



**National Co-production Critical Friends Group
Briefing October 2012**

Contents

1. Members.....	2
2. Co-production updates.....	3
2.1 Updates from the Co-production Practitioners' Network	3
2.2 Updates from organisations	5
2.3 Publications and events.....	7
3. Discussion from the critical friends meeting	8
3.1 The policy landscape	8
3.2 Preserving the quality of co-production	9
3.3 Commissioning co-production.....	9
3.4 Future activities of the group	10
4. Future meeting dates	10

1. Members

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Tim Hughes, Involve.

Tony Bovaird, University of Birmingham and Governance International.

Zoe Reed, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust.

2. Co-production updates

In advance of the meeting we asked members of the group to feed in updates from their work and the field. These are summarised below along with additional updates given during the meeting.

2.1 Updates from the Co-production Practitioners' Network

Wales

Over the past year there have been six well-attended co-production events in Wales drawing between 70 and 170 attendees from all sectors and levels. An action network entitled *All in this together* has been set up to share best-practice and encourage interest in co-production. Some 450 people from 217 organisations have either participated or expressed an interest since this was started in February. The network is asking for signatures for an open letter to the Welsh Government requesting that the principles of co-production are embedded in policies and legislation in Wales. The network has also been asked to give evidence for the efficacy of co-production to the Government's Health and Social Care committee who are consulting on the Social Services (Wales) Bill.

An upcoming voluntary sector conference is entitled 'I matter, we matter; co-production in action' and there are discussions about hosting a two-day co-production conference in 2013.

More information can be found on the *All in this Together blog* - allinthistogetherwales.wordpress.com.

Scotland

The Scottish Co-production Network (SCN) received support from the Joint Improvement Team (JIT) to employ a dedicated part-time coordinator for 2012-13. The network now has around 70 members and aims to develop understanding and practice of co-production in Scotland. It is currently co-chaired by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) and NHS Tayside. Very recently a network website has been launched - www.coproductionscotland.org.uk.

The group has been involved in discussions about the proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill (www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/engage/cer) and contributed a joint response to the consultation. The proposed bill is due to be published before January at which time the network will reflect on what impact and opportunities it may pose for developing co-production practice across Scotland.

In February 2013 the network plans to hold a Scottish conference on co-production in conjunction with JIT to bring together learning and further establish co-production within the wider community empowerment agenda.

North West

There have been five meetings of the North West network in Manchester, Stockport and Liverpool, facilitated by Coproductnet.org. The network provides a space for practitioners to share the projects they are working on and the challenges they face.

Meetings have touched upon a range of sectors and approaches including: co-production in a cooperative school (www.reddish.stockport.sch.uk), support organisations for co-produced micro-services (www.communitycatalysts.co.uk), co-production in relation to information in smart cities (from Manchester Digital Development Agency) and a NESTA People Powered Health project. Coproductnet has also run policy-focused events at the Social Policy Association and with BIS. The next event, co-hosted with Governance International, will be part of policy@mbs week (at Manchester Business School).

West Midlands

The West Midlands network has also had five meetings over the past 18 months. The major themes that emerged were:

- The importance of demonstrating to decision makers the efficiencies and cost savings of co-production (and discussion of usefulness of existing measurement tools such as SROI and Cost Benefit Analysis);
- Opportunities for local authorities to co-produce further by making use of new powers afforded by the localism agenda and developing the role of councillors;
- The evolving role of councils such as Leicestershire County Council which is moving to a more collaborative model in reaction to budget cuts (from service provider, to commissioner and market shaper);
- How it could be made easier for citizens to get involved by, for example, tailoring participation opportunities to fit citizens' lifestyles.

The next session will focus on co-production in housing.

London

A total of seven London network meetings have been held since December 2010. Having previously had most interest from the third sector and delivery organisations, the London network is now thriving with input from Local Authorities which are now picking up on co-production. Lambeth Council has, for example, become the first 'Cooperative Council' and the new economics foundation has been working with them to pilot how they can co-produce services for young people.

The meetings are hosted by different members of the network on their own terms, and usually with a presentation from the host. The emphasis is on sharing knowledge, and meetings frequently make use of action learning. Recent discussions have covered:

- Taking forward co-production in the NHS;
- Customer-led inductions within the housing sector (led by Look Ahead Housing and Care);
- Commissioning co-produced services for young people (with a case study in Lambeth Council);
- Evaluating co-produced outcomes for a peer-led diabetes project (hosted by DIMPLE, NIHR CLAHRC for Northwest London).

