Removing the obstacles to user and community co-production—how public sector reforms could help

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Co-Production and Public Service Reform

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Context: Let's start with the good news

Huge rise in academic interest in user and community co-production of public services and outcomes

Major change in discourse at top management level in UK (and some other European countries) about co-production being embedded in organisational practice …

"The Act [*Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015*] requires Councils and CPPs to enable communities to take a proactive role in how services are planned and delivered. This requirement aligns with the Council's decision in November 2014 to mainstream co-production, as a result of the Cooperative Capital Framework annual report".

Source: The City of Edinburgh Council,
The Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee, 10 December 2015
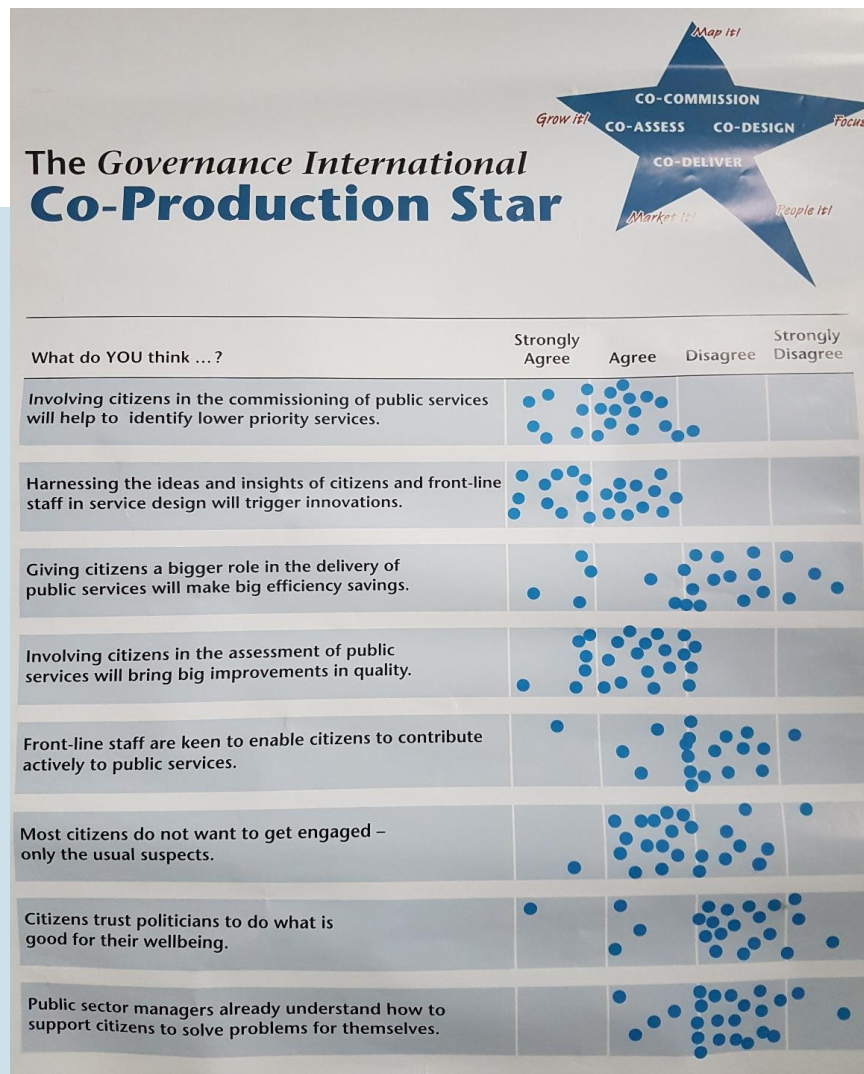
The implementation challenge

... but consistent message from practitioners that the pace of implementation of co-production approaches in the public sector is slower than intended and obstacles to co-production are now higher than before.

Your views on co-production
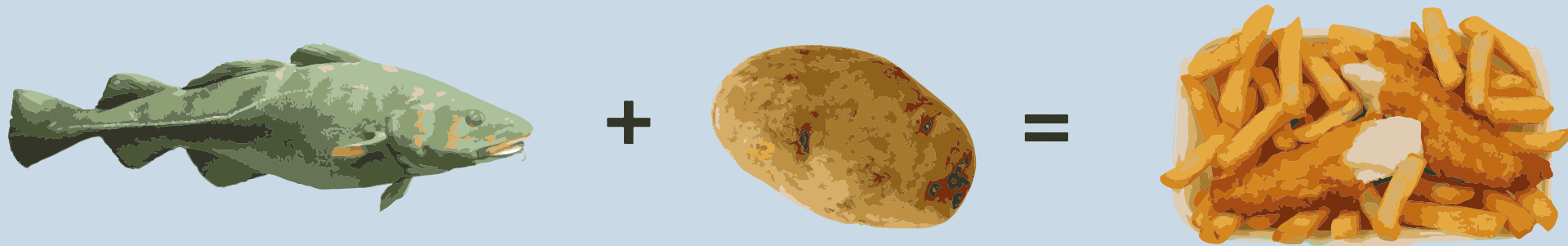
*From a
Co-Production Star
Workshop*

What is co-production of public services and outcomes?

