by the CHSRF (2003), which asserts that knowledge brokering processes are more important than knowledge brokers, the practice interventions show that internal knowledge brokers can be integral to effective union knowledge brokering. If knowledge brokering is approached predominantly as a networking or a bureaucratic process, this reinforces professional thinking and practice as a matter primarily of "rational technicality" (Schön, 1991, p. 21). In people-centric, social values-expressive organisations (Jeavons, 1992) interpersonal and group relationships and human agency are fundamental to knowledge sharing processes and nurturing communities of practice.

6.7   BROKERING INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Charnwood Connect's collaborative intent was stated explicitly in the ASTF funding bid (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a) and enacted when the partnership agreement was signed (Charnwood Connect partnership agreement, 2013b). Although Charnwood Connect's collaborative intention was clear from the outset, this did not always translate into practice (Hub critical incident A). Charnwood Connect was established in a locality where most partner agencies were not accustomed to working with and/or mistrusted each other. During the preliminary interviews, some partners expressed ambiguity about their involvement in Charnwood Connect as an inter-organisational initiative (Hub critical incident A; WN1: interview notes, October 2013-April 2014). Some were concerned about not receiving any funding from the ASTF pot, some that they were

asked to join the partnership after project objectives had been defined and others, about inter-organisational politics and the increased competition for funding. Thus, in the early stages of the development of Charnwood Connect as an inter-organisational community of practice, the characteristics of a disunion knowledge brokering orientation such as inter-agency competition, tense partner relations, a focus on individual organisational interests and sustenance, were apparent (Hub critical incident A; Forum critical incident A). Despite the initial trepidation expressed by some partners and the prevailing external environment of austerity, in signing up to the partnership agreement, participants made a commitment to work together for the collective good and to improve local services. After all, only through demonstrative changes in partner behaviours and engagement with Charnwood Connect and the mutual contributions to each other's success, would it be possible to ascertain if inter-practitioner and inter-agency practices were changing and a sustainable inter-organisational community of practice was forming.

6.8   ONLINE COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

The Hub had dual functions as a public-facing portal providing clients, local communities and practitioners with direct access to information about social welfare and support agencies and a private zone as a virtual knowledge sharing platform for practitioners (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a). In his preliminary interviews, across-the-desk conversations and practice observations, the author found that there was an agreed consensus that increasingly, clients and practitioners were using social media and the internet to access and share information about social welfare issues and local services (Hub critical incident A). The Hub was an online access point for advice services for local communities and practitioners as well as a means to generate an inter-organisational, online community of practice connecting "dispersed" practitioners from different agencies (Zhang and Watts, 2008, p. 56). Using the Hub as an online service delivery outlet to complement face-to-face interventions was consistent with the incremental trend in the not-for-profit sector to develop technological solutions to continue serving local communities, widen access, improve organisational efficiencies and enhance knowledge sharing amongst practitioners (Burt and Taylor, 2003; Taylor and Burt, 2005; Griffith, 2007; Zhang and Watts, 2008; Eimhjellen, 2014; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2014).

With the ASTF funding in place, the commitment of the partnership, the efforts of the Task and Finish Group and the facilitative services of a dedicated Knowledge Management Officer, the Hub was transformed from a vision to a reality as a service delivery and knowledge sharing outlet. However, merely developing a technological solution to improve online access to advice services and knowledge sharing amongst practitioners did not mean that the Hub would become a fully functional platform without further interventions. Once the Hub was released, further interventions were made to increase its usage through promotional activities such as media interviews, presentations at team meetings, orientation training for new volunteers, producing marketing materials and participating in community events (Hub critical incident E and F).

Further interventions to encourage practitioners to begin using the Hub as their first port of call for information about local advice services and participating in the private zone included blogs via the private zone, emails and face-to-face contacts. Developing a functional technological facility for knowledge sharing and as a service access point was easier than creating and sustaining an online inter-organisational community of practice. Making greater and more effective use of new technologies and adopting instruments such as the Hub require deeper cultural adaptations, continuous relationship building and time to embed new practices (Griffith, 2007; Ticher, 2007; Rivera and Cox, 2014). Apart from the cultural challenges of absorbing new technology, factors such as the time-limitedness of Charnwood Connect, routine pressures to service client needs rather than participate in online activities and the lack of an ongoing capacity building budget to support partners to adapt to change, constrained the evolution of a more interactive inter-organisational, online community of practice (Kwok, 2014) (Hub critical incident G).

6.9   FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

As a contrasting face-to-face platform for knowledge sharing, the Forum was a facility for advice practitioners, both paid and voluntary, who carried out a range of advisory, information and support responsibilities in partner organisations (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a). Participation in the Forum was voluntary and partner organisations chose which of their practitioners would attend (Forum critical incident A). The Forum had a very positive and encouraging first meeting where attendees agreed the

terms of membership, worked in small groups to create displays about their work and collectively identified and prioritised actions for the Forum. Despite the positive and encouraging start, over the two years, participation rates fluctuated with sporadic attendance from some partner agencies and more committed and continuous participation from others. Although attendance fluctuated, once practitioners were present at the Forum meetings, they participated freely in the planned activities and session reviews revealed that attendees found the Forum to be a valuable meeting point for inter-organisational knowledge sharing (end of session reviews; Year 1 and 2 evaluations).

Outside the Forum meetings, some practitioners were able to contribute their time and expertise to develop key project outputs such as the Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions case-studies, the no-shows working group and the Common Referral Form (Forum critical incidents C and D). The reviews at the end of years 1 and 2 revealed that the inconsistent attendance amongst some practitioners was due to a lack of time and the increasing pressure on them to prioritise face-to-face work with clients in their own organisations, superseding their own professional need to network and work collectively through Charnwood Connect. This did not necessarily mean that the interests of individual organisations and those of the partnership were divergent but that declining resources and growing client expectations impacted on individual and organisational vulnerabilities, inter-organisational working practices and participation patterns in the Forum (Forum critical incident F).

6.10   BROKERING BOUNDARIES

Over the two years, a variety of knowledge artefacts were generated to develop initiatives, promote Charnwood Connect and celebrate the outcomes achieved by the project. In the case of the Hub, the tender specification marked the initiation and the first step in establishing the Hub as an inter-agency effort. The production of the tube map was a visual representation of the partnership raising awareness about local advice services including the Hub. The release of the Hub and its accompanying promotional materials marked the completion of the Hub as one of the project's flagship outputs, the availability of an online advice resource for local communities and the beginnings of an inter-organisational, online community of practice through the private zone (Hub critical incident C). Administrative

instruments such as the terms of reference for the Forum and the Hub's users' agreement served to bridge and reify inter-professional and inter-agency boundaries and reinforced a commitment to transit from a relative state of disunion to greater collaborative working and joint action (Forum critical incident A; Hub critical incident E).

Developing project artefacts over the project's life-cycle was part of a deliberate knowledge brokering strategy to consolidate the partnership as a collective entity, build an inter-organisational community of practice, link clients to services, bridge organisational boundaries (Star and Griesemer, 1989; Wenger, 1998a; Carlile, 2002, 2004; Akkerman and Bakker, 2011) and provide practice instruments such as the My Charnwood Connect Card. The generation of knowledge artefacts such as the My Charnwood Connect Card and the Common Referral Form aimed to standardise protocols for improving client journeys, provide common currency (Star and Griesemer, 1989), accommodate multiple worldviews and create administrative tools for collective use (Hub critical incident A; Forum critical incident D). Consistent with a unifying orientation (Obstfeld, 2005; Kimble, Grenier and Goglio-Primard, 2010; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014), the knowledge artefacts symbolised collaboration, practice intersection points and respect for organisational particularities without seeking to jeopardise individual autonomy.

6.11   BROKERING VALUES

Brinkerhoff (2002, p. 21) notes how collaborative initiatives such as partnerships are promoted both "….as a solution to reaching efficiency and effectiveness objectives, and as the most appropriate relationship as defined by its value-laden principles". Charnwood Connect's key values and principles were stated clearly in documents such as its funding bid (Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application, 2013a) and the partnership agreement (Charnwood Connect partnership agreement, 2013b). However, it was through the practice interventions that these values and principles were enacted and observable.

In the case of the Hub, in critical incidents A (assessing practitioners' needs) and C (co-creation of the Hub's design), the practice interventions were based on valuing the prior knowledge, experiences and expertise of practitioners, and an unconditional belief that they could contribute to the Hub's functionality, design and sustainability. Also with the Hub,

critical incident E placed value on involving practitioners in promoting and publicising the Hub based on a belief that, as frontline practitioners, advisers were best placed to empower their peers and clients to use the Hub. With the Forum, the values and principles of collaboration and cooperation drove the practice interventions to define the terms of reference for the Forum (critical incident A) and undertake practical work such as the case studies on Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions and the no-shows initiative (critical incidents C and D).

The eight critical incidents presented in chapters 4 and 5 illustrate how knowledge brokering enabled Charnwood Connect to work towards its collective social mission broadly aligned to the values, principles and practices of individual partners (Tables 1.1 and 1.2). Values signify "what is important to us in life" (Schwartz, 2012, p. 3) and guide practice, knowledge sharing behaviours and knowledge brokering interventions (Carlile, 2002; Blackler and Regan, 2009; Kothari *et al*, 2011). Values form a core basis for human interventions in organisations and outside, whether these are espoused or manifested in practitioner actions and behaviours. In the not-for-profit sector that is driven by a social mission, values fuel individual and collective motivations to work towards desired outcomes and goals, which in this case involved strengthening collaborative working and improving advice services. Furthermore, value declarations enable not-for-profit organisations to reinforce their individual and collective boundaries and guide their strategic and operational decisions (Brinkerhoff, 2002). However, even though Charnwood Connect's value base was expressed explicitly in instruments such as the funding bid and the partnership agreement, values consistent with these were not always observable in practice or on occasions, were contradictory.

In aspirational communities of practice such as Charnwood Connect, public declarations of intent can lead to perceptions that social values are enacted as a matter of routine through practice with clients and peers. Contradictions and discrepancies often lie between stated intentions and the migration of values into practice, conflicting values can co-exist and inaccurate inferences can be drawn from behaviours and actions (Schein, 1990; Hofstede, 1998). With the Forum, value contradictions were observable in the work on client no shows (critical incident D). Despite the high priority placed on easing client journeys and improving inter-agency referrals, the sub-group's work ended abruptly due to a lack of participation

and willingness by partners to contribute to the pilots and in one instance, the intermittent implementation of one of the initiatives (Forum critical incident D, My Charnwood Connect Card). Arguably, these shortfalls could be attributable to existing work pressures and a lack of time but the experience highlighted the contradiction between intention and action despite the commitment to the values of collaboration and client empowerment (Huxham and Vangen, 2001).

6.12   CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses ten overarching themes that have emerged from the two core practice interventions (chapters 4 and 5) and as identified through a coding process (chapter 3, section 3.7.6; Appendices 3.1, 3.5 and 3.6). Analysis of the themes illustrates the issues and challenges involved in knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing. Practice provided a fulcrum for dialogue, validation, comparison and a starting point from which service improvements could be made. As identified, practice forms a key medium through which practitioners learn from each other, share knowledge and interact with clients. However, sharing practices was paradoxical and practitioners faced a choice about how much they shared to benefit the collective and how much they retained to maintain their own unique selling points. In the not-for-profit sector, the external environment has to be taken into account as this can have an adverse impact on the quality and extent of knowledge brokering interventions and the sector's ability to hold on steadfastly to its core social values. The analysis illustrates that knowledge brokering is not just a technocratic process for knowledge transfer from one community or location to another with the knowledge broker remaining on the periphery. Knowledge brokering and internal brokers can facilitate collective advantage, social relationships, democratic dialogical spaces, practice instruments (artefacts), inter-organisational communities of practice and shared social values (Jeavons, 1992; Hume and Hume, 2016). Furthermore, in inter-organisational communities of practice, knowledge brokering involves fostering and sustaining social relationships and using persuasive powers to improve practices in the absence of enforcement instruments. The discussion suggests that union knowledge brokering orientations can enable fledgling inter-organisational communities of practice to achieve an incremental transition from a state of disunion and disaggregation to one where collaboration and cooperation prevails.

The next chapter develops the themes discussed in this chapter in relation to academic literature and wider thinking about knowledge brokering, sharing and management.

Explanatory note

Part C consists of chapters 7 "Discussion" and 8 "Conclusion". Chapter 7 develops and analyses the themes that were identified from the practice interventions and discussed in chapter 6. Chapter 7 presents an interpretive and discursive analysis of the processes and outcomes of the two practice interventions in relation to academic literature and extends the discussion beyond the practice. This is followed by chapter 8 which further develops the conceptual and theoretical arguments and summarises the contribution, recommendations and implications of this study.

Part C

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 7 presents an interpretive and discursive analysis of the processes and outcomes of the two practice interventions in relation to academic literature about knowledge brokering, knowledge sharing and knowledge management. Based on the evidence and insights from this study the chapter extends the critical analysis in the literature review (chapter 2). This is then developed further in the final chapter where the conclusions, implications and contributions of the study are discussed and explained. The chapter begins with an examination of the role of values, principles and beliefs, human agency and choices in knowledge brokering practice interventions. The analysis proceeds to discuss social practice as an alternative lens to conceptualise and examine knowledge brokering. Next, there is an examination of the role of knowledge brokers including niche, incidental and internal brokers. The discussion moves on to examine knowledge brokering in inter-organisational communities of practice, before ending with a conclusion.

7.2   VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND HUMAN AGENCY

Knowledge brokering in the not-for-profit sector extends beyond the impersonal mobilisation of knowledge characterised in social network analysis. Knowledge brokering involves facilitating in- and out-group relationships, in-person and virtual knowledge sharing dialogues and joint actions with the knowledge broker as one in a constellation of knowledge practitioners and co-creators (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2002). Human agency and the capability of individuals and groups to act in their social environment (Giddens, 1984) inform understandings about knowledge brokering as social practice (Wenger, 1998a). In the not-for-profit sector, knowledge brokers have a close relational proximity to practitioners, become involved in messy situations that are characteristic of human relations and "get their hands dirty".

7.2.1   Human agency and knowledge brokering

The theorisation of knowledge brokering by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) (2003) is significant for two key reasons. Firstly, the CHSRF's (2003)

contribution stems from practice developments in the not-for-profit, health sector offering a contrasting perspective to previous analyses driven by studies in the private, for profit organisations (Burt, 1992; Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Hargadon, 1998, 2002; Wenger, 1998a). Secondly, the CHSRF (2003) distinguishes between knowledge brokering as a social process involving relationship building, knowledge sharing and improving practices and the functional role of knowledge brokers. The critical incidents discussed in chapters 4 and 5 illustrate how CHSRF's (2003) distinction between process and people is manifested in practice (e.g. critical incident C in the Hub and critical incident D in the Forum). Where this study disagrees with the CHSRF's (2003) analysis is the prioritisation of knowledge brokering processes over knowledge brokers. The CHSRF (2003, p. i) states that "….knowledge brokering occurs even without individuals dedicated solely to brokering, so it's important to focus on the activities and processes, not the individuals". The evidence from this study disagrees with the CHSRF's (2003) stance as any knowledge brokering process has to account for the human agency that is instrumental in animating knowledge brokering processes.

It is established that knowledge brokering involves the mobilisation of resources and knowledge from one place to another (Gould and Fernandez, 1989; Hargadon and Sutton, 2000; CHSRF, 2003; Cillo, 2005; Long, Cunningham and Braithwaite, 2013; Hoens and Li, 2014), boundary bridging and spanning (Wenger, 1998a; Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Hargadon, 2002, Carlile, 2002, 2004; Akkerman and Bakker, 2011), generating knowledge artefacts (Star and Griesemer, 1989) and creating new knowledge (Cillo, 2005; Meyer, 2010). To contrasting degrees and contingent upon the situation, all three aspects – knowledge mobilisation, boundary spanning and knowledge co-creation – are demonstrable in this case-study. The epistemological position of the author (chapter 3 "Methodology") conceptualises knowledge as a socially constructed subjective phenomenon that is borne out of virtual and in-person relationship building, dialogues and joint working. In the light of this, the proposition that socially constructed subjective knowledge can be mobilised may seem to be oxymoronic or even inherently flawed (Gould and Fernandez, 1989; Broadbent, 1997; Aidemark, 2009; Long, Cunningham and Braithwaite, 2013). However, in this study, the conceptualisation of knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing and co-creation is in keeping with the analyses of knowledge as practice (Hislop,

2013), knowing-in-practice (Corradi, Gherardi and Verzelloni, 2010) and knowing-in-action (Schön, 1991; McIver et al, 2012). Knowledge is co-created through human interactions, actions and practices and is not just an abstract process of conceptualisation, theorisation and transfer. Human agency is fundamental to knowledge co-creation, diffusion and sharing (Newell, 2015). Knowledge brokers, be they niche or incidental (see section 7.4.2), are essential to humanise knowledge sharing spaces, nurture relationships and improve practices especially in knowledge intensive organisations that are driven by a social mission (Jeavons, 1992; Hume and Hume, 2016).

7.2.2 Values, principles and power

Schön (1991, p. 21) discusses how professional thinking and practice is dominated by "rational technicality" involving "instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique". The author questions rational organisational strategies that bring practitioners together, share knowledge and collect evidence to improve practices (CHSRF, 2003) but do not discuss the values, principles and power dynamics that underpin human interactions and knowledge brokering orientations. The evidence from this study suggests that in addition to people and processes (CHSRF, 2003), the philosophy (the third "p") that underpins a knowledge brokering intervention is integral. Understanding how values, principles and beliefs are manifested through practice interventions and the actions and behaviours of knowledge brokers is integral to deepening insights about knowledge brokering. In inter-organisational settings, shared values, common ground and mutuality have to be brokered actively to "….align partners' understanding of the partnership" (Stadler and Probst, 2012, p. 40) and not assume that artefacts such as a signed partnership agreement will suffice.

Jeavons (1992, p. 406) states that not-for-profit organisations are underpinned by the values of "justice, human dignity, and service" and are distinctively values-expressive. Charnwood Connect had a social mission (Jeavons, 1992; Hume and Hume, 2016) to strengthen inter-agency collaboration, develop more sustainable advice provision, improve local people's lives and provide services on a not-for-profit basis. Practitioner and organisational values, principles and power dynamics influence knowledge brokering interventions and knowledge sharing behaviours (Carlile, 2002; Blackler and Regan, 2009; Kothari et al, 2011).

Organisational values (Table 1.2) are "constructs" which transmit qualitative messages about expected standards and are "inferable from verbal statements and other behaviours" (Hofstede, 1998, p. 477). In this study (chapters 4, 5 and 6), social constructs and "value manifestations" (van der Wal, De Graaf and Lasthuizen, 2008) were observable through the knowledge artefacts (such as the Hub, the My Charnwood Connect Card and the pop-up publicity banner), project documentation (the mapping study, Project Steering Group progress reports and funder's reports), social interactions (across-the-desk conversations, team meetings and the Forum), joint activities (the Hub's Task and Finish Group, Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions case-studies and the Common Referral Form) and routine managerial decisions (such as adopting new practices).

When organisations come together as a partnership to create "collaborative advantage" (Vangen, 2017, p. 263), different values, principles and practices confluence and the drive for consensus may bury existing conflicts (Gilchrist, 2007). Partnership building requires dedication and resources (Chauhan, 2007) but is possible (Ardichvili, 2008; Kothari et al, 2011; Munro and Mynott, 2014) without sacrificing individuality (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2002). Normalising practices such as knowledge sharing, developing shared repertoires or undertaking joint actions require active nurturing and ongoing socialisation amongst practitioners (Spender, 1996; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Jaskyte and Dressler, 2005). As a practice intervention in which human agency is at its heart, knowledge brokering facilitates the confluence of disparate values, principles and power dynamics through knowledge sharing and appreciating differences (Cooperrider and Srivastava, 1987; Newton and Hartley, 2005; Rothwell and Sullivan, 2005; Grant and Humphries, 2006). Knowledge artefacts, for instance, provide tangible means of building and consolidating a partnership-wide corporate identity without overriding the niche identities of contributory organisations.

The evidence from this study shows that contributory knowledge brokering literature understates, implies or ignores the role of social values and power dynamics in knowledge brokering interventions. Simmel's (1902a, 1902b, 1950) three pronged analysis – non-partisanship, *tertius gaudens* and *divide et impera* – all imply a set of conscious or subconscious motivations behind the intervening act - neutrality, self-centredness and

disharmony, respectively. Burt (1992; 2004) and Hargadon's (2002) analyses that the broker seeks benefit through their knowledge superiority and power arising from their network position, is founded on the rudiments of competitive behaviour in the economic market place. Even Wenger's classic contributions on communities of practice (Wenger 1998a, 2000, 2004; Wenger and Snyder, 2000) imply a value base in how and why communities and practices coalesce. But these writings do not account for the role of values and power dynamics in knowledge brokering interventions especially in multi-agency settings where diverse and often competing interests come together.

7.2.3   Knowledge brokering choices

Individual, organisational and collective values and principles influence routine decisions and practice interventions. Knowledge brokering is concerned with mediating contrasting worldviews, values and beliefs and not just sharing and applying professional knowledge. A union knowledge brokering approach (Obstfeld, 2005; Shi, Markoczy and Dess, 2009; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016) with the underpinning principles of connectivity, coordination, bridging and combination was deployed in Charnwood Connect. This was to enact and realise project outputs as well as shape the partnership as an inclusive inter-organisational community of practice. The inter-organisational community of practice was established anew in an environment of competitive funding, inter-agency mistrust, the pressure to protect staff livelihoods and the urgency to maintain and strengthen services. In effect, the project began and evolved from a state of disunion where a formal partnership did not exist to one where inter-agency collaboration was brought alive through concrete initiatives.

The union knowledge brokering orientation aligned with the espoused social values of partner agencies (Table 1.2) as a "….mutual process of coordinating perspectives, interpretations, and actions so they realise higher goals" (Wenger, 2000, p. 228). The approach sought to balance inter-organisational power dynamics by working inclusively on joint initiatives and developing a common purpose. However, even where a predominantly union orientation is deployed, seemingly divisive interventions can co-exist. In Charnwood Connect, only the managing agency and the lead partner drew down direct funding to deliver the project outputs. This was rationalised by both agencies arguing that they had

invested their own time and resources to submit the funding bid and so, should be the main beneficiaries of the ASTF funds. Although this was a logical and justifiable argument at the time, mistrust ensued as some partners believed that they too should have been allocated some of the funding. Consequently, interventions such as knowledge sharing and joint actions to build trust and nurture an inter-organisational community of practice were based on a union strategy which acknowledged the competing needs of individual organisations and the collective interests of the partnership (Vangen, 2017).

The scope for deploying a predominantly disunion, divisive knowledge brokering orientation can be limited in some settings even if considered appropriate. In this case, a number of mitigating factors influenced the choice to adopt a union knowledge brokering orientation. Firstly, the project's core values and mission were to improve and develop more sustainable services through collaborative work. In these circumstances, to adopt a contradictory disunion orientation would have led to mission drift, the failure to deliver key project outputs and the collapse of the partnership. Secondly, the author was appointed as a Knowledge Management Officer with the expectation that he would contribute to the project's collaborative mission, align with the social values-expressive nature of the advice sector and demonstrate empathy for vulnerable clients and communities. Thirdly and unequivocally, the funders' and the founders' expectations were to develop a sustainable multi-agency partnership that would continue working collaboratively beyond the ASTF funding. Finally, the author was committed to using a brokering and research orientation that was compatible with Charnwood Connect's collaborative intent and social mission as well as the participative principles of insider action research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005, 2014; Coghlan, 2007; Blackler and Regan, 2009; McNiff and Whitehead, 2009; Creswell, 2014).

7.3   KNOWLEDGE BROKERING AS PRACTICE

The evidence from this study finds that knowledge brokering is socially constructed practice, and not just a series of unconnected, impersonal or transitory transactions in a network. As a form of practice, knowledge brokering enables knowledge sharing to be actualised through face-to-face and virtual social interactions. In the process, existing knowledge and practices are reviewed, knowledge is co-created and learning takes place.

7.3.1   The practice lens

Key arguments in knowledge brokering literature centre on the structural position of a broker in a network, their knowledge superiority, the benefits they accrue and the consequences of their interventions (Boari and Riboldazzi, 2014). The analysis seems to suggest that social networks exist and function primarily in the interests of the broker. In a structuralist framework, network allegiances stem from positional power and de-personalised transactions rather than close social proximity (Figure 2.1). Obstfeld (2005, p. 100) states that it is recognised that "strategically positioned individuals" are the primary agents who facilitate the flow of information and innovative ideas between organisations and link organisations to external sources of knowledge.   However, studies reveal the "….passive role of social networks in transmitting the information crucial to innovation but neglected the active role that individuals can play to link different parties and advocate for innovation" (Obstfeld, 2005, pp. 100-101).

In this study, knowledge brokering is conceptualised as an intervention that is rooted in social practice with the knowledge broker as an embedded co-practitioner. The practice approach acknowledges the social environment in which human actions take place and the role of the individual as "….a carrier of practice, neither autonomous nor a 'dope' of social culture" (Cox, 2012, p. 182). Furthermore, practice theory "….looks not only at the recursive dynamics of a given relation but places everyday practice as the locus for the production and reproduction of relations" (Osterlund and Carlile, 2003, p. 3). Cook and Brown (1999) distinguish between the epistemologies of knowledge as possession and knowledge as practice. Knowledge as practice is knowing that occurs in a relationship and through "interaction between the knower(s) and the world" (Cook and Brown, 1999, p. 388). Based on Cook and Brown's (1999) epistemology of practice, Newell (2015, p. 7) describes knowing as "something people do that is context-dependent, always emerging and socially situated". Brown and Duguid (2001, p. 200) state that practice is another way of describing "the way in which work gets done". As a form of practice, knowledge brokering provides the grounds for forming social relationships and making interventions in organisations (Schatzki, 2012). The dialogical processes of knowledge sharing, undertaking joint activities and learning from other practitioners is in itself a form of practice (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2002; Nicolini, 2012).

In this study, knowledge brokering involved intervening to get close to the action (practice) and working collaboratively with other practitioners. This study provides an alternative lens for approaching knowledge brokering as socially constructed practice rather than an intervention led by a knowledge broker's social network position or their perceived knowledge superiority. Power, responsibility and ownership are diffused as practitioners are empowered to develop collegiate relationships based on their strengths. The collective working through brokered spaces provided practice-based opportunities for practitioners to frame, adjust, learn and adapt their own practices (Wenger, 1998a, 2004; Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink, 2004; Schatzki, 2012) and created room for the knowledge broker to become a co-practitioner (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2002).

7.3.2 Knowing through practice

Knowledge is "….not a static entity or stable disposition, but rather an ongoing and dynamic production that is recurrently enacted as actors engage" (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1243). Practitioners demonstrate their knowledge, skills, experiences and learning through sayings and doings (Schatzki, 2012) and the "spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life" (Schön, 1991, p. 49). "Knowing-in-action" is the "characteristic mode of ordinary practical knowledge" (Schön, 1991, p. 54) and a practice-based conception offers an alternative to the dominant expression of knowledge as a passive, cognitive process (Brown and Duguid, 2001; Carlile, 2002). The practice interventions (chapters 4 and 5) are illustrations of knowledge and co-creation as practice-based processes with the knowledge broker as a co-practitioner. Knowledge brokering facilitates knowledge sharing spaces in communities of practice enabling them to "shake themselves free of received wisdom" (Brown and Duguid, 1991, p. 53). The practice interventions (chapters 4 and 5) demonstrate how knowing through practice, knowledge sharing and knowledge co-creation take place in inter-organisational communities of practice through spaces that are "localised, embedded and invested in practice" (Carlile, 2002, p. 442). A community-based perspective of knowledge (McIver et al, 2012) as a dialogical act of knowing rooted in and borne out of given practice situations provides the foundations for improving and co-creating new or modified practices (Cillo, 2005; Meyer, 2010) and knowledge co-creation (Spender, 1996; Dixon, 2000). In the case of the Hub for instance, critical incident (C) discusses the co-creative processes brokered to design the Hub in collaboration with

practitioners, the Task and Finish Group and the design team. In the case of the Forum, critical incident (A) is a practice example of how the knowledge broker, the Project Steering Group and frontline practitioners cooperated to draft and agree the Forum's terms of reference and ground-rules.

