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Achieving citizen outcomes

*Coprodnet* and *Governance International* co-hosted a co-production workshop during the Policy@Manchester week at the University of Manchester on 30 October 2012. This report summarises the learning points from that event.

## **Coprodnet**

Coprodnet is an interdisciplinary academic and practitioner network, which has two aims:

- to critically engage with co-production and the causes and consequences of its recent adoption, across a range of academic disciplines;
- to coordinate regular meetings to explore topical co-production issues in the North West.

More information on *Coprodnet* can be found on <http://www.coprodnet.org>.

## **Governance International**

*Governance International*, a social enterprise based in Birmingham, provides advice, training and practice-oriented research for public and non-profit agencies to co-produce better citizen outcomes.

*Governance International* has developed a Co-Production Toolkit to enable organisations to co-produce public services more effectively with communities. **We are currently seeking to pair up co-production champions with each other through Peer Reviews. So, if you are from a local council or other public agency which is interested in widening and deepening co-production in the organisation but struggling with some obstacles and barriers and interested to learn from peers, please get in touch with [elke.loeffler@govint.org](mailto:elke.loeffler@govint.org).**

More information on the *Governance International Co-Production Toolkit* can be found at

<http://www.govint.org/our-services/co-production/>

## Participants' views on co-production

The workshop was attended by over 40 participants coming from a wide range of organisations, including local councils, the health sector, third sector organisations and private sector consultants.

At the start of the workshop, participants were asked to answer a set of questions on co-production. Their responses indicated that participants:

- largely agreed that co-design and co-delivery of public services with users and communities can improve efficiency
- strongly agreed that co-commissioning and co-assessment can bring service quality improvements
- were split on whether most citizens want to get engaged. A slight majority of participants felt that this is the case and that it is not just the 'usual suspects' who want to get involved
- believed that staff are keen to give citizens more influence over public service
- did not believe that citizens trust politicians
- felt that citizens would prefer to contribute themselves to improving outcomes, rather than paying higher fees and taxes
- disagreed that public managers already understand how they can help the public to solve their own problems



## What co-production is and what it isn't

Elke Loeffler discussed with the group what co-production. She emphasized that **public service co-production requires a high level involvement of public service commissioners and providers, as well as service users and communities**. She contrasted this with:

- **Traditional service provision** – high involvement of public service practitioners, but low involvement of service users and communities.
- **Self-help** – low involvement of public service practitioners and high involvement of service users and communities.

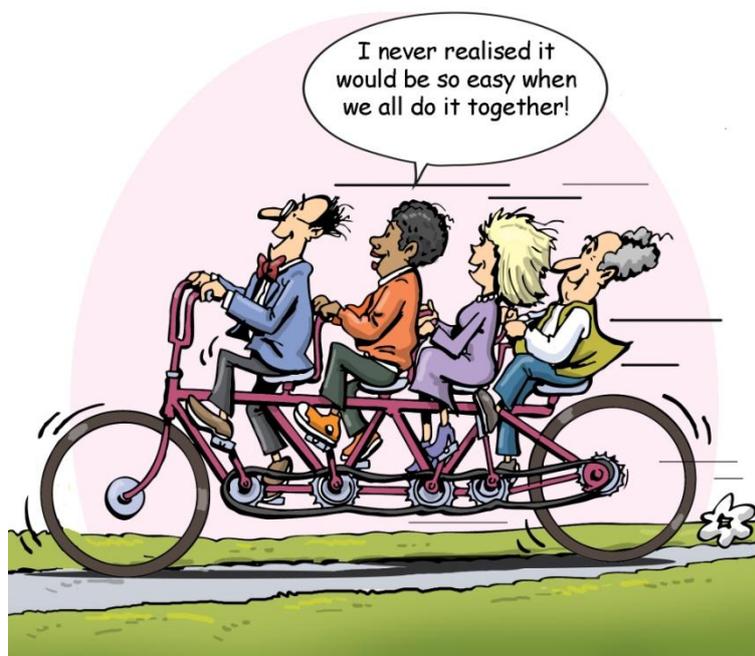
Elke then explored with the group how co-production could be defined. She highlighted *Governance International's* definition:

***“Co-production of public services means professionals and citizens making better use of each other's assets, resources and contributions to achieve better outcomes and/or improved efficiency”.***

There was some disagreement amongst the participants over how they would define co-production for their own organisation. Elke suggested that each organisation will have its own unique definition of co-production to suit its context - but that it is critical for organisation to develop and widely share this organisational definition and understanding of co-production, if it is to succeed in implementing co-production.

