



Lunchtime Seminar

Coproduction: Does training lead to any real change and the challenges in social work practice?

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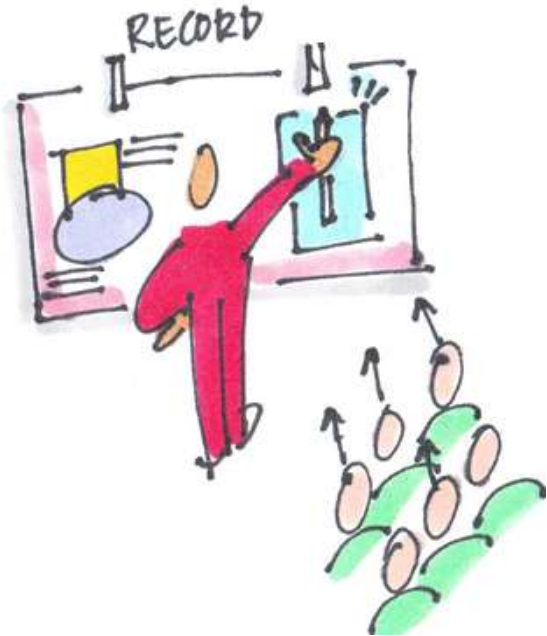
Sonia Patton

Service User & Patient Advocate

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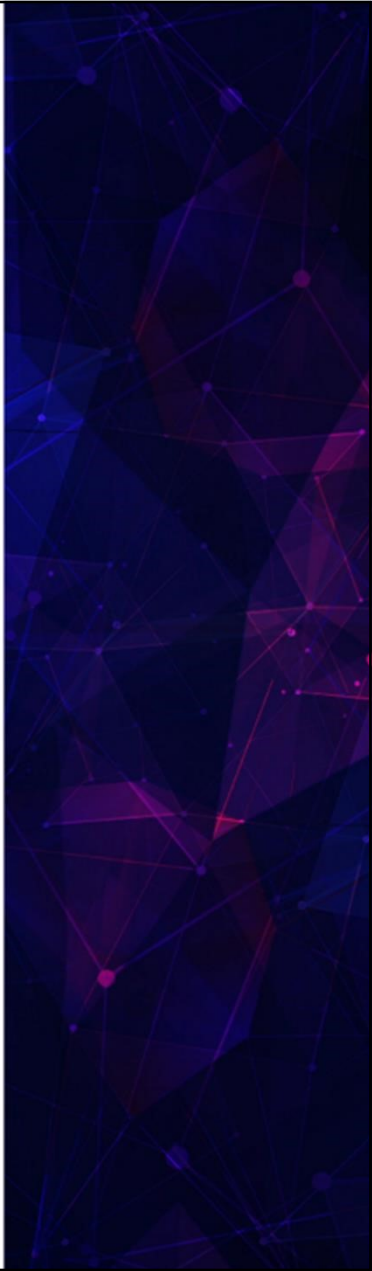


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Introduction





Lunchtime Seminar

Service user involvement: A study of the experiences of social workers and services users in adult social services

Patricia Burns

Staff Tutor / Social Work Lecturer
Open University



Method

- Small scale study carried out in 2019
- In HSC Trust/Adult Social Care Services
- Qualitative methods
- 13 study participants
- **6 service users** in receipt of services from adult social services
- **7 social workers** working in older people, learning and physical disability, mental health, hospital social work services
- All study participants involved in service user advocacy groups or provision of in-house training for social work/social care workforce
- The study was **coproduced** with a Research Advisory Group - people with experience of services and of being involved in a range of activities with the organization

Context

- Partnership, collaborative working with service users/carers has been a long-standing expectation across social work legislation and policy
- Service user involvement in Social Work Education is mainstream
- There is a legal requirement to involve service users in planning, deliver, evaluation of services (DHSSPS, 2009)
- More recently, interest in the area is highlighted by the re-emergence of term coproduction in policy (Bengoa, Systems, Not Structures, DOH, 2016)
- Coproduction preferred approach to practice, service development and strategic delivery in phase two of the Social Work Strategy 2017-2022
- Radical change recommended by putting 'citizens at the heart' of decision making, design and delivery of services (Power to People, DOH, 2017).

