Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Submission to the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery

Co-producing public services
with the third sector

Introduction

1. Wales Council for Voluntary Action represents, campaigns for, supports and develops voluntary organisations, community action and volunteering in Wales. It represents the third sector at UK and national level; and together with a range of national specialist agencies, County Voluntary Councils, Volunteer Centres and other development agencies, it provides a support structure for the third sector in Wales. It has 3,000 members, and is in touch with many more organisations through a wide range of national and local networks.

2. WCVA's mission is to provide excellent support, leadership and an influential voice for the third sector and volunteering in Wales.

3. This submission is in two parts.

4. In Part One we make some brief comments on the general questions posed by the Commission.

5. In Part Two we focus on the way that public services are designed and delivered, and we describe a new approach which combines professionals, individuals and communities in both service design and delivery: we call this "co-production".

6. We have a number of recommendations that will, if adopted, enable the approach set out in this submission to be achieved.

7. Our four primary recommendations are that:

- Welsh Government should restate and strengthen its commitment to real citizen engagement in the design and scrutiny of public services

- Co-production should be placed at the heart of future public service thinking, design and delivery

- There should be a duty on public bodies to develop an early intervention and support strategy in partnership with the third sector, to identify the help that is available and can be developed, and to ensure that it is adequately resourced
- There should be a duty placed on public bodies to seek to risk-assess and co-produce alternative ways of maintaining and developing local services and amenities that are no longer wholly affordable, before any decision on closure is taken

8. To support the approach, we make the following further recommendations:

- Welsh Government's endorsement of the principle of citizen-led services should underpinned by a long-term commitment to Participation Cymru

- A duty to ensure citizen and third sector involvement in scrutiny processes is required

- There should be a strong rationale for, and a consistent and coherent approach to, any future regional structures that operate between national and local government levels

- Community hubs should be developed and supported as bases of community co-production

- Street Ambassadors, community currencies and Timebanking and similar very local initiatives should be developed and supported

- Local support to groups including funding, governance, fundraising and volunteering should be maintained to underpin community resilience and social capital

- Local amenities should be recognised and safeguarded as an essential part of future public services

- Public bodies considering reducing or ending funding or other support to a third sector organisation should undertake a risk assessment to evaluate the real costs and impact of the decision, including an assessment of the value of other resources they may be lost if funding is reduced or withdrawn (including additional funding from other sources, volunteer time, use of assets)

- Citizen directed support should be expanded, and introduced where necessary

- New forms of community services to enhance and meet the needs of people should be developed, including piloting new service models through co-operatives, mutuals, community interest companies and charities

- Public bodies should make use of flexible and new forms of finance which can then be recycled into other initiatives and explore statutory/third sector special purpose vehicles or public / social partnerships.

Part One

Public service or public sector?

9.   A persistent and long-standing confusion between "public sector" and "public services" lies at the heart of the problem of transforming public service. In policy terms Welsh Government now generally refers to "public services", recognising that public services are delivered by all sectors. But in practice, too often public service is equated with the public sector; for example, the Public Service Workforce Partnership Council is only concerned with the public sector workforce and has no representation from other sectors. It is essentially public sector providers and the related trade unions.

10.   However, many people will have as much contact – and some may have more contact – with third sector services as they have with statutory services in their day-to-day lives. For some people the third sector is the principal or only provider on which they rely.

11.   We strongly advocate that the focus must start with people and communities, and the services they need and on which they rely. If we start at that place, then it follows that we need to construct an approach that ensures, as far as possible, that the right services are in place and are sustainable, regardless of who provides them. The public sector is a massive and essential part of that approach, but it is not the only part; and the public sector needs to be part of the mosaic of wider service provision, and not plan, operate and deploy its resources in isolation.

Performance

12.   The pace of change remains too slow. Services designed at the beginning of the welfare state have not necessarily evolved to match citizens' expectations and priorities, and still are organised around the provider's rather than the citizen's needs. Experience of service users and their relationship with providers has not fundamentally changed, although support and services have become more difficult to access and eligibility tightened.

13.   Current approaches have tended to maintain the status quo in ways which look for efficiencies through collaboration and more effective procurement and protection of existing budget lines.

14.   This mix of the tried and tested has partially succeeded in absorbing and neutralising the impact of budget reductions to date, and may continue to be able to do so in the short term. For the longer term, however, it lacks a sustainable vision or philosophy to guide the use of legislation, policy and resources in a coherent way.

15.   In monitoring performance, we suggest that monitoring criteria should take more account of user and community views and priorities, and the qualities that matter to people (such as compassion, courtesy, intelligible information and communication, listening, safety).

Scale and capability

16. We doubt that there is "one size fits all" approach that is workable. Each service ideally needs to work to an area that maximises its performance and ensures effective access and delivery for those who use its services.

17. In general we consider that services should be organised nationally where delivery and access can be assured.

18. Where access is required at a local level – and "local" may mean local authority boundary, or at a more local level (town, community, estate) – then the planning and delivery must be organised in a responsive way that engages with uses, whether or not delivered by a national or regional organisation.

19. It is not yet clear that a third regional tier, between national and local, will achieve real economies of scale or better services for the public. If the purpose is to achieve economies of scale in back-office and support services, a national approach will achieve the greatest economies. If the service requires local access points, most regional structures will be as remote from the user as a national structure.

20. We do highlight the inconsistencies that are currently apparent around regional working, where there are now different boundaries for different Welsh and UK Government policy areas. There is a danger that at a time of declining public funding there is increased investment in differing third tiers of activity. We do look to the Commission to propose a strong rationale for, and a consistent and coherent approach to, any future regional structures that operate between national and local government levels.

Collaboration

21. We do not think that collaboration either between the public and third sector, or within the third sector, is progressing at pace.

22. In terms of procurement and collaborative bidding, we are in danger of being outbid by external and large organisations because such collaboration within Wales is not taking place fast enough. Government in England is funding organisations to build their capacity for joint and collaborative bidding, and their enhanced capacity gives them competitive edge in bidding for contracts in Wales. We need greater incentives to collaborate within the sector in Wales.

23. There is bridging finance available to invest on collaborative ventures aimed at developing new services that will prevent and reduce demand on more expensive interventions. The slow take-up of this finance by both the public and third sector demonstrates a reluctance to change.

Complexity

24. Current arrangements and structures have drifted into complexity which makes it difficult for external organisations and users alike.

25. Coterminousity is important, but there are too many conflicting boundaries. Partnerships, regional consortia and local service boards can be mysteries to external organisations and users; their accountability and governance can be unclear; and (apart from local service boards) may exclude the third sector unless explicit guidance is given.

26.   For example, all local service boards are required by Welsh government to include a third sector member, and all do so. No such guidance has been issued in relation to other evolving structures, such as regional structures, and consequently third sector involvement has been minimal or non-existent.

