



WEST MIDLANDS CO-PRODUCTION PRACTITIONERS' NETWORK

Minutes of the Second Meeting on 12 October 2012 in West Bromwich

The second meeting of the West Midlands Co-Production Practitioners' Network in West Bromwich on 12 October 2011 was hosted by the *Time2Trade* Timebank. The theme of the meeting was user and community co-production in health. Particular highlights of the meeting were presentations by the local timebank *Time2Trade* which is funded by the local PCT and by NESTA's People Powered Health Project, featuring Stockport Council. In addition to these formal presentations, there was lots of time for discussion, networking and brainstorming among the participants.

Dan Grainger, the manager of *Time2Trade*, along with a number of its members, provided a warm welcome to the 20 participants attending the half-day meeting. Julia Slay from the new economics foundation (*nef*) opened the meeting and outlined what the network was about and *nef's* work on co-production.

This was followed by a very frank presentation by Dan Grainger about the benefits - and also the problems - of running a timebank. Dan explained how *Time2Trade* had evolved from a community project. Getting funding from the local PCT had helped to sustain and roll out the volunteering work by the 30 committed time bank members.

Dan stressed that involvement in a timebank does not affect individual welfare benefits, which is a danger in other EU countries. This is because the timebank places no value on the time donated to the time bank, so the tax system has no basis for taxing it. This is a big difference compared to exchange schemes based on local currencies, such as the LETS Scheme.

The biggest challenge involved in growing the membership and contributions to a time bank is that most members have a similar socio-economic profile. This means that they have similar demands for help and, of course, they make very similar offers of contributions to the timebank. As Dan pointed out "We could win Olympic medals for producing jam – this is something we are definitely not short of!".

How to overcome this obstacle? This basically requires diversifying the membership of the timebank. A number of ways have been found. For example, the involvement of the probation service has meant a supply of people able and willing to offer gardening and decorating work, which is much in demand from other members. Moreover, the organisational membership of the local PCT in the timebank has meant that important health services have been delivered through the PCT. This has also provided an opportunity to redesign some services and to deliver them in a more efficient way. The PCT took the view that people's wellbeing depends on surroundings, friends, neighbours, work colleagues, etc. – so it wanted to make use of these resources and ensure that they worked positively to influence outcomes. It therefore promoted health walks, slimming classes, EXTEND

(which is a programme of chair-based exercises) and spent its time credits (as a member of the timebank) on arranging these for its patients (or 'customers' or 'users', etc.). A good case is the Healthy Eating Cafe initiative, which sought agreement from a 'circle' of Healthy Eating Cafes that they would provide at least some healthy options on their menus. Six timebankers were trained to act as mystery shoppers and check that this was being honoured in practice. Helping local people to improve their diet could mean huge savings for the local PCT in the longer term.

For members, the timebank provides a setting in which they can make friends and get support in difficult life situations. As Glennis Griffiths, who was battling cancer, suggested to the participants "Without the timebank I would not be able to cope with the very difficult situation I am currently in". Obviously, the current re-structuring of the health services is a new challenge to *Time2Trade* but the transfer of public health functions to the local council also may mean wider opportunities for involving other local services in the timebank. A full case study of Time2Trade compiled by Frankie Hine-Hughes of *Governance International* is available by [clicking this link](#).

After discussion and a yummy breakfast (provided by the kitchen team of The Gap Centre), Ajay Khandelwal from NESTA and Nick Dixon from Stockport Council gave participants a joint presentation of the NESTA People Powered Health Project and outlined how NESTA can keep the West Midlands Network informed about the project. Nick Dixon explained to the participants why Stockport Council thought that participating in the NESTA project could help with their transformation of adult social care.

The transformation of adult social care in Stockport involves a shift of staff culture towards a value-based approach. The adult social care service has already strongly invested in change management. Nick presented the Stepped Care Model which shows that at present 90% of resources are invested into serious cases (4% of the population) whereas very little is available for people with minor mental health issues (20% of the population). As eligibility criteria are becoming stricter and lots of people who were previously entitled to support will no longer be entitled to receive public services, the challenge will be to use money saved through helping people to recover faster to build up peer-support schemes. In this way, 'milder' cases would still have access to some professional support, but at the same time, would be provided with effective peer group support to help them achieve more independent lives. This would also mean shifting more public resources into the voluntary sector. Nick's presentation was followed by a very lively debate revolving around the personalisation agenda.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of dates for the next two meetings which are

- **12 January 2012 in Coventry**
- **26 April 2012 to showcase the 48 Sheet Project devised and produced by EC Arts, which is a National and International project to transform the city of Birmingham throughout the month of April 2012. EC Arts will work in a partnership to ensure young people and community participation runs throughout the project. [To read more about the project please follow this link.](#)**

Participants expressed strong commitment to contributing to the next meetings in a number of ways - the offers of contributions made by the participants are summarised in the table below.

Meetings	12 July 2011	12 October 2011	12 January 2012	26 April 2012 (tbc)
Host	University of Birmingham, Birmingham	Time2Trade, West Bromwich	Grapevine, Coventry	EC Arts, Birmingham (tbc)
Facilitation	Julia Slay/Shahana Ramsden	Julia Slay/Elke Loeffler	Catherine Needham	Claire Farrell (tbc)
Presentation	Shahana Ramsden	Dan Grainger	Looking for offers of case study on business case for co-production –	Showcasing of the work of EC-arts and the 48 sheets project
Presentation	‘Tour de Table’ of all participants	Ajay Khandelwal Nick Dixon	Lorna Reid on Community Catalysts	case study of ‘Whose Shoes’ tool by Gill Phillips (tbc)
“Problem-solving session”	-	-	Rosie – Sandwell Friends and Neighbours	?
Minutes	Julia Slay/Shahana Ramsden	Elke Loeffler	?	?
Co-ordination	Julia Slay	Frankie Hine-Hughes	Yvonne Harley	Yvonne Harley
Marketing of meetings	nef University of Birmingham Governance International	nef Governance International Time2Trade	All participants through their networks, websites and social media	All participants through their networks, websites and social media
Other		Dan Grainger suggested running the network on a time credit model.		

Finally, discussion focussed on how to strengthen communication within the network. The following communications channels were suggested:

- The co-production network site <http://coproductionnetwork.com/>
- LinkedIn
- Twitter (suggested hashtag - #wmcoprod)
- An eventbrite event to be set up for each meeting to make registrations easy, efficient, and less time consuming (and can be used to direct people to the event)

ACTION: All members of the WM network – both those who attended on 12 October and those who weren't able to come – are requested:

1. To make suggestions for the contributions they could make to further network meetings (i.e. to fill in some more of the spaces in the table above!); and
2. To suggest which communications channels they would find most useful to keep in touch with the network.

Please share your suggestions with all network members, alternatively send your suggestions to:

Yvonne Harley, Liaison Manager, Governance International, email: Yvonne.Harley@govint.org

OPPORTUNITY: Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) have an interesting opportunity, with some funding, for practitioners to contribute to **research into how seldom heard groups experience personalisation**. If you are interested in this opportunity please get in touch with Shahana Ramsden, email: shahana.ramsden@scie.org.uk or alternatively email thinklocalactpersonal@scie.org.uk