Findings

Factors that
Enabled
Involvement

Challenges/Barriers
to Involvement


Factors that Enabled Involvement

Service Users


- **Feeling Valued** (feeling listened to, contributing to decision-making and seeing real change happening because of their involvement)
- **Relationships** (approach from staff crucial, friendly, informal, open, caring)
- **Support** (practical, emotional, hospitality, neutral and convenient locations, comfortable and safe spaces, timings of meetings, breaks from caring responsibilities)

Social Workers

- **Relationships** (achieved a better understanding of service users)
- **Support for Service Users** (induction, training, capacity building, practical, emotional)
- **Organisational Support** (time, resources)



"It was clear we were valued genuinely throughout and most importantly by those managing the process. This is hard to fake and all of us can tell the difference. The relationships we have built are testament to that" (service user).



"You, just felt good about what you were doing, it just reminded you of why you were a social worker in the first place, you just felt so good, everybody was like this" (social worker).

Relationships



Key factor motivating service users to get involved and remain involved

Personal qualities and skills of social workers, crucial from start - friendly, informal, approachable, open, caring

Service Users - direct benefits to social well-being; increased sense of purpose and belonging, personal satisfaction, increased opportunities for socialising, keeping active, connection with the community

Social workers – congruent with professional value base, improved morale, job satisfaction, enhanced understanding/insight into lived experience

Some challenges for social workers around more relaxed boundaries



“When she knocked my door, I couldn’t even have told you my name, I didn’t know what end of me was up, I was at my wits end.

She just listened and helped me decide things, just like what to do next, but she just cared. I don’t know how but I ended up getting through it, we just had a good relationship from the very start. I’ve gone from that to being involved in everything going, I even speak at conferences”. (Service User)

Challenges Barriers to Involvement

Service Users

- **Accessibility** (complex info, physical accessibility, transport, location of meetings)
- **Ad-Hoc Support** (inconsistent approaches to induction, training)
- **Stigma** (privacy around receiving support)

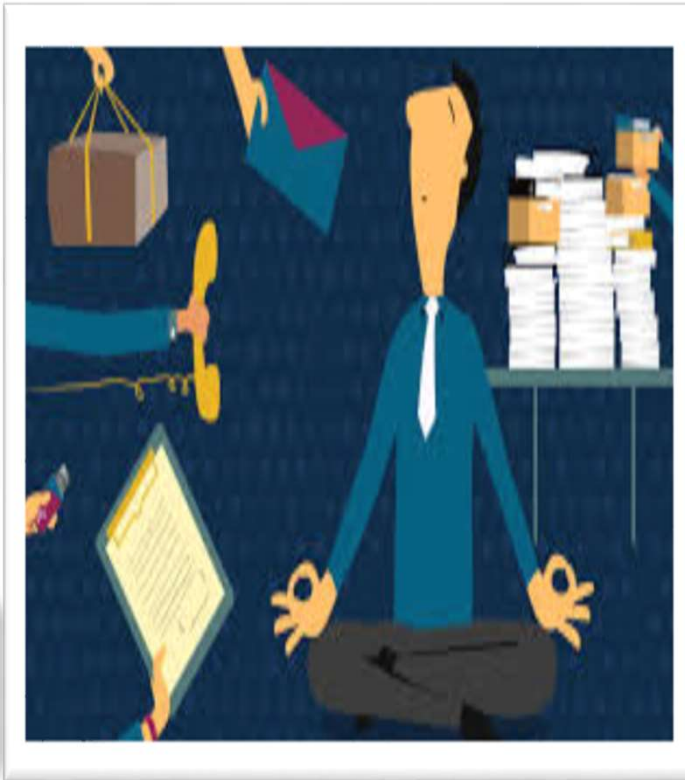
Social Workers

- **Support Structures for Service Users** (Inconsistency in training and support provided, structure/boundaries, sometimes lack of clarity about expectations/outcomes, payment)
- **Managing Professional Boundaries** (more relaxed boundaries presented challenges for some)
- **Work place culture** (paper work, processes, volume of work)

