19th West Midlands Coproduction Network Event

Hosted by the Citizen Voice Commissioning Centre of Excellence Team, Birmingham City Council

30 May 2017

Summary of the "BRICKS IN WALL" EXERCISE

1) Barriers and obstacles

Staff attitudes ("It's a nice thing to do" – implying that it's not a <u>necessary</u> thing to do)

People not understanding it

Lack of knowledge of co-production

Poor understanding (by officers) – how co-production can increase quality and decrease costs

Organisational pressures on internal Citizens Voice teams

Politicians see themselves as the citizens' voice – so why do Citizens Voice activities, too?

Don't want to give up control

No citizen expectations (or low) and low sense of power

Lack of trust on behalf of citizens

We focus on weaknesses and needs, rather than a person's strengths (how they can contribute to their community)

Too much 'status quo' rewarded, rather than innovation-rewarded

Lack of skills to make decisions – identify own goals

No-one is collating themes in Care Plans (EHCPs) to drive forward commissioning ('Virtual Voice')

Not enough support for communities to respond to local issues – statutory agencies see this as 'too risky'!!!!

Inconsistent application of co-production principles

Overcoming barriers such as language, cultural, perceptions, etc.

Jargon

Co-production is 'over-complicated' – people don't appreciate the simplicity …

Lack of access to DIY resources (e.g. person-centred tools, community mapping, etc.)

Services may have 'activities' in the community – but there is not 'community connecting' to make this sustainable

Commissioners workload/'firefighting', as contracts/grants come to an end – i.e. they have no time and co-production is not seen as a priority

Not giving initiatives enough time and resources to succeed and show evidence of outcomes

Interim leadership

Shifting landscape

Budget cuts and austerity

Budget cuts mean that work needs to happen fast – show outcomes improvement

Co-production is viewed as yet another 'add-on' to the 'day job' and not the 'way we should work'

The systems and processes of large organisations that disable and challenge the co-production approach

People just want to work with people who like them or have same job title as them

2) Things that can done to get over the barriers and round the obstacles

Aspiration to change, commitment to make a difference

New awards for organisations that HAVE made improvements by listening and involving co-production

"Incentives" to encourage active co-production in local authority? OR "Compulsion" to listen to Citizen Voice for improvements?

Quality case studies to showcase impact

Getting citizens to trust the Council

Pool all the contributions of all the stakeholders, to get the most out of them

We tend to 'problem-solve' in our organisations as a culture! Acknowledgement that staff can't do it on their own – we need to engage our communities to move things sometimes. Engaging with under-represented groups

"Let's train frontline staff" – errr … NO! Let's involve them and co-produce with them

Send 'top 5' requests to top director – then, in next meeting on co-production, review response

Private sector champions (e.g. Tesco) to build lasting relationships. (Will be around longer than some staff – build momentum for change)

To cope with problem of lack of time on behalf of commissioners, co-production should focus on things most likely to succeed – prioritise and embed

To cope with short time-span of decision-makers, build links with councillors and build local participatory budgeting approaches – linking with local community and faith groups

To cope with interim leadership and churn in leadership, don't blindly follow leadership without questioning how it sits with values and co-production

To cope with the shifting landscape, work in teams with shared values, keep going, and pick out what is possible and positive

To cope with budget cuts and austerity, aim for free venues, fewer staff, fewer mistakes – and much better value for money

To cope with lack of community connecting by statutory service commissioners and providers, support individuals to identify their own outcomes, build into care plans a 'tapered' approach (with less support over time, as service users learn to cope for themselves)

To cope with people not seeing co-production as the 'day job', need for incentives, via an outcomes framework that includes co-production alongside people's stories … 'hearts and minds'

To cope with the need for fast demonstration of results, focus on projects where co-production is most likely to work well

To cope with the requirement to write 'bloody business cases', let's rewrite 'project management speak' – move to simpler approach: "We used to do X (which cost M), now we do Y (which costs N) – get senior management buy-in ('permission') to try new things and then write about them, not writing about them BEFORE we try them!

To cope with the bureaucracy and dysfunctional systems of large organisations, rewrite/dismantle current systems and processes – staff to co-design WITH citizens – change culture and attitudes – again requires 'permission' – so need to develop relationships (including with top decision-makers)

To cope with people just wanting to work with people like themselves, mix up the people in the room – space for people to co-design with citizens from a range of levels/organisations/positions – i.e. rapid testing/development collaborative NHSE/NESTA

3) If all else fails, people sometimes fall back on one of the following made up excuses for doing nothing:

Co-production – what's that?!!!

There's nothing wrong!

I don't think it works!

Why should we do this?

We haven't got any money for that! There isn't any money!

Time – I have a lot of responsibilities – I am a carer, too!

Does it meet the 'service needs' approach?!!!!

'Bloody business cases'! "We don't' have the time – we have a business case to finish!" – "We need a business case/evidence"!

Nothing changes after all the work