The practice interventions in chapters 4 and 5 and the emerging themes (chapter 6) show how a union knowledge brokering orientation is deployed to realise a collaborative intent, emulate good practice and unify an inter-organisational community of practice. The evidence for this includes the determination of the project objectives and design by the collective needs of the client system (Champion, Stowell and O'Callaghan, 2005), funder's expectations, the constraints of a time-limited project, building a partnership from scratch and the social mission to improve advice services. In knowledge sharing and other cooperative work practices, a knowledge broker does not have to wield their knowledge superiority even if this exists. Even the external imposition of a seemingly obvious knowledge sharing conceptual solution such as a community of practice framework can be resisted by the knowledge broker (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998a; 2004). Instead, an inter-organisational community of practice can be built from within through the medium of practice. This requires a commitment by the knowledge broker to work inclusively, appreciate existing practices and acknowledge practitioner and organisational power dynamics. It also requires co-working with practitioners but not from a position of network superiority or unique power and access to key stakeholders.

7.3.3   Sharing practice and practising sharing

Understanding structures and functions in organisations involves gaining an insight into the behaviours of individuals and groups that inhabit that space (Huczynski and Buchannan, 1991; Buchanan and Bryman, 2007; Mullins and Christy, 2016). However human behaviour is an "open-ended, spatially-temporally dispersed nexus of doings and sayings" (Schatzki, 2012, p. 14) and it is not always possible to express or evidence everything that is done and said. Practitioners can find it difficult to describe eloquently what they know for the "knowing is in the action" and the doing (Schön, 1991, p. 49). In this study, knowledge brokering was deployed as a practice intervention to establish and maintain in-person and virtual spaces for knowledge sharing by practitioners to improve local services. This involved

sharing skills, experiences and knowledge (tacit and explicit) through shared spaces and joint actions by practitioners (Polanyi, 1967; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Although Polanyi's (1967) classic truism about individuals knowing more than they think is relevant, in Charnwood Connect where a cross-section of inter-agency experiences, skills and knowledge co-existed, the articulation of all that was known was not going to materialise fully for we do not know everything we know or what someone else wants to know (Burt, 2004).

In such settings, Polanyi's (1967, p. 4) maxim "we can know more than we can tell" can be extended to suggest that "only when we tell others will we know what we know". That is, the act of knowledge sharing is an act of disclosure, reciprocity and contrast where a practitioner only realises the true depth of their knowledge relative to others through a process of introspection and revelation to others. Knowledge brokering interventions can create spaces for disclosure and knowledge sharing, and move practitioners' beyond a perception of "cognitive expression of tacit knowledge as something that is hard to retrieve" (Carlile, 2002, p. 446). However, when practitioners mistrust their peers and technology, know more than they can share in limited timeframes and believe knowledge sharing is a taking more than a giving exchange, the full potential of knowledge brokering interventions can become limited. Regardless of the intention, knowledge sharing and the net gains from knowledge brokering can be constrained further by factors such as individual and collective vulnerabilities, active or passive resistance, time-limitedness of projects and hostile external environments. In inter-agency collaborations, a paradoxical challenge arises when practitioners and organisations seek to gain advantage through collectivisation but are reluctant to compromise their own assets and unique selling points (Vangen, 2017).

7.4   KNOWLEDGE BROKERS

The literature review (chapter 2) includes an examination of the broker's positionality (Burt, 1992; Wenger, 1998a; Hargadon, 2002; Aalbers, Dolsfma and Koppius, 2004; Cillo, 2005; Currie and White, 2012; Haas, 2015) and the author's role as an insider practitioner-researcher is discussed in chapter 3 "Methodology". This section examines two aspects concerning the positionality of a knowledge broker: a philosophical one about the role of a third party and, a pragmatic one about location.

7.4.1 The third party

Simmel's (1902a, 1902b, 1950) thesis about individual, group and societal behaviours rests on the principle of a third party altering an existing relationship between two parties. Simmel (1902a, 1902b, 1950) argues that in a paired relationship, the individuality of a person is more pronounced but alters when a third party joins. Simmel (1902a, 1902b, 1950) suggests three forms of intervention: non-partisanship, *tertius gaudens* and *divide et impera.* In a non-partisan intervention, the third party is committed to maintaining the status quo and does not alter the nature of the paired relationship (Simmel, 1902a, 1902b, 1950). Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis (2014) suggest that non-partisanship mediation or conduit brokering is a relatively neutral act of transmitting information. The second intervention, "*tertius gaudens*" is when the third party takes opportunistic advantage of any underlying differences between two parties (Simmel, 1902b, p. 174). Finally, "*divide et impera*" (Simmel, 1902b, p. 182) involves the third party taking advantage through deliberate divide and rule interventions.

Simmel's (1902a, 1902b, 1950) thesis about *tertius gaudens* is fundamental to Burt's (1992, 2004) conceptualisation of the ability of brokers to bridge structural holes as a result of their knowledge superiority. Burt (2004, p. 349-350) argues that "….people connected between groups are more familiar with alternative ways of thinking and behaving" and more likely to have "good ideas" which others applaud and value. Burt (2004, p. 351) asserts that "….the link between good ideas and structural holes is key to the social capital of brokerage" due to the broker's knowledge superiority which other parties do not have or only in part. Obstfeld (2005, p. 101) suggests that two aspects of knowledge brokering need to be considered: as a catalyst for generating new ideas and, as a means of putting ideas into practice, the "action problem". While structural holes can lead to good ideas and provide a "vision advantage" (Burt, 2004, p. 386), action problems can emerge when good ideas are difficult to implement (Obstfeld, 2005). Furthermore, extensive knowledge brokering can impede or dilute innovation as the broker reaps the benefits rather than building the capacity of a social network or individual organisations (Paoli and Addeo, 2011).

In this study the author was immersed in the practice setting as a co-practitioner, a project co-worker, a peer and a doctoral researcher. The evidence from this study shows that

practitioners can be complete members in inter-organisational communities of practice as knowledge brokers, co-creators, collaborators and interventionists without seeking personal benefit through their alleged knowledge superiority and advantageous network position. As discussed in chapter 2, knowledge brokering can be a unifying intervention (Obstfeld, 2005; Shi, Markoczy and Dess, 2009; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Vernet, 2012; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016). The critical incidents that are discussed in chapters 4 and 5 indicate strongly that a union, non-divisive brokering approach was deployed and did not aim to create material advantage for the author or an individual partner. This could be disputable for the very act of an insider knowledge broker making an intervention, even to unify and serve the collective interests of an inter-organisational community of practice, is a partisan act. Every intervention is likely to impact on inter-practitioner and inter-organisational relationships in some way and the felt impact is likely to be interpreted differently by different stakeholders. The challenge for a knowledge broker is to work collaboratively with practitioners to design and implement practice interventions and as a practitioner, to reflect critically on their own actions and behaviours.

7.4.2   Niche and incidental knowledge brokers

Knowledge work can be construed as the prerogative of a select cadre of professionals such as solicitors and technology specialists whose work is predominantly intellectual, abstract and theoretical (Hislop, 2013). In the alternative "all work is knowledge work" (Hislop, 2013, p. 72) perspective, tacit and situational knowledge is apparent in all occupations and all practitioners can be regarded as knowledge workers (Hislop, 2013). Approaches that regard knowledge as practice tend to adopt the second perspective and take account of "tacit and contextual knowledge, as well as abstract and codified forms of scientific knowledge" (Hislop, 2013, p. 73), an analysis to which this study can relate. The "all work is knowledge work" (Hislop, 2013, p. 72) perspective is evidenced through the union knowledge brokering orientation that was deployed in Charnwood Connect. Integral to this was co-working with practitioners to design and deliver project outputs by recognising and appreciating their existing skills, knowledge and experiences (Cooperrider and Srivastava, 1987; Newton and Hartley, 2005; Rothwell and Sullivan, 2005; Grant and Humphries, 2006). As a practitioner in the midst of such social and reflective processes, the knowledge broker is able to reflect on

their own array of skills, knowledge and professional experiences and how these can contribute towards the progression of a project.

Reflecting further on Hislop's (2013) dualistic conceptualisation of knowledge work and drawing on the current analysis, knowledge brokers can be categorised into niche and incidental knowledge workers. Niche knowledge brokers manifestly create knowledge sharing possibilities with other practitioners through their practice interventions. Incidental knowledge brokers are practitioners including line managers who latently broker knowledge as an incidental part of other responsibilities. An example of this involves a senior advice worker who shares their knowledge or mentors a supervisee through across-the-desk conversations about a client's case. At first glance, the dual categorisation of niche and incidental knowledge brokers may seem to mirror Hislop's (2013) bipartite distinction between professional knowledge work and all work is knowledge work. That is, a niche knowledge broker's job is regarded as predominantly intellectual, abstractive and theoretical, and that of the incidental knowledge broker as involving the application of tacit and situational knowledge to routine work tasks (Hislop, 2013). However this is not the case here. The outcomes of this study suggest that niche knowledge brokers can have the manifest responsibility for knowledge brokering without conferring them privilege as the knowledge expert or prescribing their work as being more knowledge intensive than that of other practitioners. Furthermore, both niche and incidental knowledge brokers are able to work alongside each other suggesting that all knowledge work involves contrasting degrees of abstract conceptualisation and the situational application of tacit knowledge. In this study, niche and incidental knowledge brokers were able to work alongside each other, share knowledge, co-create knowledge and undertake joint actions even if their core responsibilities differed. Moreover, the union interventions of a niche knowledge worker activated and empowered incidental knowledge workers to contribute to knowledge sharing and the practice interventions. Cillo (2005, p. 409) offers an interpretation of this by suggesting that in complex organisations lacking a "common world and language", "pure" internal knowledge brokers translate and reformulate knowledge for wider absorption through continuous interactions in comparison to "light" internal brokers who undertake sporadic knowledge sharing activities.

7.4.3   Internal knowledge brokers

Great emphasis is placed in the literature on locating the knowledge broker outside or peripheral to a relationship involving two or more parties (Burt, 1992; Wenger, 1998a, Hargadon, 2002; Aalbers et al, 2004; Haas, 2015). Social network (Marsden, 1982; Gould and Fernandez, 1989) and structural holes theorists (Burt, 1992; 2004; Hargadon, 2002) argue that knowledge brokers accrue their knowledge and positional superiority by operating on the periphery of network relations. In his exposition of communities of practice, Wenger (1998a) rejects the idea of brokers as full group members stating that brokers must resist becoming complete members. Meyer (2010, p. 118) acknowledges this tension by describing the "double peripherality" of individuals and organisations that "….move knowledge around and create connections between researchers and their various audiences". Meyer (2010) suggests that remaining on the edges of multiple domains can lead to ambiguity and suspicion about the roles and motivations of knowledge brokers.

By contrast, the author was an insider practitioner employed by and based in the project's managing agency and was the project's internal knowledge broker. As an insider practitioner-researcher the author was a complete member of his organisation (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). Knowledge brokering interventions were enacted from within as an internal knowledge broker (Cillo, 2005; Currie and White, 2012) or a coordinator as defined in Gould and Fernandez's (1989) typology of knowledge brokers. The concept of internal knowledge brokering is under-researched (Currie and White, 2012) and at odds with the preceding analyses about the broker's remoteness and peripherality (Simmel, 1902; Burt, 1992; Wenger, 1998a; Hargadon, 2002; Aalbers et al, 2004; Haas, 2015). Given that research about internal brokers is underdeveloped, this study offers insights and future research possibilities about internal knowledge brokering integrated into everyday work practices.

Commenting on the use of knowledge to exploit innovation opportunities, Cillo (2005) argues that the knowledge sharing activities of internal brokers can create advantages especially for smaller organisations when market conditions are complex. In this field-study, the external environment, the social market economy as well as the internal dynamics of a newly established partnership framed the context, complexities and opportunities. Access to practitioners, organisations, knowledge and information in this inter-organisational

community of practice enabled the knowledge broker to create spaces for knowledge sharing and co-creation. As stated by Currie and White (2012, p. 1335) "....internal knowledge brokering occurs as participants in any collective practice share understandings about what they are doing and what this means in real time, and knowledge is co-constructed by participants".

The internal positionality of the author as the project's Knowledge Management Officer provided opportunities to make situational practice interventions, co-create knowledge, work collaboratively with practitioners, strengthen inter-agency working and improve services. The author was based in the managing agency, managed by the organisation's chief officer and was part of a staff team comprising paid and volunteer practitioners, project co-workers and administrative staff. As an inter-agency worker, the author worked with volunteers, paid advisers, support staff and managers in agencies across the partnership. As a development worker, the author built relationships and worked with other external organisations including professional networks. An internal knowledge broker is able to use their positional leverage to broker bespoke spaces for knowledge sharing and co-creation (Currie and White, 2012). This is an alternative perspective to knowledge brokers remaining on and operating from the periphery (Wenger, 1998a). The knowledge broker does not always need to seek strategic advantage even if they have knowledge superiority due to their vantage point and access to diverse practitioners, organisations and networks. On the contrary, the knowledge broker is able to make use of their internal positionality and potential knowledge advantage to fulfil the collective objectives of an inter-organisational community of practice.

An added consideration relates to the physical location of the knowledge broker. In partnership settings, it is conceivable that the knowledge broker is perceived as being internal to one organisation because of where they are based but external to the other partners. This can create the perception that one organisation, the managing agency in this case, has secured material advantage over the others purely because of where the knowledge broker is based. The knowledge broker need not occupy a default peripheral position but this does not preclude them being perceived and treated as peripheral practitioners by others. In this study, such perceptions were countered through practice

interventions that were dialogical, inclusive and jointly developed supplemented by sustained relationship building, outreach activities and onsite visits to partner agencies. Despite such brokering interventions, in time-limited projects, such perceptions may persist as knowledge brokering and knowledge brokers are perceived as external, temporary project entities grafted onto an organisation's core functions.

7.5   INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Communities of practice can be inter-organisational but deeper understandings are needed about how such communities occur and are brokered (Osterlund and Carlile, 2003; Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink, 2004). Both the Hub and the Forum made distinct, as well as common, contributions to brokering Charnwood Connect as an inter-organisational community of practice. This section begins with a general discussion about the principles of brokering inter-organisational communities of practice before examining some specific aspects.

7.5.1   Nurturing inter-organisational communities of practice

The practice interventions in this study illustrate how knowledge brokering was deployed to bridge organisations, practitioners and practices in an inter-organisational community of practice. Two manifestations of the inter-organisational community of practice are examined, a virtual one (chapter 4) and a face-face platform (chapter 5). Both the online and face-to-face platforms exhibit the fundamental elements of a community of practice – mutuality, joint enterprise and shared repertoire(s) (Wenger, 1998a; 2004). However, a distinguishing aspect in this study was that Charnwood Connect was an inter-organisational community of practice which required paying greater attention to co-creating common knowledge artefacts without diluting the autonomy of individual organisations. In inter-organisational initiatives uncertainty can exist amongst participating organisations about the potential benefits and losses of becoming involved (Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink, 2004; Vangen, 2017).

As a consequence, nurturing inter-organisational communities of practice requires risk-sharing, reciprocity, management intervention and the creation of safe learning environments (Soekijad, Huis in't Veld and Enserink, 2004) but such processes may not

always be harmonious. Gherardi and Nicolini (2002, p. 419) criticise the communities of practice literature as veering towards a narrative of harmony and smooth passage and suggest that in a "constellation of communities of practice" disharmony can exist and consideration has to be given to the management of diverse voices and practices. Wenger (1998a, p. 77) argues that "a community of practice is neither a haven of togetherness nor an island of intimacy insulated from political and social relations". In communities of practice then, diverse voices represent different repertoires, agency or practitioner voices and entrenched values, principles and ways of working (Fisher, 2010). Communities of practice provide mediums through which practitioners conduct dialogues, connect with others, compare and contrast experiences and practices, and form their worldviews (Brown and Duguid, 1998; Gherardi and Nicolini, 2002). In this study, a narrative of positivity and smooth passage does prevail (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2002) illustrating that a conscious can-do, unifying brokering strategy can enable cohesive inter-organisational communities of practice to be brokered to make practice improvements.

7.5.2   The external environment

This study illustrates some of the susceptibilities to regressive funding environments of not-for-profit organisations trying to work collaboratively as inter-organisational communities of practice. The net reduction in funding available to the not-for-profit sector and the contract culture has contributed to a climate of inter-agency competitiveness and insecurity (Ragsdell, 2013; Cantu and Mondragon, 2016; Bloice and Burnett, 2016). Regressive social policies also have adverse effects on vulnerable communities (Cabinet Office, 2012; Swift et al, 2013; Patel and Mottram, 2014) contributing to increases in the volume and complexity of the workloads of not-for-profit organisations (Sigafoos and Morris, 2013; The Low Commission, 2014; Cookson and Mold, 2014). Charnwood Connect was a direct product of the changing social policy environment, the nationwide cuts in public spending and the reductions in legal aid for advice services (Sigafoos and Morris, 2013; The Low Commission, 2014; Cookson and Mold, 2014).

Even though Charnwood Connect's founders were committed to collaborative working, knowledge sharing and developing more sustainable advice services, this would not have been possible without the ASTF funding. Few partners had substantial financial reserves to

invest in an inter-organisational community of practice or other partnership ventures. In any case, the primary obligations of senior managers and trustees of Charnwood Connect's partner agencies were to sustain their own organisations, exercise due diligence over the welfare of their staff, maintain core services and meet the needs of their target groups (Charity Commission for England and Wales, 2015). The study then, is an example of how local agencies were able to work as an inter-organisational community of practice, collectivise resources, share knowledge, pilot innovations and improve practices in the face of adversity, albeit for a short period. The study illustrates also that as with other short-term funded projects, sustainability remains a challenge (National Audit Office, 2014; Jones *et al*, 2015) and nurturing inter-organisational communities of practice in the not-for-profit sector requires funding and dedicated staffing, not just ideas and goodwill.

7.5.3   A virtual inter-organisational community of practice

Developing virtual knowledge sharing platforms is consistent with established thinking about the significance of information technology as a communication and exchange tool for practitioners (Ardichvili, Page and Wentling, 2003; Taylor and Burt, 2005; Griffith, 2007; Zhang and Watts, 2008; Eimhjellen, 2014; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2014). New technology can become "important grounds on which communal relations get defined and changed" not just be a medium for knowledge transfer across boundaries (Osterlund and Carlile, 2003, p. 19). Increasing usage and innovations in social media to network, download and share information (Burt and Taylor, 2003; Taylor and Burt, 2005; Eimhjellen, 2014; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2014) challenge organisations to develop online service outlets. For not-for-profit organisations, this is especially pertinent in a climate of decreasing resources and increasing client demands (Burt and Taylor, 2003).

Literature is limited about the adaptive capacity of not-for-profit organisations to respond to an information technology literate and expectant society (Ticher, Maison and Jones, 2002; Te'eni and Young, 2003; Saidel and Cour, 2003; Griffith, 2007; Evans and Clarke, 2010; Eimhjellen, 2014). Griffith (2007) warns that taking advantage of the opportunities availed by new technology requires more than just grafting on social media instruments such as Facebook or Twitter. The chief information technology challenge for the not-for-profit sector is a cultural one (Griffith, 2007), a conclusion which is consistent only in part with this

study. This study contributes to the organisational cultural argument by suggesting that in not-for-profit organisations, the challenges of adopting and absorbing new technology have to be considered alongside other factors. These include the time-limitedness of projects, the lack of investment in improving information technology capabilities, poor investment for adaptations to change and generally, under-developed and under-resourced information technology infrastructures (Kwok, 2014). The study concurs with Zhang and Watts' (2008) analysis that creating a technical facility for practitioners to network and share knowledge online is possible but the availability of an information technology facility in itself does not convert readily into a fully functioning virtual inter-organisational community of practice. This requires more sustained investment and effort. In their incremental model for online knowledge management, Zhang and Watts' (2008, p. 67) conclude that the transition from basic "online commonplaces" for information sharing to the creation of online communities of practice where knowledge creation can occur, is progressively more difficult and complex. This study concurs that creating a technological facility for online knowledge sharing is achievable even in time-limited projects but creating online communities of practitioners requires a better funded and sustainable information technology infrastructure and is not just a matter of cultural challenges as suggested by Griffith's analysis (2007).

7.5.4   A face-to-face inter-organisational community of practice

In a face-to-face inter-organisational community of practice (chapter 5), practice interventions founded on the principles of participation and voluntarism can incentivise knowledge sharing, mutuality, joint actions and practice improvements. Wenger (1998a, p. 77) describes "shared practice" which connects practitioners in mutual relationships but acknowledges that relationships within a community of practice can be fraught with difficulties and paradoxes. Barnes (2001, p. 30) describes how shared practice is "actually a composite….of so many separate individual habits….sufficiently alike for us to get along together on the basis of them". As evidenced in this study, a diversity of practitioner skills, expertise, backgrounds, experiences and organisations were represented in Charnwood Connect. In such inter-organisational communities of practice, practitioners' loyalties tend to be divided between the needs and priorities of their own organisation and a loose-knit partnership structure. Over time therefore, developing collective practices requires deeper

inter-practitioner relationships and more disciplined and consistent participation if inter-organisational communities of practice are to thrive.

Even where practitioners are bonded together through the common identity of doing similar jobs and have a shared repertoire, value and practice differences are inevitable and may not always be easy or possible to reconcile. In inter-organisational communities of practice these variances can be more pronounced and more difficult to reconcile due to the diversity of agencies and practices that are represented, the voluntariness of participation and the absence of an enforcing or mandatory agency. However, it may be possible to offset such challenges through a "collective process of negotiation" (Wenger, 1998a, p. 77) involving different levels and varieties of stakeholders such as steering and working groups, project managers, practitioners, project workers and knowledge broker(s). Furthermore, ongoing face-to-face and electronic communications outside formal meetings can help establish mutuality and a "shared repertoire" (Wenger, 1998a, p. 82), a fundamental component of an inter-organisational community of practice. Continuing the in-meeting work by securing practitioners' contributions outside the meetings ensures that knowledge sharing is continuous, not sporadic or intermittent, and practitioners are able to contribute their time and expertise to other project activities as well (chapter 5).

For many practitioners though, the lack of time and increasing pressures to meet their primary work obligations supersede any professional desire to network and contribute to an "external" inter-organisational community of practice. This suggests there is likely to be greater dissonance between a practitioner's role in their own organisation and as a voluntary affiliate in an inter-organisational community of practice. This is exacerbated, as illustrated through this study, by declining resources, the possibility of job losses and the potential closure or merger of agencies leading to a propensity to prioritise organisational rather than collective objectives.

7.5.5   Boundaries and artefacts

At boundaries there is an occurrence of "….a socio-cultural difference leading to discontinuity in action or interaction" (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011, p. 133). In the current study, one example of such discontinuity involved a community centre which was not an

advice agency and had to signpost clients to advice specialists. Another example was the establishment of separate staff meetings for volunteers and paid practitioners in the managing agency due to the differing support and communication needs of the two sets of advisers. Such boundaries and discontinuities (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011) necessitate the creation of communication channels and knowledge sharing platforms especially where inter-agency and inter-professional boundaries are blatant, as in this study.

However, boundary junctures do not just signify demarcations but can provide "….channels through which epistemically distinct groups can communicate and collaborate" (Kimble, Grenier and Goglio-Primard, 2010, p. 442). Wenger (1998a, p. 114) discusses how boundary practices can emerge at such interchanges which can be brokered to bring together collective interests through instruments such as a task and finish group. Carlile (2004) argues that boundary junctures and crossing points represent deeper complexities about knowledge flows and are not just a matter of creating communication channels. Distinct aspects of different knowledge flows have to be understood for effective knowledge brokering and sharing to occur. Syntactic (Carlile, 2004) knowledge flows across boundaries involve storing and retrieving information such as the public zone on the Hub, publicity flyers and project reports highlighted in this study. Semantic (Carlile, 2004) knowledge flows involve more pro-active efforts to develop shared understandings and are symbolised by knowledge artefacts such as the Hub's tender specification (chapter 4) and the inclusive processes in the Forum (chapter 5). Pragmatic (Carlile, 2004) knowledge flows involve the creation of new knowledge through interventions such as the Forum's case-studies on the Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions and the working group on client no shows. This study notes that all three descriptors are discernible in the knowledge brokering interventions discussed (chapters 4, 5 and 6) to differing degrees, suggesting that knowledge brokering and sharing comprises different types of knowledge flows and boundary negotiations contingent upon the situation.

The evidence from this study supports Halley (1997) and Wenger's (1998a) analysis about the significance of knowledge brokering and boundary objects as connectors for determining and reifying group membership (e.g. the Hub and the Forum). Moreover, the outcomes of the study support Phipps and Morton's (2013) analysis of boundaries as

meetings points for creativity and Star and Griesemer's (1989) analysis about creating commonality amongst different stakeholders by accommodating multiple social worlds. Star and Griesemer (1989) argue that the heterogeneity in interpretations and applications of objects by different stakeholders means that creating commonality requires deliberate interventions. This can be achieved by standardising the methods of cataloguing items and generating objects that blend and reflect multiple social worlds (Star and Griesemer, 1989).

In this study, "methods standardisation" (Star and Griesemer, 1989, p. 392) was accomplished through the generation of knowledge objects to improve client journeys such as the My Charnwood Connect Card (chapters 4 and 5) and the Common Referral Form (chapter 5). Even where such standardised methods do not lead to full implementation, their development symbolises common coinage (Star and Griesemer, 1989) and communicates an intention to act. A learning point from this study was that standardising methods and developing objects in themselves do not lead to effective implementation (e.g. the My Charnwood Connect Card). However, co-created artefacts can contribute towards the nurturing of inter-organisational communities of practice and incubation spaces for knowledge sharing and practice developments, even in the absence of a managerial mandate to enforce improvements.

In this sense, co-creating knowledge artefacts is as much a political process as it is pragmatic intervention which can be framed by either a union or disunion brokering orientation (Kimble, Grenier and Goglio-Primard, 2010; Obstfeld, 2005; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014). In their comparative study of two organisations, Kimble, Grenier and Goglio-Primard (2010) find that knowledge objects that are co-created through the knowledge broker's interventions using a union knowledge brokering orientation (Obstfeld, 2005), help to further collective interests. The development and generation of a steady stream of knowledge artefacts represent deliberate practice interventions to construct and consolidate an inter-organisational community of practice, bridge inter-agency and inter-professional boundaries and provide practice instruments (Star and Griesemer, 1989; Wenger, 1998a; Carlile, 2002, 2004; Akkerman and Bakker, 2011). In the current study, knowledge artefacts symbolise collaborative work, provide visual materials for internal and

external presentation, signify practice and boundary intersection points and help bind together an inter-organisational community of practice.

7.6   CONCLUSION

The chapter examines and interprets the key themes that emerged from the practice interventions in relation to academic literature and broader thinking about knowledge brokering, sharing and management. The chapter discusses four elements: human agency, values and principles; knowledge brokering as practice; the knowledge broker's positionality and, inter-organisational communities of practice. The evidence from this study shows that knowledge brokering is enlivened through human dialogues and practice interventions. Choices about knowledge brokering orientations are shaped by values, beliefs and principles which have to be acknowledged and accounted for if we are to understand knowledge brokering as social practice in knowledge-intensive and social values-expressive organisations.

The academic study of knowledge brokering is couched largely in terms of social network theory and the remote positionality of the broker. The premise is that the knowledge broker's remoteness enables them to gain knowledge superiority and advantage. The evidence from this study shows that this perspective can be turned (Schatzki, Cetina and Savigny, 2001) using a practice lens (Orlikowski, 2000). A practice lens (Orlikowski, 2000) provides an alternative means of analysing knowledge brokering as a practice intervention with the knowledge broker as a co-practitioner. Knowledge brokers can be complete members in inter-organisational communities of practice as practitioners, co-creators, collaborators and practice interventionists without seeking personal advantage even if they have a superior strategic position. The practice interventions in this study align more closely with Cillo (2005) and Currie and White's (2012) analysis about internal knowledge brokers offering an alternative way of construing the role and positionality of a knowledge broker.

