

Co-production

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Report and recommendations: embedding co-production into adults' departmental-wide approach to engagement.

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1 Background

- 1.1 Policy direction in adult social care at both a national and local level in recent years has increasingly focused on a more collaborative role for people who use services, where they are more directly involved in shaping the services they access. This has also been linked to the idea that society as a whole does not make the most of the skills and talents that communities have to offer, as outlined in the Government White Paper *Caring for our future* (HM Government, 2011). Locally, the [Southwark Vision for Adult Social Care](#) (Southwark Council, 2011) identifies the need for people using services, carers and other partners including health and the voluntary and community sector, to have a key role in developing solutions for a sustainable system where people have choice and control over the care and support they access.
- 1.2 In light of this, the Adult Social Care (ASC) department has identified the development of an approach to co-production as a key part of its personalisation programme. This report makes recommendations for the most effective ways to embed co-productive approaches in our departmental-wide approach to engagement.
- 1.3 The recommendations have been informed by insight and input from a range of key stakeholders – service users, carers, voluntary and community sector organisations, private providers, Southwark staff and health colleagues. A project working group has also met to support the work and contribute to the development of the approach.
- 1.4 It is important to be mindful that, to follow our own aspirations for co-production, the implementation of any report outcomes need to be co-produced as far as possible. This means that not all recommendations are complete in their detail as one of the key next steps will be to flesh them out in collaboration with relevant partners.

2 What is co-production?

2.1 Whilst there is no universally agreed definition of what co-production is, we are recommending that our divisional approach use the definition provided by Think Local, Act Personal, as set out below.

“Co-production is not just a word, it’s not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find a shared solution. In practice, it involves people who use services being consulted, included and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them.”

2.2 Key themes around what co-production can support are:

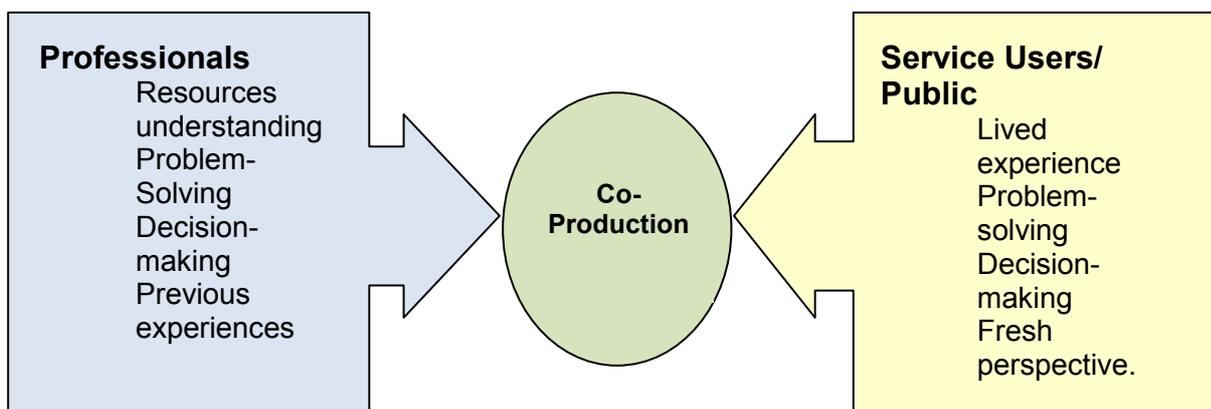
- Building relationships that bring individuals together as equal partners
- Recognising each individual as an asset, not just a consumer
- Potential to mobilise the vast resource that is the Southwark population
- Placing all participants on an equal decision-making level
- Requiring professionals to become ‘facilitators’ rather than ‘fixers’.

2.3 It is important to recognise that co-production is something more than the traditional approaches we may have used for engagement in the past. Where principles of co-production are not adhered to, the word should not be defined as co-production. One notable distinction is the difference between co-production and participation. The key difference is about being consulted as opposed to being equal partners in the process.

2.4 This section goes on to talk about some key principles of co-production and also a range of different types of co-production. Broadly, we should aim to use the forms in appropriate settings, and could use any or all of the approaches depending on the nature of the service development and the change we’re trying to achieve.

2.5 Below is an example of what the people involved in a co-production of a public service might contribute to the process.

Example contributions from parties involved



Principles of co-production

2.6 The essence of what co-production is about is focused in some key principles and ways of working. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) identifies four key principles of co-production. We are keen that these principles form the basis of our future approach. They are outlined below.