Elke continued by suggesting that co-production has the following distinctive principles:

- Co-production sees service users and staff as active contributors and asset-holders rather than passive consumers/workers.
- Co-production promotes collaborative rather than paternalistic relationships between staff and service users.
- Co-production puts the focus on delivery of outcomes rather than just services.



## Co-production in the North-West

The workshop showcased three inspiring cases from the North-West, in which public services were clearly co-producing services with users and communities. These examples showed why co-production is a powerful approach for better outcomes or improved efficiency of public services.

### *Case study 1; Smart Cities & Smart People - Digital Innovation, Inclusive Sustainability and Co-production*

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**Dave Carter, Head of Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA), Manchester City Council, UK**

Dave Carter highlighted that the MDDA's role is to support the regeneration of the city-region through the strategic and practical work of technology-focused projects. Dave outlined how the MDDA is seeking to make Manchester a 'smart city' with smart citizens. MDDA seeks to act as a catalyst to stimulate citizen engagement in becoming active generators of content and applications development, as well as being more informed and involved users of the developing Internet-enabled services in 'smart' cities. Dave highlighted how 'smart cities' require 'smart citizens' if they are to be truly inclusive, innovative and sustainable. The promise of the information society, to create new ways of empowering people to play a fuller and more equal role in emerging governance systems through their access to dynamic internet-enabled services, is also proving to be its biggest challenge, as not everyone is getting equal access to the skills and opportunities that are supposed to be there. MDDA aims to identify innovative but sustainable ways of building the capacity of citizens and public services to work together with innovators and digital developers to co-produce future internet enabled services on the basis of the widest possible digital inclusion

Manchester Smart Environments was just one example that Dave highlighted as part of the work of the MDDA. This project enables residents to collect data about the city environment through the use of wearable sensor technology as well as sensors embedded in streets, buildings and green spaces. For example this could provide information like "at what time of day pollution is at a high". [Click here for more information on this example.](#)

### *Case study 2: Enterprising people co-producing local solutions*

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**Helen Allen, Operations Manager, *Community Catalysts*.**

*Community Catalysts* is a Community Interest Company aiming to make sure that people, wherever they live, have a real choice of great local social care and health services. To achieve this *Community Catalysts* works to harness the talents of people and communities to provide high quality small scale and local support services.

*Community Catalysts* work with 'micro-providers to stimulate and support enterprise. Micro-providers are local people providing support and services to other local people. They work on a very small scale (5 or fewer workers – paid or unpaid); use a variety of business models (70% sole traders or partnerships); and deliver on a continuum from fully voluntary at one end to fully commercial at the other. Helen highlighted that micro services are more likely to be responsive to individual or quirky requirements as they are likely to be co-created, co designed and co- produced with the potential customer. These services include:

- Supported tenancies
- Well being and health
- Leisure and arts
- Holidays and short breaks
- Friendship or good neighbour
- Drop in centres and lunch clubs
- Advice and representation
- Transport

**Picture 1 - Helen Allen presenting**



Rather than focusing on 'broken' communities and 'needy' people, *Community Catalysts* focuses on what communities and people have, not what they lack – and helps them use these assets. Seeing people this way unlocks reservoirs of energy and creativity.

Micro providers work co- productively by:

- Harnessing the power of informal networks
- Creating opportunities for people to shape services
- Enabling people to be equal partners in the design and delivery of the service.

To watch a video interview with Helen Allen describing the work of *Community Catalysts*, click this link - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3MpyQK\\_Es&feature=plcp](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3MpyQK_Es&feature=plcp)

At the event, Helen was accompanied by Pete and Becky from *DanceSyndrome*, a micro provider based in the North West (pictured right). *DanceSyndrome* was founded in 2009 by its Director, Jen Blackwell, an aspiring community dance leader. Pete and Becky have both been dance-leaders for the organisation for two years. The two of them told the group that their involvement enables them to stay healthy, socialise, be creative, maintain a routine, and augment their self-confidence and esteem.