The practice interventions represent examples of how knowledge brokering and sharing occurred in an inter-organisational community of practice. The fundamental principles of mutuality, joint enterprise and shared repertoires (Wenger, 1998a) were apparent in Charnwood Connect. However, in inter-organisational communities of practice, boundary

bridging and the co-creation of common artefacts take on an added significance. The imperative is to construct an inter-organisational identity, affirm collective values, principles and practices and at the same time, enable individual partners to maintain their own corporate identities.

The next chapter, "Conclusion" reflects back on this study's aims and objectives and its main outcomes, recommendations and conclusions, bringing the thesis to a close.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter brings the thesis to a close by drawing together the main outcomes and conclusions of the study. The concluding chapter begins with a review of the research questions. This leads into a concluding analysis about the key outcomes: the practice lens, values, principles and human agency, institutional settings, internal knowledge brokering, inter-organisational communities of practice and untapping lessons from the not-for profit sector. This is followed by an overview of the conceptual, methodological and sectoral contributions of the study, the research limitations and recommendations for further research, practice and policy. The chapter ends with a summative reflective statement about the author's experiences with the concluding comments bringing the thesis to a close.

8.2   REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study examined knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector. The study was carried out in a newly established multi-agency partnership that was funded for two years through a specialist national funding programme. Charnwood Connect was funded to improve and develop more sustainable advice services through inter-agency collaboration. The author was employed as the project's Knowledge Management Officer and used insider action research to undertake the study.

The core research question was framed after critical reflection on four factors: the gaps in literature, the author's insider practitioner-researcher position, the partnership's objectives and Charnwood Connect's multi-agency constituency. The main research question was framed as **"how does knowledge brokering facilitate knowledge sharing, collaborative working and practice improvements in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector?"** This was broken down into three corollary questions which are reviewed below and discussed further in section 8.3 "Research outcomes".

Research question 1: How does knowledge brokering facilitate communicative spaces for knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector?

This question was addressed through the conceptual analysis of knowledge brokering (chapter 2), reflecting on practice and sense making after each critical incident (chapters 4 and 5), the discussion of emerging themes (chapter 6) and, the analytic discussion in chapter 7 in relation to literature. Charnwood Connect had a pragmatic mission to improve practices and services and an aspirational one to create practice-based communicative spaces for practitioners to share knowledge and work together differently. A variety of formal and less formal communicative spaces were brokered for practitioners to contribute their skills, experiences and expertise to make the practice and service improvements. Examples included the development of the Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions template and case-studies, and the design and development processes for the Hub, Forum, My Charnwood Connect Card, Common Referral Form and the reminders by text appointment system. The knowledge brokering interventions created dialogical spaces and opportunities for practitioners to share knowledge and take joint action to improve services. More formal inter-organisational communicative spaces included the Forum, the Hub's private zone, the Hub's Task and Finish Group and the No-shows Working Group.

Research question 2: How does knowledge brokering contribute to practice improvements in inter-organisational communities of practice?

The discussion and analysis of the two core practice interventions on the Hub and the Forum as well as other subsidiary ones in chapters 4, 5 and 6 demonstrate how knowledge brokering contributed to practice enhancements. Charnwood Connect comprised practitioners with a rich mix of experiences, skills and expertise in social welfare issues, some with specialisms in subjects such as debt counselling. The knowledge brokering interventions were founded on the principles of practice-based learning and building on practitioners' existing skills, insights and experiences to improve practice. The pilot ideas for improving practice were determined by practitioners' insights into what they believed could work most effectively (e.g. the My Charnwood Connect Card). The dialogical and participative approaches used in the Forum enabled the processes and outcomes of the meetings to be looped and connected to the activities outside the formal meetings thus

extending the experiences. Starting from what was known already and working collaboratively with practitioners' from different agencies were essential to building inter-practitioner relationships and an inter-organisational community of practice. Furthermore, the iterative insider action research process enabled ideas and innovations to be developed, piloted, reflected upon and implemented incrementally.

Research question 3: What are the factors that inhibit and enhance knowledge brokering in the not-for-profit sector?

The outcomes of this study provide insights about knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice in the not-for-profit sector. The outcomes show that a number of factors inhibit and enhance the effectiveness of knowledge brokering. One of the key inhibitors was the adverse effect of the funding and social policy environment which created vulnerability and uncertainty for practitioners and their organisations. This meant that the sustainability of their own organisations was of a greater priority than devoting staff resources to Charnwood Connect. Secondly, Charnwood Connect was a time-limited initiative with no guarantee of further funding. As a consequence, partnership-wide practice interventions and improvements were not sustainable beyond ASTF without dedicated knowledge broker(s), other staff and resources. The third inhibitor was an internal one. Even though new or different practices were developed participatively, they were difficult to integrate systemically into practice because of the voluntariness of the partnership and the lack of mandatory obligation to implement change.

A number of enhancers are identified through this study. Firstly, adopting a knowledge brokering orientation (i.e. union) which aligned with Charnwood Connect's mission, values and principles ensured that there was synchronicity between vision and practice. Secondly, having a niche internal knowledge broker working alongside practitioners as incidental knowledge brokers enhanced inter-practitioner relationships and inter-organisational knowledge sharing capabilities. Thirdly, starting from practitioners' established skills, expertise and knowledge (the known) ensured that knowledge brokering interventions were authentic, rooted in experiences and applicable in practice. The fourth enhancer was the co-creation of common artefacts which helped to define a partnership-wide corporate identity

without diluting the interests and identities of the individual partners. Finally, though time-limited, the ASTF funding provided an impetus for Charnwood Connect to be formed, share knowledge, pilot innovation and experiment with new practices.

8.3   RESEARCH OUTCOMES

This section summarises the main research outcomes and the elements that need to be considered when making knowledge brokering practice interventions in the not-for-profit sector.

8.3.1   Looking through a practice lens

Foundational literature suggests that knowledge brokers are able to gain knowledge superiority, privileged network access, span boundaries and structural holes and accrue benefits due to their structural position (Burt, 1992; 2004; Hargadon, 1998, 2002; Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Boari and Riboldazzi, 2014). In the foundational analysis, network relationships result directly from a knowledge broker's interventions, privileged structural position and relative power rather than reciprocal knowledge sharing and democratic exchanges by and with network participants. The evidence from this study shows that the analytic lens of knowledge brokering is dominated by a structuralist discourse emphasising the knowledge and positional superiority of knowledge brokers as primary determinants of network relations. The analysis implies that a network comes into existence to serve the interests and ambitions of the broker rather than the goals and aspirations of participating organisations.

The evidence from this study suggests that an alternative conceptual lens, a "practice lens" (Orlikowski, 2000, p. 47) is available which connects practitioners to their actions. Practitioners' everyday interventions constitute situational "social practice" (Wenger, 1998a, p. 47) carried out with others as "social reality is fundamentally made up of practices….brought into being through everyday activity" (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1241). Instead of viewing knowledge brokering through the goggles of network positionality and broker superiority, the day-to-day practices and the interventions of practitioners including knowledge brokers provide an alternative lens.

8.3.2 Values, principles and human agency

Foundational studies on knowledge brokering (Gould and Fernandez, 1989; Burt, 1992, 2004; Hargadon, 1998, 2002; Obstfeld, 2005) stem from research in private sector firms seeking to improve their competiveness by capitalising on technological innovations. The values, principles and practices of market economics (Salamon and Anheier, 1997; Kendall, 2003; Lettieri, Borga and Salvoldelli, 2004; Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016) that underpin knowledge brokering analysis in the foundational literature, remain implicit or undisclosed. Furthermore, the prominence of private sector concerns in the knowledge economy discourse leaves an impression that the values, principles and practices of competition and profitability are the norm for all sectors in the knowledge economy. Not acknowledging different sectoral values, principles and practices leads to an interpretation of knowledge brokering as a value-free practice intervention which is applicable universally. The evidence from this study shows that knowledge brokering interventions have to align with organisational values, principles and practices. In the case of not-for-profit organisations, its values, principles and practices are driven by a social mission with human interventionists (practitioners) providing person-centred services, largely face-to-face and free at the point of delivery.

The study finds that knowledge brokering extends beyond impersonal knowledge mobilisation by roving knowledge brokers as characterised in structuralist social network analysis. The evidence points to knowledge brokering as a more systemic social process involving relationship building, co-creation, in-person and virtual knowledge sharing dialogues and taking joint actions. In this, the knowledge broker is one in a community of practitioners. Knowledge brokering is a social process involving close proximity and relationships with practitioners, getting involved in messy situations and for the broker to "get their hands dirty". Without acknowledging the role of human agency and proximity, values, principles and power dynamics that influence individual and group relations in organisations, we are left with an incomplete picture about knowledge brokering in everyday practice.

8.3.3 Institutional settings and knowledge brokering orientations

It has been established that theoretical conceptualisations and academic research about knowledge brokering emanate largely from social network analysis (Burt, 1992, 2004; Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Hargadon, 2002; Obstfeld, 2005; Spiro, Acton and Butts, 2013; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016). Three contrasting approaches to knowledge brokering are identified: conduit, union and disunion (Obstfeld, 2005; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014). The three orientations are not exclusive or irreconcilable but represent contrasting situational brokering strategies (Shi, Markoczy and Dess, 2009; Vernet, 2012; Quintane and Carnabuci, 2016). Not all knowledge brokering orientations are applicable in all organisational contexts and the core values, principles and practices that govern organisational behaviour have to be considered when choosing an approach.

The evidence from this study suggests that knowledge brokering can be transformative enabling a loose collection of organisations with similar values, principles and practices to migrate from a state of disunion towards greater union without relinquishing individual autonomies. In Charnwood Connect, a mainly union knowledge brokering orientation was deployed to align with the collaborative intent of the partnership as an inter-organisational community of practice. Institutionally, the union orientation aligned with the core values, principles and practices of the not-for-profit sector. The union orientation emphasised building collective social capital, synthesising, sharing and co-creating knowledge and, connecting practitioners with each other with the broker as a co-beneficiary and co-practitioner. The author argues that in an era of decreasing resources and increasing demand for services, union knowledge brokering interventions can optimise the richness of the collective skills in an inter-organisational, knowledge-intensive setting. Furthermore, by creating incubation spaces for knowledge sharing, generating new ideas and bridging the dissonance between practice intentions and actualities, service improvements can be made.

8.3.4 Internal knowledge brokering

Foundational brokering literature argues that remoteness and peripherality from a network create a favourable vantage point for the broker to scope out new ideas and connect participants (Burt, 1992, 2004; Wenger, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Hargadon, 2002). Based on the

outcomes and analysis of the practice interventions in this study, alternative constructions about the role and positionality of knowledge brokers are necessary. Research is limited on the role of internal knowledge brokering whereby knowledge brokers are enablers from within rather than peripheral intermediaries (Cillo, 2005; Currie and White, 2012). In such scenarios, knowledge brokers can be internal enablers, practitioners, co-creators and collaborators without seeking benefits, positional advantage or knowledge superiority. This is especially relevant in knowledge-intensive, not-for-profit settings where voluntarism, role overlaps, multi-tasking, under-resourcing and growing client demands are the norm, as was the case in Charnwood Connect. Recognising the scope for knowledge brokering as an internalised, values-based practice intervention with niche and incidental internal knowledge brokers co-working, provides an alternative way of configuring knowledge brokering.

8.3.5 Brokering inter-organisational communities of practice

Communities of practice are intra- and inter-organisational but research on the latter is underdeveloped constraining the extent to which the two can be compared and contrasted. As a multi-agency partnership committed to knowledge sharing, collaborative working and improving practices, Charnwood Connect constituted an inter-organisational community of practice. This was enacted through the practice interventions and the spaces created for knowledge sharing, learning and joint action. Two complementary platforms for networking, knowledge sharing and practice improvements are discussed extensively with references to other related interventions (chapters 4, 5 and 6). Both the Hub and the Forum displayed the fundamental elements of a community of practice – mutuality, joint enterprise and shared repertoires (Wenger, 1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2004; Wenger and Snyder, 2000) and contributed to the evolution of Charnwood Connect as an inter-organisational entity.

The evidence from this study suggests that boundary bridging, generating common artefacts, a unifying knowledge brokering orientation, collective knowledge sharing and developing shared practices are significant in inter-organisational communities of practice. Furthermore, knowledge brokers are able to contribute directly to the development of common artefacts, boundary bridging and the construction of a multi-agency identity without threatening the corporate identity, autonomy or governance of individual partners.

Autonomy, independence and the right to self-organise are fundamental values in the not-for-profit sector (Billis, 1991; Hudson, 1995; Lettieri, Borga and Savoldelli, 2004; Adirondack, 2006; Harris, 2010; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2016) and need to be upheld in an inter-organisational community of practice where collaboration not absorption is the primary objective. Wenger (1998a) states that institutional boundaries neither define nor coincide with those of a community of practice as practice is the main driver of the membership and boundary formation of a community of practice. In this study, practice was a galvanising force to rally practitioners to contribute to Charnwood Connect's objectives of knowledge sharing, collaborative working and improving local services. However, as an inter-organisational community of practice, Charnwood Connect's membership and boundaries were defined not solely by practice but also its institutional form and function. In contrast to Wenger's argument (1998a), the boundaries of Charnwood Connect as an inter-organisational community of practice had to coincide with the composition of its membership to allow partner agencies and their practitioners to participate.

8.3.6 Untapping lessons from the not-for-profit sector (Appendix 8.1)

The literature review established that academic research and conceptualisations about knowledge management in the not-for-profit sector are underdeveloped (Ragsdell, 2009; Ragsdell, Espinet and Norris, 2014; Bloice and Burnett, 2016; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2016; Hume and Hume, 2016; Cantu and Mondragon, 2016). This practice-based, insider action research study provides further insights and conceptualisations about knowledge management practices in a multi-agency, not-for-profit setting and another opportunity to untap lessons from this sector (Ragsdell, 2013). This conclusion is consistent with Ragsdell's (2009, 2013) principle of sectoral reciprocity with the not-for-profit, private and public sectors learning about knowledge management from each other. The author is not suggesting that the particularities, values, principles and practices of each sector are edged out in the pursuit of a universal truth. To the contrary, on the basis of the evidence from this study, the author argues that research needs to give greater prominence to sectoral and organisational particularities, values, principles and practices. This enables deeper and richer insights to be gained about the comparative practices of knowledge brokering, sharing and management in different organisational and sectoral contexts.

Capitalising on existing skills, knowledge, expertise and experiences is essential in knowledge-intensive organisations such as Charnwood Connect and its constituent partner agencies. Despite adopting new technology and other communication tools, social welfare agencies and other not-for-profit organisations continue to provide person-centred services primarily through face-to-face interactions. The knowledge, experiences and expertise (human capital) that practitioners accumulate through their dialogical interactions with clients, peers and external stakeholders (Huck, Al and Rathi, 2011; Rathi, Given and Forcier, 2014, 2016; Bloice and Burnett, 2016) provide the material basis for social practice and the trajectory for improving practices.

However, the author argues that austerity measures, competition for funding (Ragsdell, 2013; Bloice and Burnett, 2016; Cantu and Mondragon, 2016), complex and urgent client needs (Cabinet Office, 2012; The Low Commission, 2014), knowledge outflows (Lewis, 2012) and the growing dependency on a transient workforce (Ragsdell, 2013; Bloice and Burnett, 2016; Hume and Hume, 2016) constrain knowledge sharing opportunities and possibilities in this sector. Funded essentially through external means, as a sector that is driven by a social mission, not-for-profit sector organisations are configured to invest in and generate social not economic capital unlike the private sector. The not-for-profit sector has limited capacity to generate its own income and reinvest in itself through measures such as service charges to vulnerable clients who may be living in poverty. Consequently, austerity and other measures impact adversely on the not-for-profit sector's financial stability and ability to share its knowledge wealth, internally and externally. This further constrains the sector's capacity to convert its collective knowledge, skills and experiences into practice improvements and service enhancements to benefit local communities.

8.4   KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION

This section summarises the contributions made by this study at three levels: conceptual, methodological and sectoral.

Firstly, the study contributes by examining knowledge brokering from the alternative perspective of a practice lens (Orlikowski, 2000; Corradi, Gherardi and Verzelloni, 2010; Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). Practice determines the proximity, depth and reach of a

practitioner's relationships in their social network providing the focal point for action including practitioner-client interactions. Foundational knowledge brokering literature emphasises the structural position of the knowledge broker, their knowledge superiority and the benefits they accrue. In this, the knowledge broker determines the patterns of network relations as a roving agent operating on the margins of network relations rather than as a co-practitioner within. The study contributes by turning this perspective, arguing that knowledge brokering can be examined through a practice lens as an alternative.

Secondly, the study contributes by asserting that foundational studies on knowledge brokering understate or omit the significance of values, principles and power dynamics to knowledge brokering processes and practices. Values, principles and power dynamics are contestable notions but have to be accounted for in knowledge-intensive organisations especially when they are driven by a social mission in which human agency is at its core. The study contributes by arguing that strategic orientations to knowledge brokering - conduit, union and disunion - (Obstfeld, 2005; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld, Borgatti and Davis, 2014) are underpinned by epistemological assumptions about social reality, human agency, values and power dynamics but are not addressed extensively or explicitly in existing literature. Prominent contributions (Burt, 1998, 2004; Hargadon, 2002; Obstfeld, 2005) portray knowledge brokering as an indiscriminate fusion of people and processes (Figure 8.1) without explicitly acknowledging the role of human agency. In its theoretical contribution, the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) (2003) does distinguish between people and processes but prioritises processes over people as at the time, there was a scarcity of practitioners with the role titles of knowledge brokers (Figure 8.2).

This study adds to the above contributions by arguing that as well as people and processes, knowledge brokering interventions involve values, principles and philosophies. The philosophical perspective or the third "p", represents the underpinning values and principles of knowledge brokering orientations (conduit, union, disunion or combined) and the author argues that every intervention starts from either a declared, implicit or subliminal value position. Individual and collective values, principles and practices are manifested in and enlivened through everyday human encounters in organisations. By not acknowledging

human agency and values in such encounters, knowledge co-creation and the social construction of reality, only a partial glimpse can be gleaned about knowledge brokering. Knowledge brokering is reconceptualised as an integration of knowledge brokers as human facilitators (niche and incidental), knowledge brokering processes (activating knowledge brokering in practice through systems and structures) and philosophical perspectives (values, principles and power) (Figure 8.3).
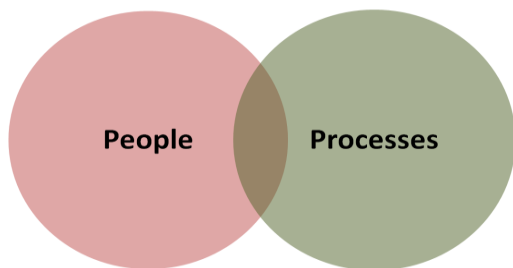

Figure 8.1: Knowledge brokering: A fusion of people and processes (Burt, 1998, 2004; Hargadon, 2002; Obstfeld, 2005).
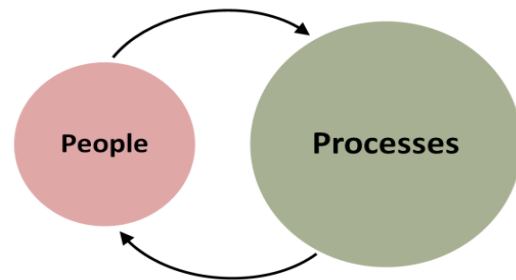
Figure 8.2: Knowledge brokering: Processes over people (CHSRF, 2003).
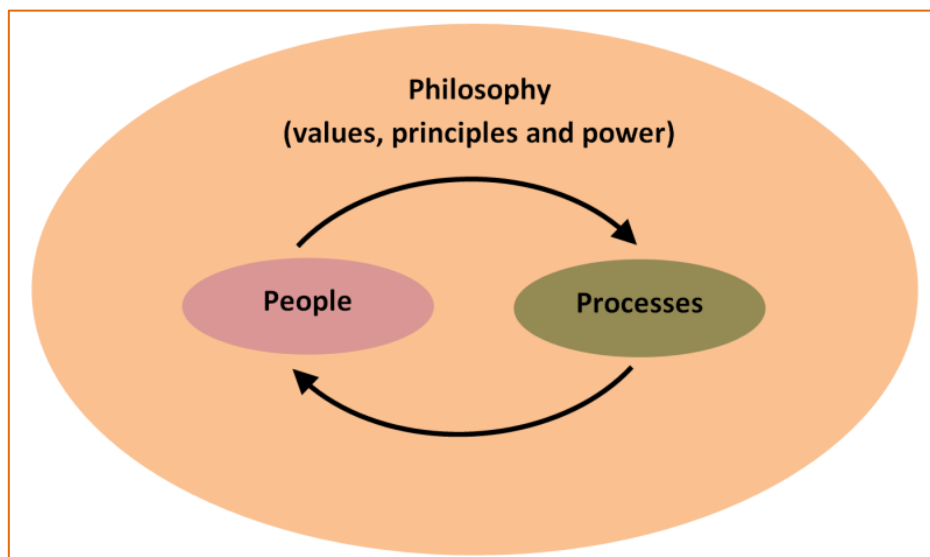

Figure 8.3: Re-conceptualisation of knowledge brokering - philosophy, people and processes.

Thirdly, the literature on knowledge brokering emphasises the externality of the broker from social network relations with the argument that the broker's remoteness creates their structural advantage. This study contributes by arguing that knowledge brokers can be internal co-practitioners who are able to construct and maintain reciprocal relationships with other practitioners without becoming pre-occupied with their own status, power or network positions. The study contributes by suggesting that two complementary types of internal knowledge brokers are discernible: niche and incidental knowledge brokers. The author argues that niche knowledge brokers can work with incidental knowledge brokers to create dialogical spaces for knowledge sharing and joint actions to increase the intellectual and social capital of organisations.

Fourthly, this study contributes by stating that the fundamental tenets of a community of practice – mutuality, joint enterprise and shared repertoires (Wenger, 1998a, 1998b, 2000) remain valid in inter-organisational communities of practice. However, these principles have to be enlivened through active and sustained knowledge brokering interventions that close know-do gaps and generate practising communities not just communities of practice. Boundary bridging through the co-creation of common artefacts, facilitating dialogical spaces for knowledge sharing and joint enterprise are tangible and potent symbols of collaboration in inter-organisational communities of practice. These enable diverse and competing values, principles, practices and power dynamics to be acknowledged and arbitrated without subsuming individual organisations and practitioners into the whole.

Fifthly, as far as the author is aware, this is the first doctoral study that combines the deployment of insider action research to study knowledge brokering in the not-for-profit sector. This is significant for several reasons. As an insider action research project, the study contributes a further empirical example to the established theoretical works of Coghlan and Brannick (2005, 2014) and other action research contributors (Reason and Bradbury, 2006). The study offers insights about the use of insider action research to other practitioner-researchers who may wish to investigate knowledge management strategies in their own organisations. As a methodology for studying a particular aspect of knowledge management, the approach demonstrates commensurability with the research topic of

knowledge brokering and the organisational context of the not-for-profit sector (Ragsdell, 2009a).

Finally, the study contributes by providing an empirical field-study on internal knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing in an inter-organisational community of practice in a not-for-profit setting. Congruent with Ragsdell's (2009b, 2013) analysis about different sectors learning about knowledge management from each other, this thesis contributes lessons from the not-for-profit sector about knowledge brokering, knowledge sharing, practice interventions and inter-organisational communities of practice. The lessons include the need to acknowledge the impact of environmental factors, austerity measures and regressive social welfare policies on the effectiveness and potential of knowledge management practices in not-for-profit organisations. Secondly, in spite of an adverse external environment, organisations are able to collaborate and share knowledge as long as effective and conducive knowledge brokering practices are adopted. Thirdly, the study finds that even where the principle of knowledge sharing is accepted and compatible with organisational values, principles and practices, knowledge brokering is hindered when good practice is not mandatory or ensured. Finally, although the author has expressed reservations about the merits of time-limited projects, such initiatives do provide spaces for exploration and experimentation with practice in real-time.

8.5   RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This was a qualitative study in a complex inter-organisational setting involving diverse practitioners, a new partnership comprising different advice, information and support agencies and a time-limited project that was concerned with having an impact on third parties (local clients and communities). As with any such research, this study has its limitations.

8.5.1   Methodological limitations

The study uses insider action research, a variant of action research, a methodology that is questioned by positivists about its ability to mitigate researcher bias, gather valid data and manage ethical issues arising from the close proximity of researchers to participants. As examined and justified in chapter 3, research integrity in this study was managed through

the use of a variety of data collection methods, immersion in the research site for two years, collaboration and co-working with practitioners, regular reporting to internal participants and external academic supervisors and, conducting ongoing reviews of the knowledge brokering interventions. The combination of these strategies enabled rich data to be gathered, triangulated, analysed, inferences made and conclusions to be drawn.

This study examines knowledge brokering as a practice intervention to strengthen inter-agency collaboration (organisational practices) and improve advice services (face-to-face and virtual practices). One of the limitations was that the study was practitioner-orientated and the author was unable to interrogate clients and local communities about their experiences and perspectives on planned or actual service improvements. A major consideration here was prioritising the design, development and implementation of project outcomes such as the Hub and the Forum and experimenting with their use within the two-year window of the project. A major exercise to involve clients and local communities in this would have jeopardised the project's ability to achieve its objectives and satisfy the funders as well as internal stakeholders. A related limitation was the lack of evidence of longer-term sustainability of the practice interventions, once the two-years of ASTF pump-priming funds were exhausted.

The research was carried out in one organisation although the Charnwood Connect partnership did comprise multiple agencies from three different sectors. At one level, Charnwood Connect was a single source for evidence gathering raising questions about the generalisability of the study's outcomes and applications to other settings. At another level, because multiple organisations and practitioners were involved in this inter-organisational community of practice, the author was able to get rich insights about diverse even competing practices and approaches.

8.5.2   Conceptual and theoretical limitations

Organisational studies about brokering and knowledge brokering stem largely from research in the private sector although there is some emerging research in the public, mainly health sector. For this study, analysis from existing literature was adopted and applied to examine knowledge brokering in a not-for-profit, inter-organisational setting. Adapting and applying

exogenous concepts and approaches emerging from the private and public sectors to the not-for-profit sector can be limiting as questions about appropriateness and transferability can arise. However, the literature review revealed that conceptualisations of knowledge brokering and knowledge sharing from the private and public sectors did resonate with Charnwood Connect's mission and the author's role as its Knowledge Management Officer. Moreover, Ragsdell's (2009b, 2013) principles of sectoral reciprocity and mutual learning could have been enlivened only by enacting these in practice. In effect, what seemed to be a limitation of applying knowledge brokering as a concept theoretically developed in one sector to another, was a strength which helped to inform the practice interventions that were made.

The focus of this study was knowledge brokering as a practice intervention for knowledge sharing. One of the limitations of having such a specific focus was the difficulty of concluding unequivocally that knowledge brokering was **the** lever that contributed to knowledge sharing rather than other factors such as team work, leadership, project values or social mission. In complex inter-organisational settings, different variables can impact on knowledge sharing behaviours. This however, does not preclude a researcher from examining specific dimensions such as knowledge brokering to gather rich evidence and deepen understandings about facilitative mechanisms for knowledge sharing and management.

8.5.3   Policy and funding constraints

One of the challenges of conducting research in such a knowledge-intensive environment in a time-limited project was the difficulty, verging on the impossibility, of influencing the social policy environment. In the short term, implementing strategies to stem knowledge outflows and boost knowledge sharing capacity may ease some of the competitive behaviours that are emerging in the not-for-profit sector. However, without reframing the social policy agenda and increasing funding for the not-for-profit sector, knowledge brokering and other interventions to enhance knowledge sharing will continue to be tinged with an element of mistrust and be sporadic rather than systemic.

8.6   RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations for further research, practice and policy emerge from this study.

8.6.1   Recommendations for further research

This was a single field study examining knowledge brokering in a newly established partnership body in the not-for-profit sector. The author was an insider practitioner-researcher embedded *in situ* for two years undertaking an intense programme of practice and research. Although the study contributes rich insights about knowledge brokering as a practice intervention, further research to enhance understandings on this topic could involve:

1. A qualitative study comparing and contrasting knowledge brokering values, principles and practices in a mixed sample of not-for-profit, public and private sector organisations. To enrich this study, the sample of organisations could include a combination of intra and inter-organisational communities of practice from the three sectors.

