

Co-producing change with older people: How person centred reviews can inform strategic commissioning

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Working Together for Change (WTfC) is a simple, systematic process using person centred information from reviews and support plans to drive strategic change in commissioning with and for older people. It collates and analyses person centred information to provide powerful insights into what works and doesn't work in peoples' lives; as well as their aspirations for the future. The Department of Health's Putting People First Programme worked with Helen Sanderson Associates (HSA) and four councils in early 2009 to test and refine this method. The experience has shown the approach to be flexible, transferable and effective. Here we describe the process and why it is important through the story of Dennis, 82, who alone and has carers that support him every day from a domiciliary agency.

Person centred information

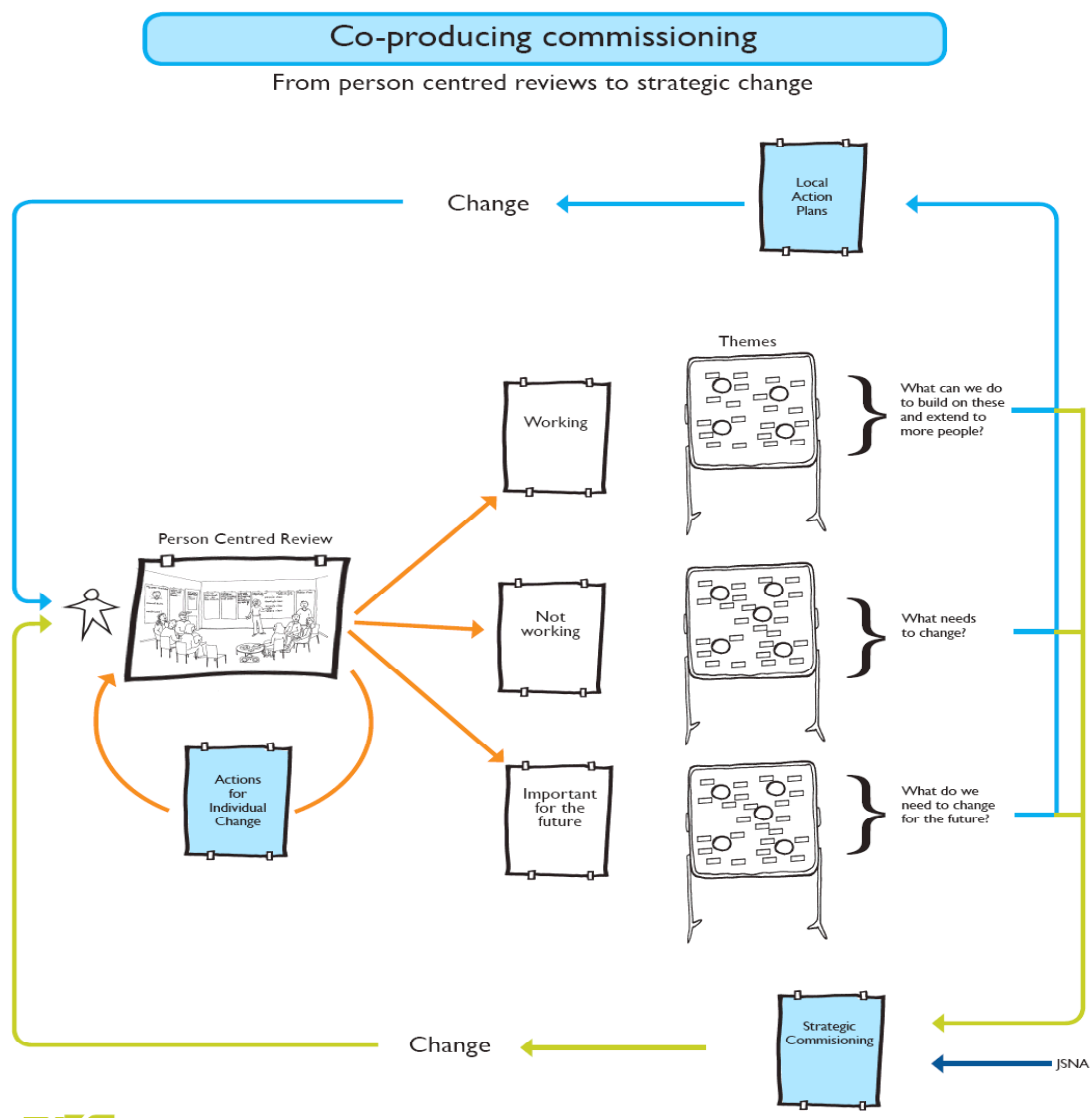
The WTfC process begins with person centred information: a person centred plan or person centred review. These lead to actions based on what is working in the older person's life, addressing what is not working and moving towards what they want in the future.

Dennis has a personal budget. At his person centred review, he talked to Lucy, his care manager, about the support he received. When asked 'what is working', Dennis talked about his friendship with his neighbour, and visits from his family. When asked what is 'not working', Dennis said 'Staff talk over my head - I feel like a package and not a person' and that he got cold when he had a wash. He was washed in a cold bathroom because his carer got too hot. In the future, Dennis wants to take up his steam train hobby, get the monthly steam train magazine, and visit his daughter in Weymouth. Lucy and Dennis thought together about what needed to happen to change things, and came up with a list of actions including

talking to the manager of the service before looking at using his budget to purchase different support. Another action was writing in detail how he wanted to be supported, in a way that all of the staff who supported him could follow. Lucy took Dennis's information to a 'Working Together for Change' day and asked him for his top two 'working', his top two 'not working' and his top two 'what he wanted in the future' ideas.

