



Older people and co-production

Report from Wisdom in Practice
Co-production event

Edinburgh, November 2013



About this report and the event

This report brings together ideas and practice around co-production as a way to create better services and community supports and opportunities for older people.

Wisdom in Practice is a project based at Outside the Box. It supports the development of services and other activities that are led by older people. The project is funded by the Scottish Government through the Equalities Fund. We give support to local groups to help them take forward their projects and provide events and resources that enable people from different places and situations to share ideas and learn from each other.

Many people are telling us about the ways they are aiming to co-produce services - to bring together the ideas, skills and resources of people who will use those services and the people who provide and plan the services. In some places people feel they are making good progress, but everyone described frustrations - the development of these approaches was too slow, or only affected a small proportion of services used by older people in an area, or could benefit from a different approach. Some people described how this is what they have been doing, or trying to do, for some time and are pleased that the official policies and recognition of good practice has caught up with their values and way of working.

We looked at what people are doing in Scotland and at what we could learn from the experience of people in other parts of the UK.

We held an event in Edinburgh in November 2013 which brought together:

- Emerging ideas from an overview which Helen Bowers at the National Development Team for Inclusion has been doing for Wisdom in Practice.
- Examples from projects across Scotland.
- People who are interested in co-production and/or who are interested in other aspects of developing services led by older people.

This report includes points we discussed on the day and some examples from people who were not able to come along to the event.

What happens next

We will be sharing this report with people who are interested in seeing good support for older people, including community groups and staff in Councils, the NHS and other organisations. We hope the ideas and examples that people brought will give others ideas on what older people can contribute to developments in their areas.

We will also be sharing it with people who are interested in developing co-production in many situations. We hope it will be a contribution to the developing body of good practice and thinking about co-production and how it can lead to better lives for the people who use the services.

We hope that people who were part of the discussions and others across Scotland use the report to feed into the work they are doing and spark off ideas on ways to work with older people to make a difference for people in their community.

Co-production and older people

Helen Bowers, National Development Team for Inclusion

The National Development Team for Inclusion works with people across the UK, helping communities and organisations to develop good, effective services that work well for the people who use them.

Helen described what has been learned from the experiences of people across the UK around co-production and older people. This includes research as well as the experience of people who are part of getting new developments underway in a wide range of places and settings.

The starting point is understanding what co-production is.

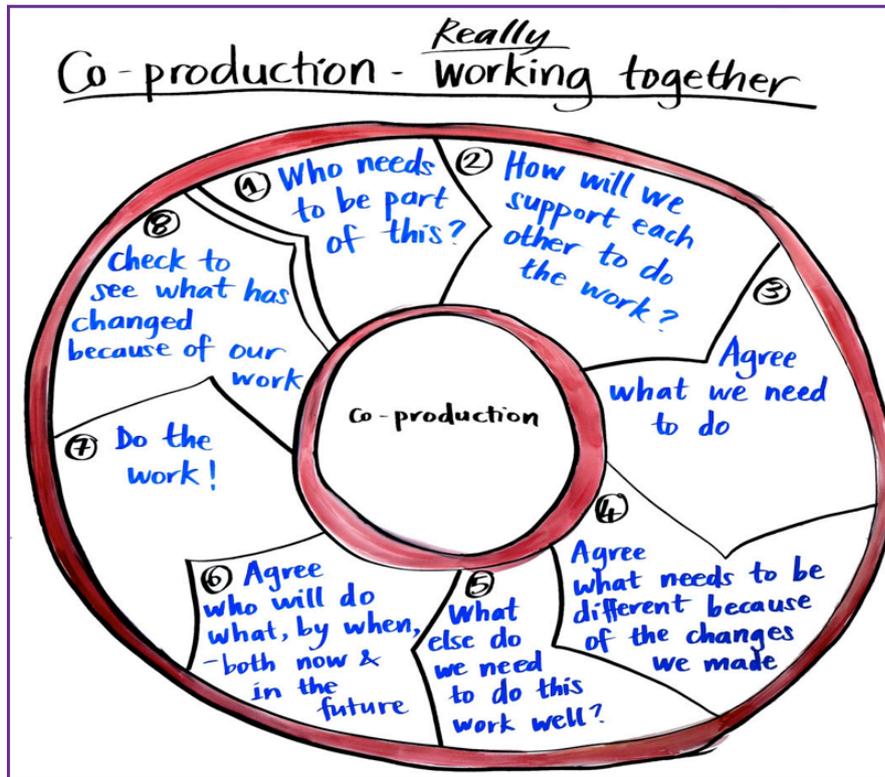
- Co-production is about different stakeholders working together on a shared issue, topic, problem or development.
- It is about individuals, communities and organisations having the skills, knowledge and ability to work together, to create opportunities and to solve problems.
- Co-production can happen at different levels: individual (such as self-directed support) and at a community or collective level (such as Timebanks).
- It is about action rather than talking, although the talking aspect and how this process happens is important, as that influences the sort of actions that follow.