2. Further studies to enrich understandings and generate comparative empirical examples by deploying insider action researchers in different organisations, co-researching as an inter-organisational community of practice.

3. In this study, the availability of a new technological medium to complement and support face-to-face services was not readily taken up by practitioners and exploited to its full potential. Practitioner participation rates on the private zone were limited, raising questions about how technological solutions can be eased in and incorporated into everyday practices by busy practitioners and sustained over time. A further examination of knowledge sharing behaviours in virtual communities of practice in the not-for-profit sector and other knowledge-intensive organisations could help better understand this phenomenon.

4. A comparative study of knowledge brokering practices in not-for-profit organisations working together collaboratively but not in a structured partnership. The research would examine knowledge brokering and knowledge sharing in a setting where the motivation to work as an inter-organisational community of practice is internally driven rather than triggered by an external funding incentive.

8.6.2   Recommendations for practice

Knowledge-intensive organisations face the dual challenges of managing knowledge outflows and enhancing knowledge sharing for practitioners. Either on their own or as a consortium, knowledge-intensive organisations could benefit from appointing niche knowledge brokers, if affordable and feasible. As a complementary or even an alternative strategy, organisations could adopt more distributive and participative orientations using routine processes such as team meetings, online communications and task groups as extended spaces for practitioner dialogues, knowledge sharing and strengthening communities of practice. Such approaches and experimentation can enable organisations to make their own assessments about the specific levers that work most effectively for knowledge sharing, co-creation and joint action.

8.6.3   Recommendations for policy

The cuts in legal aid funding and their social policy context led to the establishment of Charnwood Connect and the project was expected to become self-sustaining after two years. Although various strategies were tried to achieve sustainability including internal fund-raising, ultimately the partnership was unable to sustain the ASTF-funded activities. In the absence of external funding, it is virtually impossible for local not-for-profit organisations to sustain themselves and continue providing social welfare services. It is recommended that policy-makers strive to adopt more progressive funding policies for the not-for-profit sector in acknowledgement of its integral role in the supply chain of essential social welfare services especially as client needs grow in complexity.

8.7   PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

As a mature doctoral researcher, with substantial prior experiences of working with a variety of organisations in the UK and overseas, my outlook to life was framed already by some profound values, beliefs and principles: equality, community development, self-help and consciousness raising. These values and beliefs were shaped by my life experiences, academia, practice and the countless dialogues with other community activists. As an established practitioner, I had some trepidation about embarking on a further academic journey late in my professional life and the demands that a PhD would make, at one point

describing myself as a "reluctant action researcher" (Notes and analysis: Book 1: back pages).

Even though I was an established practitioner, I have benefited and learnt enormously from undertaking this study. As an action researcher, I have strengthened substantially my research and analytic skills and better appreciate the value of conducting systematic literature reviews, gathering rich data, practice-based studies and evidence based writing. Writing the thesis highlighted the difficulties of managing the boundaries between being a practitioner and undertaking academic research especially as an insider action researcher. As someone who was steeped in the practice for two years, I found it difficult initially to extract myself and examine practice as a form of research. The initial difficulties of writing and presenting the practice interventions, which took several attempts, illustrated the dilemma of extracting myself from the practice and learning to take a more analytic stance. As a community development worker, the experience has reinforced my belief that the not-for-profit sector provides a vital lifeline to so many individuals and groups that experience marginalisation and exclusion and that qualitative research can contribute to the sector's survival. As a practitioner, I really enjoyed working and sharing ideas, knowledge and experiences with so many skilled, experienced and committed practitioners and supervisors. These experiences demonstrated to me that knowledge sharing, reciprocity and cooperation are possible even when organisations are trying to survive in hostile environments.

8.8   CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This study was conducted against a backdrop of a regressive social policy agenda impacting on local communities and not-for-profit organisations alike. The demise of legal aid for advice services, austerity measures and public sector cuts has reduced incrementally the funding for the not-for-profit sector. The consequences of such measures include increasing competition amongst not-for-profit organisations for limited public funds, the potential of mergers, knowledge outflows, job losses and an increased reliance on a volunteer workforce. At a philosophical level, these trends raise pertinent questions about the extent to which the work of the not-for-profit sector is valued by policy makers and whether society is prepared to fund social welfare provision for those in need.

Given the gravity of this backdrop, the pragmatic contribution of this study on knowledge brokering as a practice intervention offers an optimistic note about the possibilities of knowledge sharing in and across organisations. The study provides an illustration of how practitioners, academics and researchers can combine efforts to enhance understandings about the unique societal contribution of the not-for-profit sector, increase its net capacity and reinforce its social mission. If knowledge management discourse is to reflect truly the reality of the knowledge economy, research and academic endeavours have to include the not-for-profit sector.

At a conceptual level, the aim of this thesis was to examine knowledge brokering as a practice intervention in a setting where human agency and dialogue are fundamental to knowledge sharing, practice development and service delivery. In knowledge-intensive organisations, face-to-face dialogues between practitioners, clients, communities and other stakeholders help to construct, inform and improve individual and collective practices and determine choices about practice interventions. Hopefully, practice interventions co-created through social dialogues and lateral thinking will serve to humanise workplaces, practitioner-client relations, social welfare services and the connectivity between people.

"I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1970, p. 141)

Part D

Part D, comprises the references and appendices.

REFERENCES

A

Aalbers, H.L. & Dolfsma, W., 2015. Bridging firm-internal boundaries for innovation: Directed communication orientation and brokering roles. *Journal of Engineering and Technology Management*, 36, pp.97–115.

Aalbers, R., Dolfsma, W. & Koppius, O., 2004. *On and off the beaten path: How individuals broker knowledge through formal and informal networks.* Erasmus Research Institute of Management (ERIM) Report Series Research in Management. Rotterdam: Universiteit Rotterdam.

Adirondack, S., 2006. *Just about managing*. London: LSVC.

Adler, P A., & Adler, P., 1987. *Membership roles in field research.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Advice Services Alliance, 2009. *Sharing your toys: Advice agencies working together.* London: Advice Services Alliance.

Advice Services Transition Fund (ASTF), 2012. *Updates to guidance.* London: Big Lottery.

Ahuja, G., 2000. Collaboration networks, structural holes, and innovation: A longitudinal study. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 45(3), pp.425–455.

Aidemark, J., 2008. Knowledge management paradoxes. *Proceedings of the European Conference on Knowledge Management, ECKM*, 7(1), pp.1–10.

Akhavan, P. & Zahedi, M., 2014. Critical success factors in knowledge management among project-based organisations: A multi-case analysis. *IUP Journal of Knowledge Management*, 12(1), pp.20–38.

Akkerman, S.F. & Bakker, A., 2011. Boundary crossing and boundary objects. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), pp.132–169.

Alcock, P., 2010. A strategic unity: Defining the third sector in the UK. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 1(1), pp.5–24.

Amayah, A.T., 2013. Determinants of knowledge sharing in a public sector organisation. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(3), pp.454–471.

Anand, A. & Walsh, I., 2016. Should knowledge be shared generously? Tracing insights from past to present and describing a model. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 20(4), pp.713–730.

Ardichvili, A., Page, V. & Wentling, T., 2003. Motivation and barriers to participation in virtual knowledge-sharing communities of practice. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 7(1), pp.64–77.

Argyris, C., Putnam, R. & Smith, D.M., 1985. *Action science: Concepts, methods, and skills for research and intervention.* San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publishers.

Argyris, C. and Schön, D. A., 1996. *Organisational learning II: Theory, method, and practice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc.

Avison, D., Baskerville, R. & Myers, M., 2001. Controlling action research projects. *Information Technology and People*, 14(1), pp.28–45.

Awad, E.M. and Ghaziri, H.M., 2004. *Knowledge Management.* New Jersey: Pearson Education.

B

Baker, W.E. & Obstfeld, D., 1999. Social capital by design: Structures, strategies and institutional context. In R. Leenders & S. Gabbay, eds. *Corporate social capital and liability*. Boston: Kluwer Academic: Kluwer Academic, pp. 88–105.

Barnes, B., 2001. Practice as collective action. In Schatzki, T.R., Cetina, K.K. & Savigny, E. Von., eds. *The practice turn in contemporary theory.* London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Baskerville, R. & Dulipovici, A., 2006. The theoretical foundations of knowledge management. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 4(2), pp.83–105.

Bedford, D.A.D., 2012. The role of knowledge management in creating transformational organisations and transformational leaders. *Journal of Knowledge Management Practice*, 13(4), pp.1–14.

Bell, D., 1976. The coming of the post-industrial society. *The Educational Forum*, 40(4), pp.574–579.

Berardi, G., 2002. Commentary on the challenge to change: Participatory research and professional realities. *Society & Natural Resources*, 15(9), pp.847–852.

Bergold, J. & Thomas, S., 2012. Participatory research methods: A methodological approach in motion (110 paragraphs). *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research.* 13(1). Article 30. 27 pages.

Billis, D., 1991. The roots of voluntary agencies: A question of choice, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 20(1), pp.57-69.

Blackler, F. & Regan, S., 2009. Intentionality, agency, change: Practice theory and management. *Management Learning*, 40(2), pp.161–176.

Blaikie, N., 2000. *Designing social research: The logic of anticipation*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bloice, L. & Burnett, S., 2016. Barriers to knowledge sharing in third sector social care: A case study. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 20(1), pp.125–145.

Boari, C. & Riboldazzi, F., 2014. How knowledge brokers emerge and evolve: The role of actors' behaviour. *Research Policy*, 43(4), pp.683–695.

Boder, A., 2006. Collective intelligence: A keystone in knowledge management. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 10(1), pp.81–93.

Boyatzis, R. E., 1998. *Thematic analysis and code development: Transforming qualitative information*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Bradbury-Huang, H., 2010. What is good action research? Why the resurgent interest? *Action Research*, 8(1), pp.93–109.

Braithwaite, R., Cockwill, S., O'Neill, M. & Rebane, D., 2007. Insider participatory action research in disadvantaged post-industrial areas: The experiences of community members as they become community based action researchers. *Action Research*, 5(1), pp.61–74.

Brannick, T. & Coghlan, D., 2007. In defence of being "native": The case for insider academic research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 10(1), pp.59–74.

Brinkerhoff, J.M., 2002. Government – nonprofit partnership: A defining framework. *Public Administration and Development*, 22, pp.19–30.

Brinkley, I., Fauth, R., Mahdon, M. & Theodoropoulou, S., 2009. *Knowledge workers and knowledge work: A knowledge economy programme report.* London: The Work Foundation.

Broadbent, M., 1997. The emerging phenomenon of knowledge management. *Australian library Journal*, 47(November 1996), pp.6–23.

Brown, J.S. & Duguid, P., 1991. Organisational learning and communities-of-practice: Towards a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. *Organization Science*, 2(1), pp.40–57.

Brown, J.S. & Duguid, P., 1998. Organising knowledge. *California Management Review*, 40(3), pp.90–111.

Brown, J.S. & Duguid, P., 2001. Knowledge and organisation: A social-practice perspective. *Organization Science*, 12(2), pp.198–213.

Brown, L.D. & Tandon, R., 1983. Ideology and political economy in inquiry: Action research and participatory research. *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, 19(3), pp.277–294.

Bryman, A., 1988. *Quantity and quality in social research.* London: Unwin Hyman Ltd.

Bryman, A. 1989. *Research methods and organisation studies.* London: Unwin Hyman Ltd.

Buchanan, D.A. & Bryman, A., 2007. Contextualising methods choice in organisational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 10(3), pp.483–501.

Burnage, A. & Persaud, R., 2012. *Exploring social media as a tool for knowledge exchange: The #btr11 experiment.* Birmingham: The Third Sector Research Centre.

Burt, R.S., 1992. *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Burt, R.S., 2004. Structural holes and good ideas. *American Journal of Sociology*, 110(2), pp.349–399.

Burt, E. & Taylor, J., 2003. New technologies, embedded values, and strategic change: Evidence from the UK voluntary sector. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 32(1), pp.115–127.

Butterfield, L.D., Borgen, W.A., Amundson, N.E. & Maglio, A.-S.T., 2005. Fifty years of the critical incident technique: 1954-2004 and beyond. *Qualitative Research*, 5(4), pp.475–497.

C

Cabinet Office, 2012. *Not-for-Profit Advice Services in England.* London: Cabinet Office.

Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF), 2003. *The theory and practice of knowledge brokering in Canada's health system.* Ontario: CHSRF.

Cantu, L.E.Z. & Mondragon, C.E., 2016. Knowledge management in Mexican NPOs: A comparative study in organisations with a local and national presence. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 20(1), pp.69–87.

Caplan, N., 1979. The two-communities theory and knowledge utilisation. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 22(3), pp.459–470.

Carlile, P.R., 2002. A pragmatic view of knowledge and boundaries: Boundary objects in new product development. *Organization Science*, 13(4), pp.442–455.

Carlile, P.R., 2004. Transferring, translating, and transforming: An integrative framework for managing knowledge across boundaries. *Organization Science*, 15(5), pp.555–568.

Cassell, C. & Johnson, P., 2006. Action research : Explaining the diversity. *Human Relations*, 59(6), pp.783–814.

Castro, L., 2015. Strategising across boundaries: Revisiting knowledge brokering activities in French innovation clusters. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 19(5), pp.1048–1068.

Champion, D. & Stowell, F.A., 2003. Validating action research field studies: PEArL, *Systemic Practice and Action Research.* 16(1), pp.21-36.

Champion, D., Stowell, F. & O'Callaghan, A., 2005. Client-Led Information System Creation (CLIC): Navigating the gap. *Information Systems Journal*, 15, pp.213–231.

Charnwood Connect., 2013a. *Charnwood Connect ASTF funding application*. Loughborough: Charnwood Connect.

Charnwood Connect., 2013b. *Charnwood Connect partnership agreement.* Loughborough: Charnwood Connect.

Charnwood Connect., 2013c. *Business plan.* Loughborough: Charnwood Connect.

Chaskin, R.J., 2001. Organisational infrastructure and community capacity: The role of broker organisations. In Hartwell, S.W. & Schutt, R.K., eds. *The organisational response to social problems*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited. pp.143-166.

Chauhan, V., 1989. *Beyond steelbands 'n' samosas: Black young people in the youth service*. Leicester: National Youth Bureau.

Chauhan, V., 2007. Partnership working in the voluntary and community sector. In Harrison, R., Benjamin, C., Curran, S. & Hunter, R., eds. *Leading work with young people.* Milton Keynes: The Open University & Sage Publications Ltd., pp.232-244.

Chauhan, V., Ragsdell, G. & Olphert, W., 2015. Action inquiry for investigating knowledge management within social welfare partnerships. *16th European Conference on Knowledge Management, Udine Italy*, Academic Conferences and Publishing International Limited, pp.905-912. https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/2134/18955.

Checkland, P. & Holwell, S., 1998. Action research: Its nature and validity. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 11(1), pp.9–21.

Christopoulos, D. & Ingold, K., 2011. Distinguishing between political brokerage and political entrepreneurship. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 10(Open access), pp.36–42.

Cillo, P., 2005. Fostering market knowledge use in innovation: The role of internal brokers. *European Management Journal*, 23(4), pp.404–412.

Coghlan, D., 2003. Practitioner research for organisational knowledge: Mechanistic- and organistic-orientated approaches to insider action research. *Management Learning*, 34(4), pp.451–463.

Coghlan, D., 2007. Insider action research doctorates: Generating actionable knowledge. *Higher Education*, 54(2), pp.293–306.

Coghlan, D., 2013. Messy, iterative groping in the swampy lowlands: The challenges of insider scholar-practitioner inquiry. In Shani, A.B., Pasmore, W.A., Woodman, R.W. & Noumair, D.A., eds. *Research in Organisational Change and Development, Volume 21.* Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp.121 – 147.

Coghlan, D. & Brannick, T., 2005. *Doing action research in your own organisation, 2nd edition*. London: Sage Publications.

Coghlan, D. & Brannick, T., 2014. *Doing action research in your own organisation, 4th* edition. London: Sage Publications.

Collier, J., 1945. United States Indian administration as a laboratory of ethnic relations. *Social Research*, 12(3), pp.265–303.

Colombo, G., Dell'Era, C., Frattini, F. & Landoni, P., 2016. Understanding virtual knowledge brokers and their differences with traditional ones. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 20(1), pp.1–23.

Cong, X. & Pandya, K., 2003. Issues of knowledge management in the public sector. *Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 1(2), pp.25–33.

Cook, S. & Brown, J., 1999. Bridging epistemologies: The generative dance between organisational knowledge and organisational knowing. *Organization Science*, 10(4), pp.381–400.

Cookson, G. & Mold, F., 2014. *Social welfare advice services: A review: Final report.* Guildford: University of Surrey.

Cooperrider, D.L. & Srivastva, S., 1987. Appreciative inquiry in organisational life. In *Research in Organisational Change and Development*. Stamford: JAI Press Inc., pp.129–169.

Corfield, A., Paton, R. & Little, S., 2013. Does knowledge management work in NGOs? A longitudinal study. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 36(3), pp.179–188.

Cornwall, A., 2008. Unpacking "participation" models, meanings and practices. *Community Development Journal*, 43(3), pp.269–283.

Corradi, G., Gherardi, S. & Verzelloni, L., 2010. Through the practice lens: Where is the bandwagon of practice-based studies heading? *Management Learning*, 41(3), pp.265–283.

Corry, O., 2010. Defining and theorising the third sector. In Taylor, R., ed. *Third Sector Research*. London: Springer Science + Business Media: Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2010, pp.11–20.

Costley, C., Elliott, G. & Gibbs, P., 2010. *Doing work based research: Approaches to enquiry for insider-researchers.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Cox, A., 2005. What are communities of practice? A comparative review of four seminal works. *Journal of Information Science*, 31(6), pp.527–540.

Cox, A.M., 2012. An exploration of the practice approach and its place in information science. *Journal of Information Science*, 38(2), pp.176–188.

Creswell, J.W., 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Second Edition. London: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J.W., 2009. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.* Third Edition. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Creswell, J.W. & Miller, D.L., 2000. Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), pp.124–130.

Creswell, J.W., 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Fourth Edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Curle, A., 1949. A theoretical approach to action research. *Human Relations*, 2(3), pp.269–280.

Currie, G. & White, L., 2012. Inter-professional barriers and knowledge brokering in an organisational context: The case of healthcare. *Organization Studies*, 33(10), pp.1333–1361.

D

Dalkir, K., 2005. *Knowledge management in theory and practice.* London: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

Davenport, T.H. & Prusak, L., 1998. *Working knowledge: how organisations manage what they know.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Davison, R.M., Martinsons, M.G. & Kock, N., 2004. Principles of canonical action research. *Info Systems J*, 14(1), pp.65–86.

Defillippi, R.J., Arthur, M.B. & Lindsay, V.J., 2006. *Knowledge at work: creative collaboration in the global economy.* Malvern: Blackwell Publishing.

de Guerre, D.W., 2002. Doing action research in one's own organisation: An ongoing conversation over time. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 15(4), pp.331–349.

Dewey, J., 1933. *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process,* revised edition. Boston: D. C. Heath.

Dhir, R., Patel, A.A., Winters, S., Bisceglia, M., Swanson, D., Aamodt, R. & Becich, M.J., 2008. A multidisciplinary approach to honest broker services for tissue banks and clinical data: A pragmatic and practical model. *Cancer*, 113(7), pp.1705–1715.

Dick, B., 2004. Action research literature: Themes and trends. *Action Research*, 2(4), pp. 425–444.

Dixon, N.M., 2000. *Common knowledge: how companies thrive by sharing what they know.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Dobbins, M., Robeson, P., Ciliska, D., Hanna, S., Cameron, R., O'Mara, L., DeCorby, K. & Mercer, S., 2009. A description of a knowledge broker role implemented as part of a randomised controlled trial evaluating three knowledge translation strategies. *Implementation Science*, 4(23), pp.1–9.

Downes, T. & Marchant, T., 2016. The extent and effectiveness of knowledge management in Australian community service organisations. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 20(1), pp.49–68.

Drucker, P.F., 1999. Knowledge-worker productivity: The biggest challenge. *California Management Review*, 41(7), pp.79–94.

Dwyer, S.C. & Buckle, J.L., 2009. The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), pp.54–63.

E

Eden, C. & Huxham, C., 1996. Action research for management research. *British Journal of Management*, 7(1), pp.75–86.

Eimhjellen, I.S., 2014. Internet communication: Does it strengthen local voluntary organisations? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 43(5), pp.890–909.

Evans, S.H. & Clarke, P., 2009. Training volunteers to run information technologies: A case study of effectiveness at community food pantries. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 39(3), pp.524–535.

Evans, M., Dalkir, K. & Bidian, C., 2014. A holistic view of the knowledge life cycle: the knowledge management cycle (KMC) model. *The Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 12(2), pp.148–160.

Evered, R. & Louis, M.R., 1981. Alternative perspectives in the organisational sciences: "Inquiry from the inside" and "inquiry from the outside". *Academy of Management Review*, 6(3), pp. 85–395.

Evers, A., 1995. Part of the welfare mix: The third sector as an intermediate area. *Voluntas*, 6(2), pp.159–182.

F

Factor, F., Chauhan, V. & Pitts, J. (eds.), 2001. *The RHP companion to working with young people.* Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing.

Faist, T., 2014. Brokerage in cross-border mobility: Social mechanisms and the (re)production of social inequalities. *Social Inclusion*, 2(4), pp.38–52.

Fals Borda, O., 2006. Participatory (action) research in social theory: Origins and challenges. In Reason, P., & Bradbury, H., eds. *The handbook of action research, concise paperback edition.* London: Sage Publications. pp.27-37.

Farr, M., Cressey, P., Milner, S., Abercrombie, N. & Jaynes, B., 2014. *Proving the value of advice : A study of the impact of Citizens' Advice Bureau services.* Bath: University of Bath.

Feldman, M.S. & Orlikowski, W.J., 2011. Theorising practice and practicing theory. *Organization Science*, 22(5), pp.1240–1253.

Fereday, J. & Muir-Cochrane, E., 2006. Demonstrating rigour using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), pp.80–92.

Fisher, C., 2010. *Knowledge brokering and intermediary concepts: Analysis of an e-discussion on the Knowledge Brokers' Forum.* Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

Flanagan, J.C., 1954. The critical incident technique. *Psychological Review*, 51(4), pp.327–358.

Fleming, L., Mingo, S. & Chen, D., 2007. Collaborative brokerage, generative creativity, and creative success. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 52(3), pp.443–475.

Ford, D.P. & Chan, Y.E., 2003. Knowledge sharing in a multi-cultural setting: A case study. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 1(1), pp.11–27.

Foster, M., 1972. An introduction to the theory and practice of action research in work organisations. *Human Relations*, 25, pp.529–556.

Franssila, H., 2013. The role of knowledge intermediaries in the management of experience knowledge. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 20(4), pp.232–242.

Freire, P. 1972a. *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* London: Penguin Books.

Freire, P. 1972b. *Cultural action for freedom.* London: Penguin Books.

Freire, P. 1985. *The politics of education: Culture, power and liberation*. London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

French, W.L. & Bell, C.H. 1990. *Organisation development: Behavioural science intervention for organisation improvement*, 4th edition. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Friedman, V.J. & Rogers, T., 2009. There is nothing so theoretical as good action research. *Action Research*, 7(1), pp.31–47.

G

Galea, A., 2009. Breaking the barriers of insider research in occupational health and safety. *Journal of Health & Safety Research & Practice*, 1(1), pp.3–12.

Geertz, C., 1960. The Javanese Kijaji: The changing role of a cultural broker. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2(2), pp.228–249.

Genat, B., 2009. Building emergent situated knowledges in participatory action research. *Action Research*, 7(1), pp.101–115.

Gherardi, S. & Nicolini, D., 2002. Learning in a constellation of interconnected practices: Canon or dissonance? *Journal of Management Studies*, 39(4), pp.419–436.

Gilchrist, A., 2007. Linking partnerships and networks. In Harrison, R., Benjamin, C., Curran, S. & Hunter, R., eds. *Leading work with young people.* Milton Keynes: The Open University & Sage Publications Ltd., pp.217-231.

Gibson, W.J. & Brown, A., 2009. *Working with qualitative data.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Giddens, A., 1984. *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gillespie, M., Dobbie, L., Mulvey, G., Gallacher, Y. & Campbell, J., 2007. *Money advice for vulnerable groups: Final evaluation report.* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Golafshani, N., 2003. Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), pp.597–606.

Gordon, R. & Grant, D., 2004. Knowledge management or management of knowledge? Why people interested in knowledge management need to consider Foucault and the construct of power. *Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science*, 3(2), pp.27–38.

Gould, R.V. & Fernandez, R.M., 1989. Structures of mediation: A formal approach to brokerage in transaction networks. *Sociological Method*, 19, pp.89-126.

Grant, K., 2011. Knowledge management, an enduring but confusing fashion. *Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 9(2), pp.117–131.

Grant, S. & Humphries, M., 2006. Critical evaluation of appreciative inquiry: Bridging an apparent paradox. *Action Research*, 4(4), pp.401–418.

Greenhalgh, T. & Wieringa, S., 2011. Is it time to drop the "knowledge translation" metaphor? A critical literature review. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 104(12), pp.501–9.

Griffith, M., 2007. *How online communities can make the net work for the VCS.* London: NCVO Third Sector Foresight.

Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S., 1982. Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *Educational Communication & Technology*, 30(4), pp.233–252.

Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S., 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S., eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd. pp. 105–117.

Guldberg, K. R., Mackness, J., Makriyannis, E. & Tait, C., 2013. Knowledge management and value creation in a third sector organisation. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 20(3), pp.113–122.

Gustaven, B., 2003. Action research and the problem of the single case. *Concepts and Transformations*, 1(2), pp.93-99.

Gustavsen, B., 2008. Action research, practical challenges and the formation of theory. *Action Research*, 6(4), pp.421–437.

H

Haas, A., 2015. Crowding at the frontier: Boundary spanners, gatekeepers and knowledge brokers. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 19(5), pp.1029–1047.

Haldin-Herrgard, T., 2000. Difficulties in diffusion of tacit knowledge in organisations. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 1(4), pp.357–365.

Halley, A.A., 1997. Applications of boundary theory to the concept of service integration in the human services. *Administration in Social Work*, 21(3–4), pp.145–168.

Hargadon, A.B., 1998. Firms as knowledge brokers: Lessons in pursuing continuous innovation. *California Management Review*, 40(3), pp.209–227.

Hargadon, A.B., 2002. Brokering knowledge: Linking learning and innovation. *Research in Organizational Behaviour*, 24(July), pp.41–85.

Hargadon, A. & Sutton, R.I., 1997. Technology brokering and innovation in a product development firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42(4), pp.716–749.

Hargadon, A. & Sutton, R.I., 2000. Building an innovation factory. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(3), pp.157–166, 217.

Harris, B., 2010. Voluntary action and the state in historical perspective. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 1(1), pp.25–40.

Harris, K. & McCabe, A., 2017. *Community action and social media: A review of the literature.* Birmingham: The Third Sector Research Centre.

Heen, H., 2005. About feelings in action research: An experiment in first-person inquiry. *Action Research*, 3(3), pp.263–278.

Heisig, P., 2009. Harmonisation of knowledge management: Comparing 160 KM frameworks around the globe. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 13 (4), pp.4-31.

Henderson, P., Jones, D. & Thomas, D.N., 1980. *The boundaries of change in community work.* London: George Allen & Unwin.

Hendriks, P.H.J., 1999. Why share knowledge ? The influence of ICT on the motivation for knowledge sharing. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 6(2), pp.91–100.

HM Treasury., 2002. *The role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery: A cross-cutting review.* London: HM Treasury.

HM Treasury & Cabinet Office, 2007. *The future role of the third sector in social and economic generation: Final report.* Norwich: The Stationary Office.

Herr, K. & Anderson, G.L., 2005. *The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Hislop, D., 2003. Knowledge integration processes and the appropriation of innovations. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 6(3), pp.159–172.

Hislop, D., 2010. Knowledge management as an ephemeral management fashion? *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 14(6), pp.779–790.

Hislop, D., 2013. *Knowledge management in organisations: A critical introduction*, 3rd edition. Oxford: OUP.