For more on *DanceSyndrome* - <http://www.dancesyndrome.co.uk/>

For more information on Community Catalysts go to: <http://www.communitycatalysts.co.uk>

### ***Case Study 3: The Stockport Mental Health Pathways Project***

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#### **Nick Dixon, Mental Health Service Commissioner, Stockport MBC**

In August 2011 Stockport Mental Health Services were chosen by NESTA as one of six sites nationally to run a three year project called People Powered Health. People Powered Health aims to change the way traditional NHS services are provided in order to offer more community based solutions that are designed and jointly delivered by service users and carers. Nick Dixon (pictured right) informed the group that the Stockport Mental Health Pathways Project is seeking to improve social recovery pathways for people with mental health issues. Currently, most specialist support comes from professional health services. However, specialist support can distance people from their community connections, leaving them dependent on these services and less able to contribute both to the local community and their recovery. By redesigning services some people can be redirected away from specialist mental health care services (either through referrals or



supported discharges) to a range of supportive and welcoming community alternatives which are better tailored to their needs. Nick informed the group that peer support provided by the Thrivers programme within Stockport's Wellbeing Centre has shown this is possible. Nick concluded by telling the group that the project will expand this approach by developing more community wellbeing locations around Stockport linking GP practices and outpatient clinics to the Wellbeing Centre hub.

If you are interested in finding out more information contact Nick Dixon at:  
[nick.dixon@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:nick.dixon@stockport.gov.uk)

## More good practice

During the event participants were asked to suggest further examples where they know co-production is working well. Their suggestions included:

### 1. North Wales Families' Prison Bus Service

Recognising the importance and benefits of keeping families together in troubled times, JIGSAW, a service user group, is working with HMP Altcourse to provide the North Wales Families' Prison Bus Service. This service provides transport for family and friends of offenders serving custodial sentences at this prison to enhance their opportunities to undertake visits. For more information:

<http://www.thejigsawgroup.org.uk/html/engBus.html>

### 2. Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti School in Christchurch, New Zealand

*Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti* is a co-produced school. It is a co-educational state secondary school providing an innovative learning experience where students are central in designing their own learning. Learners are supported to develop a program of learning that fits with their needs and is driven from their interests and enthusiasms. For more information:

<http://unlimited.school.nz/>

### 3. 'We made this', Cork, Ireland

Inside a run-down convent in Cork, a community of nuns, travellers, recent immigrants, ex-offenders, recovering addicts, old and young came together to visualise and prototype a whole raft of future social services that they could co-produce. For more information:

<http://www.stakeholderdesign.com/we-made-this/>

### 4. NEPHRA Residents Association

Seven years ago a group of residents asked why they didn't have adequate health and wellbeing provision. Zest helped them to set-up, plan & deliver own community provision. NEPHRA now have their own premises and deliver a range of services – luncheon group, community choir, dance, keep fit, and so on. For more information:

[http://www.nephra.org.uk/about\\_nephra.aspx](http://www.nephra.org.uk/about_nephra.aspx)

## **5. Society Works**

*Society Works* involves the collaboration of voluntary sector organisations looking at developing new partnerships between providers and with citizens to meet new problems. For more information:

<http://www.vaoldham.org.uk/sites/vaoldham.org.uk/files/Society%20Works%203%20appendix%203.pdf> or contact [Adrian.ball@vaoldham.org](mailto:Adrian.ball@vaoldham.org).

## **6. Cheetham Park Involvement Project (CHIP)**

CHIP is a network of local groups, services and businesses working together to strengthen communities and improve mental health and wellbeing in Cheetham Hill. It aims to increase involvement from local people and community groups in defining their problems and what the best solutions are. CHIP provides support and training to help people become organised and participate in their local area. For more information:

[http://www.nwtwc.org.uk/Neighbourhood\\_Resilience2.pdf](http://www.nwtwc.org.uk/Neighbourhood_Resilience2.pdf) or contact: – [john@macc.org.uk](mailto:john@macc.org.uk)

## **7. Kirklees GP referral services**

Kirklees Council gave a grant to a community organisation to receive referrals from health professionals who gave people social prescriptions. This approach was co-produced though the GP practice and a community organisation supported by the local authority in a bid to encourage a more holistic approach for GPs and tackling the causes not the symptoms of social and health problems. Contact: [matthew.nicholson@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.nicholson@kirklees.gov.uk)