2.2 Updates from organisations

nef

nef continues to support the Co-production Practitioners and has recently been working with three local authorities on Commissioning and Co-production in Young People's Services – with Lambeth, Islington, Cornwall.

nef is also part of the Department for Communities and Local Government sub-group on co-production. This working group has been looking at housing and support providers, and has been tasked to create products that help develop co-production.

Nesta

Nesta recently held a roundtable on “Working towards a People Powered Health” that explored challenges to scaling up co-production in health settings. The resource that was produced out of this session will be published by the Health Services Journal.

People Powered Health is entering its final phase, and Nesta shall be disseminating products, tools and films over the next few months. See the PPH webpage for updates:
www.nesta.org.uk/areas_of_work/public_services_lab/people_powered_health

Office for Public Management (OPM)

As part of the national DWP-funded, Local Government Association *Ageing Well* programme OPM developed a version of the community asset-based approach that focused on mobilising support by and for older people. This was received enthusiastically by older people's groups and statutory partners.

OPM held a round table to discuss links between personalisation and a social care. The discussion suggested that co-production, personal budgets, shared decision making and personalisation could be used together as part of an holistic approach.

A Personalisation Network has been launched with a meeting of reference group last month and a website looking at personalisation in children's services. The target for implementation is April 2014.

OPM has been able to work with local councillors, helping them make use of asset-based approaches in their work in communities.

London Borough of Islington

Islington Council appointed a range of service providers at the beginning of 2012 to deliver programmes co-produced with young people. The Council is now in the process of evaluating these projects and is using a new quality assurance framework developed with young people. The Council is interested in outcomes that are unique to co-production and in how co-production can increase the reach of youth services (which is currently less than 25 per cent). Projects included young people's urban camps (camping over the weekend at the Kings Cross development site) and a young people's social enterprise offering football sessions across Islington.

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

SCIE has appointed Dr Catherine Needham (Health Services Management Centre, University of Birmingham) to produce the research briefing to inform a new Co-production Guide. Disability Rights UK will provide much of the content as well as case studies. Also forthcoming is a report on co-production and participation by older people with high support needs.

SCIE has a pool of stakeholders – including user, carer, equalities and seldom heard groups/organisations – with whom it is developing strong working relationships. These stakeholders are grouped into the SCIE Co-production Network (<http://www.scie.org.uk/coproductionnetwork/>) which meets twice a year and has regular opportunities to co-produce with SCIE and to feed into strategic decision making. Recent pieces of work have included: the promotion of Find Me Good Care, meeting the Australian minister for disability and reviewing a new guide on safeguarding.

A suite of four SCTV films about user and carer involvement in social work education will be launched at the *Authenticity to Action* conference in November. The user-carer steering group for these films has developed into an independent charity and company called Social Work Education Participation (SWEP). SWEP have secured £24K from the Office of Disabilities to look at ways to make the organisation sustainable.

SCIE's Co-production Charter was launched internally at a SCIE staff seminar in September.

Think Local Act Personal (TLAP): Making It Real

Making It Real is led by a national advisory group and tries to make all services more personalised, with more choice and control based on twenty-six 'I' statements. Organisations can register and work towards a Making It Real kite-mark. There are now 272 organisations registered, each of which will have to develop a publically-available action plan.

User Voice

User Voice works on criminal justice and probation at ministerial and ground levels. They have been working with the University of Cambridge to develop a methodology that will allow them to evaluate their work and demonstrate impact. The evaluation report is due after the next round of focus groups in 2013.

Whole Place Community Budgets

Joanne Fearn is on secondment from the Cabinet Office to the Whole Place Community project. Pilots are being run March to October 2012 in four parts of the country. There is an ongoing discussion about the role of central government in catalysing further efforts. 'Strengthening Communities', the Essex pilot, is very much within the co-production sphere – it is asset based, making smarter use of volunteers and community connectors, with a community co-commissioning element.

The Cabinet Office Commissioning Academy pilot is also underway and there is a plan to make this available to more local workers.

University of Birmingham and Governance International

Tony Boviard has released several relevant academic publications (listed below) and has been running training events in Scotland where there is enthusiasm for co-production among middle managers as well as at a strategic level.

Work continues on an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project looking at common characteristics of individuals involved in co-production. Five local council areas in the UK have been surveyed.

2.3 Publications and events

- Tony Boviard, and Elke Loeffler (2012). 'From Engagement to Co-production: The Contribution of Users and Communities to Outcomes and Public Value' in *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Volume 23, Issue 4,

pp.1119-1138. <http://rd.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11266-012-9309-6>.