Hoens, A.M. & Li, L.C., 2014. The knowledge broker's "fit" in the world of knowledge translation. *Physiotherapy Canada*, 66(3), pp.223–224.

Hofstede, G., 1998. Attitudes, values and organisational culture: Disentangling the concepts. *Organization Studies*, 19(3), pp.477–493.

Hovland, I., 2003. *Knowledge management and organisational learning: An international development perspective: An annotated bibliography.* Working Paper 224. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Huck, J., Al, R. & Rathi, D., 2011. Finding KM solutions for a volunteer-based non-profit organisation. *Vine*, 41(1), pp.26–40.

Huczynski, A.A. & Buchanan, D.A. 1991. *Organisational Behaviour: An introductory text*. London: Prentice Hall.

Hudson, M., 1995. *Managing without profit: The art of managing third sector organisations*. London: Penguin Books.

Hume, C. & Hume, M., 2008. The strategic role of knowledge management in nonprofit organisations. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 13(2), pp.129–140.

Hume, C. & Hume, M., 2016. What about us? Exploring small to medium Australian not for-profit firms and knowledge management. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 20(1), pp.104–124.

Humphrey, C., 2007. Insider-outsider: Activating the hyphen. *Action Research*, 5(1), pp.11–26.

Hurley, T.A. & Green, C.W., 2005. Knowledge management and the nonprofit industry: A within and between approach. *Journal of Knowledge Management Practice*, 6(1), pp.1–10.

Huxham, C. & Vangen, S., 2001. Leadership in the shaping and implementation of collaborative agendas: How things happen in a (not quite) joined up world. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(6), pp.1159–1175.

Huzzard, T., Ahlberg, B.M. & Ekman, M., 2010. Constructing inter-organisational collaboration: The action researcher as boundary subject. *Action Research*, 8(3), pp. 293–314.

I

Ipe, M., 2003. Knowledge sharing in organisations: A conceptual framework. *Human Resource Development Review*, 2(4), pp.337–359.

Ishiyama, N., 2016. Role of knowledge brokers in communities of practice in Japan. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 20(6), pp.1302–1317.

J

Jain, A.K. & Jeppesen, H.J., 2013. Knowledge management practices in a public sector organisation: The role of leaders' cognitive styles. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(3), pp.347–362.

Jashapara, A., 2005. The emerging discourse of knowledge management: A new dawn for information science research? *Journal of Information Science, 31 (2),* pp.136–148.

Jashapara, A., 2011. *Knowledge management: An integrated approach,* 2nd edition. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.

Jasimuddin, S.M., 2006. Disciplinary roots of knowledge management: A theoretical review. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 14(2), pp.171–180.

Jaskyte, K. & Dressler, W.W., 2005. Organisational culture and innovation in non-profit human service organisations. *Administration in Social Work*, 29(2), pp.23–41.

Jeavons, T.H., 1992. When the management is the message: Relating values to management practice in non-profit organisations. *Non-profit Management & Leadership*, 4(2), pp.403–416.

Jones, G., Meegan, R., Kennett, P. & Croft, J., The uneven impact of austerity on the voluntary and community sector: A tale of two cities. *Urban Studies*, 53(April 2015), pp.1–17.

K

Karner, S., Rohracher, H., Bock, B., Hoekstra, F. & Moschitz, H., 2011. *Knowledge brokerage in communities of practice: Synthesis report on literature review.* Wagenin University: Seventh Framework Programme.

Keatinge, D., 2002. Versatility and flexibility: Attributes of the critical incident technique in nursing research. *Nursing & health sciences*, 4(1–2), pp.33–39.

Kemmis, S., 2009. Action research as a practice- based practice. *Educational Action Research*, 17(3), pp.463–474.

Kendall, J., 2003. *The voluntary sector: Comparative perspectives in the UK.* London: Routledge.

Kenneally, A., 2013. The lived experience of insider action research in a local government setting. In *Proceedings of the 3rd. National Local Government Researchers' Forum*. Adelaide, South Australia. 16 pages.

Kenrick, J., 2009. *Young people's access to advice: The evidence.* London: Youth Access.

Kent, M.L., Sommerfeldt, E.J. & Saffer, A.J., 2016. Social networks, power, and public relations: Tertius iungens as a co-creational approach to studying relationship networks. *Public Relations Review*, 42(1), pp.91–100.

Kim, S., Suh, E. & Jun, Y., 2011. Building a knowledge brokering system using social network analysis: A case study of the Korean financial industry. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 38(12), pp.14633–14649.

Kimble, C., Grenier, C. & Goglio-Primard, K., 2010. Innovation and knowledge sharing across professional boundaries: Political interplay between boundary objects and brokers. *International Journal of Information Management*, 30, pp.437–444.

Kimble, C. & Hildreth, P., 2005. Dualities, distributed communities of practice and knowledge management. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 9(4), pp.102–113.

Kingston, J.K.C., 2012. Tacit knowledge: Capture, sharing, and unwritten assumptions. *Journal of Knowledge Management Practice*, 13(3), pp.1–12.

Kippin, H., 2015. *Supporting social change: A new funding ecology.* London: Collaborate, Big Lottery Fund & Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Knight, C. & Lyall, C., 2013. Knowledge brokers: The role of intermediaries in producing research impact. *Evidence and Policy*, 9(3), pp.309–316.

Kock, N., 2004. The three threats of action research: A discussion of methodological antidotes in the context of an information systems study. *Decision Support Systems*, 37(2), pp.265–286.

Kolb, D.A., 1984. *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kong, E., 2007. The strategic importance of intellectual capital in the non-profit sector. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 8(4), pp.721–731.

Kong, E., 2010. Analysing BSC and IC's usefulness in non-profit organisations. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 11(3), pp.284–304.

Koshy, V., 2005. *Action research for improving practice: A practical guide.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Kothari, A., MacLean, L., Edwards, N. & Hobbs, A., 2011. Indicators at the interface: Managing policymaker-researcher collaboration. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 9(3), pp.203–214.

Krishnaveni, R. & Sujatha, R., 2012. Communities of practice: An influencing factor for effective knowledge transfer in organisations. *The IUP Journal of Knowledge Management*, 10(1), pp.26–40.

Kvale, S., 1995. The social construction of validity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1(1), pp.19–40.

Kwok, R., 2014. *Going digital: Five lessons for charities developing technology-based innovations.* London: Nesta Impact Investments.

L

Lambe, P., 2011. The unacknowledged parentage of knowledge management. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 15(2), pp.175–197.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E., 1991. *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lawrie, A. 2002. *The complete guide to creating and managing new projects for voluntary organisations.* London: Directory of Social Change.

Lettieri, E., Borga, F. & Savoldelli, A., 2004. Knowledge management in non-profit organisations. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 8(6), pp.16–30.

Levin, M., 2012. Academic integrity in action research. *Action Research*, 10(2), pp.133–149.

Lewin, K., 1946. Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues*, 2(4), pp.34–46.

Lewis, D., 2012. Across the little divide? Life histories of public and third sector "boundary crossers". *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 1(2), pp.158–177.

Lingo, E.L. & O'Mahony., 2010. Nexus work: Brokerage on creative projects, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 55(1), pp. 47-81.

Lipsky, M., 1980. *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Loew, R., Bleimann, U. & Walsh, P., 2004. Knowledge broker network based on communication between humans. *Campus-Wide Information Systems*, 21(5), pp.185–190.

Lomas, J., 2007. The in-between world of knowledge brokering. *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)*, 334(7585), pp.129–132.

Long, J.C., Cunningham, F.C. & Braithwaite, J., 2013. Bridges, brokers and boundary spanners in collaborative networks: A systematic review. *BMC health services research*, 13(158), pp.1–13.

M

Macmillan, R., 2012. *"Distinction" in the third sector.* Birmingham: Third Sector Research Centre.

Malinovskyte, M., Mothe, C., & Rüling, C., 2014. Knowledge brokerage: Towards an integrative conceptual framework. Paper presented at the 23rd AIMS Conference, 25-27 May, Rennes (France), pp.1-24.

Mansell, R. & Steinmuller, W.E., 2000. *Mobilising the information society: Strategies for growth and opportunity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mansingh, G., Osei-Bryson, K.M. & Reichgelt, H., 2009. Issues in knowledge access, retrieval and sharing: Case studies in a Caribbean health sector. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 36(2), pp.2853–2863.

Markus, L.M., 2001. Toward a theory of knowledge reuse: Types of knowledge reuse situations and factors in reuse success. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 18 (1), pp.57-93.

Marsden, P.V., 1982. Brokerage behaviour in restricted exchange networks. In Marsden, P.V. & Lin, N., eds. *Social structure and network analysis.* London: Sage Publications. pp.201-218.

Marshall, J., 1999. Living life as inquiry. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 12(2), pp.155–171.

Marshall, J., 2011a. Images of changing practice through reflective action research. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 24(2), pp.244–256.

Marshall, J., 2011b. The practice and politics of living inquiry. In Pedler, M., ed. *Action Learning in Practice*. Farnham, Surrey: Gower. pp.173–182.

Marshall, J. & Reason, P., 1993. Adult learning in collaborative action research: Reflections on the supervision process. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 15(2), pp.117–132.

Massaro, M., Dumay, J. & Garlatti, A., 2015. Public sector knowledge management: A structured literature review. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 19(3), pp.530–558.

Matschke, C., Moskaliuk, J. & Cress, U., 2012. Knowledge exchange using Web 2.0 technologies in NGOs. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 16(1), pp.159–176.

Maurer, M. & Githens, R.P., 2010. Toward a reframing of action research for human resource and organisation development: Moving beyond problem solving and toward dialogue. *Action Research*, 8(3), pp.267–292.

Mbiti, J., 1970. *African religions and philosophies.* New York: Doubleday & Co.

McElroy, M. W., 2003. *The new knowledge management: Complexity, learning, and sustainable innovation.* Burlington, MA: KMCI Press/Butterworth-Heinemann.

McIver, D., Lengnick-Hall, C.A., Lengnick-Hall, M.L. & Ramachandran, I., 2012. Integrating knowledge and knowing: A framework for understanding knowledge-in-practice. *Human Resource Management Review*, 22(2), pp.86–99.

McNiff, J & Whitehead, J., 2002. *Action research: Principles and practice*. London: Routledge Falmer.

McNiff, J. & Whitehead, J., 2009. *Doing and writing action research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

McTaggart, R., 1994. Participatory action research: Issues in theory and practice. *Educational Action Research*, 2(3), pp.313–337.

Meissner, J.O. & Wolf, P., 2008. Third generation knowledge management in action: Relational practices in Swiss companies. In M. Ackerman et al., eds. *IFIP – The International Federation for Information Processing, Volume 270*. Boston: Springer, pp.125–137.

Meyer, M., 2010. The rise of the knowledge broker. *Science Communication*, 32(1), pp.118–127.

Moore, B., 2007. Original sin and insider research. *Action Research*, 5(1), pp.27–39.

Moretti, C.Z. & Streck, D.R., 2015. Homage to Fals Borda: A report from III international symposium of action and participatory research. *International Journal of Action Research*, 11(3), pp.364–374.

Morgan, G., 1997. *Images of organisation*. London: Sage Publications.

Mullins, L.J. & Christy, G., 2016. *Management and organisational behaviour*. Harlow: Pearson.

Munro, E. & Mynott, B., 2014. *Analysis of transforming local infrastructure.* Sheffield: NAVCA.

N

Narayanaswamy, L., 2013. Problematising "Knowledge-for-Development". *Development and Change*, 44(5), pp.1065–1086.

National Audit Office, 2014. *The impact of funding reductions on local authorities.* London: National Audit Office.

Neilsen, E.H., 2006. But let us not forget John Collier: Commentary on David Bargal's "personal and intellectual influences leading to Lewin's paradigm on action research". *Action Research*, 4(4), pp.389–399.

Newell, S., 2015. Managing knowledge and managing knowledge work: What we know and what the future holds. *Journal of Information Technology*, 30(1), pp.1–17.

Newton, B. & Hartley, V., 2005. *Appreciative enquiry: A practical guide.* Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies.

Nicolini, D., 2012. *Practice theory, work and organisation: An introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nonaka, I., 1994. A dynamic theory of organisational knowledge creation. *Organisation Science,* 5(1), pp.14-37.

Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, H., 1995. *The knowledge creating company.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nooshinfard, F. & Nemati-Anaraki, L., 2014. Success factors of inter-organisational knowledge sharing: A proposed framework. *The Electronic Library*, 32(2), pp.239–261.

O

Obstfeld, D., 2005. Social networks, the tertius iungens orientation, and involvement in innovation, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(1), pp.100-130.

Obstfeld, D., Borgatti, S.P. & Davis, J.P., 2014. Brokerage as a process: Decoupling third party action from social network structure. In Brass, D.J., Labianca, G.J., Mehra, A., Halgin D.S. & Borgatti, S.P., eds. *Contemporary perspectives on organisational social networks: Research in the sociology of organisations, volume 40.* Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing. pp.135-159.

Orlikowski, W.J., 2002. Knowing in practice: Enacting a collective capability in distributed organising. *Organization Science*, 13(3), pp.249–273.

Orr, J.L., 1996. *Talking about machines*. New York: ILLR Press/Cornell University Press.

Ortrun, Z.-S., 2002. A model for designing action learning and action research programs. *The Learning Organization*, 9(3/4), p.143.

Osterlund, C. & Carlile, P.R., 2003. How practice matters: A relational view of knowledge sharing. In *Proceedings of the first conference on Communities and Technologies*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp.1–22.

P

Panel on the Independence of the Voluntary Sector, 2015. *An independent mission: The voluntary sector in 2015.* London: The Baring Foundation.

Paoli, A.D. & Addeo, F., 2011. Social network research in strategy and organisation: A typology. *IUP Journal of Knowledge Management*, 9(3), pp.74–97.

Park, R.E., 1928. Human migration and the marginal man. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 33(6), pp.881–893.

Patel, A. & Mottram, C., 2014. *Civil legal advice mandatory gateway: Overarching research summary.* London: Ministry of Justice.

Pawlowski, S.D. & Robey, D., 2004. Bridging user organisations: Knowledge brokering and the work of brokering technology professionals. *MIS Quarterly*, 28(4), pp.645–672.

Pemsel, S. & Wiewiora, A., 2013. Project management office a knowledge broker in project-based organisations. *International Journal of Project Management*, 31(1), pp.31–42.

Peters, T. J. & Waterman Jr. R. H., 1982. *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies*. London: Harper & Row.

Pettit, C., Ewing, S., Coffey, B., Geraghty, P., Hocking, G., Meyers, N., Butters, S. & Weston, M., 2011. Exploring the potential of knowledge brokering to enhance natural resource management: Findings from the catchment knowledge exchange project in Victoria. *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management*, 18(4), pp.233–247.

Phipps, D. & Morton, S., 2013. Qualities of knowledge brokers: Reflections from practice. *Evidence and Policy*, 9(2), pp.255–265.

Polanyi, M., 1967. *The tacit dimension.* London: RKP.

Pollitt, C., Birchall, J. & Putman, K., 1998. *Decentralising public service management*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Pretty, J.N., 1995. Participatory learning for sustainable agriculture. *World Development*, 23(8), pp.1247–1263.

Q

Quintane, E. & Carnabuci, G., 2016. How do brokers broker? Tertius gaudens, tertius iungens, and the temporality of structural holes. *Organization Science*, 27(6), pp.1343–1360.

R

Ragab, M.A.F. & Arisha, A., 2013. Knowledge management and measurement: A critical review. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(6), pp.873–901.

Ragsdell, G., 2009a. Participatory action research: A winning strategy for KM. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 13(6), pp.564–576.

Ragsdell, G., 2009b. Inhibitors and enhancers to knowledge sharing: Lessons from the voluntary sector. *Journal of Knowledge Management Practice,* 10 (1), 1-10.

Ragsdell, G., 2013. Voluntary sector organisations: Untapped sources of lessons for knowledge management. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Intellectual Capital, Knowledge Management & Organizational Learning*, pp.349-354.

Ragsdell, G., Espinet, E.O. & Norris, M., 2014. Knowledge management in the voluntary sector: A focus on sharing project know-how and expertise. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 12(4), pp.351–361.

Rapoport, R.N., 1970. Three dilemmas in action research with special reference to the Tavistock experience. *Human Relations*, 23(6), pp.499–513.

Rathi, D., Given, L.M. & Forcier, E., 2014. Inter-organisational partnerships and knowledge sharing: The perspective of non-profit organisations. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 18(5), pp.867–885.

Rathi, D., Given, L.M. & Forcier, E., 2016. Knowledge needs in the non-profit sector: An evidence-based model of organisational practices. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 20(1), pp.23–48.

Raub, S. & Ruling, C.-C., 2002. *Process moves in the intra-organisational diffusion of knowledge management: Preliminary findings from a study on CKO effectiveness.* Working paper serie RMT (WPS 02-07).

Ravitch, S.M. & Wirth, K., 2007. Developing a pedagogy of opportunity for students and their teachers: Navigations and negotiations in insider action research. *Action Research*, 5(1), pp.75–91.

Reason, P. & Bradbury, H. (eds), 2001. *The handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Reason, P. & Bradbury, H. (eds), 2006. *The handbook of action research: The concise paperback edition*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Reason, P. & Marshall, J., 1987. Research as a personal process. In Boud, D. & Griffin, V., eds. *Appreciating adult learning: From the learner's perspective*. London: Kogan Page. pp.112–126.

Rees, J., Mullins, D. & Bovaird, T., 2012. *Partnership working.* Birmingham: The Third Sector Research Centre.

Renshaw, S. & Krishnaswamy, G., 2009. Critiquing the knowledge management strategies of non-profit organisations in Australia. In *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology (WASET), 37*. pp.456–465.

Retna, K.S. & Ng, P.T., 2011. Communities of practice: Dynamics and success factors. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 32(1), pp.41–59.

Revans, R.W., 1982. What is action learning? *Journal of Management Development*, 1(3), pp.64–75.

Revans, R.W., 1983. Action learning: Kindling the touch paper. *Management Decision*, 21(6), pp.3–10.

Riege, A., 2005. Three-dozen knowledge-sharing barriers managers must consider. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 9(3), pp.18–35.

Riemer, J.W., 1977. Varieties of opportunistic research. *Urban Life*, 5(4), pp.467–477.

Rivera, G. & Cox, A., 2014. An evaluation of the practice based approach to understanding the adoption and use of information systems. *Journal of Documentation*, 70(5), pp.878–901.

Rivinus, C., 2014. IT project prioritisation: A practical application of knowledge management principles. *Business Information Review*, 30(4), pp.196–203.

Robertson, M. & Hammersley, G.O., 2000. Knowledge management practices within a knowledge-intensive firm: The significance of the people management dimension. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 24(2), pp.241–253.

Rooney, P., 2005. Researching from the inside: Does it compromise validity? A discussion. *Level3*, (3), pp.1–19.

Roth, J., Shani, A.B. & Leary, M.M., 2007. Insider action research: Facing the challenges of new capability development within a biopharma company. *Action Research*, 5(1), pp.41–60.

Rothwell, W.J. & Sullivan, R., eds. 2005. *Practising organisation development: A guide for consultants.* San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

Rushmer, R.K., Hunter, D.J. & Steven, A., 2014. Using interactive workshops to prompt knowledge exchange: A realist evaluation of a knowledge to action initiative. *Public Health*, 128(6), pp.552–560.

S

Saidel, J.R. & Cour, S., 2003. Information technology and the voluntary sector workplace. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 32(1), pp.5–24.

Salamon, L.M. & Anheier, H.K., 1997. *The third world's third sector in comparative perspective.* Working Papers of The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, No. 24. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies.

Salamon, L.M. & Sokolowski, S.W., 2016. Beyond non-profits: Re-conceptualising the third sector. *Voluntas*, 27(4), pp.1515–1545.

Sandberg, F. & Wallo, A., 2013. The interactive researcher as a virtual participant: A Habermasian interpretation. *Action Research*, 11(2), pp. 194–212.

Scarbrough, H., Robertson, M. & Swan, J., 2005 Professional media and management fashion: The case of knowledge management. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 21, pp. 197–208.

Schatzki, T.R., 2012. A primer on practices: Theory and research. In Higgs, J., Barnett, R., Billett, S., Hutchings, M. & Trede, F., eds. *Practice-based education: Perspectives and strategies*. Rotterdam: SensePublishers. pp.13–26.

Schatzki, T.R., Cetina, K.K. & Savigny, E. von eds., 2005. *The practice turn in contemporary theory.* London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. E-library.

Schein, E.H., 1990. Organisational culture. *American Psychologist*, 45(2), pp.109–119.

Schein, E.H., 1996. Culture: The missing concept in organisation studies. *Administration Science Quarterly*, 41(2), pp.229–240.

Schlierf, K. & Meyer, M., 2013. Situating knowledge intermediation: Insights from science shops and knowledge brokers. *Science and Public Policy*, 40(4), pp.430–441.

Schön, D.A., 1991. *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in practice*. London: Basic Books.

Schön, D.A., 1992. The theory of inquiry: Dewey's legacy to education. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 22(2), pp.119-139.

Schön, D.A., 1995. Knowing-in-action: The new scholarship requires a new epistemology. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 27(6), pp.27–34.

Senge, P.M., 2006. *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organisation*. London: Random House.

Serenko, A. & Bontis, N., 2013. The intellectual core and impact of the knowledge management academic discipline. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(1), pp.137–155.

Serenko, A., Bontis, N., Booker, L., Sadeddin, K. & Hardle, T., 2010. A scientometric analysis of knowledge management and intellectual capital academic literature (1994-2008). *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 14 (1), pp.3–23.

Shani, A.B. & Pasmore, W.A., 1985. Organisational inquiry: Towards a new model of action research process. In Warrick, D.D., ed. *Contemporary organisation development: Current thinking and applications.* Glenview, Illinois Scott: Foresman & Co. pp.438-448.

Shi, W. (Stone), Markoczy, L. & Dess, G.G., 2009. The role of middle management in the strategy process: Group affiliation, structural holes, and tertius iungens. *Journal of Management*, 35(6), pp.1453–1480.

Shin, M., 2004. A framework for evaluating economics of knowledge management systems. *Information & Management*, 42(1), pp.179–196.

Sigafoos, J. & Morris, D., 2013. *The impact of legal aid cuts on advice-giving charities in Liverpool: First results.* Liverpool: Charity Law & Policy Unit.

Simmel, G., 1902a. The number of members as determining the sociological form of the group, I. *American Journal of Sociology*, 8(1), pp.1–46.

Simmel, G., 1902b. The number of members as determining the sociological form of the group, II. *American Journal of Sociology*, 8(2), pp.158–196.

Simmel, G., 1950. *The sociology of Georg Simmel.* Glencoe: The Free Press.

Smith, S. & Ward, V., 2015. The role of boundary maintenance and blurring in a UK collaborative research project: How researchers and health service managers made sense of new ways of working. *Social Science and Medicine*, 130, pp.225–233.

Snoeren, M.M., Niessen, T.J. & Abma, T. a., 2011. Engagement enacted: Essentials of initiating an action research project. *Action Research*, 10(2), pp.189–204.

Soekijad, M., Huis in't Veld, M. A. A. & Enserink, B., 2004. Learning and knowledge processes in inter-organisational communities of practice. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 11(1), pp.3-12.

Spender, J.C., 1996. Making knowledge the basis of a dynamic theory of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 17(Winter Special Issue), pp.45–62.

Spiro, E.S., Acton, R.M. & Butts, C.T., 2013. Extended structures of mediation: Re-examining brokerage in dynamic networks. *Social Networks*, 35(1), pp.130–143.

Srivastava, P. & Hopwood, N., 2009. A practical iterative framework for qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), pp.76–84.

Stadtler, L. & Probst, G., 2012. How broker organisations can facilitate public–private partnerships for development. *European Management Journal*, 30(1), pp.32–46.

Star, S.L. & Griesemer, J.R., 1989. Institutional ecology, "Translations" and boundary objects: Amateurs and professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39. *Social Studies of Science*, 19, pp.387–420.

Stenhouse, L., 1975. *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. London: Heinemann.

Sun, P., 2010. Five critical knowledge management organisational themes. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 14(4), pp.507–523.

Susman, G.I. & Evered, R.D., 1978. An assessment of the scientific merits of action research. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23(4), pp.582–603.

Swan, J. & Scarbrough, H., 2002. The paradox of "knowledge management." *Knowledge Management and Information Technology*, III(1), pp.11–14.

Swan, J., Scarbrough, H. & Newell, S., 2010. Why don't (or do) organisations learn from projects? *Management Learning*, 41(3), pp.325–344.

Swan, J., Scarbrough, H. & Robertson, M., 2002. The construction of "communities of practice" in the management of innovation. *Management Learning*, 33(4), pp.477–496.

Swift, P., Johnson, K., Mason, V., Shiyyab, N. & Porter, S., 2013. *What happens when people with learning disabilities need advice about the law?* Bristol: University of Bristol.

T

Taylor, J. & Burt, E., 2005. Voluntary organisations as e-democratic actors: Political identity, legitimacy and accountability and the need for new research. *Policy and Politics*, 33(4), pp.601–616.

Te'eni, D. & Young, D.R., 2003. The changing role of nonprofits in the network economy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 32(3), pp.397–414.

Teng, J.T.C. & Song, S., 2011. An exploratory examination of knowledge-sharing behaviours: Solicited and voluntary. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 15(1), pp.104–117.

The Low Commission, 2014. *Tackling the advice deficit: A strategy for access to advice and legal support on social welfare law in England and Wales.* London: LAG Education and Service Trust Ltd.

Thiollent, M., 2011. Action research and participatory research: An overview. *International Journal of Action Research*, 7(2), pp.160–174.

Thompson, G.N., Estabrooks, C.A. & Degner, L.F., 2006. Clarifying the concepts in knowledge transfer: A literature review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 53(6), pp.691–701.

Ticher, P., Maison, A. & Jones, M., 2002. *Leading the way to ICT success: The report of issues affecting the use of ICT in the voluntary and community sectors.* London: London Advice Services Alliance.

Tripp, D., 2005. Action research: A methodological introduction. *Education and Research*, 31(3), pp.443–466.

Trude, A., 2009. *Cost of quality legal advice: Literature review.* London: Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees.

Trusson, C., Hislop, D. & Doherty, N.F., 2017. The rhetoric of "knowledge hoarding": A research-based critique. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 21(6), pp.1540–1558.

Tushman, M.L., 1977. Special boundary roles in the innovation process. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22(4), pp.587–605.

U

Urquhart, R., Porter, G.A. & Grunfeld, E., 2011. Reflections on knowledge brokering within a multidisciplinary research team. *The Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 31(4), pp.283–90.

V

van der Riet, M., 2008. Participatory research and the philosophy of social science. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(4), pp.546 –565.

van der Wal, Z., De Graaf, G. & Lasthuizen, K., 2008. What's valued most? Similarities and differences between the organisational values of the public and private sector. *Public Administration*, 86(2), pp.465–482.

Vangen, S., 2017. Developing practice-oriented theory on collaboration: A paradox lens. *Public Administration Review*, 77(2), pp.263–272.

Vangen, S. & Huxham, C., 2003. Enacting leadership for collaborative advantage: Dilemmas of ideology and pragmatism in the activities of partnership. *British Journal of Management*, 14(1), pp.S61–S76.

Vernet, A., 2012. Tertius gaudens vs. tertius iungens: The dynamics of market changes, *Paper presented at DRUID 2012.* Copenhagen, Denmark, pp.1-44.

Verona, G., Prandelli, E. & Sawhney, M., 2006. Innovation and virtual environments: Towards virtual knowledge brokers. *Organization Studies*, 27(6), pp.765-788.

W

Wagner, B.A., 2003. Learning and knowledge transfer in partnering: An empirical case study. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 7(2), pp.97–113.

Walter, J., Lechner, C. & Kellermanns, F.W., 2007. Knowledge transfer between and within alliance partners: Private versus collective benefits of social capital. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(7), pp.698–710.

Wang, S. & Noe, R.A., 2010. Knowledge sharing: A review and directions for future research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20(2), pp.115–131.

Ward, V.L., House, A.O. & Hamer, S., 2009a. Knowledge brokering: Exploring the process of transferring knowledge into action. *BMC Health Services Research*, 9(12), pp.1–6.

