Commissioning for Community Inclusion: Eight Essential Actions

A guide for public sector commissioners

October 2011

community inclusion

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What does commissioning for community inclusion involve?

Commissioning for community inclusion is a way of approaching public sector commissioning which helps to ensure that a broad range of opportunities and supports are available for disabled and older people. It is about linking people to their local communities and supporting them to make the most of the natural supports around them. Community inclusion is an important part of the prevention agenda in health and social care as it enables people to use their own time and resources to help them stay independent for as long as possible.

It is not just about traditional health and social care services. Commissioning for community inclusion recognises that universal and commercial services need to be accessible to all. Likewise, voluntary and community groups need to be open and welcoming. Buildings and facilities like libraries, children's centres, places of worship, leisure centres, the supermarket, pub and corner shop all have an important part to play in community life.

Commissioning which focuses on building community capacity and encouraging and strengthening community action is an important aspect of this approach. This is about empowering local people to provide support to others and enabling older and disabled people to contribute to community life.

What the Eight Essential Actions are about

The Eight Essential Actions give commissioners a brief rundown of the types of things to prioritise to ensure that older and disabled people get the chance to build support networks, friendships and feel valued and included in the local community.

1. Know your Community

It might sound simple but you need to know what's out there before you can develop a strategy for developing inclusion through commissioning. There will be services, facilities and groups that you don't know about, and you won't necessarily know where the gaps are. Get together with other professionals, front-line staff and local people to build up a picture of the community and a plan for how to improve it. Spend time out in the local area talking to local people and community based agencies.

1.1 Map your community

Techniques like 'community mapping' can help you find out what is happening locally and know 'who' as well as 'where' good community connections are. Using the knowledge of local people and staff who live and work in those communities can be a way of getting this knowledge. Provide time and space for people to be able to work together and share this information. Encourage people to 'specialise' in getting to know a certain aspect of the community well - e.g. sports clubs, friendly cafes, accessible parks.

The NDTi has developed community mapping training[1] for organisations wishing to promote inclusion more effectively. It is a practical course that would be very useful for commissioners wanting to build up a picture of the opportunities that are available on their doorstep. It shows how to map and build links with existing community groups and supports as well as working out where the gaps or barriers are to inclusion.

1.2 Consider a community navigator scheme

A Community navigator scheme is an excellent way to promote inclusion. Such schemes employ a network of navigators, connectors, agents, or facilitators who provide support to individuals on the ground to make the most of community opportunities, but crucially also act as the 'eyes and ears' on the ground for commissioners, feeding information back to commissioners about gaps in services or ways services could be improved.

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[1] http://www.ndti.org.uk/how-we-do-it/training/inclusion-programme/community-mapping/

For example, Turning Point piloted their 'Connected Care'[2] model in Hartlepool. A team of local residents conducted an audit of local needs which was used to inform commissioning. This method is particularly effective at engaging so-called 'hard-to-reach' sections of the community, including those who only engage with public services in a crisis. Turning Point says, "Connected Care addresses the root cause of poor outcomes for service users... We look at how factors like transport links, housing problems, social isolation and community issues impact on the whole picture. This is why the audit is so important to commissioners; because it gives grassroots insight into the problems locally, the real reasons why people are missed by the system. Through Connected Care, commissioners are able to ensure that their services are working best for the people that need them. Connected Care starts from the needs of individuals living in the local community. It is an approach done by the community, not to it.[3]

1.3   Think about networks, social capital and skills in the community

Knowing a community is about more than just understanding which shops and amenities have disabled access. Services, groups and facilities are not your only assets. Think about the skills and talents of people living in the community. Try to find out how existing social networks work so that disabled and older people can tap into existing natural support networks and social capital.

Skills for Care are developing a method called neighbourhood workforce planning – identifying ways to audit the skills and knowledge that exist in an area and creating opportunities for people to use their skills to help others.[4] Pilots are underway in various areas of the country to see how the local paid and unpaid workforce, residents and people with support needs can contribute to community life.

The RSA's Connected Communities project[5] found that public figures such as the local shopkeeper and postman appear to be the strongest 'bridges' between people in local communities, even when there was a different postman each day. The RSA conclude that community initiatives should consider how the 'latent power' of these and public servants like them (e.g. lollipop ladies and men) can be better used.

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[2] Community navigators are a feature of the Connected Care model.