“Sometimes service users are just expected to know how we do things, and that is just not right, how can they know how things are done, we go through years of training and on the job training and it is still sometimes a struggle for us to know how things are done”
(social worker)

“It would take a long time to get to grips with how things are done in the Trust. Things are so complex and there is a lot of bureaucracy” (service user)

“I really do think if we are asking service users to give their time then they should be properly paid like everyone else” (social worker).



“It’s about being pro-active in advocating for service users and for us social workers, we must fight this bureaucracy and paperwork – there has to be ways of robust assessment, care planning, recording that can still give you the time to be with the service user. The most important skills of a social worker are in interacting with people” (social worker)

Conclusion

- The study builds on existing research in social work education
- It is useful as it examines the complexities of service user involvement outside the university setting and in preparing students for professional practice
- It makes an important contribution to the continuance of service user involvement and coproduction as a mainstream approach in social work
- Opportunities are available for service users to get involved in more ways and at more levels than ever before – more training and structure needed to support this
- There are increasing expectations that social workers involve service users to an extent that goes well beyond what the profession traditionally considered as partnership approaches

Recommendations

- It is evident that the workforce is under significant pressure and that more resourcing and funding is needed to sustain social work support services.
- Organisational support is needed
- Meaningful involvement of service users cannot be achieved unless there is acknowledgement of the workforce pressures
- We need to adopt a critical stance towards service user involvement/coproduction– it is not unproblematic, particularly in social work practice settings
- This will help ensure service user involvement remains honest and does not degenerate into a tick-box exercise
- Challenges and barriers are well established, it is time to take more decisive action to overcome them

Acknowledgements

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For their time and energy, they all brought a diverse range of skills and expertise to each phase of the study.

And of course special thanks to all those who gave their time to participate in the study.



Permission was given for sharing of photographs (Sept 2019)