- Tony Bovaird with Elke Loeffler (2012). 'From Engagement to Co-production: How Users and Communities Contribute to Public Services' in Taco Brandsen and Victor Pestoff (eds.), *New Public Governance, the Third Sector and Co-Production*.
- OPM has published a toolkit (2012). *Ageing Well: an asset based approach*. Download here: www.opm.co.uk/resources/ageing-well-an-asset-based-approach/.
- A new pamphlet has been published by Governance International and the Scottish Government's Joint Improvement Team (2012). *Co-production in Health and Social Care: What it is and how to do it*. Download here: www.govint.org/good-practice/publications/co-production/.
- Governance International have published a book with the Local Government Information Unit (2012). *Making Health And Social Care Personal And Local: Moving From Mass Production To Co-Production*. Download here: www.govint.org/good-practice/publications/.
- Nesta and nef produced a *Co-production Catalogue* (May 2012) for People Powered Health. Download here: www.nesta.org.uk/home1/assets/features/people-powered-health_catalogue
- New publication, edited by Peter Beresford and Sarah Carr (August 2012). *Social Care, Service Users and User Involvement*.
- [Authenticity to Action](#) conference at the University of Central Lancashire - 7th November 2012

3. Discussion from the critical friends meeting

3.1 The policy landscape

The first topic for discussion was the current policy landscape, and to what extent policies can help or hinder co-production.

The group had some reservations about co-production being viewed as a solution to the cuts, particularly where this can lead to people feeling that the approach is simply a way of government and local councils passing off responsibilities in order to reduce spending. The flip side is that some groups fear co-production will be more costly because of the time it can take

to build new relationships with people, and because of the lack of a clear base of evidence on how co-production can deliver value for money.

The Localism Agenda has created more space for policy innovation at a local level. This has been seen by members of the group in Criminal Justice and Education. In order to make the most of this opportunity advocates of co-production need to be equipped with evidence (sector-specific where possible) of improved outcomes.

It must always be remembered that co-production is not a quick fix because it requires deep culture change within organisations and for individuals.

3.2 Preserving the quality of co-production

As co-production has become an increasingly common term in public sector terminology, its meaning has become elastic and it is being used to describe approaches that go no further than engagement. The group agreed that the critical friends could play an important role in preserving a strong vision for what good quality co-production can achieve. There is an opportunity to create consensus around the values of co-production, and encourage people to be ambitious in their approach to co-production.

Practical activities could include:

- Developing a shared definition among the group;
- Breaking co-production down into its process elements and publicising a self-assessment framework;
- Co-production Awards at sector-specific ceremonies, beginning incrementally with the most receptive sectors. For example, the group could sponsor a youth sector award at the 'Children and Young People Now' Awards (www.cypnawards.com).

3.3 Commissioning co-production

Changing the commissioning process to better support co-production has been a long running theme of the critical friends group, and practitioners' frequently describe the need for commissioning and procurement processes to change if co-production is to flourish. Local Authority commissioning can be used as a way to develop co-production with a wide range of people, and effect change across a number of providers.

nef has been working on commissioning with Local Authorities, and Nesta's starting point for People Powered Health was co-commissioning. The group discussed how best to support commissioners to procure co-produced services and the potential of focusing in on commissioning as an area of influence.

It was agreed that practical materials are needed to support interested commissioners change their work, and the group suggested that most commissioners preferred face-to-face training and practical support to written guidance. Short films are also seen as useful and templates (such as a job description and programme management structure for a co-producing worker) can smooth processes for commissioners. The group also feel there is a need to describe how the role of elected members, providers, commissioners and local people will change when they are co-producing services.

3.4 Future activities of the group

It was agreed that the future activities of Critical Friends will include:

- Developing a shared definition among the group in order to preserve a strong vision of what quality co-production can achieve;
- Sponsoring Co-production Awards at sector-specific award ceremonies, rewarding and promoting good practice;
- Building the evidence base through literature review and project evaluation, collaborating to achieve a better spread of evidence across sectors;
- Setting up an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) to improve the policy landscape for co-production. **nef** will explore this and feedback on feasibility.

The first step is for members to send their working definition of co-production, along with key co-production principles, to **nef** ahead of the next meeting. A shared definition can therefore be discussed in January. Please email these to sarah.lyall@neweconomics.org.

4. Future meeting dates

The proposed meeting dates for the group in 2013 are:

- Tuesday 29th January (**note change**)
- Wednesday 10th April
- Wednesday 10th July

Venue is to be confirmed but will be in central London.