

# CO-PRODUCTION IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT FOR CARERS

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# OVERVIEW

- What is co-production?
- Context and Policy Context
- Previous Research
- Methodology – the case study
- Spectrum of co-production and criteria for successful co-production in practice
- Results – where on the spectrum of co-production does the case study lie?
- Discussion points and implications for policy and practice

# WHAT IS CO-PRODUCTION?

- Co-production **‘describes the process whereby voluntary organisations or public services involve their ultimate beneficiaries as partners in the delivery of services’** (Boyle et al. 2006; viii)

In practice:

- The assets of carers would be recognised
  - The boundaries between the service providers and service users would be blurred
  - Services would be delivered in a reciprocal relationship
  - Peer support networks would be used in service delivery
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- Has been criticised as a way to deliver services cheaply in times of austerity

# CHANGING PUBLIC SERVICES

Context of ageing populations and fiscal constraint



Governments looking to alternative ways to deliver public services, including co-production



Shift towards 'New Public Governance' and public services *by* the public rather than public services *for* the public (Osborne 2010)



Voluntary organisations playing an increasing role in delivering public services, including services for carers

# POLICY CONTEXT 1; WORK AND CARE IN THE UK

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1995 (Carers Recognition and Services) Act</b> | Gives people who 'provide substantial care on a regular basis' the right to request an assessment from the local authority.             |
| <b>1999 National Carers Strategy</b>              | Recognises the importance of combining work and care and the difficulties that carers face  |
| <b>2008 National Carers Strategy</b>              | Emphasises the importance of carers 'having a life of their own' and recognises the business case of supporting carers in the workplace |
| <b>2010 National Carers Strategy</b>              | Outlines 'enabling carers to fulfil their education and employment potential' as a priority   |
| <b>2010 Equality Act</b>                          | Prevents carers from discrimination at work due to their caring responsibilities  |
| <b>2014 Children and Families Act</b>             | Gives all employees the right to request flexible working   |
| <b>2015 Care Act</b>                              | Gives carers a clear right to receive services and strengthens the rights and recognition of carers                                     |

# POLICY CONTEXT 2; CO-PRODUCTION

## UK

- Policy makers – considering co-production as an alternative way to deliver public services
- Think Tanks – debated the merits of co-production

## Europe

- Features heavily in European Commission's 'A vision for public services' (2013)
- Core theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> European Quality Conference

## Internationally

- OECD, UN and World Bank – all been exploring the potential of co-production in public services and disseminating evidence of best practice

# CO-PRODUCTION, WORK AND CARE

- The support needs of carers to combine work and care in the UK have been widely explored (Yeandle et al. 2007; Vickerstaff et al. 2009; HM Government et al. 2013; Pickard et al. 2015)
- **The role of co-production within this process has not**
- **Research into the role of voluntary organisations enabling carers to combine work and care suggests that co-production is a key factor**
- **Past research has not been longitudinal and offers a ‘snapshot’ only**

# METHODOLOGY

- **Qualitative Longitudinal Case Study**

Case study:

Voluntary sector project in the North of England which delivers employment support services for carers and encourages employers to be carer-friendly.

- **Grounded Theory Approach**

- **Multi-method research design:** ‘Tracking’ carers through project (10), semi-structured interviews with employers (5-10), key personnel (5), partner organisations(5) and other stakeholders (3), ongoing observation and documentary analysis



# SPECTRUM OF CO-PRODUCTION

Low-level Co-production

Mid-level Co-production

High-level Co-production

Full Co-production



## Contribution

Citizens contribute to service delivery and citizen involvement complements professional service delivery

Citizens are consulted in the design and evaluation of services

## Collaboration

The assets of both citizens and professionals are recognised and made use of and services are produced within a reciprocal relationship

Citizens participate in the design and evaluation of services

## Balance of Power

Power is shared between professionals and citizens so that services are produced in an equal partnership

Citizens have a high degree of influence over the design and evaluation of services

## Redefinition of Work

Work is defined to include anything that people do to support each other and all barriers between professionals and citizens are broken down

Citizens have full influence over the design and evaluation of services

# CRITERIA FOR CO-PRODUCTION

|                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Positive-sum                  | Engaged                  |
| Non-dominating                | Asset-based              |
| Relational                    | Reflexive and Reciprocal |
| Transparent value-rationality | Incomplete               |
| Synergy of Expertise          | Iterative                |

Source: Durose and Richardson (2015)

# CO-PRODUCTION IN THE DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

## High level co-production

- Activities designed with carers and partner organisations.  
Employers however not consulted.
- Language used in bid for funding reflects values of co-production: 'support', 'involvement', 'empower', 'work with'
- A person-centred approach is also emphasised