Thank You for Listening



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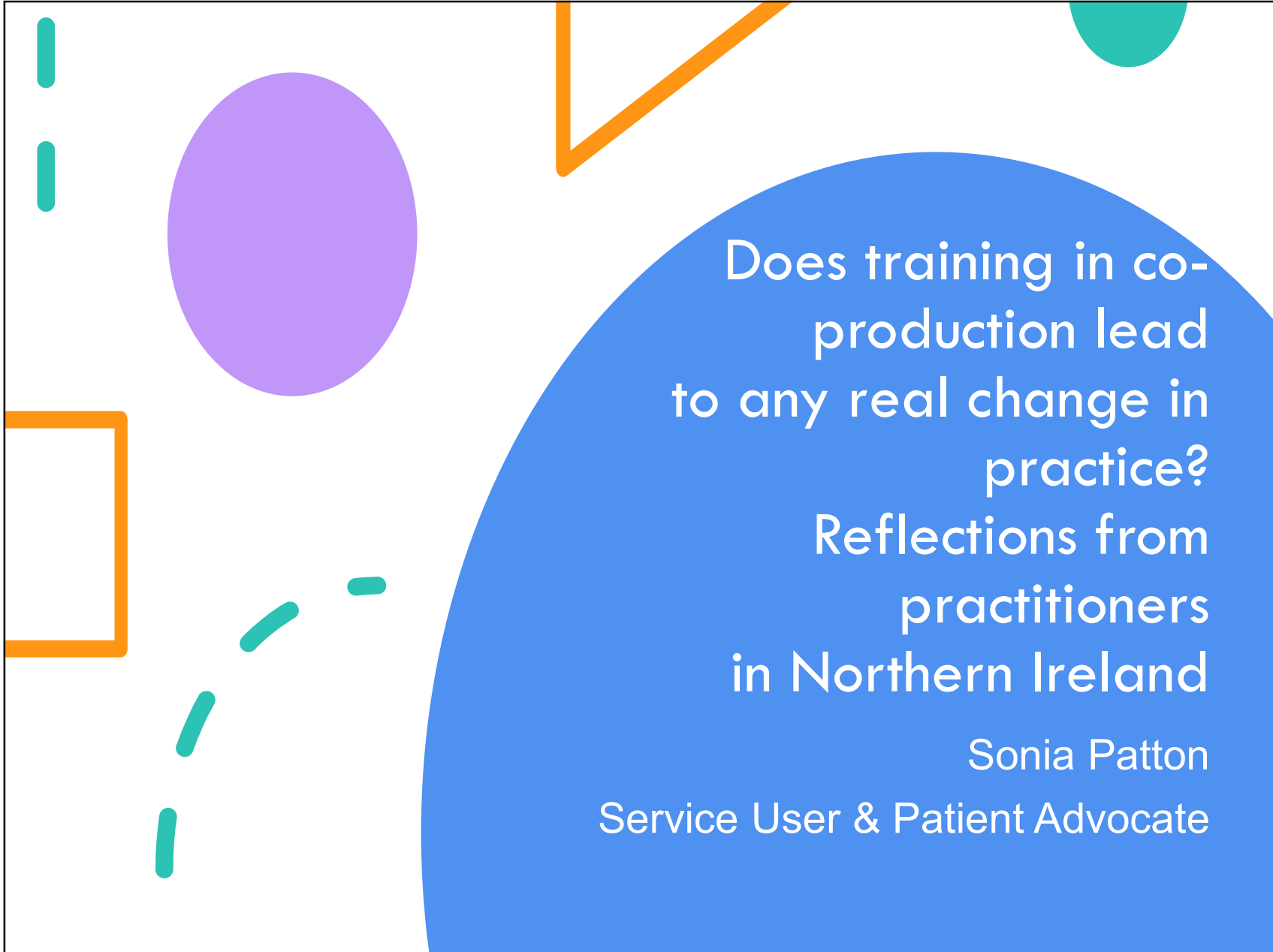


Lunchtime Seminar

**Does training in co-production lead to any
real change in practice?**

Sonia Patton

Service User & Patient Advocate



Does training in co-production lead to any real change in practice?
Reflections from practitioners in Northern Ireland

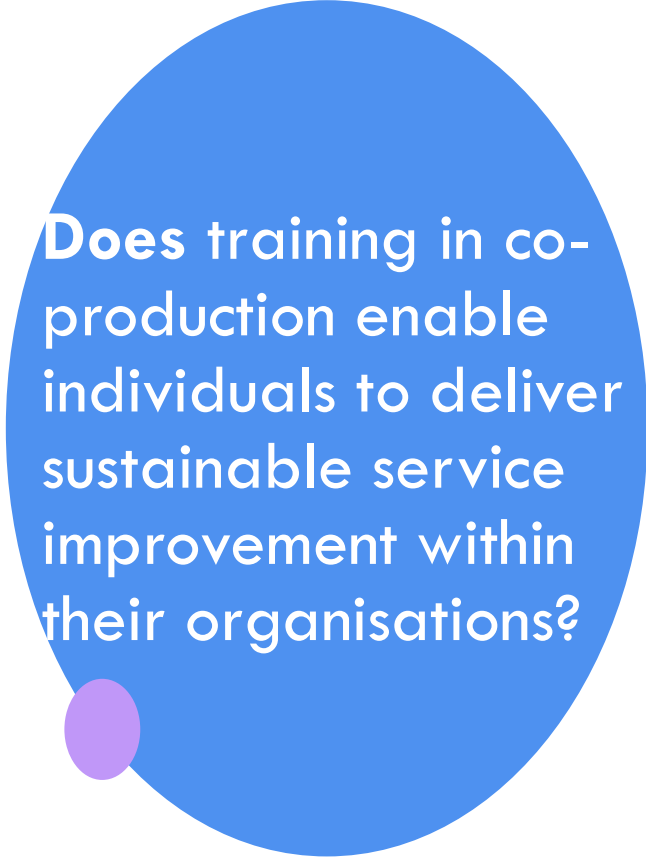
Sonia Patton
Service User & Patient Advocate