[3] http://www.turning-point.co.uk/commissionerszone/centreofexcellence/Pages/ConnectedCareFAQs.aspx

[4] http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/news/latest_news/communities_report.aspx

[5] http://www.thersa.org/projects/connected-communities

2. Join up with others and commission together

When financial resources are scarce the arguments for working together to make the most of all resources in a locality are stronger than ever. However, if you are under pressure it can be difficult to find the time and resources to put into partnership working or to get others on board. The move to GP Commissioning and the abolition of PCTs means that new relationships and ways of working will need to be established. However, joining up with other departments and organisations can save money and result in better commissioning as the 'Total Place' pilots found.[6] It really is worth the investment in your time and energy. Try some of these methods:

2.1 Work with people outside your organisation or team

Find out where all sources of resources are in the community – in staffing, time and money.[7] Health and social care needs don't always have to be met through health and social care budgets. Many of the activities that lead to strong community inclusion will be funded or commissioned by others. Housing officers, neighbourhood police teams, voluntary organisations, health visitors and youth and community workers are often very well-connected in local areas. Cultural Services departments can be a fantastic source of knowledge of local sports clubs and arts groups in an area. Sports clubs and centres in particular and are often very open to ways of working which will increase participation as it gets people through their doors (and meets your aims of inclusion at the same time).

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[6] Total Place (now finished) found that a 'whole area' approach to public services could lead to service improvements (and savings). The pilot areas tried to start from the citizen's viewpoint and break down organisational 'silos' which cause confusion and waste resources and time. See http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/total_place_report.pdf

[7] See
http://www.institute.nhs.uk/quality_and_service_improvement_tools/quality_and_service_improvement_tools/stakeholder_analysis.html

For example, in Reading, the Sports Development team have developed programmes aimed at increasing inclusive opportunities in sport. 'Everybody Active' provides tailored and supported sessions for disabled people to participate in sport and there is evidence that some people are using the sports centre as an alternative to day services. The 'Dee Park Active Retirement club' is tackling social isolation among older people and contributing to improved health at the same time[8]. Both schemes have 'coaching for coaches' elements, increasing skills, confidence and enabling the activities to become more self-sustaining. [9]

Don't forget functions that you might not traditionally think about involving. Having good quality accessible transport so that people can get around easily can make a huge difference to whether older and disabled people are able to make the most of community opportunities. For example, First Bus company have introduced 'safe journey cards' which drivers are trained to recognise and respond to, such as '*Please be patient I have difficulty in speaking*'[10]. Helping community organisations and key services and businesses overcome access issues can enable people to make valuable connections on their doorstep instead of having to travel elsewhere. And local Community Foundations may be able to help you – they give grants and encourage local philanthropy and may be able to support the inclusion agenda. If you don't have the contacts there will be someone in the local council who does.

2.2 Get inclusion on the strategic agenda

Build on the work of your Local Strategic Partnership and try to get inclusion on the LSP's agenda and the agenda of your Health and Wellbeing Board. If you can get a shared commitment at a senior level you have won half the battle.

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[8]http://www.housinglin.org.uk/_library/Resources/Housing/Practice_examples/Housing_LIN_case_studies/Case_study_27.pdf

[9]http://www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/BCC/caseStudy/BuildingTheBigSociety/ServiceDevelopment/?parent=7817&child=8307

[10] See Miller, C (2010). *Personalisation of Universal Services: Bus Travel* http://www.opm.co.uk/resources/33465/download

For example, when Wiltshire became a unitary authority in April 2009 the council made a corporate commitment to building sustainable and resilient communities through community empowerment and political decentralisation. A network of Area Boards was set up to bring power closer to local communities. The council also committed to work in partnership with local people to promote equality and inclusion of disabled and older people[11].

2.3 Make the case in different ways for different audiences

Key to influencing others is the ability to demonstrate that a focus on community inclusion can meet targets or achieve the outcomes of lots of different departments and organisations. For example:

Strong and inclusive communities may suffer less crime and anti-social behaviour[12]

Social capital leads to better health outcomes – supporting people to get involved in a local community group may be even better for public health than providing services to help people give up smoking. Key thinker in the field of 'social capital', Robert Putnam, found that people can cut their chance of dying over the next year *in half* by joining a group[13]

Local private facilities like pubs and clubs might be more sustainable if the proprietors made it easier for disabled and older people to access them.[14]

Your trump card is that it can save money.