*"... professionals and citizens making better use
of each other's assets, resources and contributions
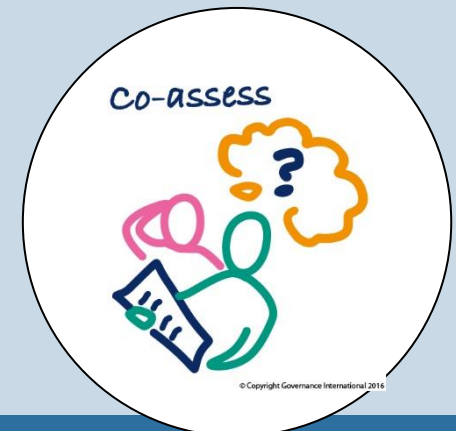to achieve better outcomes or improved efficiency."*

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

**"It takes 'two' –
professionals and communities."**

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Key co-production approaches:
The Four Co's of the Co-production Star

Map it!

Grow it!

Focus it!

CO-COMMISSION

CO-ASSESS **CO-DESIGN**

CO-DELIVER

Market it!

People it!

Co-commission

Co-design

Co-deliver

Co-assess
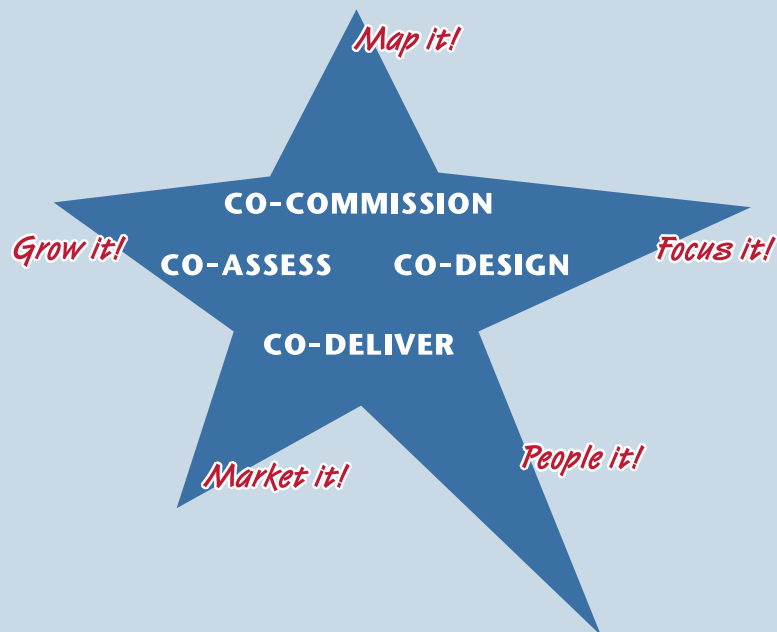
Co-production and outcome-based commissioning of young people services:
From NEET to PETE in Surrey County Council

