

Consultation on delivery of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy

Purpose: document captures responses from providers on their perceived definition of 'co-production' and what council officers (LBTH) and the VCS can do to support co-production.

Definition

- Stakeholders involved from the beginning and collaboratively, with equal say/involvement in designing, planning, commissioning, developing, delivering, reviewing and evaluating services, with the view to reaching mutually beneficial outcomes. This should involve service users in designing 'projects' to achieve the 'outcome.'
- More than one agency: more than partnership working and equal/agreed power sharing roles: equal partnership in decision making; better use of resources; everyone has a voice; fair allocation of resources and funding.
- Shift away from consultation/partnership.
- Bringing skills and resources together in partnership to achieve agreed outcomes (first identify the goals and aspirations).
- Working jointly with LBTH/ local residents and other VCS organisations to achieve measurable, positive outcomes for the benefit of local people.
- Working together to utilise needs and find solutions.
- On-going fluid process of partnership working.
- Understanding each other's roles and supporting one another to reach and achieve the same outcome.

(Common themes/ key message: equal platform for commissioning and delivering services and collaborative working involving service users).

Themes	What LBTH can do to support co-production	What the VCS can do to support co-production
Market development/ commissioning	Develop a market for providers that promote co-production	Feed into analysis at early stages
	Provide clarity around commissioning intentions for the future to encourage partnerships being built earlier	Consult service users and advocate for their needs and help them to be involved (not just being gatekeepers)
	Longer term grant funding and commitment to budget. Providers need a long term commitment	More involvement in contract reviewing- allow for flexibility

	from local government	
	Longer timescale for application: elongate timeframes for maximum participation from VCS to also include service user input	Honesty and clear about what can be provided. Be committed and consistent, be SMART (emphasis on realistic)
	Provide more links with community organisations	Decision making process to be transparent
	Funding streams to be made clear	Play an active role in service design- reflect the local picture
	Flexibility in contract reviewing	Understand the landscape; get to know the community need
	Long term planning- focus on prevention	Meet the Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service (THCVS) and be educated to have a better understanding of the service users
	Clear roles/ outputs/ timelines/ limits/ purpose to be identified	Undertake needs assessment /quality measures and determine how we measure success
	Council deciding/sharing their minimum expectations/requirements via open meeting group- decide how it will work together and next steps	
	Reduce unnecessary “red tapes” in providing/delivering services	
	Ensure consistency in consultation, planning, commissioning and monitoring. Bring about change together on an equal platform (ongoing)	
Engagement and communication	Clear communication of expectation- openness and willing to listen	Attend forums to give feedback about strategies and other matters- ensure transparency
	Develop clear policies and procedures (realistic)	Consider developing online community /forums specific to different areas
	Communicate clear outcomes and reflect in monitoring procedures	Reach out to local businesses to tell them about your services
	Be open and honest about what is required from providers, and what can be achieved (transparent agenda, especially around priorities)	Communicating: listen, reflect and feedback

	Effective clear communication on accessibility	Be honest about capabilities of the organisation
	Be prepared to listen	
	Be clear and state what is negotiable and what is non-negotiable	
	Give feedback after consultation on suggestions given: what was realistic, what is not and what will be taken forward e.g. signposting organisations to the THCVS to assist with how to look for external funding if monies are not available from LBTH	
	Ensure if meetings are changed/ cancelled, that service users are informed- this may not be easy if they do not have email/ telephones	
Sharing of resources	Make resources e.g. buildings; facilities etc available at discount rates	Make resources available known so that other organisations can use them. THCVS and VCS to facilitate this. Share community venues: Gateway Housing have venues available that can be utilised. This can be co-ordinated with the help of THCVS.
	Some training (i.e. first aid, medication) could be provided by LBTH and available to all providers. Training to be more accessible, especially core training such as risk assessment, first aid, lone working, safeguarding, professional boundaries	Larger organisation to consider partnering smaller ones to provide training and resources
	Share community venues e.g. provider venues, schools	Look into sustainability of resources
	Share resource and expertise to identify the needs as they change often	
	Trade power/resources with co-operation to produce sustainability of support and flexibility	
Information sharing	Share information and knowledge on various needs for example, and co-ordinate as appropriate	Share local knowledge to inform more global assumptions

	Easy access of information	
	Service users and providers should have access to who to contact or what agency to approach	Provide first-hand information and knowledge
		Share learning to help with pooling resources
Capacity building	Support for smaller organisations	Develop wider capacity to ensure it is not the same service users involved in consultations etc. as this has led some to burnout and becoming unwell – providers are the ones who have this knowledge. Also, providers to consider how service users could use this involvement to their own positive benefit, e.g. as part of a personal development support plan, so as to support their own desired outcomes
	Understanding of and sympathetic to the issues facing the VCS e.g. high turnover of staff and how these issues can be addressed	Be willing to be trained or learn
	LBTH need to recognise the limitations of THCVS & VCS	Skill up staff around needs and values
Capacity-building: volunteering	Liaise with businesses to provide a pool of volunteers –fund a voluntary programme to help manage volunteers	In order to retain volunteers, make the volunteer offer more attractive. Tap into support offered by Economic Development (LBTH) around apprenticeships and training opportunities
	Balance between volunteering as ‘learning’ and volunteering as ‘cost-cutting’	
	Provide more incentives to volunteers and organisations	
	Address concerns around safeguarding	
Collaboration	Bring people together for sharing purposes- this should include businesses, CVS, LBTH	Openness to co-working (getting over natural tendency to look inwards when worried about losing funding to one’s organisation)
		Share responsibility
		Learn from the success models around working in

		partnership
		More partnership working between providers
		Commitment to co-operation