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[11]http://www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/BCC/caseStudy/BuildingTheBigSociety/PlaceShaping/?parent=7816&child=8313

[12] http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/baroness-newlove-report?view=Binary

[13] Putnam R, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. http://www.bowlingalone.com/

[14] http://www.martinprosperity.org/research-and-publications/publication/releasing-constraints

For example, recent research from London School of Economics[15] for the Building Community Capacity project[16] has shown that *timebanks cost on average less than £450 per member per year, but could result in savings and other economic payoffs of over £1,300 per member.* This was described as a conservative estimate. Savings were also found for befriending and community navigator schemes.

The Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPPS) evaluation showed *investment in primary prevention* can generate efficiencies - *for every £1 spent on POPP services, £1.20 was saved in spending on emergency hospital beds*[17]

A recent Social Return on Investment analysis for the Community Development Foundation found that, *for an investment of £233,655 in community development activity across four authorities, the social return was more than £3.5 million.*[18]

The New Economics Foundation estimates *savings of up to six times the investment* made in approaches that involve co-production, and better outcomes for people at the same time[19].

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[15] Knapp M et al. Social capital economics. See www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/BCC

[16] The Building Community Capacity project was formerly a Department of Health Putting People First delivery project but is now part of the Think Local, Act Personal social care sector partnership. See www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/BCC

[17] http://www.cpa.org.uk/cpa/POPP_national_evaluation_final_report.pdf

[18] Catalysts for community action and investment: A Social Return on Investment analysis of community development work, based on a common outcomes framework. A report by nef consulting on behalf of the Community Development Foundation

[19] http://www.neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/Public_Services_Inside_Out.pdf

3. Think co-production

Involving people and communities in the commissioning process leads to smarter solutions. It makes sense to commission services that people really need and want and to make the most of the knowledge and skills that are out there in the community. We need to stop thinking of older and disabled people as only 'service users' and see them as assets. Consider the potential they have to contribute through supporting and advocating, working, volunteering, making friends and alliances and taking part in community activities.

This approach to involving people is termed 'co-production' – a new, equal relationship between public services and the people who use them. Co-production can be about reviewing, designing, delivering and commissioning services together.[20]

3.1   Find new ways of involving people – this is not just 'consultation'

Try to avoid 'top-down' methods of consultation and find new and better ways of talking to and working with older and disabled people. There are easy to read guides available such as 'The New Economics Foundation's 'Participation Works!'[21] or ' A Guide to co-production with older people' produced by NDTi for the Department of Health[22]– which gives a run-through of different methods to encourage participation, including 'Community Appraisal' and 'Open Space'. Investing a small amount of money in facilitation skills training for you and your team might help. You might be able to find others in your organisation who could get involved too.

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[20] Ref: Governance International; see http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_121669.pdf

[21] http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/participation-works

[22] For further details go to: http://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/Personalisation_-_dont_just_do_it_coproduce_it.pdf

3.2 Make decision making reflect the views and experiences of people and their lives

The NDTi's Inclusion Web[23] is an easy way to help people and the organisations who support them look at the people and places in their life and how things may be changing over time. It can also be useful to collect and analyse the results for a group of people using the Inclusion Web to help commissioners work our whether they are focussing on the right activities.

Another example is the 'Working Together for Change' methodology[24] - a six-stage process that uses information from person-centred reviews and support planning to inform strategic planning and develop more personalised models of care and support. The information from individual plans is clustered and analysed and action plans are developed in partnership with service users, their carers and families. The methodology can be used in many different settings.

3.3 Commission timebanks and other innovative ways for people to participate

A Timebank is a way of bringing people together to exchange time and skills. Members of a timebank earn time 'credits' for helping out others through activities such as painting/DIY, shopping, cooking, cleaning, or learning a language or new skill. They then spend their 'credits' by getting someone else to do something for them. Everyone's time is valued equally whether you helped someone with their accounts, did a bit of gardening or iced a cake for someone's birthday.[25]

There are huge benefits to older and disabled people in a scheme that is based on reciprocity and a tangible 'reward' for doing something for someone else. As well as drawing on local human 'assets' and providing practical help, Timebanking naturally builds connections between people in local communities. It goes beyond traditional volunteering as no member is a passive recipient of services – everyone has something to contribute.