Objective

Improve employability of young people in Surrey CC

Change management

- **Co-commissioning**
- **Co-design**
- **Co-delivery**
- **Co-assessment**

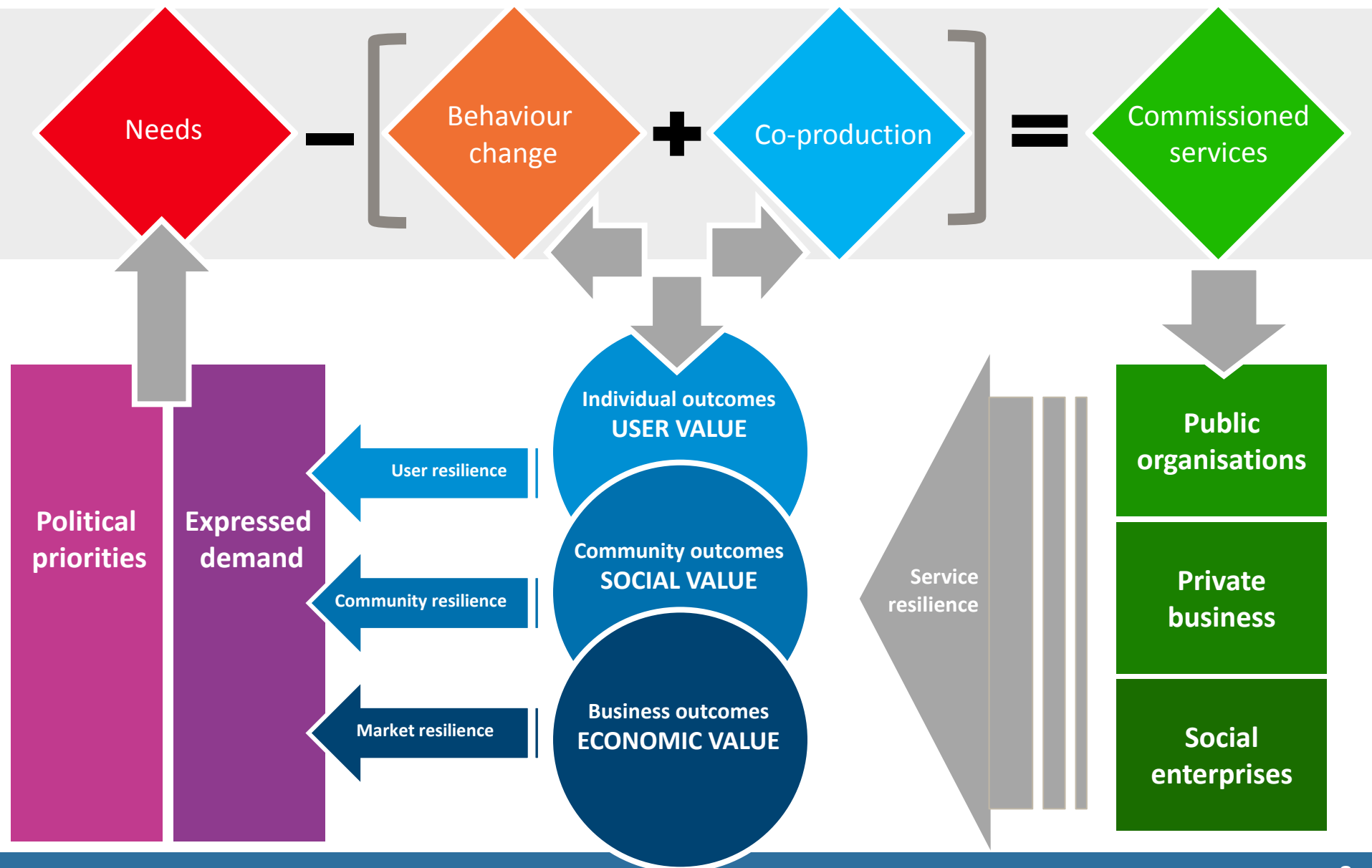**Focus** on prevention and effective support for very disadvantaged young people

Results

A 60% reduction in the number of young people who were NEET (2012–2014)

A 90% reduction in the number of young people who were first-time entrants to the criminal justice system (2009–2013)

25% budget savings for young people services

The Governance International Public Value model

Needs **−** [Behaviour change **+** Co-production] **=** Commissioned services

Political priorities

Expressed demand

User resilience

Community resilience

Market resilience

Individual outcomes
USER VALUE

Community outcomes
SOCIAL VALUE

Business outcomes
ECONOMIC VALUE

Service resilience

Public organisations

Private business

Social enterprises

Literature review on barriers to co-production

NESTA study (2011), summarising evidence to date:

- Funding and commissioning barriers
- Difficulties in generating evidence of value for people, professionals, funders and auditors
- Need to develop the professional skills to mainstream co-production

Voluntas article (2012) added:

- Risk aversion
- Political and professional reluctance to lose status and 'control'

Literature review on social innovation

Bloch et al. (2009), Public Sector Innovation Index, Aarhus University, funded by NESTA

Barriers are the REVERSE side of the factors in the literature which are '*enabling environments for social innovation*'

Input	Process
Innovation expenditures (staff, funding, consulting expenditures and other knowledge purchases etc.)	Explicit innovation strategy and targets
	Systematic, internal measurement and evaluation of innovation
Staff (education, experience, diversity etc.)	Role of management in innovation (active involvement, risk management, support/commitment to innovation and implementation)
Sources of innovation (e.g. management/senior staff versus employees/frontline staff, users, suppliers, collaborators, etc.)	
	Incentive and reward structures
Technological infrastructure for innovation (incl. access to and use of ICT)	Practices for learning and diffusing knowledge and innovations
	Innovation collaboration and alliances
	Perception of enablers and barriers to innovation

Source: CFA & DAMVAD, 2009.