Principle 1 – Equality

2.7 Co-production starts from the idea that no one group or individual is more important than anyone else; everyone has assets to bring to the process. This principal does not simply apply to the need to recognise the assets of people who use services and others in the community but to the assets that workers, practitioners, managers and other professionals bring to the process.

Principle 2 – Diversity

2.8 The range of people involved in any co-production activity should be diverse. Co-production projects should be pro-active about diversity. Some of the main groups who may experience exclusion include, for example: black and minority ethnic (BME) communities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities; people who communicate differently; people with dementia; people who are not affiliated to any organised group or 'community'; homeless people.

Principle 3 – Accessibility

2.9 Ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate fully in an activity in the way that suits them best. This can include physical access or information accessibility. All parties need to have enough information and enough time needs to be allocated to co-productive work.

Principle 4 – Reciprocity

2.10 Ensuring that people receive something back for putting something in and building on people's desire to feel needed and valued. The idea has been linked to 'mutuality' and all parties involved having responsibilities and expectations.

Types of co-production

2.11 Co-production can exist in a variety of different ways and forms, supporting different objectives, outcomes or stages in a journey of change. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) breaks co-production into the following:

- **Co-design**, including planning of services
- **Co-decision making** in the allocation of resources
- **Co-delivery** of services, including the role of volunteers in providing the service
- **Co-evaluation** of the service

Examples of the different areas

Co-delivery

Toucan Employment employ people who have learning disabilities to support them in delivering their service model.

Co-decision making

Southwark's innovation fund (Children's services focus) has a decision making panel consisting of carers, service users, VCS orgs and Southwark staff.

Co-evaluation

The Southwark commissioning team works alongside five lay inspectors who support them in their quality assurance of older peoples residential care homes.

Co-design

The Southwark commissioning team used a co-design group to support their work on The Centre of Excellence. The group consisted of service users, carers, VSC organisations, private providers and Council staff.

2.12 SCIE also makes a clear distinction between co-production as referenced above and **co-creation**. In co-production, people who use services take over some of the work done by practitioners. In co-creation, on the other hand, people who use services work with professionals to design, create and deliver services.

Example: By agreeing and signing up to the think local, act personal 'Making it Real' scheme Islington Council has implemented a board of stakeholders including their director of adult social care. This board is responsible for designing, creating and delivering their personalisation agenda.

Individual co-production

2.13 As well as being applicable to how local authorities can work with communities to improve the quality of services they deliver, we also

need to understand that the term can be applied to the work we can do with individuals. The Local Authorities Research Council Initiative (LARCI) terms this '**individual co-production**'. This means the benefits of co-producing are felt mainly by the individual citizens taking part. In shaping these services, citizens and front-line staff can collaborate at the start of the process (service planning and design), in delivery and management of the service, and/or in audit and evaluation.

Example: Self-managed personal budget and support plan. By agreeing to take on and self-manage a personal budget, and by support planning with their circle of support, having access to a developed market and accessible support planning tools, service users are able to co-produce their own care and support with the local authority and those people closest to them.

Collective co-production

2.14 LARCI uses the term '**collective co-production**' to apply to how communities can be mobilised to provide public services with little or no direct input from the local authority, In contrast with personal forms, collective co-production expands the concept to encompass groups of citizens. Collective co-production contains intrinsic benefits for those involved, by creating the possibility of public services in particular, shaped around communities' needs.

Example: peer support. By understanding and appreciating the expertise they have in their own circumstance, and by having access to the training and resources facilitated through the local authority peer support models offer communities a fresh perspective, an alternative support to that available from a professional.

Substitutive co-production

2.15 Most of the types of co-production outlined above can be collected under a general term of '**additive co-production**'. It can also be important to explore the possible benefits of '**substitutive co-production**', where part of the service is transferred from the professional to the public.

Example: participatory budgeting. This is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. Newcastle City Council has been a pioneer of participatory budgeting approaches. Newcastle piloted participatory budgeting using £280,000 from Neighbourhood Renewal Fund money. Early evidence shows that these have been largely successful.