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[23] http://www.ndti.org.uk/publications/ndti-publications/inclusion-web-resource-pack/

[24] See http://www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/_library/Resources/Personalisation/Personalisation_advice/WTFC_Final.pdf

[25] http://www.timebanking.org/documents/Publications/New_Wealth_of_Time.pdf

The Spice timebanks in Wales take the person-to-person timebanking model even further by involving organisations and companies in the timebanks. As well as getting help from other timebank members, Spice rewards people with cinema tickets or leisure passes for getting involved in community life. They have had some great success promoting inclusion and making people feel valued for their contribution.[26]

Rushey Green timebank was London's first timebank and the first to be based in a GP surgery. Part of Rushey Green's vision is to achieve a cohesive community in which people get to know each other and their neighbours. Today the time bank has

over 200 members who have generated 33,000 hours of mutual exchanges such as housework, clearance/decluttering, simple DIY, gardening, befriending, escorting to shops, admin and ITC help, shopping, help with CVs, picking up prescriptions, healthy walks, chair-based exercises, a poetry group, workshops and general help at the practice.[27]

Another successful project which is based on similar principles of reciprocity is the 'Green Fingers' project in Redruth which is aimed at disaffected young people who are referred from the police, probation service and Youth Offending team. They get free driving lessons in return for doing an NVQ in horticulture and maintaining the gardens of older and disabled people on the local estate.[28]

3.4   Support community events

Giving small grants or support in staff time and resources to community events and initiatives can be a fantastic way of building support for your ideas in the local community. Any event that encourages older and disabled people, families, friends and professionals to engage and participate is valid.

For example, Oxford City Council has been working with the Oxford Civic Society to encourage and promote street parties. In 2010 there were at least 54 street parties across Oxford, more per head of population than anywhere else. People canapply to hold a street party at no cost and help and support is given to local residents to enable them to advertise road closures easily and cheaply. The street parties have helped to

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[26] http://www.justaddspice.org/index.html

[27] Ref: http://www.rgtb.org.uk

[28] http://www.redruthnorthpartnership.org.uk/index.php/news/view/greenfinger

break down social barriers between neighbours and identify people who might need support from others in the street. Residents have reported that a genuine sense of community has began to emerge.[29]

3.5 Work to ensure community and voluntary sector organisations promote inclusion

Don't assume that all community organisations are inclusive. We have all had the experience of joining a group and finding that it's hard to be accepted and involved. Groups can have 'norms' and ways working that unwittingly exclude others, due to where and what time they meet, whether they have childcare or decent toilet facilities and the welcome they give others. Be prepared to work with groups, do some training or awareness-raising sessions, agree a set of inclusive principles with them and share in any training opportunities you might be developing for your own staff.

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[29] http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/BCC/topics/Latest/resourceOverview/?cid=8681

4. Hand over control to people and communities

To get people involved in community life it helps if you are really prepared to hand over control over resources and the ways services are delivered. It can be about supporting User-Led Organisations to provide brokerage, handing over assets to community organisations to manage, or devolving budgets to local neighbourhoods or groups.

4.1. Give ownership to local people

It can be quite a shift to let go of the helm completely and hand over services and money to local people. However, there are some great examples across the country of where this has been done successfully and where participation has increased as a result.

For example, Leeds City Council commissions Neighbourhood Networks across the city. The networks are run for older people by older people and provide a range of services and activities for around 25,000 older people, enabling them to stay in their own homes and live independently for as long as possible. [32] Leeds Council recently pitched the idea of the networks to a 'Dragons' Den' event organised by the Building Community Capacity project and were praised for their decision to give the networks five-year contracts to encourage sustainability, despite the current financial climate. [30]

The London Borough of Lambeth has taken the view that community groups need stability and certainty about future funding so that people believe that their efforts will have a long-term impact. They also believe that focussing activity around venues and buildings is an important way to encourage community spirit. Over the past three years, the council has transferred £3.5m of its assets to the voluntary sector, a figure expected to rise to about £10m in the near future.