# CO-PRODUCTION IN THE OUTPUTS

## Mid to High Level Co-production

- One-to-one support
- Groups and workshops
- Training for employers

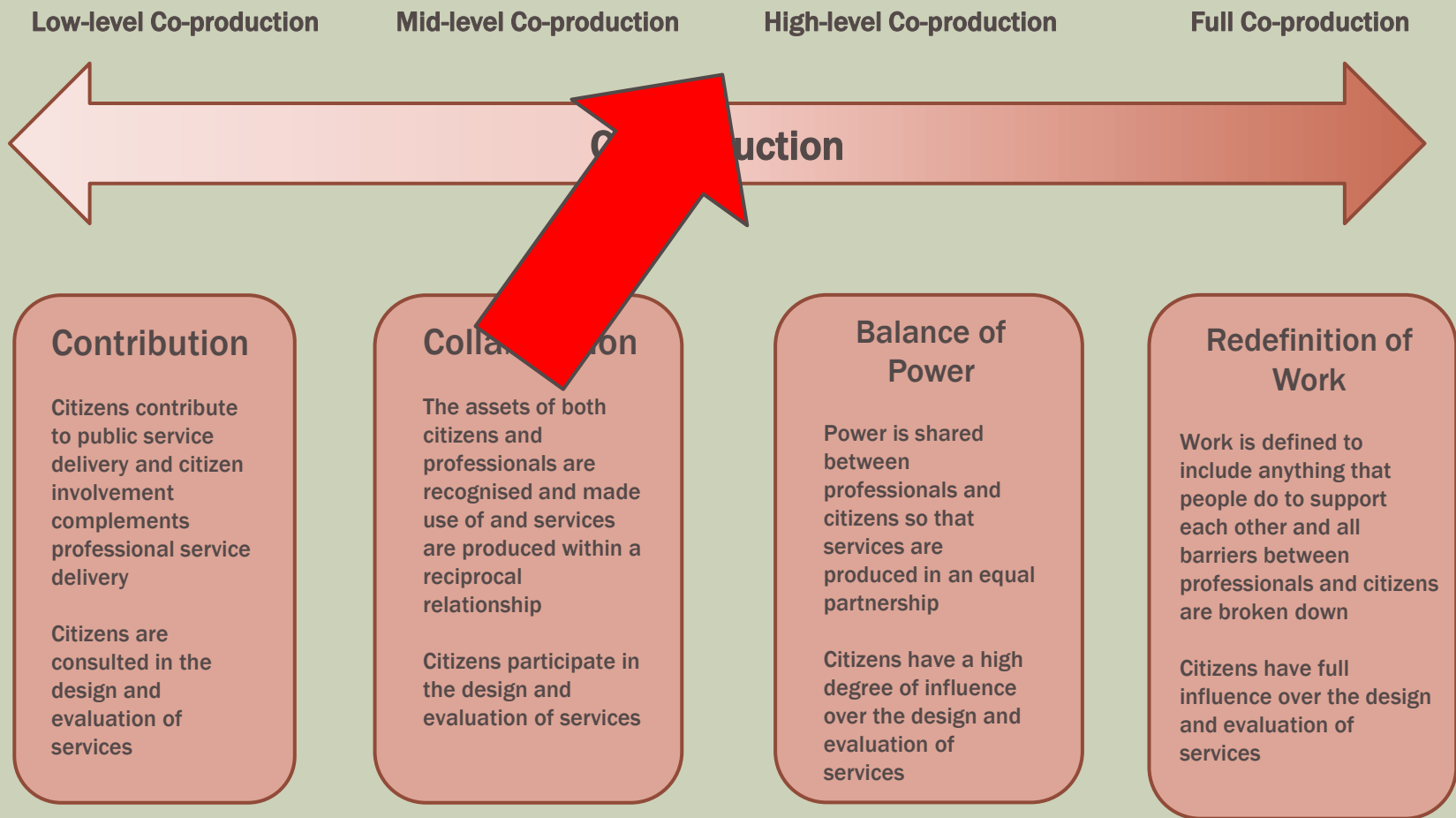


# CO-PRODUCTION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

## Mid-Level Co-production

- Service delivery determined by carers (but not employers)
- Assets of carers are recognised
- Services delivered based on previous experience and intuition (but not always based on evidence and research)
- Relationships in practice are not always reciprocal

# WHERE ON THE SPECTRUM OF CO-PRODUCTION DOES THE CASE STUDY LIE?



# DISCUSSION

- Suggests that **co-production is important** in the role of voluntary organisations enabling carers to combine work and care or return to work
  - Tension between policy and service implementation
  - Shifting responsibility to carers
  - Difficulties engaging with employers
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- What is the importance of co-production in enabling carers to combine work and care or return to work?

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