Understanding what co-production is matters. Real co-production brings many benefits and has an impact on a wide range of people. It leads to better outcomes for the same level of resources and effort. But the term is sometimes used in situations that are not really co-production. There are concerns about the lack of progress in working through to changes in the experience of older people or reducing the power imbalance between older people and others.

Co-production happens at two main levels. The first is co-production with older people about their lives and the support they need. There is work with older people to help them identify their goals, priorities and needs, and how to achieve them. This includes supporting older people and those closest to them to personalise the support they get. It can also include planning for and using a personal budget.

The second level is co-producing services, solutions and developments with older people in local communities. Services work with people where they live to understand what is working well in their areas, and what is not working so well. It involves sharing power in the local planning processes so that communities can be part of determining both what issues should be tackled and how they should be tackled.

The experience has shown that there are 8 stages to co-production. When these are there the process enables people to really work together.



There is a growing body of experience of co-production with older people resulting in changes in how plans are developed and the services and supports that are then produced. The experience is that once people are there they can help develop a different process for the discussions. Once you have a different process you can come up with different solutions.

For example, in Hampshire and in Dorset older people pointed out that they were retired and were not squeezing in meetings between other work. They had time to spend longer on real conversations. If it took all day to have a proper discussion about something that was important, that was fine. They could have meetings with no agenda, so no limit on what was discussed.

In Dorset, over 4,000 older people were directly involved in the development of strategies that impact on their lives. They and the other stakeholders agreed 8 outcome areas and services are commissioned and provided to contribute to these outcomes.

Older people in local communities in Dorset:

1. ...have housing suitable for individual needs.
2. ...are socially integrated and not isolated.
3. ...are making positive contributions and experiencing fulfilment.
4. ...feel secure and safe.

5. ...feel free from discrimination.
6. ...feel financially secure.
7. ...are in good health in mind and body.
8. ...have dignity, choice and control throughout their life, especially towards the end.

For more information

Helen Bowers has written a paper on Co-production and Older People for Wisdom in Practice. It is at www.otbds.org/wisdom

There are other resources on Co-production and Older People on the NDTi website.

For the Positive and Productive meetings guide see <http://positiveproductivemeetings.com/>. The ideas and practical suggestions on the website are helpful for co-design teams, coproduction groups/networks, and project teams and staff meetings.

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(Helen got married not long after our event. You can find her under both names now).
www.ndti.org.uk

Local developments in Scotland

Older people in Argyll and Bute

Argyll Voluntary Action hosts the Community Resilience work strand as part of Reshaping Care for Older People in Argyll and Bute. There are 7 workers based in communities across Argyll and Bute who are helping the shift from formal services to community activities.

The work is based around:

- Empowering older people to have a voice.
- Enabling people and communities to take part, including creating links between communities of geography and of interest, and showing what people can achieve.
- Co-production - working together to create new opportunities, connecting the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and using the skills of communities, and taking an asset-based approach.
- Partnership working - sharing resources and expertise to enable services to work better for the benefit of older people, combat social isolation and support reablement and rehabilitation for people who need this.
- Focus on prevention - such as taking the falls prevention message out to the community.

“We asked: ‘What things support you? What things nurture and nourish you?’ The responses included: church, scenery, gardening, pub, social club. It was a good reminder that health and community development staff are not always needed.”

All of the activities come from suggestions by older people in response to the gaps older people have identified. Older people are involved in creating and delivering the services as well as in receiving support.

There is a community shop, where older volunteers are getting involved with their community and feel they are contributing and doing something useful.

A new volunteer befriending scheme for older people has been launched in Helensburgh. The emphasis is on companionship and the scheme targets older people who are isolated, with training and support for the volunteers who are again mostly older people.

The Grey Matters group in Helensburgh now has 100 members. Councillors come and present local plans to them. Other organisations consult with them and they are seen as an important group.

“We are able to have our say - and people listen to us. We make the decisions about what we need and we are heard. With Grey Matters it belongs to us.”

The Lunch Bunch was created by Timebank volunteers and provides soup groups - gathering at lunchtime once a month or more often - and outings. It is a safe place for people who are frail. The volunteers are also mostly older people who are using their skills and experience to organise and cook the meals, and it is mostly self-financing.

“I really look forward to the community lunches - our lunch bunch are growing every time so now over 30 of us are meeting up.” Mary, aged 84

Safe at home is a new telephone assurance service in Helensburgh for older people who have recently been discharged from hospital. Volunteers make a call to see if the person needs anything such as a prescription collected or any shopping. The aim is to make the transition from hospital back home easier.

The impact in the first year of this work across Argyll and Bute has been:

- Over 600 people involved in volunteering projects.
- 200 new timebankers.
- Over 200 older people supported with friendship opportunities, practical help ranging from getting lists to hanging curtains, and support to air their views.

