



What can managed networks deliver?

First question

- Why have them at all?
- Are they an easy answer to problems of:
- Where power is located
- Avoiding decisions about centralisation
- Not having any other ideas about how to improve services
- Or.....

Do they

- Improve learning & spread of good practice
- Reduce artificial boundaries between organisations and staff
- Improve the use of scarce expertise
- Improve access and avoid the need to centralise service
- Developing clinical governance

Next questions

- What sort of network?
 - Size
 - Complexity
 - Differentiation
 - Centralisation
- How do we make it work?
- How will we know it is working?

What sort of network?

- Enclaves
 - Flat & with no central authority
 - Based on shared commitment
- Hierarchical
 - Have an organisational core
 - Authority to regulate & control
- Individualistic
 - Loose association of affiliate around a hub
 - Some co-ordination by procurement

What sort of network?

- Enclaves
 - Mostly useful for information sharing
- Hierarchical
 - Best for complex but well defined tasks that require a division of labour
- Individualistic
 - Best for rapidly changing environments with less certainty

What sort of network?

- Enclaves
 - Depend on enthusiasm & can be unstable
- Hierarchical
 - Danger of bureaucracy
- Individualistic
 - High transaction costs & fluid membership

Contract or manage

- Contract (individualistic network) if:
 - Clear about what outputs are required
 - There is rapid change.
- Hierarchical network
 - Relative stability
 - Hard to exactly specify outputs for which a contract could be written
 - Over advantages of cohesion are being sought e.g. better integration of care & shared learning
 - Contracting costs are high

Creating effective networks

- Central co-ordination (by someone neutral if possible)
- Clear goals and reasonable boundaries
- Inclusiveness in design & development
- Avoid being too large
 - Smaller groups work better

Creating effective networks

- Develop cohesion
 - Boundary spanners
 - Using IT
 - Shared guidelines & protocols
 - Professional leadership
- Avoid over regulation & instruction

Creating effective networks

- Avoiding network capture
 - By one professional group
 - By one institution
- Clear business plan & mandate for management
- Engagement and connectivity

Creating effective networks

- Adding value to members and others
 - How will you demonstrate this
 - How do you want to be held to account?
- Don't forget the soft stuff
 - Values
 - Personal relationships

Some issues

- Hierarchy vs networks
- Do you really agree on what the objectives are?
- How will decisions be enforced?

Final thoughts

- Networks require considerable effort
- Keep a clear eye on why you are doing this