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[30] http://www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/BCC/topics/Latest/resourceOverview/?cid=8687

4.2   Give spending power to people and communities

As well as commissioning services from groups of people themselves you can also hand over part of the commissioning process too through a process called participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting involves local people in making decisions about where public money is spent in their neighbourhoods, or for a particular group of people e.g. young people. Residents and community groups are brought together to discuss proposals, come up with new ideas and vote on them, as well as giving them an opportunity to scrutinise and monitor the results.[31]

Wiltshire County Council held a participatory budgeting process in Salisbury in March 2009 with disabled young people and carers. Proposals were developed for six projects including money for a youth worker to run training sessions to help and advise disabled young people on coping strategies where they were suffering abuse and antisocial behaviour from other young people; cash for disabled young people to open and run a café which is normally closed on Mondays, thus gaining work experience, social skills and easing their transition to adulthood; and a fund to enable young carers to access positive opportunities away from their caring environment.[32]

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[31] http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/participatorybudgeting

[32] http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/BCC/topics/Latest/resourceOverview/?cid=8313

5. Focus on outcomes not processes

Focus your commissioning on the end results you're looking for rather than being hung on the specific activities you commission. You will find that innovative and person-centred approaches start to emerge. Ask local people and communities what they want for themselves and their families. They probably won't reel off a check-list of services they'd like to have - they are more likely to talk about outcomes such as better quality of life and wellbeing. A shared vision of what you want to achieve is a good starting point for reshaping services.

For example, Lancashire has developed a set of 16 commissioning intentions with local people, providers and staff, which are intended to improve the design and delivery of services over the next four years. One of the intentions involves a 'community pathway' which is being designed with user-led organisations and community organisations to ensure that personal budget holders have more ways of getting help with support planning.[33]

For example, the Gloucestershire disabled children's work on short breaks involved developing a system whereby all individual plans have to contain outcomes for people and families (e.g. families get 2 nights of unbroken sleep, child makes two new friends) that arise from person centred planning. These are then costed and put into contracts and outcomes monitored. The impact has been more community inclusive services and better outcomes for people.

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[33]http://www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/_library/PPF/NCAS/Practical_approaches_to_Building_Stronger_Communities_12_November_2010_v3_ACC.pdf

5.1 Use contracts and service specifications to help providers to change

Write your expected outcomes into contracts and get providers to explain how they have achieved the outcomes. Ensure that there are sufficient resources for effective person-centred planning and support planning within contracts. Make co-production and increasing community links a requirement within your contracts.

For example, The New Economics Foundation worked with the London Borough of Camden to create a model for commissioning for outcomes at both service level and on a wider community level. Co-production is integral to the model. It led to a service specification for mental health services which specified, "We would encourage providers to adopt the model of 'co-production' whereby services are planned and delivered in mutually beneficial ways that acknowledge and reward local 'lay' experience while continuing to value professional expertise. Service users should be regarded as an asset and encouraged to work alongside professionals as partners in the delivery of services."[34]

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[34] http://www.socialinclusion.org.uk/publications/CommissioningCoproduction.pdf

6. Develop the market

With increasing numbers of people having control over their own budgets commissioners need to think of themselves as having a facilitative rather than a purely purchasing role. There is a lot you can do to shape the local market for care and support to ensure that the services on offer from all types of provider meet the needs and aspirations of the people who use those services. Traditional tendering and contracting processes can act as a barrier for some groups that might enter the market – especially small community focused groups. Commissioners might explore ways of developing more flexible and creative approaches.

6.1   Involve a range of people

Think about the way the whole system works and involve individuals and community groups in an open discussion about the market.

For example, Croydon have developed an 'Inclusive Forum' which aims to shape the local community and market for personalisation. The forum was set up in a spirit of genuine co-production with community stakeholders and involves commissioners, service providers, universal service providers and service users. The forum helps to celebrate success, share information about supports, services, solutions and networks, improving choice, quality and the self-directed support system as a whole. [35]

6.2   Support micro-enterprise

There are often many small businesses and voluntary and community groups operating in a local community that commissioners don't know about. Sometimes known as micro social enterprises, they provide services such as meals, transport, befriending, lunch clubs and drop-in centres. If you can identify them and provide them with some support they can become a sustainable and truly personalised option for people. Rooted in the local community they can also help people develop vital community links.