There are plans to develop activities further over next year, including co-production of local services such as a new Men’s Shed and the Safe at Home project.

“Timebank and Grey Matters means I have a reason to get up in the morning.” Sarah, aged 87

“Volunteering with the young people keeps me young. It’s lovely they spend time with us and I feel I still have something to offer.” Grace, 81

For more information

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www.argyllvoluntaryaction.org.uk/about-us/our-work/reshaping-care-for-older-people

Pilmenny Development Group, Edinburgh

Pilmenny Development Group began 30 years ago and is led by people in the local community. It supports activities for older people and for young people in a small, densely populated area in North East Edinburgh.

The Community Connecting service for North East Edinburgh is based at Pilmenny Development Project. It is a service for older people who need a bit of support in

getting out and about. It is for people who have lost confidence, for example after a fall or an illness or bereavement. It also helps people start using public transport again. (There is a similar service for people in other parts of Edinburgh.)

The service helps people to build, or rebuild, their own social networks and link into local activities that interest them. A volunteer - who is often another older person - works with each person for around 4 months to help them identify what they want to do and support them to start doing these activities. The aim is that by then the person will have made their own connections which they can maintain.

Two features that older people said at the planning stage were important are that it is a free service and that the person, or more likely someone who knows them, can request the service without the need for a formal referral from a professional.

“The activities are wide ranging, such as joining a social group for a walk or for a blether, going to the cinema, going to the shops again, or getting a bus into town.”

“It is easy for someone to lose confidence, and that leads to them withdrawing and then to poor mental and physical wellbeing. A bit of encouragement and support can change all that.”

For more information

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Developing links with community resources in Fife

We had a presentation from the Local Area Co-ordinators based at Fife Elderly Forum and from BRAG, which is linked to the SHINE project. The Fife SHINE team is part of the Council and NHS and is implementing a range of initiatives to support older people to live and thrive at home in ways that are safe and sustainable. Both developments have been funded for 3 years through the Reshaping Care for Older People Change Fund.

There are 4 local area co-ordinators (LACs) based at Fife Elderly Forum. Their aim is to help older people (aged 65 and over) to live independently within their own homes and communities.

The LACs work closely with individuals to help them identify and plan their own journeys, supporting them along the way. The LACs support access to and involvement in communities and low level to high level service provision.

They link individual older people, their families or carers with services and community resources in Fife. They have helped individual older people access community activities like walking groups, elderobics, carpet bowls, local history groups and discussion groups, as well as lunch clubs, day care services, dementia services, shopping services, advocacy services and welfare advice.

The LACs have been developing an online Directory of services and community resources with lots of information on local services and community groups including contact details, what they do, times and so on. They are continuing to expand the range of community resources and services in the Directory. The LACs use the Directory when they meet with older people who are looking for help and support. The Directory is available on their website, is free and can be used by individuals, their families and their carers.

The LACs have good links with social work, occupational therapists, the SHINE project and others. This means that information about services and community resources is available for others to use when they meet with older people. This has resulted in more creative approaches to support for older people.

For example one older person has got involved in a local history group because the Occupational Therapist talked to him about things to do in his local area. He has now got a new lease of life as he has got involved in something that interests him, he gets out of the house more and meets other people.

BRAG is Benarty Regeneration Action Group. BRAG's main aim is to regenerate communities affected by the decline in heavy engineering and mining in Fife. BRAG is a social enterprise and it supports other social enterprises and other initiatives by providing things like development support, training, accommodation, support, advice.

As part of the SHINE project BRAG identifies gaps in services for older people and helps develop different types of small scale provision, called micro-providers, to develop new services to meet the gaps.

These micro-enterprises will allow older people to access tailored packages of care that are personalised to them and their family. The care provided through these packages is preventive, timely and will strengthen self-reliance and resilience in individuals, families and communities.

For example, currently an older person will be admitted to hospital following a fractured wrist if they are unable to care for themselves. Under this initiative, a micro-provider will respond to the situation, providing meals and personal care as necessary, to allow the older person to recover from their injury at home.

Older people will benefit from care that is tailored to their specific needs and which is delivered by micro-providers, who are often already known to them as friends or neighbours. Anticipatory services will respond to early warning signs, which will reduce hospital admissions. Informal carers will feel better supported to provide care.

The team hopes that having a wider range of flexible care options for older people will reduce the number of people whose discharge from acute and community hospital is delayed.

For more information

Local Area Co-ordinators:

E. info@fife-elderly.org.uk

T. 01592 643743

The Directory is available on the website: www.fife-elderly.org.uk

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WOOPI - Wider Opportunities for Older People in Inverclyde

WOOPI came out of a partnership between older people and older people's groups, Inverclyde Council and voluntary organisations.

The aims are to:

- Improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people aged 55+ who live in Inverclyde.
- Develop and improve participants' skills and confidence through volunteering opportunities.
- Break down intergenerational barriers and cultural perceptions between younger people, especially teenagers, and older people.