27.   Our experience over many years is that where guidance about involving the sector is not forthcoming (often in the name of local determinism) the result is always patchy. And where the sector is not initially invited, excessive and unnecessary time is spent negotiating involvement – wasting time on process rather than focusing on outcomes.

28.   Many partnership arrangements are designed around public sector organisational needs, and not those of partner third sector organisations, or user interests. As already stated, they are often obscure to external interests. It is important that partnerships are clear about decision-making, and can indeed make decisions rather than these being referred to or overruled by "higher" authorities.

Governance and scrutiny

29.   Accountability both supports and is supported by greater transparency and involvement, and together these are important for supporting a healthy democracy. The policy reforms and financial reductions facing the public sector pose great challenges to institutions and also to good governance, not least because a number of forms of external challenge and reassurance about the corporate health of public organisations are also going at the same time. These changes may see services delivered in different ways, such as commissioning, outsourcing, asset transfer to community groups, joint ventures, through pooled budgets and under shared management, all require different forms of governance and additional thinking about how accountability will work under these new arrangements.

30.   Independent scrutiny can improve both the quality of a decision and the outcomes sought by the decision-maker. Scrutiny is a key element of accountability. The Centre for Public Scrutiny research "Accountability Works" 2010 calls for more joined-up systems of accountability at local level, to reduce duplication and costs and to improve transparency for the public. If there are to be fewer central inspectors and regulators, we will still need a way to provide public assurance over service quality and the spending of public money, and this needs to be done efficiently and effectively.

31.   We support the view that an engaged, proactive approach to scrutiny is indicative of healthy and publicly accountable local government and other public bodies, and we welcome initiatives to improve scrutiny functions, the awareness of scrutiny and expand the opportunities for involvement in it.

32.   Third sector organisations have vital roles to play in scrutiny: groups can assist scrutiny committees through providing advice, expertise, frontline evidence and most importantly by providing a conduit to (often disenfranchised) citizens' voices. We support the co-option of third sector organisations to scrutiny committees. Local authorities will need to develop their work with County Voluntary Councils to develop third sector engagement models that are appropriate for their area; more networked, collaborative models that ensure the systematic and sustainable engagement of the sector which in turn provides access to citizens' voices, as well as the expertise of the sector in diverse policy and service areas.

33. Co-production with citizens enables not only planning and solutions, but also importantly informs quality and improvement through the evaluation and scrutiny process. Active engagement with citizens is the mark of healthy democracy in action

Culture and leadership

34. If there is to be a common set of values, we need the answer to the question we posed in paragraph 10: are we talking about public services, or are we talking about the public sector? If we are talking about the wider public service, the question is more challenging but the conclusion is potentially much more rewarding for Wales. The third sector, of course, is not homogeneous, and each independent organisation will have its own values.

35. In its current consultation on its relationship with the third sector, *Continuity and change*, the Welsh Government states:

   We have previously identified the qualities of the Third Sector as:

   - *Flexible and responsive, able to meet needs quickly;*
   - *Non-judgemental, independent and widely trusted, giving it credibility as an effective advocate;*
   - *Caring in its approach and focused on people and their multiple needs, often drawing on direct experience of the issues;*
   - *Capable of achieving a 'virtuous circle' which delivers benefits to the providers of support as well as the beneficiaries*
   - *Able to penetrate more deeply than others into challenging areas making public services and resources more widely accessible;*
   - *Able to generate community-ownership, releasing talent and energy;*
   - *Excellent at networking and blending a wide range of funds and resources together to meet needs effectively;*
   - *A repository of special skills and expertise not available anywhere else;*
   - *Capable of delivering services that go 'above and beyond' the usual norms; and*
   - *Cost effective, especially in achieving multiple outcomes and helping people to grow and develop as individuals.*

36. We would concur with this list, but would also emphasise:

   - Helping to make sustainable development a practical reality for people and communities through integrated social, environmental and economic action
   - Effective public engagement and participation
   - Innovation
   - Devising rapid and flexible responses to new challenges
   - Adding value to public funding through additional resources, and community and person centred approaches
   - Providing choice and specialism

37. If our focus is the wider public service, these are qualities that the public sector might wish to consider.

38. So far these have only been a tentative start to developing a vision for remodelling service delivery. It seems very operational and focused on workforce rather than users needs – "protected" as an end in itself, rather than part of a mosaic which determines people's well-being in a wider sense.

39. Shared values need to be understood by and shared with people in Wales. Terms like "well-being" and "sustainable development" are not part of everyday language for many people. Most people have limited contact with the public sector; where they do, they may find generic call-centre style responses less than sensitive, unless staff are thoroughly trained to recognise and transfer calls in urgent need of a response.

40. Shared values also need to be underpinned by shared action. A programme for Wales needs to set out what government will do, but also enter into agreement with the third sector through the existing engagement mechanisms of the Third Sector Scheme (Third Sector Partnership Council, Ministerial meetings) on what it will do, and the basis for shared and common ground.

41. This means entering into dialogue at an early stage about how the government's programme and plans for public services can be turned into action.

42. Central Government also needs to be clear about its role, define it, and stay within it – and not unconsciously drift from legislation and policy into executive action and delivery, which is often best left to other agencies. Government should use its leadership role to induce change and co-production, and maintain the right balance between clear policy goals and local determination.

43. Finally, the public sector should be willing to share resources and power if it wants local engagement, responsibility and ownership; and recognise that effective engagement requires both corporate leadership and skilled practitioners.

Part Two

The third sector perspective

44.   The 33,000 organisations that make up the third sector in Wales play a significant but largely unquantified or costed role in the public services of Wales. Most have long-term missions about improvement in individual or community life. Many are interested in influencing the design and delivery of public services, as well as delivering some services themselves.

45.   Many people will have as much contact – and some may have more contact – with third sector services as they have with statutory services in their day-to-day lives. For some people the third sector is the principal or only provider on which they rely.

46.   Emphasis and resources have been directed towards achieving economies between different parts of the public sector – towards a smaller, smarter public sector – rather than seeking ways of increasing public services through innovation by and engagement with non-statutory partners and their resources.

47.   The third sector has been actively involved in the Welsh Government's successive mechanisms for reforming and improving public services in Wales, most recently through the Efficiency and Innovation Board, and its successor the Public Service Leadership Group. Throughout this period, public service policy has generally espoused positive views about the importance of the sector, but there has been little progress in viewing the sector as a major partner in public services.

48.   The Beecham review of public services in 2006 advocated the citizen-model of public services and much stronger scrutiny to counter a culture that was provider-led, and in which "service improvement through change and innovation is inhibited by a conservative organisational culture and the limited nature of public debate which often reflects an attachment to what is rather than a willingness to explore what might be".