Introduction

- Strategic priority 7 “...any research, evaluation or audit activity promotes the principles & practice of and equality and human rights, (HSCB, 2015)
- Implementation - UU and HSCB in unique creation of service user carer modules leading to

MSc in Development and Co-Production of Social Care Research.

- Social work values - the parity of participation.
- Acknowledging validity of service user and carer’s experiential knowledge.
- Profession’s knowledge and skill base realized through involving service users trained in rigorous research methods.
- December 2019, first service user in N.I to graduate on MSc programme.



Does training in co-production enable individuals to deliver sustainable service improvement within their organisations?

Design & Methodology



- ✓ Small scale qualitative study
- ✓ Purposive sampling approach
- ✓ **'Involving People'** 2017 training cohort
- ✓ 18 participants, only **5** signed up
- ✓ Semi-structured, f to f interviews
- ✓ Free text analysis
- ✓ Several themes & sub themes identified.

Key Findings

Knowledge transfer and the value of co-production training

Social inclusion and the voice of the service user

Organisational structure – Leadership & Culture

I thought that we were doing co-production but we were **only doing PPI**

Mgt were the enablers; they were open to what I was doing...so that was good

listen, respect, and empower your service users

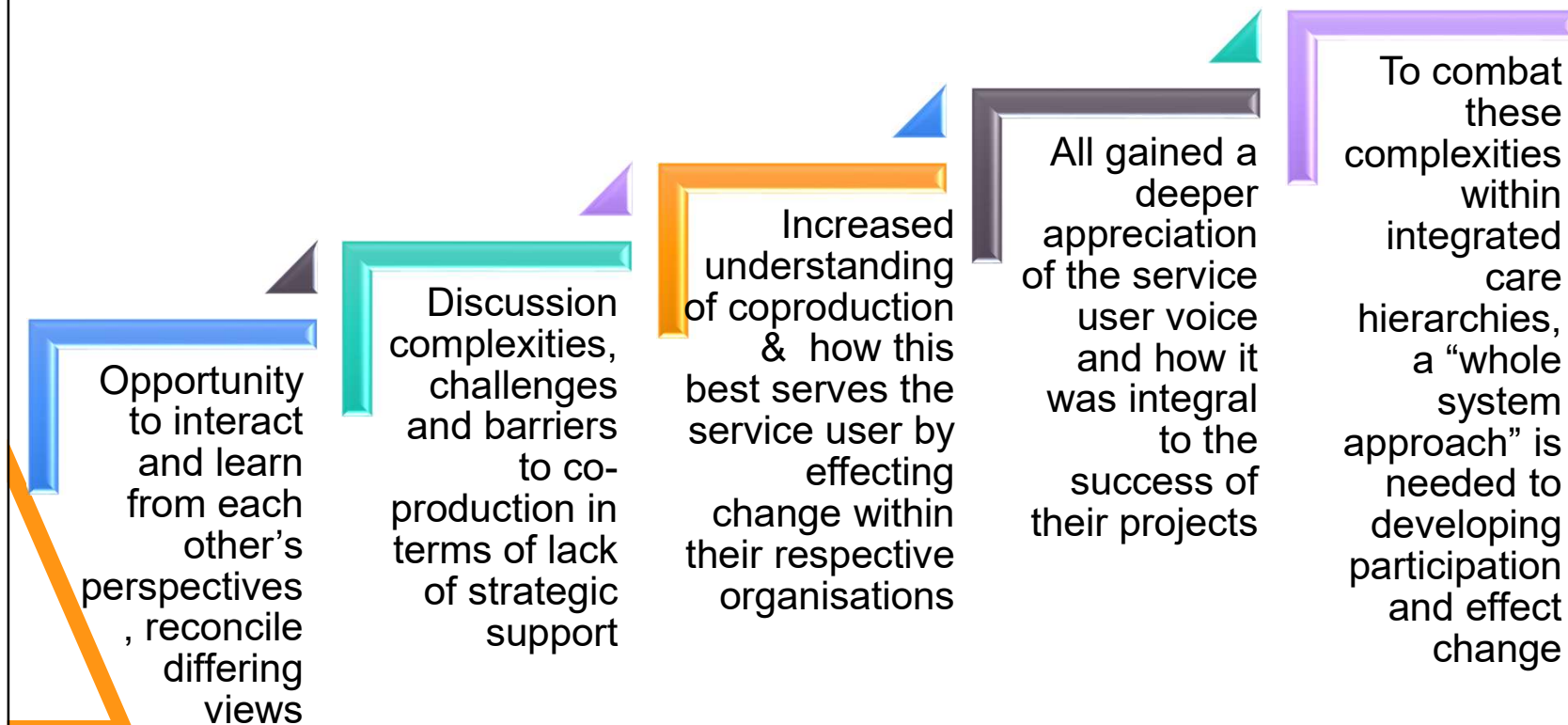
When mgt put forward that we are co-producing, I now feel enabled to speak up and say we are not,, ...and in fact **we are only scratching the surface**