The project began in July 2009 and since then, 2029 learners have engaged with the project. There are 17 sustainable WOOPI groups running, 74 registered volunteers and 281 learners regularly attending sessions.

The activities have grown in response to what the older people taking part want to do and opportunities that have come along. They now include:

- A creative writing group.
- Silverline dancers.
- Riverview Players Drama Group.
- Several art groups and other crafts groups in towns across Inverclyde.
- A singing group that give performances to other older people, community groups and the like.
- Inverclyde Pipes and Drums - who will also give performances if you want a pipe band at your event.

- Website and digital groups.
- A health group.
- Skills share groups.
- Roving Reporters /research group.

The Roving Reporters have produced a booklet describing places people can go to on buses that start in Inverclyde with their free bus passes so people have more information and choices on ways to spend their time and keep active and interested.

“The starting point for engagement work was door to door surveys, open ended conversations. Talking to people on their door steps, teasing out issues. We found it often takes 2 – 3 visits before people will come to the community centre and meet with the others and begin to take part in what is going on. The reasons include people’s lack of confidence, transport, didn’t know the community centre was for them.”

“Each thing we do sparks off ideas and leads to something else.”

“Remember that resources not just for developing skills etc. It’s great just to have fun! It’s not just about solving problems.”

For more information

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T. 01475 715 450

www.woopi.org.uk

Befriending project in the Borders

The Seton Care Befrienders project is a response to the gap identified by older people living in Berwickshire (the eastern part of Scottish Borders) and the north part of Northumberland around Berwick-upon-Tweed. They wanted company and friendship and someone to do things with when this was becoming harder. They wanted company to go places with, or someone to have a chat with over a pot of tea, and to help with small practical things around the house, like changing light bulbs, which were too hard for them.

“As you get older, things you used to do with ease are harder, getting out and about alone is a challenge too far. You become isolated, lonely and lose a bit of confidence.”

The project is based at Seton Care which is part of the Berwickshire Housing Association group. The volunteers are also mostly older people and the project aims to benefit all those taking part in both roles. The development of the project starts with the feedback and ideas from the people asking for befriending support and from the volunteers.

“It doesn’t feel like volunteering now. I just visit a friend every week to catch up.”

For more information

Contact Terri Bearhope
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T. 01361 884000

Bad Boys Bus, Cowal

In Cowal they now have the Bad Boys Bus (not the official title, but this is what everyone calls it). A few older men were having problems at activities when they were mostly with older women who are not comfortable with some of the men’s behaviour such as swearing. The men felt they had to behave and could not relax. So the solution they all came up with is for the men and a few workers to go off on their own: the bus picks them up and they go to the pub, have a pint and have lunch. They can chat about the topics they want to talk about, make friends with other older men, and spend time just being themselves.

This is part of the work of Cowal Elderly Befrienders, which is a voluntary organisation working on the Cowal peninsula in Argyll and Bute. They provide a range of befriending services designed to improve quality of life, reduce isolation and loneliness and keep older people independent and active for as long as possible in the communities they helped create.

For more information

T. 01369 704985
www.cowalbefrienders.co.uk

Stakeholder Engagement Project, Falkirk

In Bo’ness and Blackness older people are part of developing ways to enable older people to live in their own homes. The Stakeholder Engagement Project is based in Falkirk Council’s Community Learning and Development team. They have used a range of ways to think about what was needed to make wider change happen, work out who should be involved, ask people their views and identify possible solutions.

This work has been done in the context of integration between health and Council services and moving services and resources to enable older people to stay at home as long as possible.

The start was asking stakeholders - older people and people who worked in services - about their perceptions and expectations of health and social care services. The next question was: how do we use a co-production approach to meet those expectations, and to shift the balance of care towards independent living?

Some of the challenges they have come across are people's perceptions about co-production and the cultural and administrative barriers to change.

The main issues that community groups raised were:

- Mobility and transport.
- Staying connected to the community.
- Lack of information on what services are available for older people.
- Lack of awareness of who to contact about services for older people.
- Variability in patient/client experiences.
- Restricted consumer choices within the town.

The main issues from the service providers were:

- The difficulty in removing social, cultural and administrative barriers to integration of health, Council and voluntary sector services.
- A subsequent need for better communication between and within some core services (e.g. between secondary health care and Social Work Services).
- A lack of information on community social infrastructures.
- Stretched capacity within Council and NHS key services.
- Difficulty in identifying and engaging carers.
- A need for training in community engagement across Council and NHS services.

This led to 5 co-production projects:

1. **Enhancing social support mechanisms:** the partners are Equal Futures (a voluntary organisation), Community Learning and Development at Falkirk Council, CVS Falkirk and a Small Grants Scheme to support small local projects.
2. **An Older People's Services Directory and signposting:** the partners are CLD, CVS Falkirk, NHS Forth Valley and Churches Together.
3. **Falls Prevention:** the partners are Step Forth (which encourages and supports walking projects) Bield Housing Association, Hanover Housing Association and Falkirk Council Housing Services.
4. **Understanding patients' expectations:** this is led by NHS Forth Valley Patient Experience Programme.
5. **Promoting community transport options:** the partners are the Royal Voluntary Service, Patient Transport Service and NHS Forth Valley.

