

Working Together for Change (2 videos)

About the process

Simon Stockton: Just have a think about what's going well for you right now in your life. It could be something that you've done recently, it could be good meal, anything that you're particularly pleased about.

This is both a bit of fun but also it is an illustration of how the process works. Essentially what we're doing is we're asking people about their lives and we're asking people to have a think about that, with open questions, to say what matters to them. Not focusing on what's the matter *with* someone, but what matters *to them*.

We bring that information, as well as what people say isn't going so well in their lives, and the things that are important to people for the future into a workshop environment and that essentially is the core of this process of Working Together for Change.

Gathering person-centred information from people in their own words and then looking at it collectively, to see what the themes are, and what that can tell us about what we can do that would make improvements to improve the quality of people's lives. What's practical and possible to do, what's within our collective gift.

And sometimes it can be really hard stuff, when we're looking at the things that people say aren't working. We always do that with a mix of people in the room and mix the people with lived experience, working together with people from across the system: policy, sector organisations as well as health and the local authority. And that mix of people is really vital to make the process work, to begin to break down barriers and build that trust.

It's an eight-stage process, so the first couple of stages is deciding how you're going to use it, development of carers' strategy for a Central Bedfordshire, development of an anti-property strategy in Southend.

And then we start to collect information sometimes that's done by questionnaire, sometimes it's done from interviews, often by a mix, and then we bring that into the workshop environment. We spend a day essentially clustering that information, looking at the patterns, what it's telling us. We ask ourselves for the 'not working' themes why some of those things might be happening, for the root causes.

We finish the first day thinking, for those issues that are really impacting the most on people's quality of life, if we could fix it what would that look like and what would that look like from different perspectives: what would be in it for people and families also for commissioners and providers as well.

On the second day we've got the shared understanding, we know where we want to go, but how are we going to get there? So we go through a series of exercises to help us think about what we could do that isn't happening already that would make the biggest difference in

people's lives, and finish by developing some concrete action plans where people choose the things that they think we should work on first, that are also practical and possible to do and within our collective gift.

There's ongoing work to make sure that we continue to share what happens, what changes as a result of those workshops, how do we make sure that we keep people in the loop, what's the best way to continue people's involvement, How do people remain involved, including people with lived experience.

We come back together on day 2 to think about what are we going to do about this. We go through a series of exercises to help us think about what we could do that would make a difference. We start by thinking about what's in place already so we have a brainstorm exercise to get all of that to be sure we captured everything so we're not reinventing the wheel, and then we use these celebrity chefs (pictures of Delia Smith and others shown on screen) often to help us think differently.

Delia to help us think about traditional ideas or maybe service-based solutions, Jamie (Oliver) to help us kind of think about ways of involving community groups and people and families and Heston (Blumenthal) to help us think about off the wall kind of radical bonkers ideas where there might be a grain of brilliance.

Once we've done that, we ask people to vote again, the final filter that we do is taking them into a kind of investment grid where we put them on a board to think about how much effort they going to take - which is the horizontal axis - and how much of a difference they're going to make - the vertical axis.

This is what that looks like (refers to screen). It's kind of quite near the end of day two so it's a bit of a kind of a gamified kind of thing we're asking them to shout out from the group to go 'higher, higher' or 'lower, lower' or 'to the left' or 'to the right' and it helps us get to the to the very end of the day where we're asking people to pick one of those ideas.

People essentially kind of choose the things that they feel most connected with that they would like to be involved working on. We tend to steer people towards the quicker win so that some things can happen fairly quickly and help us get momentum. At the very end we invite people to take collaborative ownership of their plans, and continue that involvement in taking them forward.

2. The WTfC programme in Adass East

Simon Stockton: We've been working with four local authorities: Essex, Hertfordshire, Central Bedfordshire and Southend, to use this process Working Together for Change as a way of boosting capacity for strategic co-production.

Each authority is using it in very different ways, but the core idea and the process is the same which is about using person-centred information, capturing what people say is most

important to them and using that information in aggregate form to make decisions about what we should do more of and what we should do differently.

So we gather data from typically around 50 people, asking them what's working well in their lives, what's not working well and what's important to them in the future and we bring that data into a workshop environment - which might be virtual or might be a live workshop.

And in that workshop we have a mix of people with lived experience, and commissioners and providers, and we listen to everything that people have told us and try and understand what the themes are, what the patterns are.

Once we've built that kind of shared understanding we use that to help us think about what we could do that would really make a difference that is practical and possible and impactful.

Ali Smith: Working Together for Change is now used for a wide range of situations and with various organisations to find out what really matters to people, how we can improve services, and include people at the heart of change.

I think with Working Together for Change we're offering councils and organisations a framework for co-production really, in whatever service they are looking at.

Simon Stockton: There's a really broad range of focus areas that we've had within the programme, everything from experiences of carers, people using home care, people experiencing poverty in a particular area, sensory - people using sensory services, to contribute to an autism strategy and ageing well strategy, so a really wide variety and the process works equally well in all of those different scenarios.

Ali Smith: people with lived experience can come in feeling a bit cynical: 'We've been here before, nothing is going to change...' They are not really sure why they're there, but actually it's lovely to see that journey that people go on, and that actually they are part of this.

One of the really important things that we highlight is that this is a shared, equal space for all, working together. We're going on a shared journey together.

Simon Stockton: Collecting that information about what people say are their own priorities, in their own words, and what's impacting on their quality of life, allows you that lens to say okay, well look, here are the key things that people are saying. It allows you a space to think together with people with older people and with providers and commissioners and say okay, what can we do about that that we're not already doing. What can we do that would make a real difference that's within our gift, what can we do collaboratively that is within the resource envelope that we have?

Sometimes the solutions that you come to from that might be service solutions but sometimes they're not. Sometimes solutions can involve people in families and communities and community organisations. Sometimes they cost money sometimes they don't. But bringing people together to have that discussion - by the time you decide what you're going

to that's different everyone's had a voice, everyone's had a chance to have their say in and work out what's the most valuable thing that we could we could do.

Ali Smith: it's hugely important that there's actual change that happens. There's no point involving people with lived experience and leading them up the garden path and nothing happens at the end of it. That's almost worse to be honest.

So we really make sure, it's a really key part of the process that the action plans that come out of the two day workshops are implemented and that we have an ongoing connection to make sure that the changes are happening and that people with lived experience that have been involved know that and we can continue to let them know what is happening.

Simon Stockton: Also, as part of the programme we are training up people with lived experience to facilitate this process. So part of the project is about building a community of practise for people who can continue to use this Working Together for Change process in other ways, and with other focus areas once the project is finished.

We have teams of facilitators which includes people with lived experience in each of the four areas now, where we bring some of those people into to work on their neighbours' workshops.

The programme is joint-funded by regional Adass and part of the deal, in order to join the programme, we are asking each authority to commit to a number of things. Each site that's this part of programme has committed to run this process twice, and for most of them that's running at once virtually and once live, to train up a pool of facilitators including people with lived experience, and to explore how they could use this process beyond the life of the programme.

At the moment we are still in the process of working with the four councils that we have. We want to extend the offer to traditional sites across the region, we think we may be able to take on if there's interest as many as three more sites, as well as supporting that emerging community of practice of people who are actively involved in each of those four sites in this work.

With that comes the opportunity for people to in turn to facilitate each other's processes, to share resources and learning and we will be developing an online portal for people to share learning and collaborate on processes.