49.   Seven years on, by not having fully enabled the third sector contribution, we see only limited evidence of real transformation; and perversely, the public expenditure environment, coupled with rising demands, seem to be at risk of pushing back innovation rather than triggering it.

Why Change is necessary

50.   The pressures now for transformation are irresistible. Public spending is declining or at best flat lining, not just in response to the recession but also as the global economy recalibrates in favour of newer economies. At the same time demand is rising sharply: individual circumstance and expectations are changing due to benefit changes, demographics, family structures and an increasingly diverse society.

51.   Conventional service delivery is still based on need and treatment models. Individuals are "service recipients or users"; some communities are "problem" communities. People and communities are defined by their deficiencies. A recent report by local authority leaders in Wales concluded:

>   '... though organisations have worked hard to deliver substantial improvements, the potential to deliver sustained change in some of the most challenging areas is limited within the current system. It has been suggested

that the whole system is locked within a culture of reliance that is essentially passive and demands little in the way of responsibility or reciprocity'

(Solace, *Beyond Direct Delivery: New approaches to local services in Wales,* 2011)
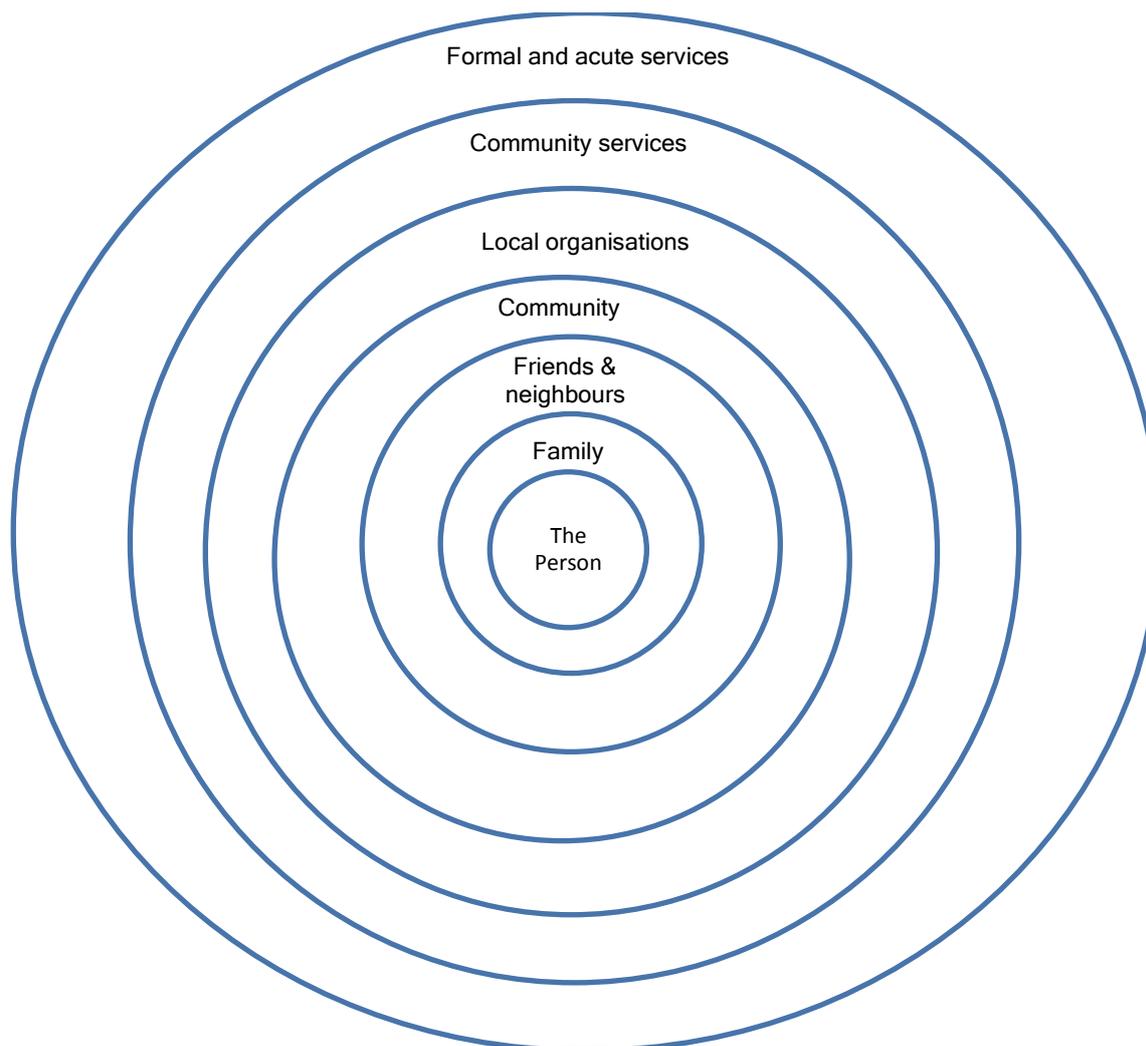
52. Against this background public services have stark choices.

53. One choice is to retreat – set higher thresholds for eligibility for access to services, withdraw from anything that is not a statutory requirement, and close community amenities and services.

54. An alternative choice is to redefine the way that public services engage with people, communities and other sectors, especially the third sector to rethink how public resources can unlock other resources and forms of help.

55. We are on what is commonly referred to as the 'burning platform': we do not have the resources to maintain the status quo, let alone for improvements – we need to be radical and 'make the jump'.

56. There now seems to be little dispute that the vital drivers for change include:

    - Increasing focus on prevention and early intervention: early action is cheaper than late action, but currently we spend most of our public money on the late action
    - Increasing community resilience and social capital: people – especially those who are isolated and vulnerable – need to maintain their independence within their community, but their well-being and happiness can depend on their participation in their community and the use of its amenities
    - Maximising all available resources: the quality and breadth of our public services, the future for our environment and the quality of life for our people and communities will not be sustained by the public pound alone.

57. Most recently these concepts have been enshrined in planned Welsh legislation.

58. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill states that "social services cannot be sustainable unless we take action to drive forward the development of early intervention and preventative services at a greater pace. These are services that will prevent people's existing needs from becoming more severe. If we can do this, we will improve the quality of life for individuals, assist many people to live in their own homes for longer and ensure that finite social care and health services are used in the most effective way".

59. The recent Ministerial statement on the Future Generations Bill states: "Our communities form the heart of our nation and culture and the purpose of the Future Generations Bill is to future-proof them, ensuring they and the people who live in them are protected from pressures that threaten their viability and survival... Our aim is to develop strong, cohesive communities, which flourish, and in which families can have a decent standard of living now and foresee the same for their children and grandchildren. This includes the environment that we pass on to future generations".

60.	Both bills recognise that the public sector alone will not achieve these aspirations. How it is intended to mobilise the contribution of others, however, is less apparent, but the following sections set out what a new approach might look like.