For more information

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Designing Dementia Services in East Renfrewshire

People diagnosed with dementia are co-designing the support services for themselves and other people in East Renfrewshire. This is one of 4 pilot areas which are part of a Scottish Government programme to look at how people diagnosed with dementia can be best supported.

People with dementia, their families and carers get together for a regular working lunch along with a range of stakeholders, including staff from health, social work, housing, the voluntary and independent sectors. People talk about their experiences of living with the disease. They also share from their personal point of view what has and hasn't helped them since they were diagnosed, and how they think they could be best supported.

The project is informing future care provided by East Renfrewshire Community Health and Care Partnership, which brings together community and primary health care services and social work services, as well as feeding into the national learning. It is part of a range of ways in which older people and people in the local community are getting involved in developing and helping to deliver better support for older people in East Renfrewshire.

For more information

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Our experiences - what helps co-production and what makes it more difficult

Getting real co-production

These are the factors that were frequently raised as being essential for real co-production and for good quality services that supported older people:

- A shared understanding of what people were trying to achieve.
- Openness to new ideas.
- An open agenda which included different people's issues.
- Having the right people there - older people being at the heart of all the discussions, and understanding about equalities aspects.
- Equal partnerships, not token involvement.
- Using processes that are effective.

There were some very positive examples of co-production in the discussions. People thought the aim should be to learn more about what is working well and build on that experience in areas where people are still finding it difficult. We also found that the experience is often patchy within local areas - some developments reflecting and benefiting from strong co-production, while other activities in the same area did not have any meaningful elements of co-production.

People thought that part of the problem is that there seems to be a vast range of things which people call 'co-production'. It ranges from good practice on people working together, including approaches that have been used and have been effective over many years, to just being another name for participation or person-centred services.

People thought it is important that everyone understands what terms such as 'co-production' and 'capacity building' mean: not just from a theoretical point of view, but in terms of their practical applications.

"People don't realise this is a fundamentally different approach. They think it is just another buzz word - 'we've had participation and engagement and now we have co-production'. It hasn't been explained to them properly."

"We need a checklist to help us all identify when the words are being used but the action is not happening. We also need examples to show us how it can be different and how to achieve that."

“The Scottish Government needs to ask people - including older people and staff/teams delivering services and activities: What does good look like? They need to apply this to each stage of the process for Reshaping Care for Older People (and for other policies too).”

Another factor was how far public bodies were comfortable about the agenda being open to the priorities and ideas that are raised by other people.

“Be prepared to be surprised about what communities can do and the lives and experiences older people have, and continue to live.”

“Motivation is important. Some people are just told to do it, while others are genuinely enthusiastic. Of course that makes a difference to the results.”

“People who take the risk and choose to be open and to share ideas, thoughts, challenges and success find that this can be very powerful and have significant advantages.”

We talked about the pressures that public bodies were under. Again, people had different experiences in how far real co-production was happening within the same overall context.

“The model of co-production is good but it is believed to be difficult to put into effect.”

“You need to have the time to talk to people. In practice there are compromises because people don't think they have enough time. But it often takes almost as long to do it badly as to do it well.”

“Co-production starts with bringing different stakeholders together, building trust etc. That all takes time and needs some funding.”

If older people (or people who use the services in question) are not around the table, this is not co-production. People described situations where the Third Sector Interface or organisations that provide services to older people were involved in planning services in their area, but older people themselves were not involved. In other places older people are involved as full, equal partners, showing that it is possible.

Co-production should also include the staff who work in services or local development projects as well as involving older people. People described examples of staff who are not able to attend or feed in to the Steering Group for the project they have to deliver.

“One of the barriers to real co-production is senior managers not giving up their power - within their own organisations as well as between NHS and voluntary sector.”

“They are using old-fashioned ways of having meetings, such as one big meeting with a huge agenda and only senior people there, which are working against the aim they are trying to achieve.”

“It is about respecting each other, respecting the contribution of different professions and services, respecting a range of views and experiences.”

“The experience in our area reflects what Helen said. How you look and speak really can affect the conversation.”

One of the difficulties for many people was that the move to more co-production was happening at a time when there were financial constraints.

“Our experience is that it’s good to be honest about the financial context. We do need to make the available money go further and we need new ways of providing services and support.”

“It is unfortunate when people think the only reason we are moving to more co-production is to save money. Some of us have been trying to achieve this for a long time because it is a better way to do things.”

Participation by older people

The essential aspects people raised are:

- Encouraging more people to get involved.
- Hearing the voices of more older people.
- Understanding the stage in co-production for each discussion - broad ideas, consulting on a specific plan, or developing a particular service.
- Remembering that participation is essential for co-production but it is not the same as co-production.