3 Our vision for co-production in Southwark

- 3.1 Based on research today, our overall vision for adult social care, and what people told us through this exercise, we describe below how we think co-production needs to fit into the vision for adult social care in Southwark.
- 3.2 Southwark Council wants people to live independent and fulfilling lives, based on choices that are important to them. We want care and support services to be more effective and to be focused on the needs of individuals so that they can be independent and get involved in their local communities.
- 3.3 We recognise that to achieve this goal we will need to embark upon a cultural and systemic change that will fundamentally challenge the relationship that we have had previously with individuals and their communities. We want to better recognise the strengths, expertise and assets that exist in our community and empower those people who are willing to contribute to adult social care to do so.
- 3.4 We want to promote, value and work with active citizens and support a breakaway from a culture of co-dependency that currently exists. We believe that a culture of co-dependency does little to improve the quality of the life of those people living in Southwark or the quality of services available to them. We recognise that by participating and becoming directly involved in the co-production of public services, citizens are able to enhance the quality of their own lives as well as their sense of wellbeing.
- 3.5 We will use co-production to shift the balance of power from the local authority to the community and the individual. It will flow through our approach to the provision of care and support services and sit as a core value in everything we do.

4 Research exercise and key findings

- 4.1 The research carried out for this report aimed to give us an understanding of how stakeholders feel about engaging adult social care. We wanted to explore both the idea of individual co-production and the co-production of services more broadly. To inform the recommendations we used information from a range of sources.
- Desk-based research on concepts of co-production and good practice examples from national organisations.
 - Early learning from elements of other local authority models that encompass co-production, including Greenwich and Islington councils.
 - Surveys of service users (70 responses across client groups), carers (58 responses), the voluntary and community sector (30 separate organisations) and the private sector (2 organisations).
 - Focus groups with staff (adult social care, commissioning and health).
 - Interviews with the Service Development Management Team (SDMT) and community engagement within Southwark Council.
 - In-depth interviews with a number of voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 4.2 A summary of the methodology and detailed responses is available in an appendix separate to this report. In addition, we commissioned Community Action Southwark (CAS) to complete the research work with the voluntary and community sector. This resulted in a separate report, which is available within the appendix and informed the wider recommendation development.

Key findings – what people told us

- 4.3 Being a relatively new concept it was unsurprising that co-production was not widely understood and often misinterpreted and misrepresented in the work that adult and children's services undertakes. However there does exist a clear enthusiasm to develop co-production both in adult social care and within the services available.
- 4.4 There are pockets of co-production taking place across adult social care, and there is some focus on commissioning services that both develop co-production or are co-produced, such as the prioritisation of peer support and a community approach to quality assurance. There is, however, no formally-agreed policy or approach to co-production.
- 4.5 There is a growing understanding of and motivation to pursue individual forms of co-production; we can find many excellent examples of support planning and personal budgets. Our market development has generally been a success, however our communication mechanisms to date have not always resulted in

initiatives being tested to reach the widest audience, and consequently have been under-utilised.

- 4.6 Feedback suggests that Southwark does not currently have a system that supports co-design. Practitioners told us that they would like to work more closely with stakeholders but felt they do not have the time to do so. There was a feeling that in such a fast paced environment where there are time limitations on funding streams, co-designing a service can be difficult. However, respondents did provide some good examples of what could work when time and resource were available – this includes the Centre of Excellence co-design group and work to develop a carer’s hub.
- 4.7 The voluntary and community sector in particular felt that they worked well with adult social care to identify needs in the community. However, many organisations felt they lacked an ongoing role after that, being only consulted at the end of the process.
- 4.8 Feedback from staff, service users and the voluntary and community sector suggested that the current partnership boards in Southwark ASC did not have a particularly high profile outside those organisations that are represented, and that there was a lack of clarity on how they could effect change in their current format. The voluntary and community sector in particular felt that the boards were not able to take a strategic approach and mainly looked at information sharing between the local authority and the parties represented.
- 4.9 Although there were some good experiences of our consultations the general consensus was that people were not involved early enough in the process to effect change. The frustration around the lack of time to involve stakeholders was felt by all people surveyed and certainly was felt by Southwark staff.
- 4.10 We found that the vast majority of service users wanted to be involved in individual co-production and more involved to have their voice heard in the decisions that we make. It is worth noting that older people receiving services who responded to this survey were less likely to want to contribute than other service user groups.