given me **greater confidence** to be analytical & that we are doing co-production

My job is to **knit & sew** people into their community to the point that we are almost irrelevant.

Culture is all about putting the client first and putting them at the heart of the services.

Discussion & Implications




"seek first to understand, then to be understood."
(Covey, 1989)

Conclusion

- This study allowed conclusions to be drawn on the value of co-production training, enhancing participants' confidence.
- It acted as an enabler to further deliver service improvements through meaningful service user engagement.
- It highlighted co-production strengths from the CVS and how these could be transferable to statutory, through addressing barriers and opportunities thereby ensuring equal and reciprocal relationships with service users & carers.
- Whilst this study was set against the background of NI, its findings further support & evidence the principles of national advisory groups on co-production: the Social Care Institute of Excellence, INVOLVE and the Kings Fund.

“The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing”

Walt Disney



Whole System Approach for Health & Social Care

- PHA's of England, Scotland
Wales already adopted
- Making Life Better – A Whole System Strategic Framework for Public Health 2013–2023
- Delivering Together (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2014; Department of Health (NI), 2016)
- Cross-sectoral and multi-agency approach as quoted:

Strengthen collaboration and coordination to deliver on shared strategic priorities across all sectors at a regional level, and on supporting implementation at a local level (NI PHA, 2015).

Whole System Approach – What does it look like?

- A review of the original strategy (2015-2020) undertaken in (2019) gave the impetus for the establishment of a network of interested stakeholders.
- The project, titled “Building a Research Community”, was established to develop a sustainable research community to work collaboratively on research opportunities within the integrated HSC system.
- The research community is drawn from a range of backgrounds and includes service users and carers (with knowledge and competence in research evidence), statutory, community and not for profit sectors, social workers and academia.
- This is a significant step forwarded towards a whole system approach, with leadership at the helm.
- **Co-working – Collaboration – Participation** will be at the heart of building the evidence base relevant to social work and social care in Northern Ireland.