## **8. Timebanking in Kirklees**

Kirklees Council was interested in developing mutual support networks for all people but specifically vulnerable adults. Utilising the local voluntary action organisation, Kirklees Council gave them a grant to work with all community and voluntary organisations to develop a network of time-banks. This project is still developing so is still open to working with anyone and any organisation. Contact: [matthew.nicholson@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.nicholson@kirklees.gov.uk)

## **9. Crime Reduction Initiative by REACH Rochdale:**

REACH Rochdale is a Psycho-Social Intervention Service. It offers to support to people misusing a range of substances including cocaine and cannabis. Service users co-produce services with REACH Rochdale in a number of ways, including:

1. Writing and reviewing their recovery plans.
2. Choosing their timetable for treatment.
3. Having input in the whole development/design of service.
4. Taking part in weekly service user led community groups, peer mentors, recovery champions volunteers

For more information: [http://cri.org.uk/psi\\_rochdale](http://cri.org.uk/psi_rochdale)



For more co-production case studies go to: <http://www.govint.org/good-practice/case-studies/>

## Barriers to co-production

The session then moved onto to discussing with the participants the most common barriers they encounter when trying to scaling up co-production. They included:

- What's behind the word – 'co-production' needs exploring/defining more
- The political values that need to be present to really create the shift (critical mass)
- Lack of leadership for co-production
- Engaging service users and people in the community in the process of co-production
- Not enough understanding at all levels
- Lack of people with the necessary aptitudes and skills both to deliver the services and deliver the training
- The vested interests in the current ways of doing things.
- Hearts & minds
- Silo working – people not thinking beyond their own work, not reaching out to others to make new connections. Many public service departments don't communicate even when they work on the same floor.
- Austerity has reduced workforces and resources, so staff now have to have a fire-fighting mentality to achieve targets. At these times it's important to find the time to look at co-production to ease the burden and increase opportunities to improve service outcomes and efficiency.

- Working within existing organisational and funding structures
- Measuring sustainable outcomes to build a robust business case.
- Co-production is not the way the public sector has been encouraged to think recently. We're becoming commissioners and procurers of services, bound by things like procurement regulations, and culturally co-production doesn't fit neatly with this. We need training and experience in doing this to drive the necessary cultural change.
- In austere times people may see this as an opportunity to reduce costs. However, a core feature of co-production is not low public sector involvement, but high involvement... It's involvement with a different set of skills required than the public sector currently has a lot of.
- Professional 'vested' interest – fear of bringing service users into being part of the solution.
- Others' lack of knowledge of co-production.
- Allowing for the release of power to provide a balance – there are lots of examples of co-production but how many truly give the power to the user?
- Individuals' preconceptions
- Difficulty in inspiring community involvement in co-production – particularly those communities labelled as deprived
- No financial incentive to get involved in co-production
- Fear of workforce handing over responsibilities to recipients.
- Sustaining community involvement in co-produced services



Picture 2 - Discussion (led by James Duggan) on how to overcome the barriers to co-production

## Smart ideas to boost co-production

The session concluded with James Duggan facilitating a discussion on how to overcome barriers to co-production. Ideas included:

- There needs to be a shift in the culture of organisations towards citizen-oriented values/principles.
- Mobilising leaders & people wanting to progress
- Recognising that the service user is the 'expert' in their own condition and that their views & experience are valuable in their treatments.
- Professional training courses
- Stories, collaboration, culture and values, evidence, science, leadership, shared vision.
- Clear values and principles to support the transfer of power.
- Start small.
- The importance of: visibility; transparency of objectives; 'joined up thinking'.
- Make a deliberate effort to let people realise you genuinely want them to contribute.
- Take the message to the people in places where they go – schools, libraries, community centres.
- Growing the connections and capability to connect equally.
- An award system to recognise those involved in co-production, where no financial gain is given.

## Next Steps

*Governance International* and *Coprodnet* are looking for more smart ideas that will help overcome the barriers of co-production. You can contribute to this discussion at the [www.citizenoutcomes.org](http://www.citizenoutcomes.org) forum.

## Contact

Further details can be obtained from

### ***Coprodnet***

Email: [coprod@coprodnet.org](mailto:coprod@coprodnet.org)

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