5 How we could achieve a co-productive approach – recommendations

- 5.1 This section aims to set out how we hope a co-productive approach could work in Southwark. Key elements of this approach are:
- co-production at all levels of decision-making and embedded as part of decision-making forums and processes, that are involved in the design of services
 - a much wider network of people with expertise and interest in getting involved
 - stronger user and community voices
 - making good use of a wider range of community voices rather than trying to create everything ourselves
- 5.2 As the Health and Wellbeing Board develops, we will look to work with colleagues responsible for supporting it to promote the benefits of co-production in that wider system approach.
- 5.3 A general principle for all the co-production work is that it needs to closely tie in with the strategic priorities of the department. There are likely to be a range of priority projects in which a co-productive approach could be utilised. These recommendations are particularly focused on some overarching actions we need to take to develop the supporting structures so that co-production can take place effectively. They are not intended to preclude the wider pieces of work from taking place. It is also clear that community engagement, health and children's services will be key internal partners for this work.
- 5.4 Below are a series of recommendations about what we think needs to be different to achieve this. Recommendations are based on the good practice desk research that has been done to date and takes into account the feedback we received from service users, carers, the voluntary and community sector, staff, and private providers.
- 5.5 It is important to note that, for the outcomes from this to be most effective, the detailed solutions and implementation of any recommendations should also be co-produced. This means that further work will be required to build up the recommendations into complete actions.

Recommendations

1. Develop the capacity of people and organisations in the system to co-produce

Develop a community advisor network to work alongside us in partnership as co-designers and co-creators of social care in Southwark. Support this

network by improving the accessibility of information across the department, ensuring that people have every opportunity to contribute.

The focus would be on identifying an initial 'cohort' to join a community advisor network from the range of people and groups with whom we currently work. Finding people who would like to be a part of the network would be part of the work, as well as identifying any training needs to enable people to participate.

We would closely work with and learn from other approaches, e.g. community engagement's work with volunteers to ensure a level of consistency across the organisation, but designed to meet the specific requirements of adult social care.

The network would also provide opportunities for colleagues across ASC to link into and use network members as sources of advice and expertise for individual and ongoing work.

A key part of this is also working with commissioning and other colleagues to invest in our partnership board model. The aim would be to strengthen its links with strategic decision making. There was substantial feedback from a range of survey participants about this strategic work, suggesting a level of interest in making this happen from partners within and outside the organisation.

Alongside these particular structural developments, we also hope to look at a range of mechanisms both existing and considering new technology that enable people to contribute to conversations about ASC without becoming a community advisor. One example might be posting the LDPB agenda on Southwark's Facebook page and requesting friends – Cambridge House, the Bede, the Riverside, Southwark College, Community Advisors, Orient Street, individual service users – to comment, for example.

Understanding the time and resources needed to enable different groups of people to engage meaningfully and effectively will be important.

Again, we would hope to do this in partnership with colleagues in community engagement, health and children's services to look at opportunities for there to be a more consistent approach across the whole council.

2. Promote individual co-production through a cultural shift

Develop an understanding of personal co-production through a focus on strength based support planning and accessible and easy to use communication. Work directly with strength based services such as time banks and supported employment organisations to improve on our current support planning guidance.

Introduce a single annual event or 'State of the nation address' co-chaired by a councillor / director / head of disabilities and a Community Advisor. This will support stakeholders who do not often contribute to strategic decision making groups such as social workers and service users not in Speaking Up to feel that they are part of the 'bigger picture'.

Focus of asset mapping to ensure staff are looking to the community to increase both the expertise and capacity available to the delivery of services. We will start to think more broadly about what an asset is and how we can work with them or support them to realise their own assets. We will work on a system which makes it easy for all stakeholders to identify assets, this should be applied to a mechanism for the VCS organisations to work jointly with each other. This work would be done using the knowledge gained from the proposed piece of work with Southwark and Lambeth Integrated Care (SLIC) on asset mapping, to avoid duplication and share knowledge.

3. Develop a 'toolkit' of good practice on co-productive approaches and methodologies for all staff to use

A co-production methodology and toolkit needs to be developed and be available to adult social care staff that supports them to better co-produce with the community. The toolkit would be a step-by-step guide to co-producing a project or piece of work with sections including, for example: how to complete a 'statutory asset map', how to complete a 'community asset map', how to use remuneration agreements, how to facilitate an accessible meeting, how to utilise the community advisor network.

A reward and remuneration policy will be developed to outline what people can expect if they engage with us, what we will offer them and what we expect and return. We are aware that this needs to be have consistency across the whole department (children's and adults), and will also take into account the approach that CCG colleagues currently use. We will work with strategy and commissioning colleagues to achieve this. We will also take learning and use it to influence any wider council approaches through the work of community engagement, which is looking at opportunities for co-production more broadly.

The use of video and audio explanation should be a key objective for the department. Multimedia offers us a fantastic ability to make what we do accessible to the community. We would like to test possibility of a video and audio explanation of the policy available on the Southwark YouTube channel.

Next Steps

The Adults service management team have reviewed this report and its recommendations and agreed to the vision and recommendations in principal.

The next step will be to work with partners develop what this could look like in more detail and agree an implementation plan.