Ward, V., House, A. & Hamer, S., 2009b. Knowledge brokering: The missing link in the evidence to action chain? *Evidence and Policy*, 5(3), pp.267–279.

Ward, V., Smith, S., House, A. & Hamer, S., 2012. Exploring knowledge exchange: A useful framework for practice and policy. *Social Science and Medicine*, 74(3), pp.297–304.

Weick, K.E., Sutcliffe, K.M. & Obstfeld, D., 2005. Organising and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science*, 16(4), pp.409–421.

Wenger, E., 1998a. *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E., 2010. Communities of practice and social learning systems: The career of a concept. In *Social learning systems and communities of practice*. London: Springer. pp.179–198.

Wenger, E. & Snyder, W.M., 2000. Communities of practice: The organisational frontier. *Harvard Business Review*, 78, pp.139–145.

Wiggan, J. & Talbot, C., 2006. *The benefits of welfare rights advice: A review of the literature.* National Association of Welfare Rights Advisors.

Wiig, K. M., 1993. *Knowledge management foundations: Thinking about thinking: How people and organisations create, represent, and use knowledge.* Arlington, USA: Schema Press.

Wiig, K.M., 1997. Knowledge management: Where did it come from and where will it go? *Expert Systems with Applications*, 13(1), pp.1–14.

Williams, P., 2002. The competent boundary spanner. *Public Administration*, 80(1), pp.103–124.

Wynne, B.G., 2010. *Managing knowledge in small non-profit organisations: A toolkit and research report.* Charlottetown: Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network.

Z

Zhang, W. & Watts, S., 2008. Online communities as communities of practice: A case study. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 12(4), pp.55–71.

Zheng, W., Yang, B. & McLean, G.N., 2010. Linking organisational culture, structure, strategy, and organisational effectiveness: Mediating role of knowledge management. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(7), pp.763–771.

Zuber-Skerritt, O., 2001. Action learning and action research: Paradigm, praxis and programs. Chapter 1. In Sankara, S., Dick, B. and Passfield, R., eds. *Effective change management through action research and action learning: Concepts, perspectives, processes and applications.* Lismore, Australia: Southern Cross University Press. pp.1-20.

Zuber-Skerritt, O. & Fletcher, M., 2007. The quality of an action research thesis in the social sciences. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 15(4), pp.413–436.

ONLINE SOURCES

Advice Services Transition Fund (ASTF)., December 2012. *Updates to guidance*. London: Big Lottery Fund. https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/astf#: retrieved 23/12/17.

Charity Commission for England and Wales. *The essential trustee: What you need to know, what you need to do.* London: Charity Commission for England and Wales. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/617828/CC3.pdf: retrieved 24/8/17.

Cook, T., 2012. Where participatory approaches meet pragmatism in funded (health) research: The challenge of finding meaningful spaces. *Qualitative Social Research*, 13(1), Article 18, 22 pages. http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1201187: retrieved 20/12/17.

Massingham, P., 2013. The Researcher as change agent. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*. http://link.springer.com/10.1007/s11213-013-9293-9: retrieved: 1/3/14.

Ragsdell, G., 2016. Knowledge management in the not-for-profit sector, *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 20(1). http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/JKM-11-2015-0483: retrieved 20/10/17.

Schwartz, S.H., 2012. An overview of the Schwartz theory of basic values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), pp.1–20. https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=Schwartz%2C+S.H.%2C+2012.+An+overview+of+the+Schwartz+theory+of+basic+values.+Online+Readings+in+Psychology+and+Culture%2C+2%281%29%2C+pp.1%E2%80%9320.+&btnG=&httpsredir=1&article=1116&context=orpc: retrieved 17/12/17.

Ticher, P. & Eaves, A., 2007. *ICT Hub: Report on 2007 extension to baseline research*, ICT Hub. http://www.paulticher.com/articles/Baseline%20report%202007.pdf: retrieved 26/12/17.

Trowler, P., 2011. Researching your own institution: British Educational Research Association online resource. https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Researching-your-own-institution-Higher-Education.pdf: retrieved 9/3/15.

Wenger, E., 1998b. Communities of practice: Learning as a social system. *Systems Thinker*, 9(5), pp.1–10. https://thesystemsthinker.com/communities-of-practice-learning-as-a-social-system/: retrieved 21/4/17.

Wenger, E., 2004. Knowledge management as a doughnut: Shaping your knowledge strategy through communities of practice. *Ivey Business Journal Online*, pp.1–9. https://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/knowledge-management-as-a-doughnut/: retrieved 30/12/17.

Appendix 2.1: Literature review strategy

The literature review strategy comprised four main strands:

1. An incremental and cumulative identification and study of key literature on knowledge brokering, knowledge management, knowledge sharing and research methodology. This was guided by the practice interventions in Charnwood Connect when the author was a part-time doctoral researcher (October 2013-September, 2015).

2. A systematic literature search of a selection of databases using key search terms (October–November, 2015).

3. A further literature search focusing on knowledge brokering and knowledge management in the not-for-profit sector (June 2016) and a final one in March 2018.

4. Snowballing to follow up secondary leads, references and suggestions from peers, supervisors and other social and learning encounters.

3.1.1 Practice improvements

long chat with [REDACTED] about
the referral/DWA bness —
how do we monitor — what
has been tried before (texting).
Idea to use scanning software
→ thumbprint on the CC passport
which is scanable → enters
personal data automatically
— great idea of his I thought
— he seemed excited too.

(your Connect Card) →
productive mtg — [REDACTED] is leaving
for another job + [REDACTED] is
inundated with appts + loaded
with clients. So I agreed with the
I would take over + develop the
your Connect card.

interesting discussion about
no shows — a number of clients
esp. those who were meant to be
accompanied by support workers
or had appts. made by them,
failed to show up or cancelled.

+ve ack. from ███ about our
perf. as project workers + also
open discussion about what
we needed to do.
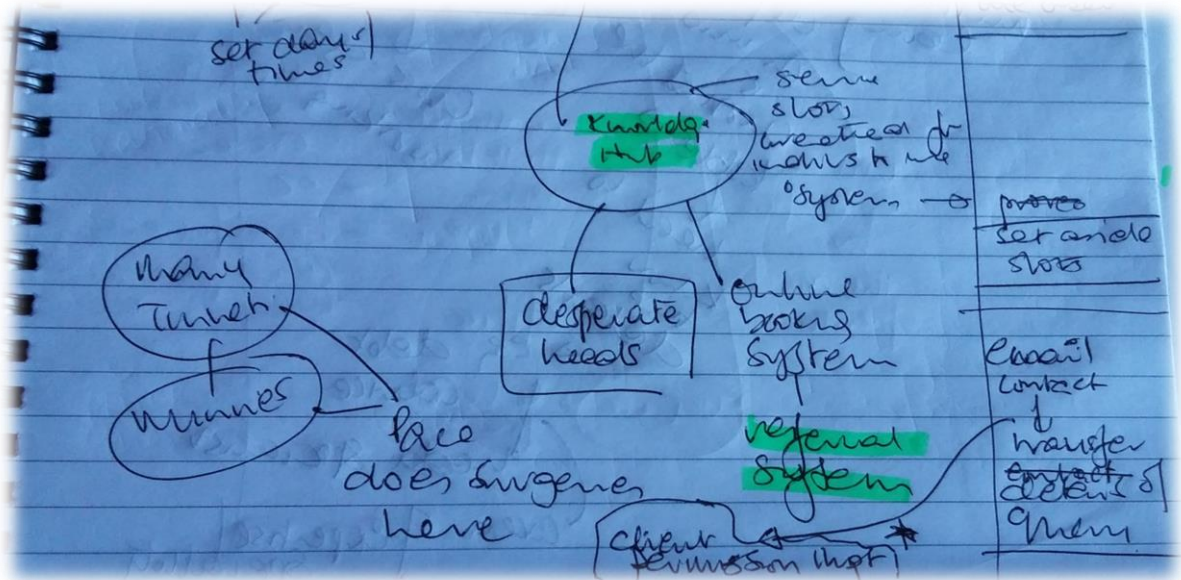
...ted a No Shows working group mtg -
quite productive through the
discussion was organic +
semi structured - good dynam
+ good generation of ideas +
possibilities (see notes on PC)

Back to the mapping report -
needed to get this finalised
+ ready to send to PSG -
dragging on a bit now but
also I do ⬜ want to make
sure there is nothing in there
that any of the partners are
going to object to. So I will
discuss with

3.1.2 Practice-based learning

[____] came to return the publication
I had lent her th SA Corps →
She found the un interesting esp.
stuff around social care + older
people.

OK. turnout but really good
meeting esp discussion around
the housing benefits – enforcement
the advisers really know their
stuff + are prepared to share in
that kind of arena →

discussion – should [____] be allowed
to sit in [____] with a client as
an observer? → if she signed
a confidentiality clause –
was not sure [____] asked
for my opinion + I told her that
as long as it was a mutual
process ie [____] advisers could go
+ sit in on [____] clients then
as part of a learning exchange
it would be reasonable

asked about a guy called [REDACTED] — I told her how [REDACTED] is pronounced & that it is Brahmin caste & looked perplexed — went into caste sys. a bit — could tell it was beyond her comfort zone — talked about skin tone & whitening/bleaching —

told me about this & we had a bit of a discussion about what happens when clients do not come with relevant (if any) info. She was focused on why the support worker did not prep the client & help

so always. I asked her if it was possible to find out about whether or not we/cs. had handled consumer cases b4? Petra or been speaking to the centre's te manager.

3.1.3 The paradox of sharing practices

Also discussion with [REDACTED] about the Contact Centre — not referring enough clients — & speculating why this might be.

[REDACTED] I asked her if it was possible to find out about whether or not NeILs had handled consumer cases bar'd? Petra on her speaking to the centre's ta manager.

Also another problem — [REDACTED] said he did not know what the Your Connect card thing was about & whether it would work — I reiterated that it was really like an appointment card in the first instance & then could develop into something more sophisticated.

Did get some quick feedback from him about the SSA sanctions case-study template I did — he said it was very good.

not sure how much actually can be taken on by listeners given the room layout - old courtroom - also not sure if many of the VOs - are really listening.

(issue)

re CPD for VOs → what is the best way

This incident lead to ~~at~~ my proposal to have a better shape for the staff mtgs → perhaps more less like a roundup from each area of work/unit + other ones
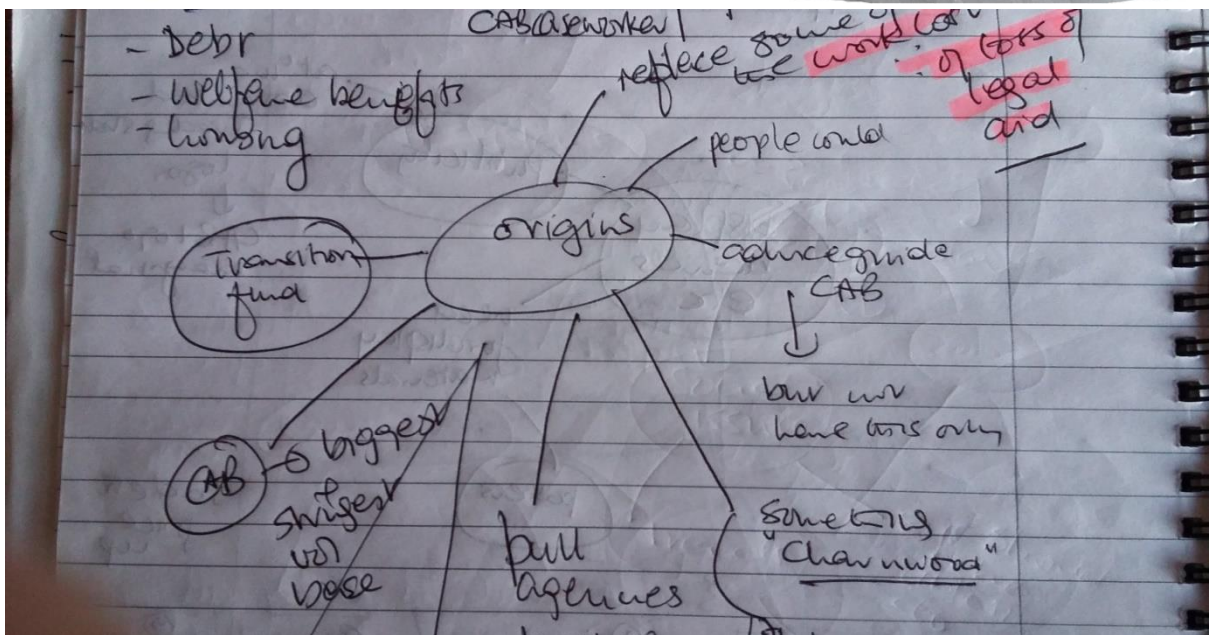
I asked her to proof read the data sharing paper - she had previously asked me if I had any work for her

She said she will do it when she can - but then got on + did it immediately + came back with useful comments

3.1.4 Relational knowledge brokering

[REDACTED] ... master posing about need to do satellite work at a couple of community centres - some [REDACTED] funding was dependent on this work being done. Spent time helping him to talk thro' what would be done including meeting the centres concerned & clarify expectations + then deciding which centres to locate services at

[REDACTED] Started talking to me about how [REDACTED] @ EHRC had spoken to him about their funding cuts & could CC do anything. I said could support him but his mger needs to talk to [REDACTED] & [REDACTED] to get support. Told him I would give [REDACTED] a ring later

[handwritten mind map]
- Debt
- Welfare benefits
- Housing

CABAdviceworker replace some the work people could ... of lots of legal aid

origins

Transition fund

advice guide CAB

but un have tons only

CAB biggest & biggest vol base

pull agencies

something "Charnwood"

Still not heard from a number of agencies - again raising the question of to what degree are they concerned about CC?

... fundamentally it raises the question about the quality of the ==partnership==

↳ perhaps this is an area where further work needs to be done - how do you build a favourable & high quality partnership? ——

Also discussion with ▮▮▮ about the ==outreach work== in a coupled community centres - he seemed pessimistic about — will clients come?
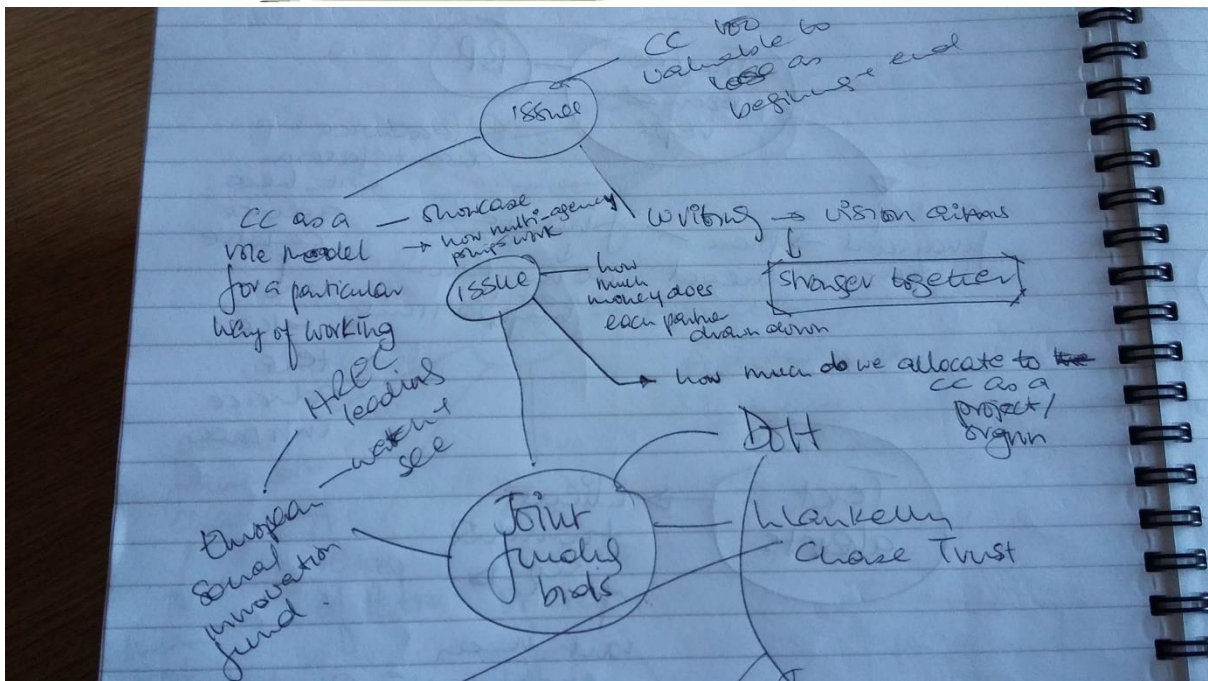
3.1.5 Internal knowledge brokering

Got call from ████ — saying point I had made was a good one — made her think about risk assessment of our outreach worker going to someone's home to deliver a food parcel without knowing what sth they were walking into. She said that the what I had said will impact on their Qualifying process

18 yr old son
Interesting conversation re client whose mother had been sectioned — how can he help the son when the mum needed to be the client?
Told him that must be a social worker attached who should be sorting out these things

Client there is discussion re JSA sanctions → issue was about Clients not knowing they are obliged to tell Housing Benefit if they have been JSA sanctioned. The DWP informs Housing Benefit anyway — Housing Benefit... assumes that the client has been sanctioned as they have got a job — Housing thinks they have got a job + stop Housing benefits → this results in accumulation of debt esp. if the ... got a job. So it

left in the conv!

(floating ~~conv~~ conversation)

[REDACTED] → left over conversation which I had started yesterday about the staff hire & the NJC issue → did not go anywhere except ack. the right of [REDACTED] to have a new opinion → another (floater)

[REDACTED] → tried to reassure & talk about client confidence → that some clients do not feel able to go out & look for work or make an effort ∴ of the situation in which they find themselves.

(Idea) KM based on clients sharing their stories

not as a client issue personally

coming & talking to CCAB staff & vols about their situation

3.1.6 Inter-organisational communities of practice

[____] started gently
with a discussion about having to
do sessions at [____] centre
& how he felt that this was not
good use of ccu specialist
adviser time – he felt that the
sessions should be staffed by
generalists.

The organns used to work together informally
& had an agreement about client referrals
with HREL taking on thingsn (as it had
licensed advisers), CCAB – money & debt +
TB – housing.

How Bridge
service model
can benefit
from vols

CC

vols to do s/w welfare
tng

diff levels of
support &
vol. role in this

principle
of
sharing

from vols to
higher levels – eg
DRO

Partnership issues (central)

- CAB + Bridge → lead → others peripheral?
- Introductory mtgs – introduce the concept ↓ more indepth meetings with designated indivs.
- need for a starting from strengths appch
- how do we create an equitable partnership so that at the end of the project it is a common/equal partnership

...old .... ε he agreed that my strategy was to get money into pockets of partner agencies eg by CC purchasing an et referral sys software as a legacy of the project

Intemp issues

CC (central)
- Strengthen knowledge – what all partner agencies do → ↓ upto date resource highlights current priorities of et our orgn
- database of skills/exps available
- tele referral HREC will tele in advance
- vols
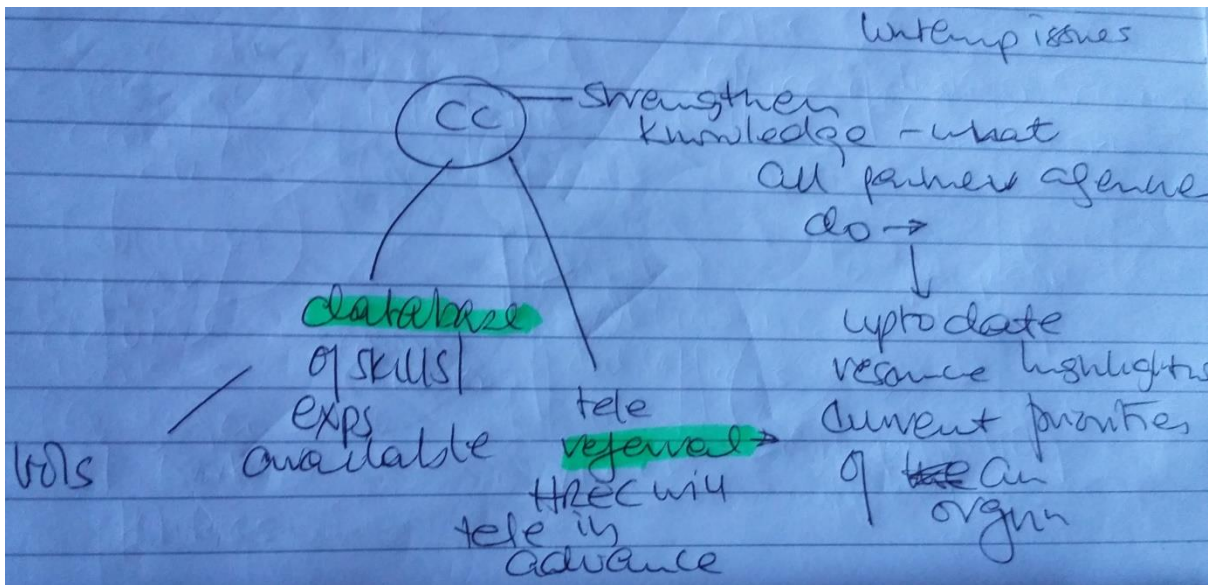
3.1.7 Online communities of practice
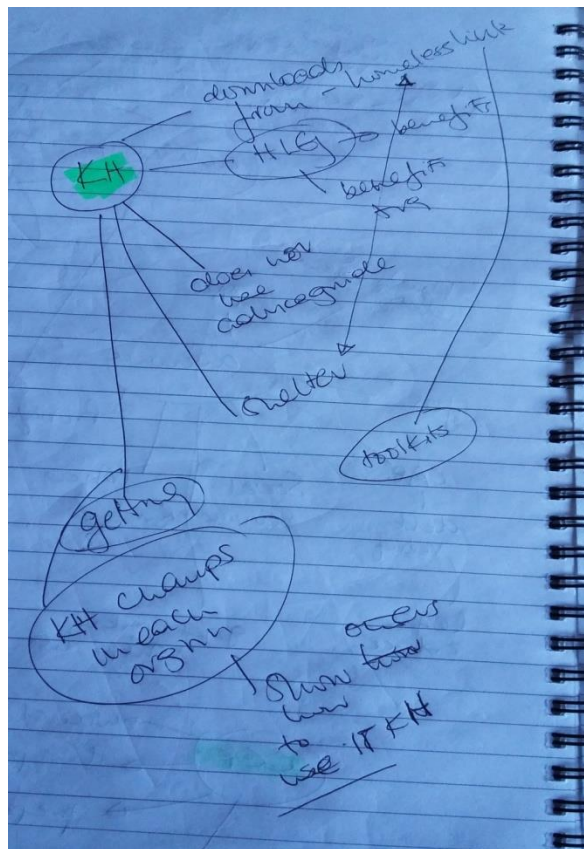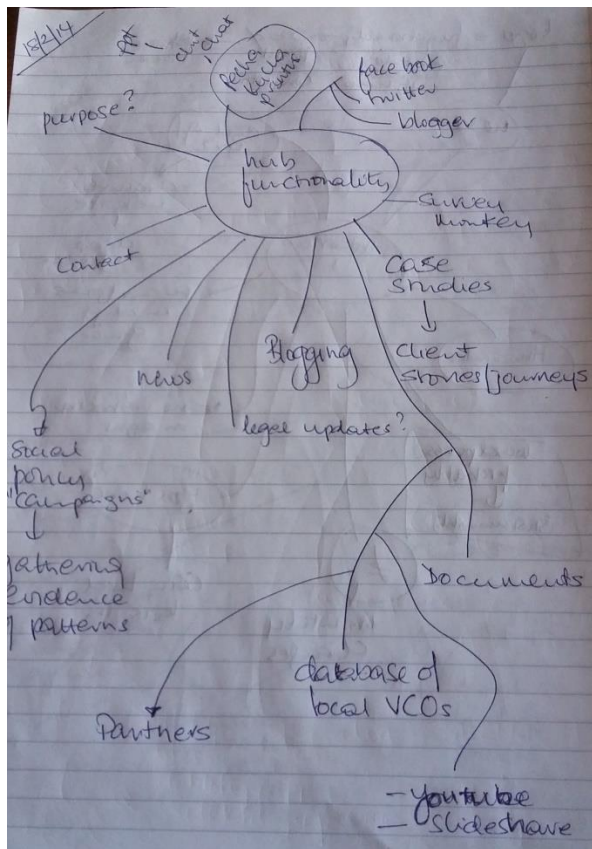
Prep work for interviews for IS KH
website designers.
Discursive interview preceeded by a
plg mtg trying to decide what we
wanted from the Hub. Lots of diff views
e persps – how to use it. [ ] keen to
locate whole thing in Charnwood &
ensuring Charnwood led figures quite
prominently.

Nipped out for lunch with ███ at New
coffee bar — busy place — ███ busy on
laptop → showed him what would
be done with the ITKH → seemed to
agree with most of my ideas

Spoke to ███ but he is wtd in
ensuring ITKH included directions
to funding ha hec. about a
letter of support ∴ they were losing
funding.

Also design issues with ITKH →
delay. As a tradeoff the
tube wrap came tru' and that
has been really well recd
→ good feedback from ███
███ waiting for a wider response

Mid morning — talking to ███
about pinning up the mock designs
for the ITKH in staff room area
← inviting people to write in any
comments.

3.1.8 Face-to-face communities of practice

Re-drafting & dissemination of CCF? notes – looks like there is potential for some really good work through the CCF esp. on referrals.