Using person centred information to inform strategic commissioning

This diagram illustrates the WTfC process. On the left is the individual person centred review, resulting in 'actions for individual change'. These will change what is not working for the person and respond to what they have identified as important for the future. At the same time, the person is asked to prioritise information from their review to take into the WTfC process. This information, combined with other people's reviews, is thematically clustered during a workshop.



These clusters are analysed so the group develops an understanding of what is working and can be built upon; what is not working and need to change; and the things that will guide future changes. This information informs changes in local action planning (blue line) and changes in strategic commissioning (green line) where the information can be used alongside other information sources, such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

Anonymous information from Dennis and 15 other people's review was shared at a one day workshop with commissioners, members of the Older People's Association, care managers and providers. All the information was aggregated and written onto cards – red for what is not working, green for what is working, and blue for what people wanted in the future.

The facilitator read out each of the green 'working' cards and the group decided which cards were similar, and then what to call each theme. Everyone then had a chance to comment. There was a wide range of positive, encouraging themes, suggesting areas that were working well for people. They repeated the exercise with the red cards. There were several other cards with similar issues to Dennis's. For example: "Agency carers... there are too many of them... men and women thinking they can do it. I will do it myself" and "I am not allowed to use a wheelchair to push myself around the house due to the risk of scraping my knuckles on the door jamb". The group decided to call this cluster 'I am not treated with respect or as an individual by my paid carers'.

There were four other clusters of what was not going well for people . The group said this information was not new but felt more powerful seeing it all together, in the older people's own words. Finally, the group clustered the blue cards that looked at what people wanted in the future and found people did not want extraordinary things, but more everyday experiences like going out, meeting people, taking a holiday or starting a hobby.

The group analysed the 'not working clusters'. People worked in teams of older people, commissioners, providers and care managers and discussed possible root causes. Lucy was part of the group looking at the 'I am not treated with respect or as an individual by my paid carers' cluster. Their list for why people might not be treated with respect included observations that:

- Paid carers are too task focused and not outcome focused.
- Paid carers are not matched to older people.
- Paid carers get poor quality training and supervision.
- Information is not recorded for carers to use.

They shared this with the other groups and thought about what success would be like for older people, staff and managers if they could address these issues.

What would people say if they changed things for the better?

The group decided that older people would say:

“My carers listen to me and understand what is important to me.”

“I look forward to my carer visiting me.”

The staff supporting older people and their managers would say:

“I get good training and support.”

“It is easier to respect others when you are respected yourself.”

“I have all the information I need – we have written information about what matters to the person and how best to support them.”

Each group did the same process for their ‘not working’ cluster and wrote it up on a poster ‘What would success look like?’ They looked at the roles of commissioners, providers, care managers and the Older People’s Association and asked what each could do to work towards this success. The Older Peoples Association offered to work with providers in the recruitment and training of staff.

The Providers looked at what they could influence, and thought about possibilities with the care managers. They committed to things like recruiting staff more locally, and have people working a wider range of hours and matching staff to older people by developing one page profiles to describe what matters and how people want to be supported. They would then use a ‘matching staff’ tool to get better matches for personality characteristics, hobbies, interests and skills. Staff could use their one page profiles to introduce themselves to the people they support. The providers also committed to reviewing how they supervise and support staff and individuals and re-evaluate the training they provide for carers.

How older people’s views inform commissioning

The commissioners took their information to a further meeting and put the information alongside data from the JSNA and other sources.

The Commissioners decided to:

- Further analyse review data to determine best practice if and where people have reported that relationships with their care staff are working particularly well; and encourage replication by other providers.

- Develop Individual Service Funds for domiciliary care services to empower individuals to design their own support and express preferences regarding care staff.
- Use this and other priority areas identified through Working Together for Change to set the overarching outcomes for an outcomes-based approach to commissioning for all future older people's services.
- Commission specific direct payments service for older people, offering specific support with employment, legal and HR issues.
- Consider designing or commissioning a web-based database for personal assistants/care workers that supports person-to-person transactions (e.g. slivers of time) where individuals can build networks of care staff and choose between them.

Lucy shared with Dennis what had happened on the day. The individual actions agreed at his review were having an impact. He was warm in the bathroom now. He enjoyed working with Lucy to put together his one page profile, and could tell that staff had read it and that some were using it to think about how they supported him. Hopefully the actions the Providers agreed to would change things in the short term for him and others in a similar position. The commissioner's actions should mean people will be less likely to receive a service where they were not treated with respect and as an individual.

Dennis's story shows how person centred information can drive strategic change in organisations and effect improvements in commissioning. Working Together for Change is a tried and tested tool councils can use to ensure the current changes in adult social care are co-developed and co-produced with older people and families. As well as helping those undertaking JSNAs, it can provide a way to understand and measure the outcomes of personalisation by generating and analysing qualitative data for commissioning; improving the links between strategic decision makers and the people they serve.