Co-production – a new culture

61.	As the role of the state changes, the third sector can re-energise our approach to public services, with its unique contributions coming sharply into redefined focus for our communities and the people of Wales.

62.	We believe that a new approach is needed which combines professionals, individuals and communities in both service design and delivery: we call this "co-production". No person or service exists in a vacuum, and the involvement of the wider community is likely to bring about greater innovation in service design and delivery. The key point is that co-production is not about consultation after the service has been designed. The process should begin with a blank sheet of paper and a debate about the needs to be addressed, desired outcomes and potential ways of achieving these.

63.	This new approach requires:

- Treating people and communities as assets
- Facilitating reciprocity
- Building services around people/the citizen/the community
- Recognising the central significance of family, neighbourhood community and civil society as the determinant of wellbeing, with the critical role of the state being to facilitate, engage and reinforce these resources, networks and organisations.

64.	This approach reinforces and *adds* to the role of the state. It also changes and has the potential to transform the relationship between state, community and individual to that of an equal and shared partner in a joint endeavour to achieve our wellbeing. It establishes a new relationship of equality between state provision and people doing things for themselves, with origins in the civil rights movement which is characterised by doing with not for.

65.	Co-production is asset-based. It brings into play a much wider range of resource including time, reciprocity and friendship and shared ownership (social capital) which transcends traditional service delivery. It happens at the neighbourhood level, also in communities of interest. It is therefore about the roles of the state, people/citizens, their families, friends and carers, their communities, volunteering (both informal and formal) and the third sector. It has strong links to a community development ethos, and a commitment to community development is an important foundation for effective co-design and co-production.

66.	Co-production recognises how we live our lives. It corresponds to our needs and aspirations to living in a safe, healthy, prosperous and attractive place and accords with our implicit understanding that quality of life depends on a mix of individual, family, community and state action. This is set out below in 'our network' diagram: each network will vary with every person and by issue or challenge. The distance between the person and formal statutory services may be great; and any statutory intervention needs to understand how it fits with all the other parts of the network.

Our Network

Formal and acute services

Community services

Local organisations

Community

Friends & neighbours

Family

The Person

67.   Co-production is central to this change. It gives people voice and control over their public services, empowering them to come up with service solutions and improving outcomes. The third sector is keen to work more collaboratively with statutory partners in delivering better services, whether at local neighbourhood level or on much larger scales. Co-production is about how people can draw on support from all sources, including their community and the third sector, to maintain their well being and quality of life.

68.   It can involve a very different relationship between service providers and service users and communities. Service users or people in their communities are seen less as recipients and more as agents of their own change, using services to inform and resource them. Individually they may exercise choice in their requests for services, and take the initiative in identifying their own outcomes. Collectively, they may organise to offer self-managed services.

69.   Co-production has been defined as 'the provision of public services through an institutionalised, long term relationship between state agencies and organised groups of citizens, where both make substantial resource contributions'. The contribution of citizens may be more about their own knowledge and expertise, their time, and their ability to involve the community or other users; but it can also be about their access to funding not available to public bodies. This definition implies that, where there is co-production, the boundaries between public and other sectors

may not be clear-cut, and consequently, the power and authority is divided (not necessarily equally) between the state and groups of citizens in an interdependent manner.

70.   The theory of co-production is already being put into practice through expert patient schemes, user managed mental-health centres, carer-led respite services, waste recycling and separation initiatives, peer-led substance misuse prevention programmes, young people-led activities, time-banks, extended school/community partnerships, and community managed amenities, for example.

71.   Asset-based development enables co-production – for instance transferring assets from the public sector to community ownership to provide income-generating assets to underpin community-led provision.   The power available to local authorities to dispose of assets at less than market value is not-well enough understood and insufficiently used, and a proactive approach to asset-based development could pay real dividends in terms of building community capacity to generate services and social enterprise.

72.   There are compelling reasons for public bodies and voluntary and community organisations to develop partnerships that marshal all available resources to meet the needs of a particular community or client group. A conventional approach to public service delivery is constrained by the public funds available to fund the service in question. A co-production approach can mean that the public sector budget is the starting point, not the limit.   To this can be added the resources that a community organisation can raise locally, or lever in from sources not available to public bodies, as well as the value of voluntary effort of both service users and other members of the community that are involved.

73.   For many public services, the win-win scenario of involving people as active participants whilst mobilising resources from all sources must be the most desirable option.

Underpinning drivers for change

74.   Public service improvement requires underpinning drivers for change.

75.   In the seven years since Beecham the Welsh Government has made a significant investment in Public Service Management Wales (PSMW), and its successor the Public Service Academi, as a vehicle to cultivate leadership and a change and improvement culture in the Welsh public service.

76.   In tandem, it has similarly invested in Value Wales as a vehicle to improve efficiency and standards in procurement.

77.   The third driver is real citizen and public engagement. If we are seeking innovation, challenge and co-production, this is arguably the most important driver.

Public and community engagement and scrutiny

78.   Engagement is key to coproduction and improvements in the provision of public services. Never has the time been riper for citizen / service user involvement in the service design and delivery, based on a person centred approach rather than a service provision approach. Public service organisations are seeking advice,

support and guidance on how they do this better and are actively involved in cultural change. Large public sector organisations sometimes find this difficult to support at all levels, and there is a need to do this more quickly so that the response can be more flexible.

79.   The Programme for Government, across subject areas and ministerial portfolios, emphasises the essential relationship needed between the public and government, nationally, regionally and locally. Policy statements and strategies underline, as a major theme, the importance of public, service user and carer engagement and involvement as essential for the better design and delivery of citizen centred services. Citizen engagement is key to single integrated planning as outline in 'Shared Purpose, Shared Delivery' (Guidance to Local Service Boards on single integrated plans).

80.   Legislation, in particular with regards the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill and the Future Generations (Wales) Bill emphasis the need for people to have greater voice and control. With all this in mind the role of the third sector is crucial in enabling large statutory organisations to access the raw voice of the people and for people (particularly those who are most marginalised) to be empowered in terms of how that voice and control is realised.

81.   Participation Cymru, working predominantly with national government and public service providers at national, regional and local level, plays a vitally important in ensuring the promise of policy is played out in practice. Managed by WCVA, it is the leading initiative for public and service user engagement in Wales. Its work is directed by an Advisory Panel made up of a broad representation of public service organisations and related public bodies in Wales across the Third and Public Sectors. Membership includes:

- Association of Chief Police Officers in Wales
- Natural Resources Wales
- HM Courts Service
- Public Health Wales
- Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales
- One Voice Wales
- Tenants Participation Advisory Service Cymru
- Wales Association of County Voluntary Councils
- Wales Audit Office
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action
- Welsh Government
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Welsh NHS Confederation

82.   This affords Participation Cymru a unique place within Wales to connect the work of engagement across public services and with citizens and communities, increasing effective collaboration and genuine partnership working. The staff team comprises trained professionals who work with public service providers and other public bodies to help them to be better engage and work with the public, service users, carers and other stakeholders.

