



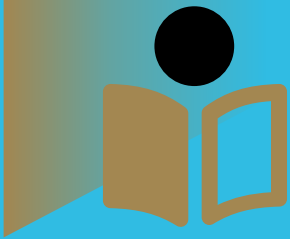
# Public Value Case Studies

DR SABRINA BUNYAN, DR DAVID DUFFY,  
PROFESSOR KRISTIAN LASSLETT AND DR KARL O'CONNOR

CENTRE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



## Realising Public Value at the Library



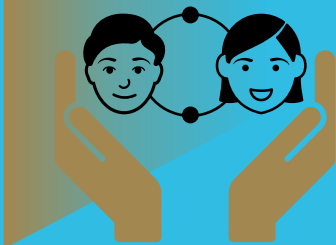
The actions of a town librarian provide a useful illustration of the concept of public value. A town librarian had noticed that the library became swamped with children during after school hours. Initially, the librarian's reaction was to discourage the apparent practice of parents using the library as unofficial day-care for their latchkey children. After all, it was distracting the librarian from 'official' duties. However, upon further consideration, it was understood that the library could be thought of as more than just a place where books were kept and could become a new kind of indoor park to be used by many citizens for varied purposes. As such, the librarian managed to care for the latchkey children and to add public value in an economic, efficient and fair manner with little costs to other functions of the library. As such the purpose of a library may be to provide the public with access to literature

and multimedia resources. However while achieving it's primary objective, the library can additionally add public value through knowledge creation, social care of young people, reduction in delinquency, social opportunity for older people, equality of information access for poorer households, enhanced community cohesion etc. The town library example is just one illustration of the multifaceted concept of public value and the broad spectrum of its possible interpretations.

---

**Moore, M.H. (1995).** *Creating public value: Strategic management in government.* Harvard University Press.

## Unlocking Public Value – UK Public Services



**Barber (2017) explored how public value might be applied to inform UK public sector reform. Public value is maximised when several conditions are fulfilled including that:-**

- “outcomes are clearly defined and being delivered;
- the resources allocated to it are being used efficiently in pursuit of the authorised goals;
- the beneficiaries of the service and the citizens/taxpayers perceive it to be effective and run broadly in accordance with society's values; and
- the institution or service concerned is well-managed, resilient and capable of delivering in the long-run as well as in the short-run” (Barber 2017, pg. 24).

As such it must be ensured that public expenditure produces outcomes that citizens value. The report provides practical steps towards using a public value framework to achieve this objective and thus avoiding actions that provide limited value, such as achieving the delivery of a large number of medical appointments that do not translate to improved health outcomes for patients. Barber emphasises that in order to enhance the generation of public value, it is necessary to gather data on outcomes that the public value generates, rather than the measurement of inputs. The correct data can then be used to inform decision-making which builds public value.

---

**Barber, M. (2017).** Delivering better outcomes for citizens: practical steps for unlocking public value. HM Treasury.

## Conceptualising the Public Value of Health Services: Lessons from the NHS



Tritter (2011) uses a public value approach to frame the activities of health-related services in terms of public value. Tritter identifies the 'value mission' of health organisations, such as the NHS, to produce better health for users. The public value of this mission has societal benefits beyond individual consumers of health services. Beyond the individual, ill health impacts family life, lessens productivity, compromises the workforce and limits the tax base. As such the public value of NHS activities accrue to communities, industry, the economy and society as a whole.

Public value creation is legitimated and supported by a broad range of public sector organisations, such as GP practices, NHS trusts etc. In a broader perspective voluntary and community health organisations, local employers as well as Strategic Health Authorities and the Department of Health also support value creation in a general sense. Co-production is embedded at the centre of the public value framework. Participation by users, families and the voluntary and community sectors are continuing to grow in importance as part of the co-production of health.

---

**Tritter, J. Q. (2011).** Framing the production of health in public value terms: lessons from the UK National Health Service, in J. Benington and M. Moore (eds), *Public Value: Theory and Practice*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, pp.158-167.

## A Novel Approach to Creating Public Value in the Criminal Justice System



The staging of Frank McGuinness's play 'Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme' in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre was initially thought to be a 'crazy idea' but following the persistence of key individuals it turned out to be somewhat of an 'artistic miracle'.

The performance was staged with prisoners playing the leading roles. Actors included armed robbers, perpetrators of grievous bodily harm and a murderer. The engagement of the prisoners and their positive experience is evidenced in the quality of the acting such that it would have "...stood up to serious critical scrutiny in the public arena" (Irish Times, 2007).

Learning of the historical context of the play and its real-life heroes had a real effect on the prisoners. There are the obvious educational benefits as well as employability skills for those involved. Moreover, working on the play helped change the relationship between prison officers, prisoners and the wider prison community. According to director Dan Gordon, "when we started on this journey, I didn't dare hope that it would turn out so well" (Irish Times, 2007).

---

**Irish Times. (2007).** Observe the Ulster inmates. Available at: (<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/observe-the-ulster-inmates-1.1211921>). Accessed on 16/04/2019.

---

**Published By:**

**The Centre for Public Administration**

---

**About:**

The Centre for Public Administration is housed within the School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences. It is an internationally leading research institute, recognised for its local as well as global impact in policy and public administration. The work of the Centre is interdisciplinary in nature, coalescing expertise from a range of disciplines including social policy, public administration, sociology, education, conflict studies, social work, political science, criminology etc. We are committed to high-quality, impact driven research to enhance policy and public administration.

---

**Centre for Public Administration**

---

**School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences****University of Ulster**

Jordanstown Road  
Newtownabbey BT37 0QB  
Northern Ireland

**E** [k.oconnor@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:k.oconnor@ulster.ac.uk)

**T** +44 28 9036 8885



Design: shesaid.design