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[35] http://www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/BCC/topics/Latest/resourceOverview/?cid=7864

Community Catalysts support micro enterprises in many different parts of the country. In Dudley, they are supporting a Carers' Café which provides a valuable meeting place and social hub for Dudley carers, as well as a training centre and networking base for third sector care groups. Apparently they also do extremely good cakes! [36]

6.3   Commission activities which support people to be part of their community

Good neighbour schemes, Circles of Support, Homesharing, and supported living networks like Keyring can all be very effective ways of helping older and disabled people build community connections. Some councils are using technology to bring people together and develop mutual support networks.

Reading Borough Council has commissioned teleconferencing networks to help develop support networks for older people. There are four networks so far, including a Polish group, one for the Indian community and a 'just home from hospital' group.[37]

Tyze is a system of personalised online social networks for carers and people with long-term support needs, similar to Facebook but secure. It allows users to post messages and photos and keep in touch with friends, family and paid supporters.[38]

6.4   Ensure effective support planning and brokerage

Good support planning and brokerage will help people to make community connections and tap into natural supports locally as well traditional health and social care services. Work with local people and organisations to help you identify what is working well and what is missing in your local area around brokerage. The Commissioning for Support Planning and Brokerage resource tool developed by the Putting People First delivery team[39] gives you a step-by-step guide of how you can do it. In addition NDTi has developed a training programme for Independent Support Brokers which could be considered.[40]

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[36] http://www.communitycatalysts.co.uk/
[37] http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/BCC/topics/Latest/resourceOverview/?cid=8549
[38] http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/BCC/topics/Latest/resourceOverview/?cid=8177
[39]http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/_library/Resources/Personalisation/Personalisation_advice/Commissioning_for_Support_Planning_and_Brokerage_-_a_resource_tool.pdf
[40] For further information, please go to: http://www.ndti.org.uk/how-we-do-it/training/training-for-independent-support-brokers/

7. Think about workforce and leadership

As more people take responsibility for their own services through individual budgets, social workers and other professionals will need to change. Whilst 'technical' skills are important, so too is ensuring that staff teams actively encourage and support people to develop plans that encourage inclusion. The ability to work across departments and agencies and with people using a person-centred approach is key.

If you are planning on implementing any of the ideas in this guide make sure you think about the implications for paid staff and for the relationships you have with voluntary and community organisations. Changing anything involves a process and you can't expect things to happen overnight. You might have to support providers and community groups to enable their staff and volunteers to promote community connections. Work with staff and disabled and older people themselves to find out where the energy for change is and empower people to advocate for it. Leadership for change at all levels is important. And don't forget the importance of getting buy-in from the top of your organisation.

7.1 Support providers to 'match' staff and people who use services

Commissioners can work with providers to encourage a different approach to workforce. If staff have similar interests to the people they support they can be more enthusiastic about 'going the extra mile' in finding and accessing opportunities. Similar cultural and religious can also be crucial to inclusion for some people. This can apply for paid staff and volunteers. Think about how you can encourage or require providers to adopt a person-centred approach.

For example, the Department of Health's Provider Development Programme has been working with Castle Supported Living - an organisation which supports people living in the community with learning difficulties in East Lancashire. Castle are developing one page profiles for all the people they support, relationship maps and matching tools to help match the people with the right volunteer who shares similar hobbies and interests. [41]

7.2   Develop training and awareness-raising

Commissioners can create the conditions for increased inclusion by commissioning or promoting training and other resources to support providers. Another way in could be by offering secondments or staff exchanges to develop person-centred planning approaches or community development skills.

7.3   Get councillors on board

Local councillors, including ward councillors, provide an important community leadership role and are often very well-connected in local neighbourhoods. Tapping into this knowledge and interest can be very important in getting things off the ground locally. They also have an important role in setting the budget and the priorities of the council.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has been working on a scheme called 'Friends and Neighbours' based in one ward which aims to build on existing community involvement to support vulnerable residents, improve neighbourhoods and health and wellbeing. Residents, elected members, local organisations and council officers got together to map all the assets, needs and aspirations in the ward and develop a neighbourhood plan. The project has full support from the council's leader and the project has been awarded funding to develop it further.[42]

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[41] http://www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/BCC/caseStudy/BuildingTheBigSociety/ServiceDevelopment/?parent=7817&child=8305

[42] See http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/BCC/caseStudy/BuildingTheBigSociety

7.4   Identify and empower community leaders

Use the enthusiasm of local people and people using services to help make things happen. Local people can be important advocates and crucial to the success of any community scheme. It goes without saying that you should be setting the priorities for change together but empowering local people to drive the change as well can bring tremendous results.