Case study evidence

Over 60 case studies
of co-production at
www.govint.org/good-practice/case-studies

Sections on 'change management'
and 'learning points'

Collected all instances
of 'barriers' or 'obstacles'
to co-production

Survey of stakeholders on barriers to co-production: Dimensions explored

Barriers arising from:

- Insufficient resources
- Poor processes
- Poor communication and inadequate data
- Evidence base and business case
- Citizen capabilities and time
- Professional/managerial/political ownership
- Inadequate leadership
- Short-termism
- Risk aversion

Barriers in relation to:

- The Four Co's co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery and co-assessment
- Five steps of the Co-production Star (Map it, Focus it, People it, Market it, Grow it)

Survey: If you had more budget for this co-production project, to be used to remove the barriers getting in the way of its success, what would you spend it on?

Percentage of the budget increase you would spend on this factor (out of 100%)	Surrey CC – Senior commiss-ioner	Surrey CC – middle mangment commiss-ioner A	Surrey CC – middle mangment commiss-ioner B	Sandwell MBC – Senior commiss-ioner	Solihull MBC – senior commiss-ioner	Scottish Health/ Social Care Partnership – Public Health Lead	National 3rd sector organisation & user advocacy service	National Charity - Regional manager for Engagement	AVG
More frontline staff			20		20	10			6
Training frontline staff on how to make co-production more successful	30	20	20	20	10		10	40	19
More staff who can enable service users to co-produce	30	80	20	20	5	10	20		23
More staff who can enable communities to co-produce			20	20	5	10	15		9
Supporting service users to do more co-production in the project				10	15	10	15	20	9
Supporting communities to do more co-production in the project	20			10	15	10	15		9
Connecting service users to communities more effectively					10	50	10	20	11
Project management					10		5		2
Better ICT					2.5	3			1
Better technology (other than ICT)					2.5	2			1
Supporting partners to embed co-production in their working	20		20	20	5		5	20	11

www.govint.org

Preliminary results

- **Barriers to co-production are stakeholder specific – see the great variation in responses in this table**

- **Survey results suggest that the most common factor is "More staff who can enable service users to co-produce" – and this ties in with the findings from our 'Dots' exercise**

- **This issue isn't about lack of resources, but rather about use and training of existing staff and recruitment policies for new staff**

- **This finding also ties in with the next most popular response: "Training frontline staff on how to make co-production more successful"**

- **A survey result, which also comes up frequently in our case studies, is "Connecting service users to communities more effectively"**

- **We'll be taking this survey further in the next few months – but in the meantime we'd like YOU to fill it in this short table today!**

How can public sector reforms help?

"More staff who can enable service users to co-produce"

- For this to change, HRM policies and organisational learning need to change in public service organisations

- But this will also require more flexible practices and learning opportunities in the public sector such as
  - Competency frameworks emphasizing co-production skills
  - Training existing Co-Production Champions as Coaches
  - Experimentation in Co-Production/Innovation Labs
  - … and bringing service users into the public sector at least part-time or enabling them to become service providers

Case study: Esther Improvement Coaches in the County of Jönköping in Sweden

Every clinical and care service has its own Esther Coach, who supports staff development and continuous improvement across organisational and professional boundaries.

Esther Improvement Coaches are specially trained members of staff, in a range of job roles and grades.

Esther Improvement Coaches receive no extra payment for their involvement and, despite being a major commitment; it is considered part of their job.

Source: Governance International Case Study, Photos Copyright 2013 Nicoline Vackerberg.

Case study
Service users as service providers:
Café Rainbow in the Council House in Nürtingen

Case study
Employment of 'Experts by Experience' (EbE) in poverty and social exclusion' in Belgian Federal Social Services

Staff consider service users as people, rather than as 'cases' who are legally entitled to a service.

Quality of front-line services has improved considerably.

Some rights are now automatically given to people who are entitled to them, without asking the person concerned for evidence.

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Conclusions and way ahead

- Co-production is not the only answer …
  … but it is has huge potential to improve public outcomes, not yet fully exploited.

- The main barriers to co-production are no longer lack of understanding by senior decision makers or even lack of budgets in public services (serious though these undoubtedly are) – these excuses no longer convince.

- We need to put public sector staff in place who can practically help service users and communities to do more for themselves, with the help of public services … and experiment with new ways of connecting service users with local communities, including digital technologies.

- So SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO in 2018 to improve public outcomes and services through co-production. We'd like to hear from you!

Interested in running our co-production survey in your local council? Contact us!
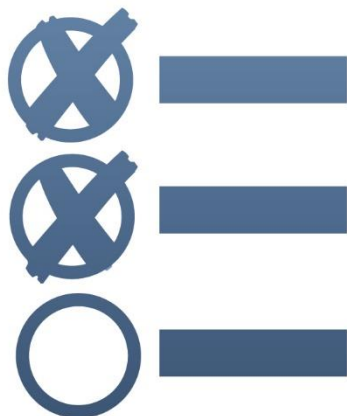
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