

Co-production in Haringey context

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I'm here as a retired person and Chair of Haringey Over50s Forum, a member of Reclaim Social Care, a member of Unite the Union community branch in Haringey, and a community representative in the adult social care re-design in the borough. For fifty years I was a social worker, and in the '80s director of social services in Hackney where for awhile we developed a full social model of care and a universalist, anti-discrimination and human rights approach to providing social services and support. This was while trying to withstand the Thatcher onslaught on all things related to social work and community organization.

Jumping forward thirty years to now, we see that neo-liberal predominance at last really shaking. Having endured so much austerity and deepening inequality in the last ten years particularly, perhaps only now are the long active voices for fair and equal determination of decent social care and support for everyone with a social support need being recognized again. There are too real dangers in authorities turning to local communities and their users and carers to find solutions to huge financial cuts, and it is not uncritically that we take on the call for co-production of care and support – as I'm sure many on this call know only too well, lest we become co-agents of limiting our own support. I shall say a few things about co-production now in Haringey which hasn't come out of nowhere and still has a long way to go.

Haringey Council committed itself to reform of social care in the borough from its 2018 Manifesto with the aim of reviewing day care for adults and restoring two day centres scheduled for closure, revising domiciliary care in line with the Ethical Care Charter of Unison, and reversing a decision to close Osborne Grove Nursing Home [the last local authority run nursing home in England]. This followed successful campaigns to oppose the closures, and to overturn a sell-off proposal of Council assets by the previous Labour administration, called the Haringey Development Vehicle.

In the reform of adult social care, the principles of co-design and co-production are central [see links at end –Terms of Reference of Adult Social Care Re-design Group, and Principles of Co-design in Hornsey Pensioners Action Group web]. The principles of co-design, based on an equal place at the table, had been established in joint work between user and carer groups in the borough and the Council for several years, but with tentative rather than transformational progress. Insofar as the machinery of local government itself can be either an obstacle or a facilitator, regarding social care and support, a Planning and Oversight Group for Social Services with a built-in majority of user, carer and community representatives, and Reference Groups for each identified population of users and carers which reported to a Joint Partnership Board with Council and CCG officers, and the Lead Member, ex-officio, were the precursors for the areas of real co-design which I shall outline briefly.

Three points on the structures, however are worth noting. They are advisory – and we now have a Community Advisory Board with direct access to the Cabinet – so they have influence but do not of themselves tackle any power imbalance. But they are built on 1] a demonstrated voice and a capacity for action of the representative groups locally, 2] they do address previous breakdown in trust and need to build back up between local authority and many of those most at risk, and 3] they engender a kind of public provision which is not just a last resort but rather is supportive of where people in need are and want to be, is locally sourced, values mutuality, respects the dignity of all, and is empowering wherever it can be.

In domiciliary, or home care, the market had wrought a degree of havoc on the provision to those isolated and most in need, and the ever tighter eligibility criteria exclude even basic preventive work for those not in the very highest category of assessed need. The Sevacare scandals of 15 minute timed visits by home care workers, and many instances of a person being left without basic attention to their health and respect while home care worker went from place to place without even payment for that time, are now well documented. After banning Sevacare from providing in Haringey, and significant groundswell of pressure, including a September 2020 Tribunal decision [

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<https://www.homecareinsight.co.uk/three-home-care-providers-ordered-to-pay-staff-100000-in-back-pay/>

Haringey had adopted Unison's Ethical Care Charter, now in full – abandoning short time allocation of visits, paying travel time, SSP for workers, no zero hour contracts, continuity of worker for client, London Living Wage, training and access to co-workers – and then set up a panel, with user and community reps., on re-designing the home care contract to which any bidding provider would have to subscribe and be monitored on.

This new contracting system greatly reduces the number of providers to one or two per district [3] of the borough, emphasizes co-ordination with preventive work by others, and is locally sourced wherever possible. It is not then in-house, nor does it abolish charging [as Hammersmith and Fulham have done] but is a step towards a local partnership in home care and community support which will maximize local resources and recruit local skills. The development steering group for home care and community support, with union and community reps., is in a position to argue for embedding further co-production in home care.

In day care, the Adult Social Care Re-design Group has set about involving carers and users of services for learning disabled and autistic people directly in re-conceiving the form and amount of care and support to be provided in two day centres now saved from closure, Roundway and The Haven, and in re-configuring other day care opportunities. Services for older people are part of an Age Friendly borough approach [including a Dementia Friendly alliance] and an Age Well Partnership Board which is leading on reducing isolation and supporting community interventions with these jointly commissioned with user groups. Examples are Walking Buddies, IT

Buddies, Wellbeing Coaches etc. and being a catalyst for NHS and LA staff to adopt something similar to the Buurtzorg neighbourhood care model, established in the Netherlands, but clearly here very locally determined mainly at ward level or park neighbourhood level. The use of what are deemed “community assets” such as housing block community spaces and supporting mutual aid activities [especially post-pandemic] are also key. A new disabled peoples organization, Disability Action Haringey, will now be central to co-producing support for people with disabilities.

The last home for older people with continuous care needs run by Haringey, Osborne Grove Nursing Home [OGNH], which was subject to a Cabinet decision to close in 2018, prior to the new Labour Council, is now being completely re-designed and re-built, in a £30 million plus project, to expand its bed provision for a much needed population group and at the same time be a site for day and community support, especially for carers and family living nearby. The OGNH Co-design Group has the overall remit for the redevelopment, and is founded on co-production with local stakeholders [These are shown in the Terms of Reference to be seen on–screen] so that from conception through to delivery the input of people with most experience locally will be a central consideration alongside architects, local authority and CCG personnel, union representatives, and councillors. Liz Ciakajlo whose mother spent nearly the last decade of her life in Osborne Grove is going to talk about her experience and hopes for co-designing this important site in the south of Haringey.

Links:

Terms of Reference: Haringey Adult Social Care Redesign Working Group
https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/adult_social_care_redesign_group_terms_of_reference.pdf

The Principles of Co-Design – Hornsey Pensioners Action Group
https://www.hornseypensionersactiongroup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Social_Care_Co_design.pdf

Three home care providers ordered to pay staff £100,000 in back pay
<https://www.homecareinsight.co.uk/three-home-care-providers-ordered-to-pay-staff-100000-in-back-pay/>

Haringey agree to invest £30 million in Osborne Grove redevelopment
<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/news/haringey-agree-invest-30m-osborne-grove-redevelopment>

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