83.   It does this by offering advice, support and training whilst enabling the sharing of good practice and innovation through our regional and national networks. To ensure that its training is grounded in good practice and current thinking it is also involved

in direct engagement with people, often those who are most marginalised. It offers a value for money, flexible, bilingual service and works across Wales.

84. Participation Cymru's work is underpinned by the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, committing it to a consistently good experience for those it engages with. These Principles, developed by the Participation Cymru partnership on behalf of Welsh Government, have been endorsed by the First Minister; and endorsement and application of the Principles is being sought by service providers and public bodies across Wales. To date nearly 80 organisations have signed up and this is increasingly on a daily basis.

85. At a national level, Welsh Government is in the business of putting policy into practice with regards service user and carer involvement.

> Participation Cymru has been commissioned to pilot a citizen's panel to work strategically with the Social Services Partnership Forum, chaired by the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services, to influence priorities of work in preparation for the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) bill

86. At a local level Local Service Boards partners are working together to offer a more collaborative approach to engagement and consultation.

> Participation Cymru, working collaboratively with ESF Local Service Board project in Welsh Government, WLGA and Public Health Wales are training LSB partner organisations together in public engagement so that they build stronger working relationships, share resources and skills and offer a more integrated and coordinated approach to engagement for the sake of citizens. To date 150 learners have been through this accredited programme

87. In sharp contrast to PSMW/Academi Wales and Value Wales, Participation Cymru has only received funding from the Welsh Government on a stop-start basis. Despite its central strategic role in supporting public service improvement, it does not have secure and long-term core support.

Accelerating co-production with the third sector

88. Wales has a strong and proud history of community action and mutualism, and we can build on this, reinvigorating it and moving to being a wellbeing society. We need to support and enable co-production at the neighbourhood and community level to grow social capital and wellbeing.

89. The third sector is uniquely placed to support and enable co-production with people and their communities:

- Enabling citizen voice and control in the design of services
- Developing local resilient community/neighbourhood solutions
- Co-producing services including volunteering and co-operatives/social enterprises.
- Drawing on its expertise in and ethos of community development;

90. In order to support and grow social relationships which will deliver against healthier communities, less dependency on state provision we need to focus support and development wider than the traditional state services.

Strengthening the person

91. If co-production starts with the person at the centre then the citizen is at the heart of a new approach.

92. Citizen Directed Support (CDS) is an approach by which people who require assistance can live as independently as possible. CDS begins with the person and not the service and is about being in control of that support, helping people to stay in the community and be part of their community.

> In Wrexham it was identified that support was provided for a lot of people with lower levels of need on a 1 to 1 basis. There was potential that if these people knew each other there might be opportunities for people to share support or to support each other. A social group was set up in a public house in Wrexham where once a month the group could meet (currently 50 people). Many of them now meet independently of the group and without support, and many of them share support to undertake activities.
>
> CDS Report, Effective Services for Vulnerable People Board, Welsh Government 2013

93. Early stage support that meets low level needs and encourages independence is likely to reduce cost by slowing down the rate and level of escalation. Efficiency gains may be generated because individuals will know how to get the best value for the resource available to them.

> **Parabl**
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> The Parabl Talking Therapy service provides short-term therapeutic interventions for individuals facing common mental health difficulties or challenging life events. Commissioned by the local Health Board, it is provided by a consortium of charities which complement other treatments that are available from Primary Mental Health Support. Services are available across a range of venues across North Wales, with options for weekend and evening appointments. The Partners are Advance Brighter Futures, Flintshire Mind, Aberconwy Mind, CAIS, Tan y Maen and Ynys Mon and Gwynedd Mind. Other service providers include Vale of Clwyd Mind, Relate and Medra.
>
> Following referral, a comprehensive telephone assessment will be offered to establish eligibility, assess the individual's needs and agree the most appropriate service from a range of options.
>
> **Self Help**
> The Parabl Assessor will signpost individuals to relevant self help resources, mental health promotion and education, which is predominantly internet based.
>
> **Guided Self Help**
> Access to the Serenity Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CCBT) programme is being provided, allowing individuals to work with an interactive self-help programme in their own time. After an introductory meeting with the care worker, regular follow up sessions by telephone/e-mail are provided.
>
> **Therapeutic Groups**
> The following group based therapy is provided over 7 - 8 weekly sessions:
> - Coping with Life.
> - Stress Management.
> - Mindfulness
>
> These are educational based courses, focused on recovery of the individual. Participants gain the skills needed to manage their mental health more effectively. Examples of courses include Assertiveness Skills, Managing Anxiety and Dealing with Depression. Mindfulness also includes techniques such as meditation, gentle yoga and mind-body exercises

> **Individual Therapy**
> This includes counselling for those individuals who want to explore on a one to one basis with a qualified counsellor, any common mental health difficulties they have or any challenging life events which are impacting on their mental well being. Each client is offered a Counselling Assessment followed by up to 6 sessions of counselling. Sessions are offered on a weekly basis with each session lasting 50 minutes
>
> http://www.parabl.org.uk/

94. Life changing events such as bereavement of serious illness have a major impact on an individual's well being and quality of life. These can lead to a loss of confidence in getting out and about independently, losing contact with friends, isolation and loneliness, and often a rapid decline which, if not halted, can result in more intensive health or social care. There are similar challenges for young mothers, and others whose circumstances change significantly. Local organisations and networks can help at an early stage if public bodies and the sector are working together, and if public bodies are investing to ensure that support is readily available.

95. We believe that there should be a duty on local authorities to develop an early intervention and support strategy in partnership with the third sector, to identify the help that is available and to ensure that it is adequately resourced. Such a strategy could ensure that help is available and joined up, as in the example below supported by Essex County Council.

