

Responsibility and Public Services

Foreword

Whichever way you look at it, public services provided for people whose lives have fallen off the rails consume a very large proportion of expenditure. The Whitehall narrative has it that there is an immediate and growing crisis: demand is rising, so who will pay?

Richard Davis shows through an evidence-based narrative that the crisis – if we should call it that – is a crisis of management, organisation and political policy. In short, we waste hundreds of millions of pounds on ineffective and counter-productive interventions.

The opportunity to radically lower the costs of services is nothing short of breath-taking, to say nothing of the beneficial consequences for people's lives and the quality of life in communities.

Richard Davis, one of the founding members of Vanguard, is respected by his colleagues and clients for his profundity of insight and practical competence. He has pioneered Vanguard's work in this field. As early adopters of the ideas in this book have found, the ideas may challenge conventional wisdom but they are logical, practical and effective.

Anybody involved in services will gain enormous value from the guidance Richard provides. Policy makers, if they take the time to first understand what is described here, will realise that policy should be concerned with the State getting out of the way of people who, if given responsibility, can seize the opportunity to improve services.

In turn, better services will have a profound impact on the level of expenditure. What could be more important?

John Seddon