Many of the participation arrangements are aimed at people who are already using services. But there are many reasons why public bodies and others should be also listening to the voices of people who are not yet using services - to find out about the gaps in current provision, and to plan for the future and to draw in the contribution of the community.

“The language sometimes gets in the way. We still talk about involving service users and carers. That doesn’t encourage participation by people who don’t see themselves in those ways.”

“Some people have never used services or gone to places like the community centre. They always worked, had no need to get involved. We should applaud this type of existing community resilience – don’t try and take that away from them.”

When there is representation of older people on committees and similar routes it is often not reaching people who are frailer, or people in the equalities groups. The risk is that it is a few people who are confident who become the voice of all older people, and their experience does not reflect that of other people.

Some people described ways of gathering the views of older people that were themselves based on a co-production approach, such as older people working as volunteers to meet and gather the views of other older people. In other places there was still a limited range of methods.

Aberdeen City has seen a range of developments over the past 10 years. They established an older persons’ steering group which asked questions to both older people and senior managers and found that the answers to questions such as “how do you want to live your life?” and “what would you like when you are older?” were the same from both groups.

They also use other methods to hear people’s views. One example is a mobile tea party with an artist which is set up in a range of different locations. It was used as a very relaxed way to ask people about their lives and their views.

Some people thought that more focus on good, effective participation would also help. This included training and support for the people taking on any representation role, training for staff from public bodies on their role, and good processes. The National Standards for Community Engagement to which local authorities and the NHS had already signed up are still relevant and useful.

Another aspect of this was honesty among partners, and respecting older people and people in communities as partners.

“We need more effort on supporting people who are representing older people, and not just having one or a few people taking part who do not really represent others.”

“We liked Helen’s Stage 4 - asking older people what would be a good outcome for you. We should be asking

that about the involvement and consultation aspects of the processes.”

“We need to have more ways for people to participate, so people can find the participation route that is right and comfortable for them: events, talking to individual people, someone coming out to groups and individuals, people who know older people being part of it, and more.”

“When there is consultation it has to be realistic. For example, explaining about the options which are economically viable, not adding in some which are not possible and pretending that people’s views are considered. Be realistic about what can be achieved.”

“At national level, the Care Inspectorate (and their original predecessor bodies) have always involved people who use the services they regulate at all levels, including at board level. We recognise the huge benefits this brings to the organisation in improving the way it works.”

“It works best when you start from older people’s perspectives.”

For more information

You can read the National Standards for Community Engagement at <http://www.otbds.org/participationresources/>

Equalities - including all older people

The main aspects people raised are:

- Building equalities into every aspect of the co-production process.
- Seeing co-production as a way to develop services for people who have tended to be missed out.

People described concerns that one of the risks of wanting to get services which work well for most people is coming up with solutions that exclude some people - often those who are already the most marginalised and vulnerable - because they are not part of the discussions or are not visible.

However people also described ways in which co-production was helping develop better services for people in particular situations, including people with dementia, people in small rural communities and people from communities of interest or of shared circumstances.

“It means accepting that this will mean more small services which are each right for people in certain circumstances, rather than saying that every service is open to everyone so it is all fine.”

“The villages have many different strengths and come up with different solutions.”

“There is a lot of diversity in our area - people with different languages, faiths and cultures. We had built up good consultation routes as part of wider Community Planning and are using these to plan for older people’s services.”

“We are not doing enough to make sure services are reflecting the changes in our population. Services need to include people who are coming to Scotland now and reflect their needs.”

“Like many areas we have found it much more difficult to get older men involved. The men’s shed idea is very attractive as it offers older men the chance to have some control rather than being the recipient of support from others. The idea that you can just drop in is also attractive.”

People’s perceptions of older people

The main aspects people raised are:

- Recognising that people’s perceptions are often a barrier to real co-production.
- Steps to change these perceptions is part of the task.
- It will take time to change.

Some people described how they found it difficult to persuade colleagues to involve older people when their assumption was that most older people just wanted things provided for them.

People also talked about the rights of older people to choose not to be involved.

Barriers to good co-production include older people’s perceptions of themselves. Part of this is people’s own expectations, such as expecting to be looked after, deciding that they are old and handing over responsibility. Another aspect is people finding it difficult to express what they want, especially when they have had no practice/ experience of this.

Another difficulty is the perception people have of services, including whether resources for the wider community are also for older people. This matters when one

of the ways we can provide more and better support to older people is by making mainstream resources for the whole community work better for older people.

“Finding the balance isn’t easy. Some of the people in our group don’t want the hassle. They want to get good quality services that work for them, but not get involved in the bigger discussions. Other people - including some of the most frail - do want to have a say.”

“It’s realising that people can choose to be involved at one time, not involved at another tie, and then get involved again later on when they are feeling better. It’s keeping the door open even when a group or a person said no to the first invitation.”