> Our **Active Lives** service is all about keeping people active, independent and in touch with the outside world by supporting those who may have lost all confidence in getting out and about independently. We work with each client to help them identify their personal goals. Every client is then allocated a trained volunteer who helps the client to achieve their personal goals following an agreed plan over a maximum period of 12 weeks. Volunteers help to restore confidence and maximise long-term independence and will provide company for key activities such as attending a lunch club, short shopping trips, walking or using local public or community transport
>
> Our **Digital Befriending** service offers people over 60 the opportunity to make contact with people through Skype HD TV. This easy to use service is designed for people who feel lonely and/or socially isolated and would like the opportunity to meet new people or catch up with friends and family. Skype HD TV is a system which links up to your TV and allows you to see, hear and chat to your friends and family from the comfort of your sofa. This is your opportunity to connect with your loved ones anywhere in the world, see your grandchildren grow up, catch up with old friends and even engage with local clubs and groups.
>
> **Home Befriending:** Growing older can be lonely, isolation may creep up on people as they and their friends become less mobile, or it may be sudden as the result of illness or bereavement. Regardless of age, we all need contact with other people. We are committed to preventing older people in Essex becoming isolated and to help them remain happy and independent by providing friendship and company. We do this through our Home Befriending Service, where trained and vetted volunteer "befrienders" extend a hand of friendship to older people by a weekly visit, or a phone call. As well as providing company it is also the perfect way to keep a friendly eye out, and to direct the people we visit to other parts of Age UK Essex and other services if they have problems. We offer
>
> - Home Befriending - clients receive a weekly one-hour visit at home from one of our befrienders.
> - Telephone Befriending - clients waiting to be matched to a befriender receive a weekly call for a friendly chat, so that we can maintain contact and monitor general well-being.
>
> Age UK Essex

96.　Co-producing, far from being more costly, can be cost saving in being more tailored and thereby cutting out waste:

> Community Lives Consortium (CLC) in Swansea is a non-profit making organisation which provides support for adults with learning disabilities who want to live successful lives in the community by working in partnership with Social Services and health agencies in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. CLC is a membership organisation with 146 members including service users, relatives, staff, staff from related professional organisations and members of the public. In 2010 CLC adopted a new system for helping people plan their lives. A personalised Service Delivery Plan was developed over an extended period of time with each service user resulting in plans that were truly individual, outcome focussed with the service user contributing the majority of the content. These changes resulted in plans which more closely reflected the aspirations and situations of the people involved.
>
> Service managers spend more time with the people they support and less time repeating the work of support workers and checking process compliance. The more effective use of service manager's time has led to cost savings in support costs, estimated at £188,774 (1.3% of total expenditure) and this saving will be on-going.

97.　Starting with the individual also ensures that services are planned and targeted to meet his or her priorities and needs, rather than these being second-guessed, or determined in line with the providers interests.

> Some families find that traditional respite care for children with complex needs does not work.
>
> > "In a new environment, out of his routine he struggled to sleep, eat or drink enough. He came home on the verge of hospitalisation. It was not respite for us."
>
> However, through a 'citizen directed service' (personal) budget, they were able to buy very specialist overnight stays, short breaks with foster families and care provided in families' houses as well as social and leisure centres. Where services did not exist, Scope has helped parents of disabled children pool resources and jointly purchase tailor made short breaks and leisure activities and share transport etc. and support one another. In this way a better service has emerged with more flexible and sustainable options.
>
> The Guardian 14/8/2013

> **Co-commissioning - Asking partially-sighted people what outcomes they most want (University of Birmingham for Pocklington Trust)**
>
> What public sector staff think partially-sighted people need most:
> 1) More information about public services available to them (64%)
> 2) More information about support in case elderly people need help (54%)
> 3) Want to know more people and develop friendships (36%)
> 4) Want to talk with somebody about personal issues *(18%)*
>
> What partially-sighted people really want:
> 1) Want to know more people and develop friendships *(91%)*
> 2) Want to talk with somebody about personal issues *(62%)*
> 3) More information about public services available to them (53%)
> 4) More information about support in case elderly people need help (47%)
>
> *Source: Martin Willis and Eileen Dunstan, University of Birmingham, 2009*

Family

98. The family is vital for many people, although many either have no close relatives, or they are not close at hand. Families often give emotional as well as physical support. However family care (carers) should not be taken as the default or a substitute or free service. Family care and support can be enhanced and strengthened by some complementary public sector/state support.

99. There are also models that enable individuals to benefit from support from "foster" families.

Carmarthenshire - Shared Lives schemes in Wales

Shared Lives, also known as Adult Placement, is a form of regulated social care. The person being supported has the opportunity to share the carer's family life and be part of their social networks.

In Wales, there are 12 registered schemes providing over 1,400 arrangements. The schemes are run by local authorities and third sector organisations, providing long term accommodation and support, short breaks (respite), day time support and rehabilitative or intermediate support.

The Shared Lives model of care helps people to live at the heart of their communities, as part of an ordinary household. The West Wales Adult Placement Scheme helps people from all service user groups with the variety services mentioned above, however other schemes have different target groups, so the option is not available to all potential service users in all areas. Shared Lives schemes are a potential way in which care by a family member, friend or neighbour could be supported.

Key Learning

- Research on schemes in England has shown that people experience a range of positive outcomes, including living the life they want, developing confidence, skills and independence, having wider social networks, increasing self-esteem and sustained relationships with relatives.
- Stories published on the West Wales Adult Placement website, run by carers, support these findings with a range of people being supported to live more fulfilled lives than would otherwise be possible.

Financial Implications

Potential savings of up to 60% for people with Learning Disabilities, 10% for Older People and 30% for people with Mental Health issues are reported, based on average residential placement costs in England

In Carmarthenshire, the West Wales Adult Placement Scheme delivers 50% of the respite provision for people with Mental Health and Learning Disabilities for only 12% of the total cost for all respite in the area. Similar to foster care, adult placements attract an allowance which is much less than residential care costs and service users retain their benefits enabling them to pay for some activities themselves.

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100. Choice about support is important and for many a move away from Personal Assistants to being able to employ family members is welcomed.

Direct payments enable a young mother to employ her family, as she is wary about having strangers in the house because of her little boy.

I Matter, We Matter video, Third Sector Health and Social Care Alliance, WCVA

Friends and Neighbours

101. Citizen Directed Services can create new opportunities both with individuals within the family or with friends and neighbours.

> **Claire and Anne's Story**
>
> 102. "Claire was 39 years old. Her family became homeless when both she and her partner were made redundant and lost their house. They were housed in temporary accommodation and due to anti social neighbours became depressed and their self esteem hit rock bottom. They had no family or friends locally and it became difficult to care for their young child.
>
> They were introduced to the local volunteer centre and became involved in time banking and volunteering. Through this they met Anne who was an instant 'hit' with their daughter. They helped her with shopping, transport and small repairs. She became their greatest friend and mentor and gradually rebuilt their lives and got a house using time credits for decorating and moving and childcare.
>
> Anne was 81. Most of her friends had died and she felt she had little to offer. But meeting Claire and helping her with the child made her feel she was doing something worthwhile. Before long they were supporting each other in all sorts of ways. She felt less nervous and even the doctor noticed, and with the help she was getting from Claire and her partner she felt able to stay in her own home. "I feel very fortunate and have a purpose in my life".
>
> Abridged case study: Time Banking in Argyll and Bute

103. Such actions can be spontaneous and informal but there may be need to develop new services which 'match' individuals with friends and neighbours willing to help.