Referral system → becoming better a referring / signposting

pathways

improving client journeys

tg for people on recep — staff ↓ to be able to train

simple system for looking after the client

Key contact in another agency ↓ giving client a consistent service — front door — one front door

CCF — find out how we decide currently do referrals?

how improve / do it?

what does a good service look like?

her prepare for the appt. we then had a discussion about how Support Workers & Advisers appreciate each others roles & boundaries → I suggested that this could be done through a workshop / a CCF or even as a tg event. Some support by ___ for this.
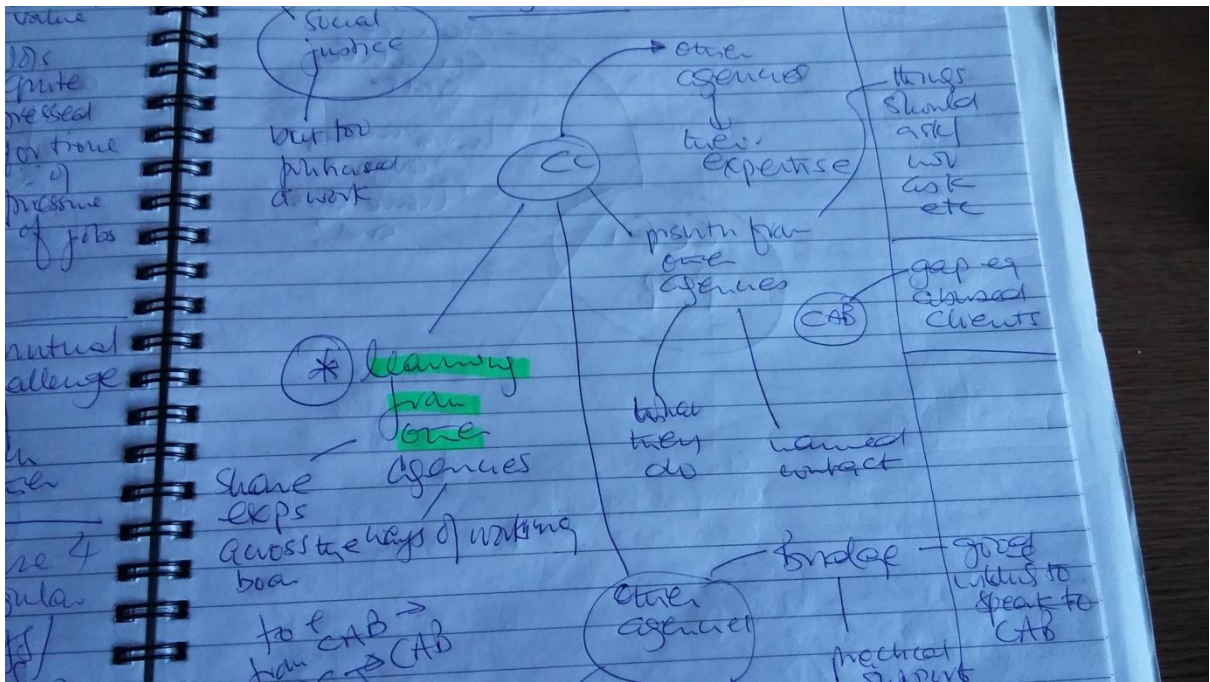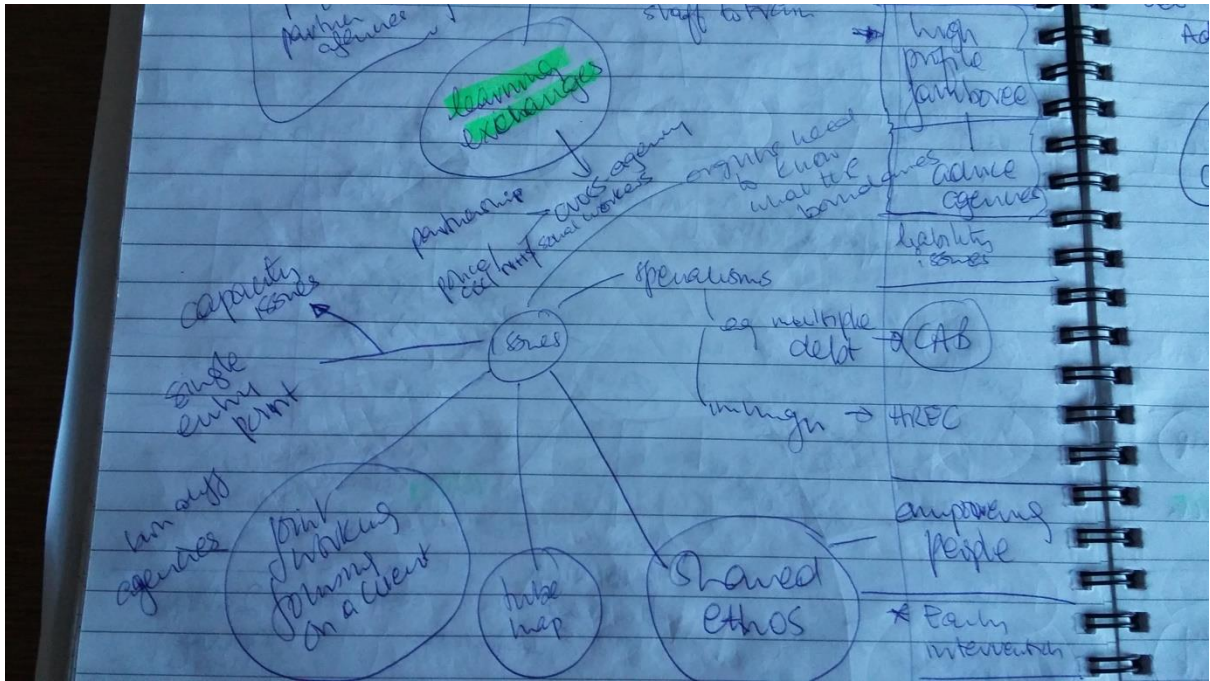
3.1.9 Brokering boundaries

I am struggling with ==boundaries== with people — I feel they want to talk & when I do & do so openly — they seem to cease or crack up

Focused on getting ==data sharing policy== — establishing a protocol for how ==private zone== on knowledge this is to be used by Advisers. Once completed will have to be signed by all partners before the this can be used

popped in to drop off JSA
care studies from the Bridge
Had a quick chat about the
Hub + PSG → need for users
to take resp. for the project.
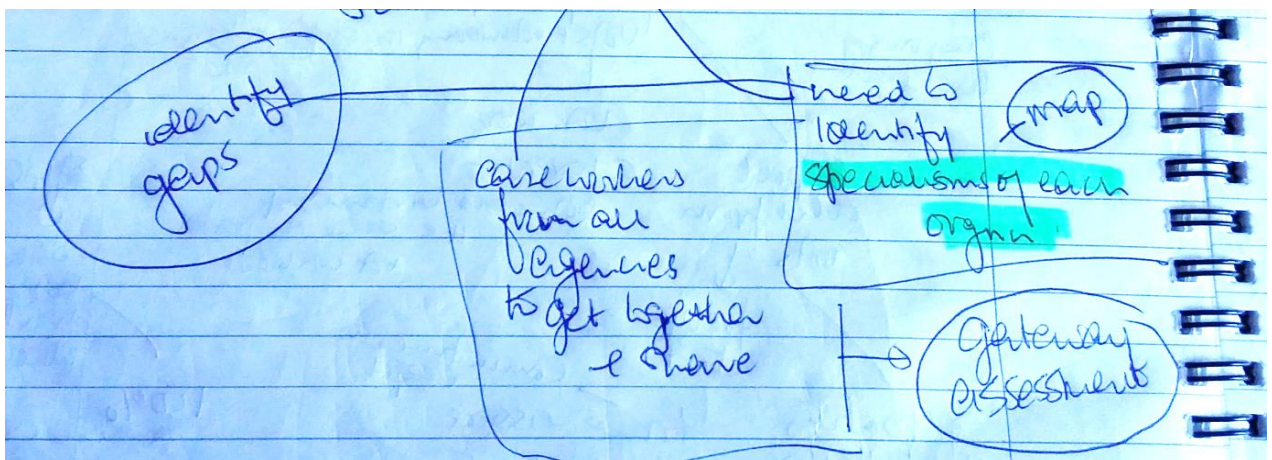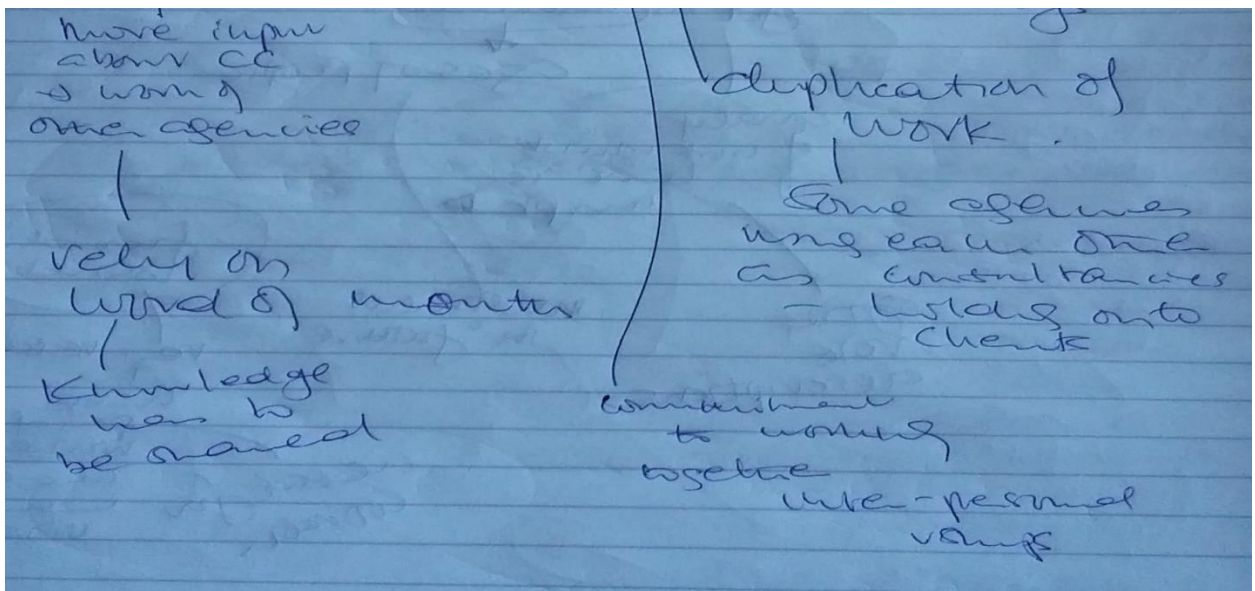
mgt resp for
project

have input
about CC
& work of
other agencies

rely on
word of mouth

Knowledge
has to
be shared

duplication of
work.

Some agencies
using each other
as consultancies
— holding onto
clients

commitment
to working
together
inter-personal
values

Identify
gaps

Care workers
from all
agencies
to get together
& share

need to
identify
specialisms of each
organ

map

Gateway
assessment

3.1.10 Brokering values
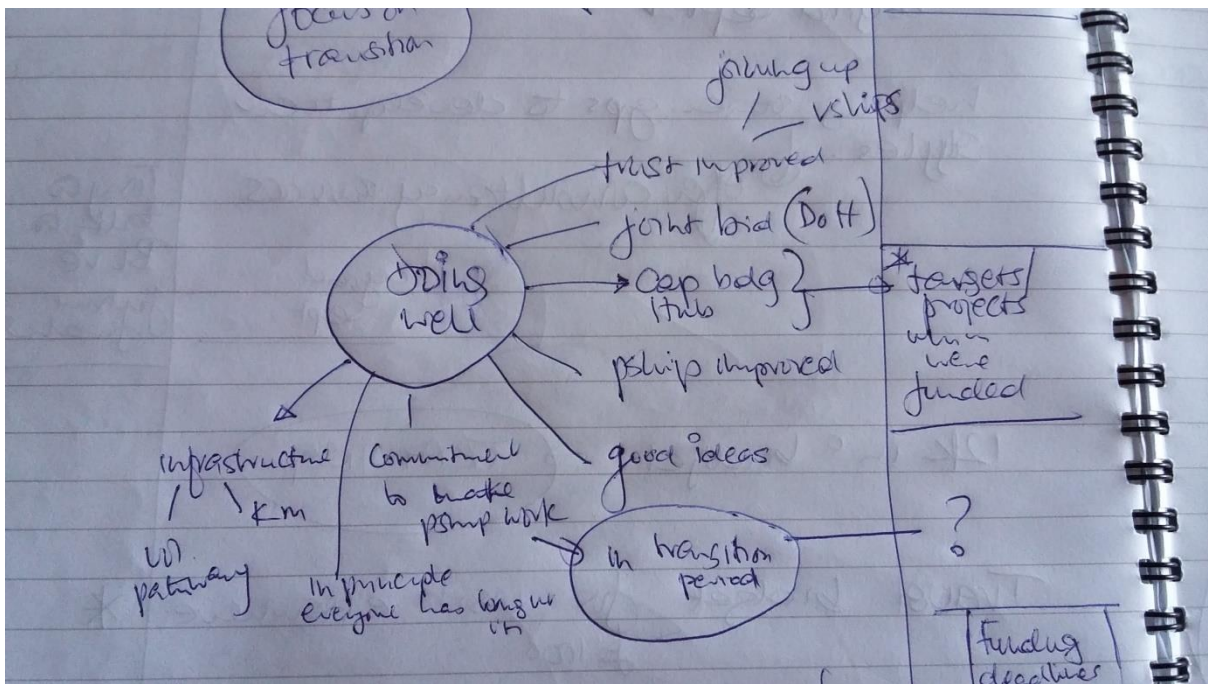
if UOL rect is going to change then why not help ▮ rect. vols with multi-lingual skills a aske existing vols with multi-lingual skills if they also want to go e UOL at ▮ →

Challenge was advisers would not have access to AdviserNet + so I tried to see if we could purchase this for groups like ▮ ▮ have the CC money - but ▮ said that this was ▮s competitive advantage + so why give this away?

can bring additional resources can be brought in →
need to be competitive

what has made it work?

→ got traction

hard work

keep moving things on

some willingness to contribute + add value

persistence

CAR/TB

vested int.

but some partners not responding → not ind bigger pic
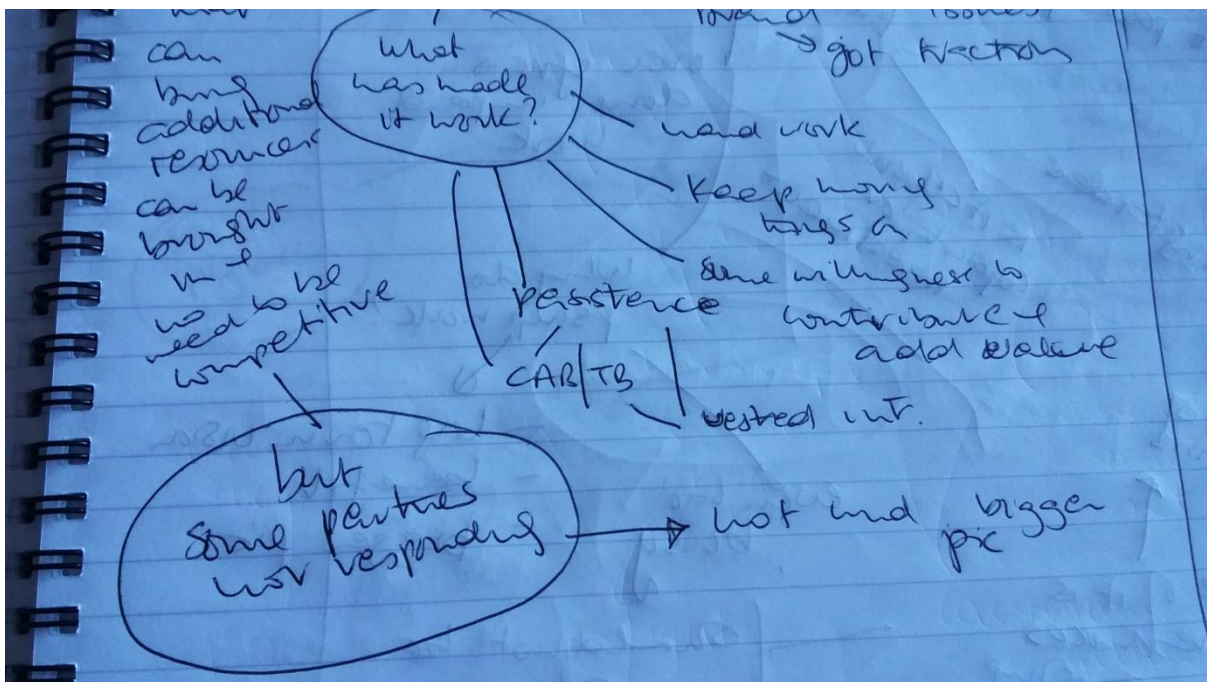
Appendix 3.2: Interviews

Method	Project activity	Sample size
Face-to-face semi-structured interviews	Needs analysis	9 agencies
	Impact review	9 agencies
E-questionnaire	Mapping study	7 agencies
Focus groups	The Forum year 1	5 individuals
	The Forum year 2	7 individuals
	Away day training needs analysis	24 individuals
Working groups	The Hub Task and Finish Group	4 individuals
	Do not attend	2 individuals

Appendix 3.3: Documents

Project reports	• Project funding bid, progress reports to funders and end of project report • Research on volunteering in managing agency (Ragsdell, 2009) • Loughborough University MA student presentations • Executive summary of MA student's research on knowledge flows • Department of Health and Llankelly funding bids • Away day + consultants' reports
Administrative records	• Project Steering Group meeting notes • E-mail communications • Project team meetings • Managing agency volunteer, staff and team meetings • Supervision meetings with the project manager • Diary and work notebooks
Knowledge Management Officer's reports	• The Forum's draft and final strategies • Mapping study • Progress reports to Project Steering Group, Big Lottery, managing agency trustee board • Exit report including summary of impact review • Reports to Project Steering Group and managing agency
Project initiatives	• Terms of reference for the Forum • Tender specification/assessment grid for the Hub • Terms of reference for private zone Hub users • Hub users' guide • Text reminders for appointments
Research and reading	• Knowledge management, brokering, sharing, action research, insider action research, not-for-profit sector • Advice, information and support sector • Social welfare policy • Sample documents, examples of good practice and grey documents from agencies involved in comparative work

Appendix 3.4: Audio-visual materials

The Hub	• Draft designs displayed in lead partner offices and at the Forum for feedback • Design, development and release of the Hub • New project logo • Hub publicity flyer(s) • Hub users' pack
Tube map	• Tube map of partners with Hub link • Tube map on promotional cotton bag for Community Heroes event
Do Not Attend	• My Charnwood Connect Card
Project	• A4 flyer about Charnwood Connect • Pop up banner • Examples of project's work posted on national sites to share practice
Training programme	• Continuous Development Programme flyers
Photos	• Photographs of events and meetings
Media	• BBC radio interviews • Coverage in local community magazine(s)
Dissemination	• Knowledge management and voluntary and community sector conference, Loughborough University • Knowledge Management Research Group seminar, Loughborough University • European Conference on Knowledge Management, Udine, Italy • The Operational Research Society, London • Presentations at local networking events

Appendix 3.5: Coding samples

Sample 1: Examples from the practice journal

Initial categories ⟶	Relational categories ⟶	Thematic topics
• Co-working • Problem-solving • Responding to practitioner concerns • Taking the initiative/ leadership • Project artefacts • Developing practice	Knowledge sharing/practice development	**Community of practice/ human agency**
• Hub • Forum • Do not attend • My Charnwood Connect Card • Common referral form Partnership development • Poor participation (Forum)	Joint enterprise	**Knowledge brokering/ community of practice**
• Legal aid cuts • Job insecurities • Merger • Project sustainability • Evaluating impact • Funding • Strategic planning (away-day)	External environment	**Knowledge sharing/ brokering**
• Inter-practitioner relations • Inter-personal relations • Inter-agency relationships and understandings Personal issues, dilemmas and conflicts • Tensions and conflicts • Practitioner-client relations	Relationships/boundaries	**Internality/human agency**
• Doctoral research • Ethical dilemmas • Defining the research • Communicating research updates	Charnwood Connect action research project	**Internality**
• Planning and preparation Data gathering Project Steering Group • Supervision • Team meetings	Administration	**Knowledge brokering**
• Record-keeping • Empty time • Office noise levels • Poor or miscommunication	Work environment	**Internality**
• Values and beliefs • Professional standards and expectations	Values and principles	**Values, principles and beliefs**
• WGO (what's going on?) • Unresolved issues • Perplexing scenarios/ statements	Floaters	**Critical reflection/practice development**

Sample 2: The impact analysis

	Initially	Positive	Negative	concerns	Issues	Forward
				Partnership working		
PACE	sceptical but now some respect and found voice eventually	stronger telling trustees that CC working Bring in outside people e.g KMO - no past history Massive shift in attitude about PACE	not sure if full trust is there still	* not sure how much input there has been from other partners e.g. community heroes day 2014 - how many other agencies volunteered?	not sure what we bring to the partnership got fin cap tool - why was this not used?	* needs to change shape trying to do something that has not been done before * survey of what expertise/skills there is in each agency - do not
SASS		raised awareness about our work - useful to know what was out there - sems bigger agencies more proactive - smaller agencies fihting for own survival			we do not want to be a drain on CC resources - we are not charity	need to know why coming together - raise awareness - SASS unlikley to be part after Sept
HREC	reluctant - trustees felt their names had been used - that is why low engagement initially	lots been done - e.g. training, CCF over time very good - vol - CCF good network of advice agencies - good model more transarent now	time pressures lead to low engagement not progressed as much as would have liked - everybody	funding can be competitive but we se CC as an opp for joint bidding - outweighs the negative	spend time doing own bids - not enough time to engage - not always ina position to respond	shame coming to an end widen partnership more sharing get funding for individual agency specialisms - expand brief of CC and look at other social issues - poverty/health - wider than advice widen to advice, info

				Impact			
PACE							
SASS	got CC in our code of practice	been able to put something into CC - we are privileged	see SASS as on the edge and loosely connected not core because of our designated client base	only tied by the idea of advice not charitable status or being resource starved	deal with socila policy issues differently through the University's internal system		
HREC	more trust	BoD attended trg and benefited from the parnership - also atended away day	sharing funding applications				workig in partnership throu CBC funding to meet diverse needs
CBC	not much - seen as something for VCS - out there - vol pathway does not affect CBC even though signed up to partnership	one front door could have had an impact - cont pursuing this					
JSC	picked up 7 or so vols	JSC can offer diff vol roles	JSC is ike a multi agency pathway	personal - confidence building			
LWA	better relationships with other agencies and an understanding abou what they do	united voices					
	as accmdn agency need to	CC funding did	staff too				

Hub

Hub									
PACE	not beeen n it	forget passwords	stafff shortage - who could go on the trainiinng	info on funding and trg useful					
SASS	pool of advisers	make community bigger	perhaps useful to smaller orgs - we part of other networks	do people need private zone to ask diffi qtns - is reposnse releiable	perhaps people prfer to use nantnal sites	orig qtn needs to be answered - why was it set up? Is it still neeeded? What is its effect on your rgansiation?			
HREC	not got used to using	e-alerts good	referred clients to it	needs further promotion	sites impt but soc media even more	hub good for advisers but social media better for clients	local news	links to orgnns	browse pages	also get info from other sources
CBC	CBC people signed on	peole need it less than envisaged	posting cases may be seen as a sign of wekness	use Hub to put CBC VCS database of homeless orgs - help CBC meet its Gold std	carry on Hub - need a site	CBC could coordinate private zone - David Flatters			
JSC	possibly more useful on reception - put it on a dedicated PC	use to find info	need to devote time	clients ask for stuff which JSC staff know already - newer staff may need Hub more	navigation friendly - friendly interface				
LWA	no time to use it - either google or phone someone	limitations of oneline usage	peole search for certain terms and hub may not come up - search engine optimisation	difficult to keep it current - probabaly just leave it as an information resource					
		do not know if staff use it -							

Forum

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
			Forum					
	PACE	time mgt - single person agencies - cannot go everywhere	proj mger could have helped to see ways of getting peole there					
	SASS	should cont	have access to own support	combine trg and bness				
	HREC	learning and sharing - useful	trg needs to be a part e.g. UC - spplit betweeen a business meeting and training	perhaps meets twice a year	try and get CFF hours and trg as CPD hours - see VAL e.g.			
	CBC	for frontline workers	attendance patchy - gettig peole there is an issue	focus needs to be widened - not just discuss issues of concern to advice agencies	need to address lack of commonality across partners - diff orgs	need focus on commonality of topics	CBC could host CCF	tie up with VCS forum which JSC will be developing
	JSC	local VCS network is needed	VAL losing contracts and so no VCS network locally	early days no permission to engage	time and timing - once absent difficult to join	1.5 hr meetings - better focus - skills share - share expertise - small group work	link to local VCS forum - CCF becomes skill sharing ad trg and VCS forum becomes anetworkin g event	
	LWA	not had any feedback	can be helpful but time and resources is an issue - choos service users over attending a meeting	based at CBC could help pitch at wider sector - not VCS and not advice				
	YS	fills a void for practitioners	ltd attendance due to staff shortages	as an accmdn agency need to provide cover all the time	keep it going	staff time when invested has been worthwhile		
	TR	quite positive	peole getting to know each other	some work on DNAs and one front door				

Sample 3: Forum year 1 review

Charnwood Connect Forum: End of Year 1 Review

Charnwood Connect Forum has had four meetings to date and a further programme of meetings is planned for the coming year. In order to make the best use of this opportunity it would be really helpful to have some feedback about your experiences of the Forum so far and your thoughts about what it should be doing for the next 12 months. Please fill in your comments (individual or team) and email them back to vipinchauhan@charnwoodcab.co.uk or call me on 01509 221211 for a chat. If you prefer, I would be happy to come and have a chat with you or your team about the work of the Forum. Thank you for all your support.

What have you liked about coming to the meeting(s) of the Charnwood Connect Forum?

I only attended the first one. I liked meeting the other organisations and learning about what they do, and making contacts with new practitioners. The meeting was well organised and well attended.

I have enjoyed meeting some very public spirited and thoughtful people all concerned about various aspects of the welfare of the local population. I have also enjoyed hearing about the ways a coordinated approach through Charnwood Connect could enhance the benefits already provided on an individual basis by the participating organisations like The Bridge, CAB etc..

Networking with the other Agencies and getting to know people better.

-The pro-activeness of the group.

The meetings have provided a good setting in which to network with other agencies.

I have enjoyed putting faces to names of the people I work with in other agencies. I found some of the information about other agencies really interesting and I learnt a lot more about what each agency do.

What have you not liked?

The other organisations do not share my area of work. (consumer), not surprisingly for the groups represented there will I fear always be more immediate concerns about their clients needs and well being than unfair and rogue trading.

I would have preferred to hear more about specific examples of where "being connected" will improve overall effectiveness in other words, why will the whole be greater than the sum of the parts?

Nothing is coming to mind

Commitments to other Projects, Not having any one else who can represent us.

I feel the scope of the forum was initially unclear. Now that the forum has a regular commitment from a number of agencies I feel it would be useful to focus on sharing good practice. Possibly looking to capitalise on the different experience around the table.

I only managed to attend a few due to work commitments. It seems after speaking to my colleague who attended in my absence that this was the same for many people. It seems the group got smaller

If you have not been able to attend any of the meetings or only some, what has stopped you from attending regularly?

Pressure of work.

Given what I have said above I cannot spend lots of time attending meetings which do not cover my area of work.

I do not feel that I have the authority to speak on behalf of my organisation.

I have other local commitments which mean that, given I already commit up to 1.5 days each week to the Charnwood CAB, it is sometimes difficult to be free to attend additional Charnwood Connect meetings.

Commitments to other Projects, Not having any one else who can represent us.

Attended 3 out of 4. The meeting I had to send my apologies for was solely for operation al reasons. Otherwise I have had no problems in attending the meetings.

Work commitments

What improvements would you like to see in the way in which the Charnwood Connect Forum works?

Can't say after just one meeting

I would like to see Charnwood Connect being as objective as possible, possibly by placing an emphasis on certain specific areas where it is believed "being connected" will enhance overall benefits. I would also like to see case studies being used to provide all interested parties with the evidence that the enhanced benefits are indeed being produced.

-Less Emails!!:-)

Can't think of anything at the minute.

I think it would be beneficial to build an agenda around the presenting issues in the advice sector. The experience within the forum could then be used to share best practice to better inform the forum.

More of the bigger organisations to get involved so we can get more answers to many of our questions.

For the coming year, which issues/areas of practice would you like to see the Forum focus on?

Any issues which are impacting on clients locally and we may be capable of altering using the influence of the group.

Can't think of anything at the minute.

Continued impact of welfare reform. Changes in private sector housing. Common themes such as addressing DNA's.

Commitment to the meetings by everyone involved

Any other comments/observations?

I am looking forward to the hub being fully functional, this will be a very useful area to share issues, get help, promote events and so on. I am happy to do training for either the forum or for individual member groups about rogue trading and spotting and reporting potential problems with/for their clients

Good start, especially with the website, but we now need to see the first real evidence of the benefits.

I am very impressed how pro-active ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ have been over the project. The delivery has been second to none.

I think the forum has developed a strong setting to develop relationships between the partner agencies. I think the working relationships have been strengthened as a result of the forum.

I think the short time I did attend I did learn something that I brought back to the Falcon centre to share with the rest of my colleagues. I just wish I had attended more. Next time we will do our best to attend each meeting.

Sample 1: Charnwood Connect mapping survey: Draft summary of findings

Restricted Circulation: PSG Members Only, 7/5/14

INTRODUCTION

This draft paper summarises the findings from a low-scale mapping survey, undertaken between March – April 2014. The Project Steering Group (PSG) is asked to note the summary paper and await a more detailed report which will be made available before the next meeting. Appreciation and thanks must go to all the partners for giving up their time and submitting their responses.

PURPOSE OF THE MAPPING

The purpose of the survey was to map out the services offered by the independent advice organisations that are a part of Charnwood Connect. Seven out of the ten partners that fall in this category were emailed a questionnaire to complete. It was hoped that the data generated could be used to help shape the content of the Knowledge Hub and additionally, give some indications about how local advice services operate, what gaps exist and how advice services can be strengthened.

KEY FINDINGS

Validity of the Data

Some of the data generated is inconsistent. This may have been due to a variety of factors including different ways in which a question was interpreted, lack of available data, lack of time to complete the questionnaire, lack of clarity (confidence?) about the purpose of collecting this information and its use and poorly phrased questions. Nonetheless, the findings give some indication of the types and patterns of advice services provided by the seven advice agencies.

