Co-production and equal participation as practical expressions of shared social responsibility

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What is co-production?

- Bringing people together in equal partnership for making decisions and designing and delivering services
- Sharing different kinds of knowledge and skill – pooling professional expertise and personal wisdom and experience
- Changing the way professionals think and work, fostering reciprocity
- Tapping into everyday human resources that are often unrecognised and undervalued.
How can co-production make a difference?

- Improves the quality of decisions and services
- Improves the well-being of those involved
- Builds social networks and capacity
- Prevents needs arising, intensifying or recurring
- Makes public services more sustainable
In practice

• Practical applications of ‘community development’ and taking it further
  – NHS time banks
  – Elderplan, US
  – Carebanks, UK

• Growing body of evidence that ‘upstream’ intervention, valuing people and applying their wisdom saves money and gets better results.
Why now?

• More and better outcomes for less input of public resources
• Key to transforming welfare systems in an era of scarcity and austerity

BUT

• It must be about sharing, not shifting responsibility
• and equal participation
Equal participation

- Language matters – ‘sharing’ means ‘pooling’ not ‘splitting’
- Shared responsibility is a collective enterprise where everyone involved shares a common set of goals
- Sharing must be inclusive and interdependent
- Everyone must have a fair chance to participate on an equal footing
‘False friends’ of equal participation

- The neo-liberal challenge to post-war welfare settlements
- Rolling back the state
- Promoting individual choice and consumerism
- The curse of ‘nudge’
- New dependence on IT solutions
Getting there

• Tackle the underlying causes of inequality
• Build capacity of local groups
• Establish clear rules of engagement
• Reach out to marginalised groups
• Redistribute paid and unpaid time
• Transform professional cultures
• Change attitudes and norms
In your experience…

- How far can co-production go?
  - Where can it work best?
  - Where will it not work?
- What are the barriers and how can these be overcome?
- How much does equal participation matter for shared social responsibility?
- What are the barriers and how can they be overcome?
Thank you

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