> In Sandwell a Community Interest Company CIC was established which matched skills in a more formal and reciprocal way, eg, a carpenter with health problems provided building support to a local youth centre.

104. Friends and neighbours have also participated as Street Ambassadors, where a person keeps an eye on the environmental condition of their street and feeds in any minor problems to the council via fixmystreet.com thus preventing at a very early stage any environmental damage as a result of anti social behaviour.

105. Such rapid response to environmental problems has been shown to build confidence and morale and lead on to other street level activity.

106. Again, time banking initiatives which underpin some friends and neighbourhood relationships are set out in the previous Anne and Claire case study.

Local Groups

107. The backbone of a co-production approach is engagement with and support from the local community, and it is important that local communities have full access to leadership and trustee training, funding, fundraising, legal and building advice so that local organisations can build and maintain strong communities and develop local pride, sense of place and communal safety. A commitment to community development and embedding these skills in communities and the community development workforce is also vital. Without local groups as opportunities for enjoyment, respite and reciprocity co-production becomes difficult.

Local Amenities and Community Hubs

108. The continued existence of local amenities like churches, community halls, leisure centres and libraries can no longer be taken for granted, but are nevertheless the building blocks on which local groups and social networking are built and from which a wide range of services can be brought together and work in the interests of local people and the community.

109. We call these community hubs where communities come together and tackle problems, where their approach starts and ends with the needs of local people with an ethos embedding community involvement and trust.

> Caia Park Partnership (CPC) was set up in 1995 by local people to provide facilities, services and opportunities for people living in Caia - the largest social housing estate in Wales.
>
> Since then they have developed over 40 projects and enterprises involving 500 people in volunteering and created employment for over 50 local residents.
>
> Community Hubs - A Vision for Wales: WCVA/CREW/CDC

110. Classifying such facilities as 'luxuries' or often targets for cuts is therefore the opposite of a co-production approach, as such facilities are needed to enable people to live independently within the community. Now is not the time to disinvest.

111. There is a connection between small investments in community activities and cost savings for statutory services. *Sported,* the national charity supporting young people's participation in sport, has developed an evaluation tool that can assess the potential impact and value of sports participation across several social policy areas (including crime and anti-social behaviour, educational attainment, behaviour and attendance, physical and mental health and economic regeneration), provide real-time performance monitoring and estimate the financial savings associated with their work. It demonstrates that sport for development projects are likely to generate a total societal cost saving of £4,174 per participant per annum.

Table 1: Risk Reduction and Cost Savings Profile					
Policy area	Risk	Impact	Risk reduction	Cost of negative outcome*	Cost savings*
Crime and ASB	52.50%	30.11%	15.81%	£4,585	£724.89
Educational achievement	54.90%	23.22%	12.75%	£1,000	£127.50
Educational attendance	31.03%	14.52%	4.51%	£4,000	£180.40
Substance misuse	58.48%	32.84%	19.20%	£11,800	£2,265.60
Well-being	62.58%	22.92%	14.34%	£3,000	£430.20
Fitness and obesity	46.03%	15.81%	7.27%	£2,715	£197.65
NEET	45.09%	15.06%	6.79%	£3,651	£247.90
• Per participant per annum					
Source: Summary report, sportworks: Proving the Value of Sport http://www.sported.org.uk/media/60936/sportworks_summary_low_res.pdf					

Community Services

112. A co-production approach to statutory funded community services would require considerable 'co-design' and 'co-delivery' in planning and commissioning.

113. Commissioning is:

> "The set of activities by which partners ensure that services are planned and organised to best meet the outcomes required by their citizens. Commissioning, 'involves understanding the population need, best practice and local resources and using these to plan, implement and review changes in services. It requires a whole system perspective and applies to services provided by local authorities as well as public, private and third sector services." *(Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities Commissioning Framework Guidance and Good Practice, Welsh Government 2010)*

114. True commissioning, as above, therefore comes into its own with co-production. The State and public sector, far from retrenching to only providing a minimum service, can focus on directly providing and contracting specialist services within a rich mix of complementary and holistic service provision, and act as an enabler and broker.

115. Our experience, however, is that many public bodies confuse commissioning and procurement, and many public sector officials uses the terms interchangeably. There is also widespread misinformation about legal requirements (under Welsh, UK or European law) to procure. WCVA and Swansea Council for Voluntary Service are jointly publishing guidance which aims to clarify some of these issues; the final draft version of this is attached as Appendix 1.

116. Procurement practice could be improved, but it is not a substitute for intelligent commissioning, and is ultimately incompatible with a coproduction approach based on relationships and joint working, not on the market-place.

117. Where there is a legal requirement to procure, service specifications can be broadened to include activity that will improve people's wellbeing and quality of life, and sustain independent living. For example, whilst an individual may have an immediate health or social care need, their longer term independence and quality of life could be enhanced by:

- Making new friends if wanted;
- Exploring different experiences;
- Sharing skills;
- Help with accessing internet-based services;
- Experiencing stimulating social, creative or physical activities;
- Helping to form groups of people who share the same interests;
- Developing friendship and support from groups;
- Exploring options and opportunities

118. Procedures should require providers to express the ways in which they would involve service users and draw in additional support. Prospective providers should be required to answer specific questions on service user involvement and how they can assist people to access a wide range of services from statutory, third and private sector providers in accordance with the individual's needs.

> Providers could be assessed against:
>
> - How their service identifies and mobilises service users' strengths
> - How their service assists people to participate in community life and benefit from community networks and support?
> - How their service supports people in finding ways to help and support others, including fellow service users, family, neighbours and the local community
> - Where appropriate, how their service creates additional benefits through the contribution and development of volunteers?
> - How activities and approaches meet both service level and community level objectives and outcomes
>
> Co-production in Service Design and Service Delivery, WCVA 2010

119. This would open up the possibility of new forms of services which take the forms of users' co-operatives or mutuals, community interest companies or charities.

> Peninsula Community Health is a Community Interest Company delivering adult community care with a budget of £87m and 2,000 staff. Independent of the NHS it works closely with patients, CPs, clinician and others within the health and social care system, retaining the values of the NHS whilst maximising the opportunity to innovate. Its employees provide the company membership and have local knowledge and skills which are at the heart of improving healthcare in our communities.

120. Such services would need to be 'closer' in style and more attuned to individual need and expectation, but considerable scope remains.

> The project is designed to generate small, highly tailored community-based care packages for frail and vulnerable older people, provided by independent 'microenterprises'. A micro-enterprise may take the form of a single volunteer or small team of volunteers, a social enterprise or a sole trader or small business but in any case the relationship between the older person and the micro-enterprise relies on co-production for its successful delivery. The micro-provider delivers the package in a close relationship with the client and strong connections to the health care staff who helped initiate the process are maintained throughout. In the medium to longer term, this shift in the balance of care is intended to reduce demand on acute health services to the extent that resources can be transferred to establish sustainable community-based provision.
>
> Bragg Enterprises, Fife

121. New forms of service require financing and decommissioning some existing services. An example of financing such transformational change is WCVA's Wales Wellbeing Bond.