“Many older people don’t have the confidence to get involved with services. There is still the stigma of social work and some people’s negative experiences to be overcome.”

“It can take time when older people don’t think of wider community resources being there for them as well as for other people. For example, we found that most people thought the Community Centre was for young people – not for older people.”

“Different cultures present a challenge. The NHS sees everyone primarily as patients, even when in some services they are learners or volunteers!”

Co-production in strategic planning

These are the aspects which people said are important:

- Being clear what we are trying to achieve
- Using the right processes for this stage of co-production

Most people thought that we need more co-production in the strategic commissioning process. People described good examples of services that are led by older people, and where older people tell the people delivering the services what they want. It sometimes gets taken on at a service level. But usually there is no opportunity to feed back up to the strategic level.

“Getting real co-production would happen if the people leading the Reshaping Care process could take a step back and ask what people want? What difference will it make? Thinking about the process for this will lead to better results.”

We need to remind people that the concepts around co-production are there to help. They are useful if they help people find better solutions. They should not become drivers, doing them for their own sake. (We think that is what happened with the process used by the Scottish Government. It was meant to be helpful and get things moving. But in many places the focus on deadlines has driven out real dialogue and participation.)

The experience of people at this event was similar to the experiences of many people at other equivalent strategic planning meetings: when people go to the strategic planning meetings in many places the same items (the ones that are important to the Council and the NHS) come first at each meeting and take up most of the time, and other items (usually the ones that matter to older people and/or involve the voluntary sector) are left to the end and there is no time to talk about them.

“Our message for Commissioners, Strategy Planning groups and the like is: Be more chilled. Relax. Spend time on topics such as community initiatives and small projects that the voluntary sector are working on as you do for the big projects that affect the NHS and local authority and have lots of money involved.”

“Our suggestion is to try reversing the agenda every so often. Literally: start with tea and the chat that happens at the end of meetings. Then take Any Other Business - anything that people want to raise. Then take the agenda items that always get left to the end and get missed or rushed when people run out of time.”

“We liked the example of older people saying to take longer for meetings, have a real discussion, and not to worry about agendas and reaching decisions.”

“The big gap in the planning processes is older people being part of decisions about where the money gets spent. There should be real co-production at every stage.”

Co-production in services

These are the main aspects people raised:

- Building the skills and confidence of older people.
- Using processes to support effective co-production in this context.
- Building the skills and awareness of the staff who work in services about co-production and what it can bring.

We talked about many good examples of co-production in local services for older people.

In Inverclyde WOOPi support their groups to become self-sufficient. For instance, they offer training for older people to become tutors. This is offered in a way that is honest and transparent about the benefits to the person, to the group and to the project.

“Members take ownership of their own groups and activities. But it is important to recognise that, like volunteering, this does not just happen, and does not come free. A measure of advice, support and facilitation, which needs to be funded, will always be needed.”

“There is a gap in understanding about how projects like WOOPi, which improve people’s health and wellbeing, save government significant amounts of money by keeping people more active and independent, and less in need of health and other services. They are therefore very cost-effective.”

People also described some of the difficulties in getting co-production in services.

“Services are given to people, but we have no say.”

“There is talk of services being led by older people but it can be very difficult to hand back to people when they are so used to things being done for them. It doesn’t happen overnight.”

“Nurses need some help and time to learn to step back, talk to patients and work things out together, instead of telling people what to do. It’s hard when people have been taught that they - or the NHS - know what is best for people and have all the responsibility which goes with that.”

“In our area the private sector providers in some care home are less engaged in culture change than the public services are. It means we are getting co-production in some services but not in others.”

Asking for people’s views on services they use can also have its limits. People described how there is a real issue with care at home in most places, as the range of tasks covered is limited and the time available is often reduced further with travelling time. When asked for their views, older people tend to be positive about the care worker, and will often talk about the things they do to help out. But when people talk about what they value, and what they liked about the way care at home used to be delivered, the aspect people value is the personal contacts when the person coming to them can include having a cup of tea and a blether as part of their visits.

The focus on working in partnership also needs to work for individual people - which is where co-production links up with the focus on Personalisation and person-centred support.

An example from Aberdeen is My Life Software. It is a reminiscing kit that creates a digital scrapbook with photos and paintings. It is good for sharing life stories. For example, one man in a care home kept getting up at 4 am - this was considered too early by staff and a bit of a nuisance. But when the staff looked at his digital scrapbook they discovered he had been a newsagent and had always got up at 4 am to sort the morning papers out. As a result his early morning starts were not seen as the problem as they had been before.

In Aberdeen they have also found that wider initiatives lead to benefits for specific services and for individual people. The Golden Games were set up 3 years ago for older people living in residential care settings.

“One of the games was basketball and one of the participants said he had been a professional basketball player. He had never mentioned basketball before. It changed everyone’s perception of him.”