The Townstal Community Partnership (TCP) was set up in June 2009 as a result of a community development initiative led by former health visitor Hazel Stuteley. Hazel has worked in estates across the country, identifying potential community leaders and bringing them together with representatives from local agencies to create energy for change. TCP now has its own community-led multi-agency partnership, chaired by a local person, which tackles issues raised by local residents and runs activities and events and has significantly improved the quality of life for local people.[43]

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[43] http://www.healthcomplexity.net/content.php?s=c2&c=c2_main.php and
http://www.townstalcommunitypartnership.org.uk/index.asp

8. Communicate & Enthuse

The last essential action is one that does not stand alone – communication should run through every part of your strategy for community inclusion. It should never be an add-on – you need to build it in from the outset. If you don't plan how you are going to communicate your plans to others you can come unstuck (if you meet resistance) or fail to reap all the benefits of your good work just because not enough people know about it.

8. 1   Have a plan

A good communication strategy should address the following:

- Who your main audiences are e.g. councillors, officers, staff from other agencies, local communities, disabled and older people, community and voluntary organisations, providers etc.

- Why you need to communicate to those audiences E.g. you may need councillors to know about a new supported living scheme before you implement it so they are on board, promote it and defend it (as can be necessary if you are trying out something new); you may need to tell community organisations that you are planning on holding a mapping/market-shaping exercise

- What you need to communicate e.g. Your 'key messages' – the two or three bullet points of information that you want people to take away with them in their minds

- How to communicate e.g. You may need to promote a community event so you decide to use the local media and print some simple posters and flyers; you may need to think about easy-read leaflets and get some advice on the words and size of text you use; you may decide that face-to-face communication is an important way or making sure that you are including everyone

- When you are going to make important announcements – at important 'milestones' in your project – thinking about it, setting it up, reporting on progress, reporting on 'easy wins' to keep people's interest.

For more help see the Putting People First communications toolkit.[44]

8.2   Use case studies and positive stories

Collecting case studies of how an initiative has had a real impact on someone's life can be a really effective way to communicate what you're trying to achieve and to get others on board. Story-telling and photographs are an excellent way to demonstrate the impact of inclusion on people's lives and show the contribution that disabled and older people can make.

There are many stories on the Think Local, Act Personal website[45], but make it an aim to collect your own local stories, enabling disabled and older people to speak for themselves. Grow your own bank of case studies and resources and share it widely.

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[44]http://www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/_library/Resources/Personalisation/Localmilestones/Putting_People_First_Communications_Toolkit.pdf

[45] http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Browse/Stories/PersonalexperiencesofPPF/

Conclusion

There are great examples of community inclusion across the country and lots of ideas in here to get you started.

In summary, the key things to remember are:

- get to know your local community
- work in partnership with local people and across departments
- get trained up in participative skills
- commission some quick wins like timebanking
- communicate success, and
- develop a plan for the future.

Appendix 1

Other useful resources

1. Social Inclusion Training Pack[46]

The Social Inclusion Training Pack is a suite of tools and approaches that staff teams and organisations can use to help achieve better outcomes for people.

2. Inclusion Web Resource Pack[47]

The Inclusion Web is an easy way to help people, and the organisations who support them, to look at the people and places in their life and how things may be changing over time. Developed by NDTi and refined over a number of years, the Inclusion Web has been used by many organisations to:

- Help people who need support to think about their life in the community and make plans for the future

- Evaluate change in people's lives over time

- Measure outcomes of the support provided

3. The Older People's co-production guidance[48]

This new guide on "coproduction" with older people sets out 7 principles to help local authorities and their partners, including local communities, work together and improve older people's influence at all levels of service commissioning and delivery. It was co-produced by a small team of people working together over a period of four months to capture what 'co-production' means and how we'll know it's happening with older people

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[46] For further details please go to: http://www.ndti.org.uk/how-we-do-it/training/training-for-independent-support-brokers/
[47] For further details, please go to http://www.ndti.org.uk/publications/ndti-publications/inclusion-web-resource-pack/
[48] For further details, please go to http://www.ndti.org.uk/publications/ndti-publications/department-of-healths-co-production-guide/

who need support in their lives. The team included older people, strategic leads/senior managers in three local authorities and representatives from HSA and NDTi.