Core Services

Advice work is the core business of four out Charnwood Connect's seven partners providing independent advice services. Even where the core business of partners is advice work, other services such as advocacy and information are offered to clients as well. For at least three of the partners, the provision of support services is their core business with advice integrated into this.

Accessing Advice Services

The main issues and challenges faced by clients when accessing advice services in Charnwood can be summarised as a lack of capacity, a lack of resources, limited awareness of what is available, where and from whom and user confidence to access services.

Clients Accessing Services

Contacts in person and via telephone seem to be the preferred methods of contact for the majority of clients.

Opening Hours

Advice services do not operate over the weekend even if some of the support services do (e.g. supported housing).

Provision in other Languages

Collectively, as a partnership, advice and information services are available in at least 13 different European (including English) and Asian languages. The partnership has staff and volunteers able to communicate in several languages other than English as well as access to the language line when necessary.

Staffing

Nearly three out of every five paid workers (57%) and a lightly higher figure (62%) of volunteers are involved in advice work. However, only two agencies deploy volunteers for advice work.

Number of Enquiries

Figures seem to suggest that there has been a slight downward trend in the number of enquiries received but an increase in the number of clients seen. The figures on the number of enquiries received has to be treated with some caution as one of the agencies only submitted a figure for part of its annual cycle and another agency, does not keep records of the enquiries it receives, just the resulting casework.

Ward Data

Between the five agencies that responded to this question, it appears that, all the wards areas of Charnwood are covered. However, given that some of the partners are specialist agencies (e.g. housing or domestic violence) and others are generalist advice agencies, it cannot be assumed that client needs are being met equally well regardless of the front door through which they first access advice.

Nature of Enquiries

Again, it appears that between the seven agencies, advice work in the core social welfare areas are covered. As before though, it cannot be assumed that client needs are being met equally well regardless of the front door through which they first access advice.

Gaps in Services

A number of critical gaps exist in current advice services, which may be bridged if additional funding is forthcoming:

- Court representation.
- Basic support such as form filling.
- Immigration.
- Family support.
- Accessing adult social care and befriending services especially for the Asian community.

Sample 2: No-shows, cancellations, waiting times and referrals

Charnwood Connect Working Group Meeting
Tuesday 1 July 2014, 10.00 am – 12.00 pm, CCAB Training Room

1   PRESENT
- ❖   ████████ Charnwood Borough Council (CBC)
- ❖   ██████████ Student Advice and Support Service (SASS)
- ❖   ███████ Charnwood CAB (CCAB)
- ❖   ██████████ Charnwood Connect (CC)

2   APOLOGIES
- ❖   ██████████ The Bridge

3   WELCOME
After a round of introductions, the background to the setting up of the working group was clarified and the agenda and the terms of reference were agreed.

4   SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES THUS FAR

CBC	• Appointments were generally well kept but not so when clients had emergencies or a crisis with which they had to deal • Figures suggested 20% no shows for money advice appointments • Emails and texts did not seem to work that well • Clients tended to leave issues till the last minute until a crisis point was reached e.g. failure to pay council tax and ignoring early warning letters until a court summons arrived • There was increasing pressure to steer clients towards using the internet and online services but not all clients had internet access or the confidence to undertake tasks online such as form filling for benefits • No show rates depended on the type of contact - with drop-ins the client turned up when they needed help whereas with pre-booked appointments, at the date and time when they were due, their needs may have subsided or become less of a priority/urgency hence the no show
SASS	• SASS experienced some no shows but actual statistics were not kept • Texting was used to remind students about appointments which seemed to work
CCAB	• Approximate figures for June 2014 suggested 26% no shows for face to face appointments for money advice • Some clients saw the CCAB as a free service to which they are entitled but did not

| | acknowledge their responsibility to turn up for booked appointments or appreciate the knock on effect on the CCAB or other clients of them not showing up |
| | • Demand for advice services was outstripping supply due to staff shortages especially specialist advisers |

5   EXAMPLES FROM OTHER SETTINGS/PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES

- CAB advice bus travelling out to remote areas
- Double booking appointments in the hope that some users will not turn up
- Three strikes and out as a sanction for no shows
- Having a floating specialist adviser who did not have any pre-booked appointments but was called in if a generalist adviser had a client with a complicated need e.g. a debt

6   REFERRAL ISSUES

6.1   Relationship Building

- The continuity of advisers and the importance of relationship building between them and clients was important so that advice was not viewed just as a formal transaction but also about relationship building

6.2   Client Readiness

- Ensuring that clients had choice and control over what further help and advice they needed and empowering them to decide what to do next
- Appointments being made either by the client or the support agency before the client was ready to receive advice and turn up for an appointment
- Incidence of no shows/cancellations seemed to be higher when a support worker had made the appointment and/or agreed to accompany the client

6.3   Boundaries

- It was important to draw a line between a client demonstrating responsibility to turn up for appointments and no shows resulting from an agency's failure to meet client needs
- Need for balance between a client's right to advice and their responsibility to be a good client by honouring appointments and other commitments when seeking advice
- Misconceptions or lack of understanding between agencies about each other's work, specialisms and ways of working

6.4   Sanctions

- Not always possible to sanction clients for not turning up as some may seek the support of local politicians who may put political pressure on agencies to get an issue resolved
- Word of mouth was still an important means by which people found out about local services and provided a useful channel for communicating to local communities about sanctions imposed by advice agencies when clients did not turn up for appointments

7   AREAS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND ACTION

- Filtering client needs at reception so that internal or external referrals can be more precise
- What is the national average for no shows and are our local rates out of sync with these?
- Try using texting to remind clients about appointments with the onus on the client to respond e.g. 'you have an appointment at 2.00 pm are you going to be attending? Reply YES or NO. If no response is received assume No

- Putting up posters in agency reception areas showing how many appointments had been missed, the cost to the agency and the impact on other clients (similar to those put up in hospital/GP surgery waiting areas)
- Consideration about the development of a one stop shop as a longer term vision – co-location of key agencies in one venue with a shared reception/triage facility – issues around confidentiality and consent can be taken care of in one go when the client first signs in
- Need to re-educate support workers into determining when a client is ready for a referral
- Find examples of successful referral systems, within and outside the advice sector

8   PILOTING NO SHOWS

It was agreed that in the initial pilot each participating partner agency should trial one of the following over a given period. This will help Charnwood Connect compare results across different methods used by different partners as well as indicate which, if any, of the suggested methods seemed to work most effectively. Three methods were suggested for the pilot:

8.1   Partner Agency 1

The design and creation of an appointment card with a difference – the card is issued to the client and **they** have to fill in the details of their appointment. The CC 'Your Connect' could serve this function in the first instance.

8.2   Partner Agency 2

High visibility notices in the reception area with current information about the number of cancelled appointments/no shows.

8.3   Partner Agency 3

Text messaging initiative reminding clients about their appointments, putting the responsibility on clients to respond by text to confirm or cancel their appointment.

9   OTHER OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS

Actions	By
It was agreed that we should finalise the list of agencies participating in the pilot. Check out if Youth Shelter is going to be involved in the pilot	███
Gail to forward information she has gathered on no shows for distribution to working group members	████████████
Meeting with ████ at The Bridge to update her on the outcomes of today's meeting and confirm the involvement of The Bridge	███
Consideration of whether or not a one stop shop model is desirable, feasible and viable, in the longer term	███
To negotiate will all partner agencies to collect some baseline data about no shows over an agreed period to see what patterns emerge	███

10   DONM

Wednesday 30 July 2014 at 2.00 – 4.00 pm, CCAB Training Room

Appendix 4.1: Knowledge Management Officer: Role summary

Background:

Charnwood Connect (CC) is a Big Lottery funded project. Charnwood CAB will lead this project which will encourage voluntary and public sector organisations to work together to achieve more for service users and service providers. Although there is an excellent advice and information provision already in the Borough, CC will build on the success of the individual providers to promote "a joined up" approach. A distinct element of CC will be the development of a fully functional IT Knowledge Hub and Forum for both advice and information providers as well as service users.

Responsibilities:

The Knowledge Management Officer (KMO) will play an important role in ensuring the success of this project and will be responsible for the development and operation of the Knowledge Hub and Forum. S/he will take on the challenge of implementing the Knowledge Management strategy of Charnwood Connect. The KMO will be expected to have at least a good undergraduate degree in a relevant subject area.

Subject to successful PhD application, Loughborough University would be pleased to support the KMO to undertake PhD studies based on this project.

Hours and Salary Scale:

30 hours a week. (Opportunity for part time study for a PhD at Loughborough University in the post holder's own time).

Salary: Sc 6 pt 26 £22,221 pro rata

Actual salary: £18,017 plus 3% employer's contribution to a money purchase pension scheme

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

'Knowledge management in the voluntary sector....'connecting people together through the sharing of knowledge and experience'. " (Gilmour and Stancliffe cited by Ragsdell: March 2009) The knowledge and experiences shared can include examples of good practice, user experiences, policies and procedures, management and governance, joint working with partners and staff and volunteer co-working. In fact, sharing whatever is possible and appropriate in order to improve local services.

A. AGENCY CONTEXT

OVERVIEW

1. History of your organisation
2. Vision, key aims and objectives
3. Organisational structure/trustee/legal status
4. Staffing/volunteer levels
5. Funding

THE WORK YOU DO

1. Key activities, projects and areas of work
2. Geographical spread/areas covered or prioritised
3. How do you identify client needs/tailor services to meet their needs?
4. Walk in? Appointments?
5. Balance between advice/information/support/project/crisis/direct provision (e.g. housing)

THE CLIENTS/USERS

1. Who are your core clients?
2. Age/gender/ethnicity/disability/etc profile
3. Client needs and issues
4. Challenges and issues you face working with your clients
5. How do clients/users give you feedback about the services you deliver?

WORK WITH OTHER AGENCIES

1. With which other agencies do work? (list and describe the nature of the work)
2. Nature of the relationship – formal partners/joint working/referrals?
3. Which are the main agencies or organisations to which you refer clients?
4. Which are the main agencies or organisations which refer clients to you?
5. How do you normally communicate with each other?
6. What are the issues and challenges you experience working with other agencies?
7. Examples of good practice of working with other agencies

B. CC KNOWLEDGE HUB & CC FORUM

A locally relevant IT Knowledge Hub for practitioners and clients and setting up of a CC Forum for practitioners to help promote greater multi-agency collaboration and joint working.

INFORMATION

1. What sources do you use to access information to help you do your job? (internet/ newsletters/circulars/training/etc)
2. What information gaps do you have?

3. How do you feel about the use of the IT Hub and CCF as a source for gathering and sharing information you need to help you advise and work with your clients?

CLIENTS/USERS
1. How do your clients/users source information to help themselves? (internet/newsletters/ circulars/training/etc)
2. What information gaps do they have?
3. What issues and challenges do they face in accessing relevant information?
4. How do you feel about the use of the IT Hub as a resource for clients/users to help them access information directly?

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS
1. With which agencies do you have close working relationships?
2. Do you work with designated individuals in these agencies?
3. What are some of the issues and challenges you face working with workers/managers in other agencies?
4. Are there any examples of good practice?
5. How could your relationships with other agencies be improved/developed further?
6. What is required to help improve/develop these relationships?
7. Are there any ways in which your agency works
8. How do you feel about the use of the IT Hub e.g. twitter and facebook to share information and strengthen working relationships with other agencies?

SOCIAL POLICY
1. To whom and how do you report broad trends in clients needs e.g. social security/housing/etc?
2. Do you discuss broad trends with partner organisations? How?
3. How else do you think broad social trends could be shared and discussed with other agencies/partners?
4. How do you feel about the use of the IT Hub to gather information about and acting on social trends?

C. CHARNWOOD CONNECT FORUM

One of the objectives of CC is to set up a CCF for practitioners working in the partner agencies. The idea is for the CCF to meet four times a year, co-ordinated by the KMO.

1. How and from where do you get external support to help you carry out your role/do your work?
2. What are the gaps/needs?
3. Are you a member of any workers or volunteers network or forum in Charnwood? If so, which?
4. Are you a member of any networks or forums outside Charnwood? If so, which?
5. What kind of support would you find useful to help you carry out your role?
6. How do you think this support should be provided? (Face to face/network meetings/IT hub?)
7. How would you make use of the CCF? What would you want to get out of it?
8. How else do you think workers/volunteers such as you could be supported to develop your practice? Critical practice/reflective practitioner?
9. How could you support the establishment and development of the CCF (hosting/facilities/ skills/expertise)?
10. Apart from the core partners, are there any other organisations that you think should be involved either as members, co-optees or 'guests'?

D. ANY OTHER COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS?

FAO: ALL CCAB STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

One of the key objectives of Charnwood Connect is to establish a fully functional, locally relevant and interactive website (the IT Knowledge Hub). As well as a public domain, the Hub will have an online <u>private/restricted domain</u> for Advisers to share practice and experiences with their peers. Eventually, the <u>public domain</u> will be available for use by local people to access information about social welfare issues.

The design process has begun and the designers have come up with some initial designs – see attached.

CAN YOU HELP?

We would welcome your reactions to these initial designs and would appreciate it if you could take the time to let us have some feedback. **Please enter your comments directly onto the draft design documents (what you like, do not like, could be improved and anything else). All contributions welcome.**

Thank you

INTERVIEW/DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

PURPOSE

Charnwood Connect (CC) is in a transitionary process as it heads towards September 2015 when its Big Lottery ASTF funding comes to an end. Concerted efforts are underway to secure further funding to consolidate and sustain the partnership work that has been made possible through the ASTF.

When Charnwood Connect first started, introductory visits took place to all the partner agencies to find out more about their work, expectations of the project and likely engagement with it. As we head towards September 2015, it will become increasingly important to review the impact of Charnwood Connect and the degree to which the project's two core objectives have been met:

1. To collaborate more effectively with each other, and other agencies, to improve service outcomes for customers.
2. To become more resilient and better equipped to meet future needs, with more modern and enterprising business models and more diverse sources of funding.

PROPOSAL

The Knowledge Management Officer (KMO) would like to hold 1:1 meetings with all the partner agencies over the summer period to discuss their views and perspectives about the impact of Charnwood Connect in relation to the two areas that fall under his direct responsibility: the IT Knowledge Hub (the Hub) and the Charnwood Connect Forum (the Forum). Below is a schedule of questions to be used to guide the discussions with partner agencies. Their responses will be collated to help inform team and PSG discussions about future arrangements for the Hub and the Forum.

The 1:1 visits will parallel a similar process which is being planned to bring all the partners together to discuss their experiences of the multi-agency volunteering pathway.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All responses will be treated in confidence and any reports produced will not mention individuals or organisations by name.

A   PARTNERSHIP WORKING

1. How well do you think CC has worked as a partnership? Has CC helped to improve relationships between partners? If yes, how? If no, why not?
2. What have been the benefits of working together in partnership? Why?
3. What have been the main issues and challenges of working together? Why?
4. What more could your organisation have got from the partnership? What more could your organisation have contributed to the partnership?

B   IMPACT ON YOUR AGENCY

1. What has been the impact of CC on your work/organisation?
2. Which elements of CC's work have impacted on your work/organisation? How? (**Prompt:** the Hub, CCF, multi-agency volunteering pathway, training/continuous professional development, financial capability training, one door inter-agency referral work)
3. Which elements of CC's work have not impacted much on your work/organisation? Why? (**Prompt:** the Hub, CCF, multi-agency volunteering pathway, training/continuous professional development, financial capability training, one door inter-agency referral work)
4. How else do you think CC could have had a greater impact on your organisation?

5. What has been the impact of CC on your clients?

C   CHARNWOOD CONNECT FORUM (THE FORUM)
1. Did anyone from your organisation attend the Forum? If so, how frequently? Why? Why not?
2. Has the Forum been effective? If yes, why and how? If no, why not?
3. How has the Forum impacted on your work/organisation?
4. How else could your organisation have contributed more to the work of the Forum?
5. What impact has the Forum had on your clients?

D   THE HUB
1. Has anyone from your organisation used the Hub? If yes, why and how? If no, why not?
2. How useful have you found the Hub? Why?
3. What has been the impact of the Hub on your work/organisation?
4. How else could you have made greater use of the Hub?
5. What impact has the Hub had on your clients?

E   OTHER COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

Vipin Chauhan, KMO
17 June 2015

Appendix 4.5: Summary results of the impact analysis

	Appreciated	Concerned About	Moving Forward
Impact	• Being able to influence CC's work direction • Greater trust exists • Board members participated in some events • Joint funding applications submitted • Picked up high calibre volunteers • Relationships have been built and strengthened • The personalised approach by project staff was positive and welcomed	• CC not fully embedded in people's minds • One front door approach could have been developed further and had a greater impact • Hard work and time consuming on agency resources • Project ending when it has just started • Difficult to get involved in raising income for CC when own funding is uncertain • Lack of future funding and uncertainty about CC's sustainability make it difficult to plan ahead	• Agreeing a vision for the future is important • Willingness to invest time, energy and perhaps even funding is important • Need to strengthen the VCS as a whole through greater partnership working
Partnership working	• Increased awareness about work of different local agencies • Lot of good work was done by CC • Tangible outputs have been delivered such as the training, the Hub and the volunteering pathway • CC has created opportunities for joint bidding • CC has provided a formal route for networking • Appointment of project staff from outside made it more comfortable to engage and establish relationships	• Initial reluctance to engage because of past tensions between key organisations • Past culture of working in isolation or selectively with certain organisations only rather than the collective ethos CC was nurturing • Time and work pressures contributing to low participation rates • Not being able to draw down income from CC made it difficult to justify use of own resources to participate • Over-emphasis on advice which is not the core work of some partners	• Continue building trust • Need to be clearer as to why we are coming together • Expand criteria to include advice, information and support services
The Hub	• User friendly interface • Useful information source e.g. funding and training • E-alerts good • Referred clients to it • Useful resource for frontline staff	• Forgotten passwords • Not got into habit of using it • Lack of time to use it – either phone someone, Google or discuss with team colleagues • Some partners have their own websites which are their first reference points	• The Hub needs to be maintained as a localised site is needed • Expand size of its user community • Promote the Hub further and wider • Hub is useful for advisers but many clients prefer using

	Appreciated	Concerned About	Moving Forward
		• Private zone is not part of daily routine • Individuals may feel exposed if they pose a request for help • Some advisers have not embraced technology and may prefer just to talk to someone	social media
CCF	• Learning and sharing was useful • Relationship building was valuable • Local network for practitioners is necessary • Fills a void for practitioners • Tangible work, on no shows, for instance, was positive	• Time management and competing priorities • Not enough staff available to participate consistently • Attendance patchy • Lack of volunteers attending • Hangover of previous culture of working in isolation and not exposing oneself in such forums	• Meetings should be a combination of training and business • Perhaps meet just twice a year • Secure CCF hours as CPD hours • Tie up with the VCS Forum? • Based at CBC could attract wider sector
One Front Door	• Recognition of individual agency specialisms • Referrals and signposting have improved • See this as the start of a journey to having a one front door system • Raised inter-agency awareness	• Not always smooth with some agencies • Ideas such as My CC Card do not work for some agencies – treat this as a pilot initiative to learn from • Perhaps the My CC Card could have worked better if it had formed part of a more comprehensive referral system • Initiative did not get as far as would have liked e.g. the Common Referral Form took longer to materialise	• Need for contact names within individual agencies not just a generic phone number
Volunteering	• Direct pathway created through a common route • High quality of recruitment and support • Wider range of volunteering opportunities were available • Partners have learnt more about how they manage volunteers	• Resource intensive • Lack of management time to manage volunteers • Question marks about the retention rates of CC volunteers	• Need to mainstream this perhaps through a lead agency

Appendix 5.1: Year 1 Forum review e-questionnaire

Charnwood Connect Forum: End of Year 1 Review   **Charnwood Connect Forum has had four meetings to date and a further programme of meetings is planned for the coming year. In order to make the best use of this opportunity it would be really helpful to have some feedback about your experiences of the Forum so far and your thoughts about what it should be doing for the next 12 months. Please fill in your comments (individual or team) and email them back to <u>vipinchauhan@charnwoodcab.co.uk</u> or call me on 01509 221211 for a chat. If you prefer, I would be happy to come and have a chat with you or your team about the work of the Forum. Thank you for all your support.**
What have you liked about coming to the meeting(s) of the Charnwood Connect Forum?
What have you not liked?
If you have not been able to attend any of the meetings or only some, what has stopped you from attending regularly?
What improvements would you like to see in the way in which the Charnwood Connect Forum works?
For the coming year, which issues/areas of practice would you like to see the Forum focus on?
Any other comments/observations?

Vipin Chauhan, KMO
30/7/14

Appendix 5.2: Summary of key issues from the first Forum meeting

Issues faced by clients	
Abuse & Violence	• Sexual abuse • Child protection
Access to Services	• Thresholds for statutory services are higher (less people getting help) • Referrals • Signposting • Not being able to communicate in English and IT therefore not accessing services • Early intervention • Crisis • Waiting lists for services • Services to rural communities
Benefits	• Welfare benefits • Welfare reform/benefit sanctions
Consumer	• Consumer rights
Debt & Money	• Poverty • Debts • Not having enough money to live on • Not understanding how to work and use money • Rent/mortgage arrears
Education	• Education
Housing	• Eviction • Emergency accommodation • Rent arrears • Homelessness • Under occupation/overcrowding
Healthcare	• Drug and alcohol • Mental health • Legal issues • Longer term recovery • Abuse i.e. financial, emotional, drug/alcohol • Self-abuse • Suicides
Law & Rights	• Immigration • Divorce • Criminal and civil proceedings • Discrimination
Relationships	• Domestic abuse • Safety • Fleeing • Family breakdowns • Fleeing violence/harassment • Child contact
Resettlement	• Fleeing home • Starting again • Settling in new home/area
Work	• Employment

Issues faced by practitioners	
Client Referral Systems	• Users not showing up for appointments without advanced warning also contributed to the long waiting lists as adviser time gets wasted • The length of time it takes for users to be seen once referrals have been made, internally within individual agencies as well as across different agencies • Develop new or different models for referring users? • Many users have multiple issues and challenges – should there be a more efficient 'one front door' approach? Should these needs be prioritised somehow e.g. the top two to be dealt with first? What about the work of First Contact?
Funding	• Concerns and fears about the future of advice services • Funding cuts and the financial sustainability of advice organisations • Restrictions in activities that can be undertaken because of funding requirements • Money to fund other activities such as training • Reduction in other resources that help us to achieve outcomes for clients • The general lack of funding for advice services threatening continuation of services
Health and Safety	• Lone working • Emotional threats
Inter-agency Working	• Working with other agencies and partners not always working well together • Work not being acknowledged by statutory bodies • Building on and strengthening existing partnership working
Staff Development	• Lack of opportunities for training • Knowledge gaps • Lack of funding for training
Time	• Not enough time to do the job • Not enough time
User Needs	• Long waiting lists and delays in users accessing services as a direct consequence of a lack of resources, staff and volunteers • Managing expectations • Increase in demand for services
Volunteer Development	• Lack of good volunteers

Ideas for further action	
Agency news	• Keeping each other up to date about staff changes and turnover at individual agencies to ensure effective and efficient referrals and inter-agency working
Information update	• Sharing information arising from meetings attended and/or any forthcoming meetings which may be of interest to CCF members • Cascading national knowledge, thinking and case law as well as information from agencies such as Shelter • Updates about the volunteer development element of the CCP
Acting on issues of common concern	• Responding to current issues such as social care and mental health and for the statutory and voluntary and community sectors to working on these jointly • Gathering and submitting evidence with the power of multiple voices on issues of common concern e.g. Leicestershire Welfare Provision which has one more year to run, JSA sanctions and other social policy trends
Strategic issues	• Supporting partner organisations to become more sustainable • The challenge of competition between agencies for funds • Assessing the degree to which agencies already worked together and the benefits of doing this even more

Appendix 5.3: JSA sanctions case-study template

1. This template is for use by Charnwood Connect's partner agencies to record case-study/anecdotal evidence of the effects of JSA sanctions on service users.

2. To state the obvious, when using this template to record service user details, please make sure that nothing is written that could reveal their identities.

3. If all Charnwood Connect partner agencies can make a concerted effort to gather the case studies over a **two month period between Monday 23 June – Friday 15 August 2014 inclusive,** this will mean that we are all working over the same period to collect JSA sanctions evidence.

4. The progress made can be reviewed at the next meeting of the Charnwood Connect Forum on Tuesday 29 July 2014.

5. This template is being sent for action to all the individuals on the CCF email list and I suggest that **one individual from each agency coordinates this activity within their organisation** – I hope this is acceptable and you are able to arrive at a decision about who this should be, amongst yourselves.

Thank you for all your support.

Date of the incident			
What is the client's profile? (E.g. age, gender, ethnicity, employment, disability, etc.)			
What were the circumstances leading to the sanction?			
Why was the sanction imposed?			
For how long was the sanction imposed?			
Were they informed they could request a mandatory reconsideration?			
Did the client receive information about why they were sanctioned prior to their JSA being stopped?			
If yes, what was the length of time between notification of their sanction and their money stopping?			
What was the impact of the decision on the client (e.g. social, emotional, material, etc.)			
What advice/information/support was offered by you to the client?			
What was the outcome?			
Are there any outstanding issues to resolve?			
Name of adviser		Date	

Vipin Chauhan, KMO
JSA Sanctions Case-studies
18/6/14

Appendix 8.1: Dissemination and impact

The author was an insider practitioner-researcher in the research site for two years for the full duration of the ASTF project. As an insider practitioner the author was instrumental in designing and delivering the Hub and the Forum as well as contributing to other project objectives (chapters 4, 5 and 6). The author participated in the routine staff, volunteer and other meetings in the managing agency and was able to discuss the progress of the project and this study with a variety of practitioners on a regular basis. More formally, the work of the project and the study were presented and discussed at a range of academic and practitioner events, as listed below (*represents presentations undertaken by other contributing members of the Project Steering Group).

1. ***South Africa, September 2014**
   A presentation about the work of Charnwood Connect to an audience of practitioners and researchers involving a consultation about the design and functionality of the Hub (Dr. Gillian Ragsdell, Reader in Knowledge Management, School of Business and Economics, Loughborough University and Moya Hoult, Chief Officer, Charnwood Citizen's Advice Bureau).
2. ***Third Sector Special Interest Group, The Operational Research Society, 10 November 2014**
   Presentation "Managing knowledge to increase resilience in Charnwood's voluntary sector" by Dr. Gillian Ragsdell, Reader in Knowledge Management, School of Business and Economics, Loughborough University and Moya Hoult, Chief Officer, Charnwood Citizen's Advice Bureau.
3. **Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau, 25 November 2014**
   Presentation to the Trustee Board about Charnwood Connect by Vipin Chauhan.
4. **Charnwood Voluntary and Community Sector Forum, 3 December 2014, Leicestershire**
   A presentation to practitioners from the not-for-profit sector about the work of Charnwood Connect and to identify opportunities for joint working.
5. **Knowledge management in the voluntary sector, 1 April 2015, School of Business and Economics,**
6. **Loughborough University**
   Co-presentation on knowledge sharing in Charnwood Connect at a national conference on knowledge management in the not-for-profit sector (Sally Hall, Volunteer Training and Support Officer and Vipin Chauhan, Knowledge Management Officer).
7. **European Conference on Knowledge Management, Udine, Italy, 3-4 September, 2015**
   Conference paper (PhD stream) "Action inquiry for investigating knowledge management within social welfare partnerships" by Vipin Chauhan, Gillian Ragsdell, Wendy Olphert.
8. **Knowledge Management Research Group seminar, 30 September 2015, Loughborough University**
   Presentation at a seminar for researchers and academics on "Knowledge brokering in action" by Vipin Chauhan.
9. **Voluntary Sector Studies Network, 7-8 September 2017, Nottingham**
   Presentation "Knowledge brokering: A practice intervention to actualise knowledge sharing" by Vipin Chauhan to an audience of doctoral researchers and practitioners from the not-for-profit sector.
10. ***European Conference on Knowledge Management, Barcelona, Spain, 7-8 September 2017**
    A presentation "Charnwood Connect: Holistic knowledge management for building resilience in the voluntary sector" by Moya Hoult, Gillian Ragsdell, Peter Davey and Paul Snape, won first prize in the international Knowledge Management and Intellectual Capital Excellence Awards.