Co-production with communities

The main aspects people raised are:

- Using the capacity of the community alongside services to create more supports and opportunities.
- Encouraging community activities to welcome older people.
- Changing awareness and perceptions of older people.

The experience of most people at this event was that so far there had been more focus on working with older people than on working in partnership with the wider community.

We heard of examples where the local community was part of developing ideas and especially in providing the support.

In Fife day care was provided in local settings with satellite groups. But due to financial constraints the service changed to day care being provided in a central hub. For some people this was too far to travel. As a response, the community got together and set up their own club for local people. The benefit of this is that it has reached more people with 5 local villages joining in to support the venture.

Some people knew of local businesses, community groups or other parts of the Council contributing equipment and buildings to get new ventures for older people underway. Some of the Men’s Sheds projects have got started in this way, for example.

People also described building on the existing community contacts that older people have through churches, gardening clubs, social clubs and the like.

“We don’t always have to create new services or projects.”

“People don’t like (or understand) the term ‘capacity-building’. It might be better to talk about ‘releasing capacity’. There is also a serious misunderstanding about the term. Many people seem to believe that it is only communities who need to have their ‘capacities built’. There is probably a more important job to be done in building the capacity of people in Government and senior positions to understand and to listen to what communities are saying.”

“It’s not just about enabling people it is also about challenging the wider community.”

We also talked about the benefits of helping ordinary services and resources to become more ‘older people friendly’. Services that are there for the whole community can include photographs of older people in the publicity and information about how the building works for people for older people as well as for younger people, for example.

“I like the examples from WOOPI. We can learn from what they have done and what they have achieved.”

“We could be doing more to challenge some of the attitudes towards older people.”

“We can make sure that our publicity material does not talk up dependency or suggest older people are not making a contribution. Even when we don’t intend this it can creep in.”

Sustaining services as well as starting them

The main points people raised are:

- The need for co-production in decisions about continuing services as well as about starting new ones.
- The criteria used to assess the value and impact of services.

Most of the people at the event had experience of co-production - or at least of some participation - in planning for new services, usually in the context of Reshaping Care for Older People. There were more concerns about what happens to sustain services that work well or of what the process will be for planning beyond the end of a short-term project.

“The finance and infrastructure have made it relatively easy to get startup funding for new projects. Our big worry now is how we continue and develop what we are doing.”

“There is a lot of concern for many projects which are funded under the Reshaping Care Change Fund.”

“We could be looking at other types of income such as grants, fundraising. Should we just get on with it?”

People described the impact for the people using the services.

“Programmes like the one at St Mirren [a football project for men and women with poorer mental wellbeing] bring together people who are socially isolated. It is then very disappointing if the programme does not continue for them and they go back to being alone again.”

“Older people in our area are worried that services they rely on will just become self-financing, with older people being charged for their support.”

Some people were concerned that there is an assumption that groups which are led by older people will be able to manage in the future without any staff or other support.

“Some groups can need help with facilitating the group, keeping what they do consistent for everyone using the service, supporting the group and the volunteers. They need some staff time to underpin it, and need resources for that. This is especially for services that are for people with higher needs. The risk is that people making decisions about future funding don't understand this.”

There were also concerns about the way projects that have got started with Change Fund money will be evaluated when decisions are made about any future public sector funding.

“In our area the discussion around the Change Fund is getting back to talking about demonstrating reductions

in inpatient stays. We are confident that what our group does is contributing to keeping people out of hospital and helping people get home more quickly. But we can't prove the link."

"A co-production approach to identifying the criteria for the evaluations and then for the assessments of all services would be consistent with the aims of the policy."

"Activities led by older people, and services where there has been a strong level of co-production with older people, can celebrate our successes and show people what we have achieved."

"Small changes are good, we don't just need to have big changes. A lot of small impacts can add up to a more significant shift."

Other issues affecting older people

We talked about some of the other issues affecting older people. Many people made the point that all these issues are connected, and that a problem in one can undermine the impact of other welcome changes.

Loneliness and social isolation were mentioned as a problems for many people. We also talked about good local activities led by older people which were preventing or reducing both loneliness and social isolation for older people.

Transport and the importance of people being able to get to the services that are developed is a problem in many areas. Aspects that were causing problems included cost and the limited access in rural areas.

Digital inclusion is a potential way for people to have a good quality of life for themselves and to contribute to wider developments. Some people described great benefits when older people were encouraged and became able to use the technology. People were using it to become more independent, maintain contact with friends and family and keep up hobbies and interests. In other places this was more of a struggle for a range of reasons - limited access to public facilities, the cost of having equipment at home, and the type of encouragement offered to older people.

We talked about the extent to which older people are part of decisions about wider community services and facilities, such as libraries closing.

“It’s our lives. The policies mean that organisations can say this topic is someone else’s responsibility. But for us it is all connected. If you can’t get transport, you can’t get to the services. If you can’t get out you don’t see friends so much and don’t feel part of your community. Older people need to be part of planning for all these other services too.”



For more information

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