

## One Team: Lived experience in co-producing public services

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We've been working with a group called the National Expert Citizens Group, which is a group made-up of people who have lived experience of disadvantage like homelessness or addiction, mental health, potentially have also been in prison.

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We've come together with that group of people to really look at how we might try and tackle some of the biggest problems faced by public sector at the moment.

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Co-production is about moving away from just consultation and into genuinely engaging people in how services are designed, how policies are made so that the public sector really learns from the people that it's delivering for.

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Co-production for me is really about sharing power and at the moment power is often helped by government institutions who have the money and the resources to solve for citizens problems, live experience and co-production.

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What you are doing is bringing that power to the people who are closest to the problems.

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We'd like to see co-production in the boardroom, co-production in commissioning, co-production at every level with the people who are affected by the system.

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When I heard we were working with Deloitte, I was thinking, OK, this is quite a big corporate company, how is this going to work out?

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Are they going to be receptive?

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And actually it's really surpassed my expectations.

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We've worked really well together.

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We've formed a really good rapport between us all.

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The main point with Deloitte is I felt completely on an even keel.

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I felt that my voice is level to everybody concerned within the meeting.

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And also that we're all, we're all batting on the same team, which is, which for me, with my lack of trust in services of being homeless from the age of 15 is a massive thing.

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I like the the, the energy in the room and, and the enthusiasm from everyone.

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I think the dynamic is brilliant.

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And it'll be like there's one question asked, but because we're all bouncing off each other, the conversation just flows.

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And it's a real brainstorm.

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But it's a very, very, very level, equal respecting playing field.

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And that's what makes it such a pleasure because we can be honest, we can share, and there's no judgement. And I love that

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It felt very, very confident between all of us that we're going to get somewhere, we're going to get places.

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There's really been a sense of Deloitte getting it.

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And, and not it's not tokenistic.

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It feels valued, considered.

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And I think that there's real potential there.

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The fact that people see me, the fact that I'm relevant is very important because the fact that people see more than just the addiction is a lot.

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Sometimes you could perhaps say that people are disconnected from what's really happening on the ground.

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So think this piece of work, especially around people with multiple disadvantage and having that voice is really key to helping them understand the problems and helping them move forward with some of the solutions that they need.

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If you walk, you wouldn't know who was lived experience, who was staff, who was government.

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We were working together to find solutions.

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Why shouldn't we all have equity?

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Why shouldn't citizens be heard and be part of the solution, part of the design?

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So yeah, I mean, it's a no brainer, isn't it?

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When we listen to people with lived experience, it's like a real rocket fuel that can make a massive difference to the way that we're delivering public services.

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This is about using lived experience to understand those problems differently.

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You might actually be solving for a problem that isn't the real issue to solve for.

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And then it's about finding solutions with people lived experience and being solutions, and opportunity focus.

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I think so often the nervousness and the scariness around this can come from a place of we've already got too many problems to solve.

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We don't need to hear more from people with lived experience, but the people in the room that we're working with today, they're here to bring the solutions.

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They want to be part of those solution making processes and they want to understand governments problems.

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And it's a truly two way process.

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And so I don't think government can afford not to bring people lived experience into the room.