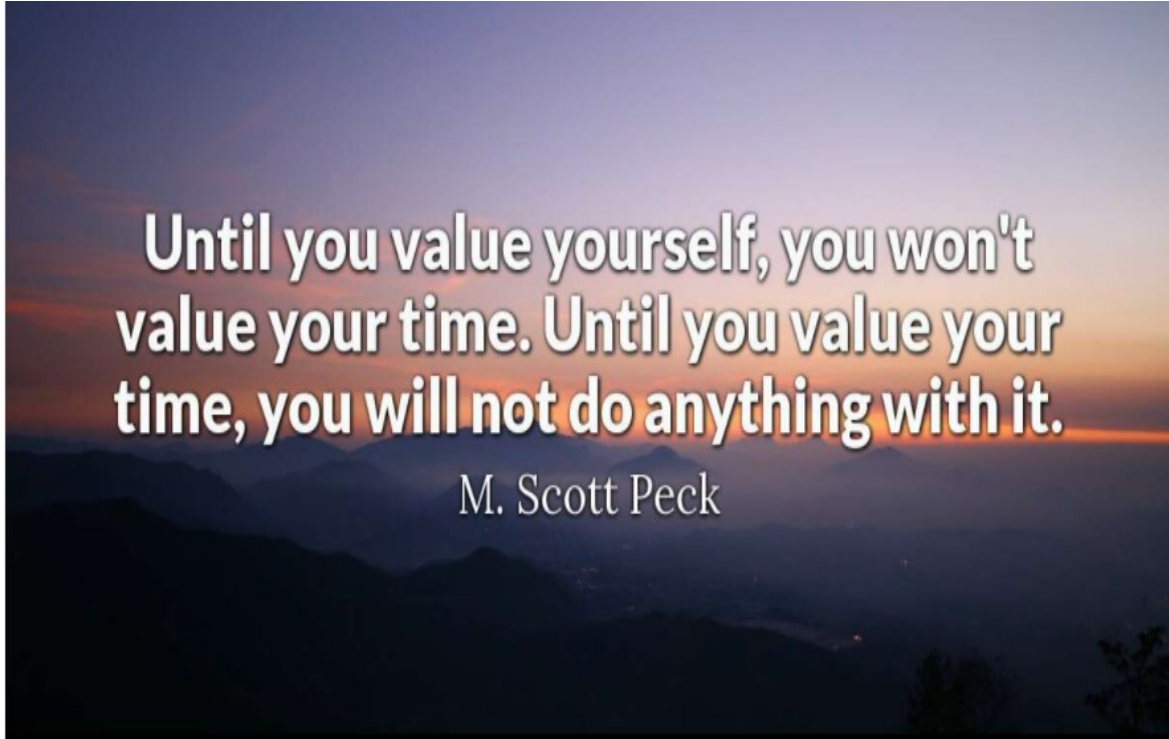
Social Work and Social Care Research Evidence Supporting Continuous Improvement in Service Outcomes STRATEGY 2020-2025

- Launched March 10th 2021 at the Social Work & Social Care Research Conference.
- Key document that embodies Social Work and Social Care values
- **Co-working – Collaboration – Participation**
- It clearly defines the fostering of leadership and reciprocal relations and networks between policy, practice, academia, service users and carers and inclusive of managers and practitioners and researchers.
- Finally, it enhances professional and service user and carer learning and development opportunities to build competence and capacity in light of the changing contexts of practice.
- Live Link below:

[SWSCResearch-Strategy-2020-25.pdf \(hscni.net\)](https://hscni.net/SWSCResearch-Strategy-2020-25.pdf)



Reflection



**Until you value yourself, you won't
value your time. Until you value your
time, you will not do anything with it.**

M. Scott Peck



Thank you
for
listening

Patton, S., McGlade, A. and Elliott, J. (2020), "Does training in co-production lead to any real change in practice? Reflections from practitioners in Northern Ireland", *Journal of Integrated Care*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print.
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