122. The Wales Wellbeing Bond, with the help of a co-ordinating function, brings together the constituent partners in a mutually beneficial arrangement. Simply put, the investor places its money into the third sector organisations so they can deliver increased preventative actions to a client group. In time the activity reduces the re-active services that the public sector body provides and therefore reduces their costs. The cost savings made by the public sector mean the investor can be repaid, with interest, from the savings made and continue to invest in preventative programmes to create more savings.

Example · Health Board and the third sector

Expenditure by Health Boards on medication to combat depression is rapidly increasing and some areas in Wales are seeing year-on-year double digit percentage rises in spending in this area.

Third sector organisations have tried and tested methods of engagement and support that can either remove the requirement for prescribing drugs in the first place or reduce the time that a person requires medication.

The Wales Wellbeing Bond could invest into third sector organisations to deliver the services and activities known to have a positive effect on people with mental health problems. By providing these services, and GPs referring their patients to these services, we can begin to stop the rapid increase in prescribing rates and then reduce it, bringing cost savings to the Health Board from reduced expenditure on anti-depressant medication. The Bond loan is repaid out of the cost savings generated.

This method could also be applied to other areas of wellbeing where Health Boards are faced with exponential demand, such as dementia and diabetes.

WCVA 2012

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123. There are also examples of creative decommissioning, in which innovation and decommissioning are treated as part of the same positive process.

Figure 6: Adult social care in Thurrock
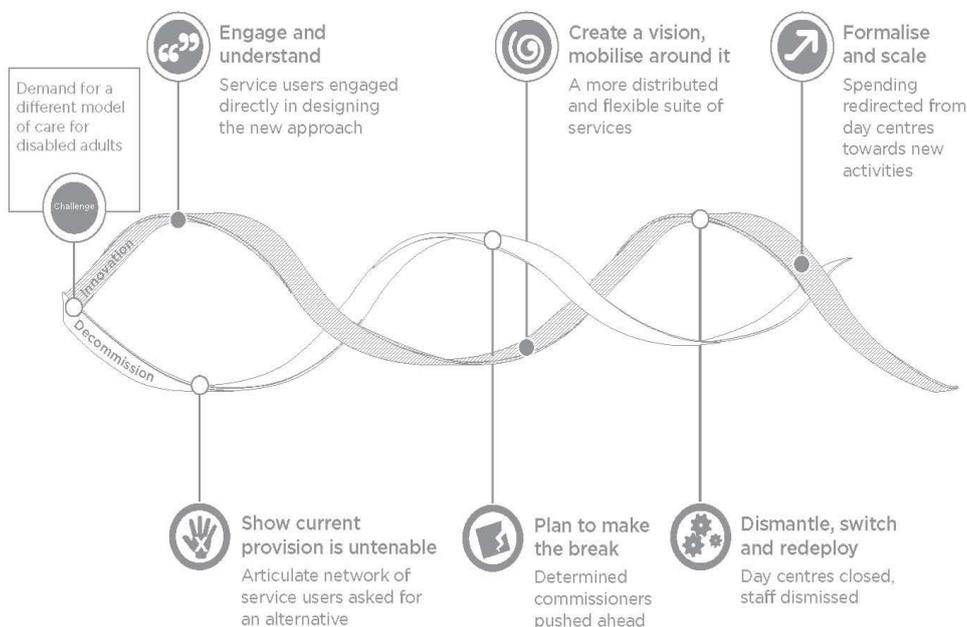
The Art of Exit (NESTA 2012)

124. Any proposal to withdraw or reduce funding for any public service, whether provided in-house or by the third sector, should be subject to consultation with a wide range of local persons, including service users, local third sector organisations voluntary

and others. Public bodies should be aware of and sensitive to the benefits and needs of third sector organisations, and their commitments in local Compacts, and not pass on disproportionate cuts

125. Public bodies that are considering the option of reducing or ending funding or other support to a third sector organisation should undertake a risk assessment that includes:

- Impact on service users, and any need for provision of alternative support
- Impact on the viability of the organisation or the service it provides
- Assessment of the value of other resources they may be lost if funding is reduced or withdrawn (including additional funding from other sources, volunteer time, use of assets)
- An equalities impact assessment.

126. Following the risk assessment, a public body that is intending to reduce or end funding or other support to a third sector organisation that will materially threaten the viability of the organisation or the service it provides should give at least three months' notice to both the organisation involved and the public/service users.

127. A public body should actively engage the organisation as early as possible on in considering the future of the service; any knock-on effect on assets used to provide this service; and the wider impact both on service users and the local community.

128. Where existing community services may become unaffordable at the present level of public funding. We do not think it acceptable, however, for a public body to simply withdraw all funding and close the service without seriously and proactively considering, jointly with service users and stakeholders, alternative ways of maintaining all or some of the service. Public bodies should make provision for the organisation or other community interests to put forward options on how to reshape the service or project, and make available all appropriate information to support this process

129. We therefore propose that a duty should be placed on public bodies to prepare and publish, in partnership with services users and stakeholders, including relevant third sector organisations, an options appraisal of delivery alternatives if funding for a community service or amenity is under threat. If the service is valued by its users, the primary objective should be to ensure that the service is not closed altogether The appraisal should consider options including:

- Transferring ownership/management of the service to a not-for-profit organisation
- Reducing or re-configuring the service
- Maintaining funding at a lower or reducing level
- Organising aspects of the service in different ways, including through the involvement of volunteers.

Two councils want to cut expenditure on libraries.

In Council 1 the decision is taken by the Cabinet and the library is closed, with protests and negative publicity which do not alter the decision. Staff are made redundant and there is no longer a service in the area of any sort.

Council 2 went to the community with its proposal and asked for ideas. The community propose transferring the freehold of the library building to a development trust; and

> transferring the library service to a nearby community centre with spare capacity, and running it with a mix of residents and a paid co-ordinator. The trust sells the original building and uses the proceeds to establish an endowment to pay towards the co-ordinator. Other ongoing costs are met by a continued revenue grant from the Council that is 80% less than previous expenditure. The service and at least one associated job are maintained.

130. We recognise that this will be challenging for both the third and public sectors. In particular, involving volunteers in a service previously provided by paid staff is a sensitive issue, and traditionally not an option supported by the third sector. However we are in changing times; and if faced with a choice on the one hand of shutting down a service and making all posts redundant, and on the other hand, maintaining some jobs to continue a service that its users value, then it may be that some service and some jobs is better than no service and no jobs. The over-riding interest should be that of the service user.

Formal and Acute Services

131. The success of a co-production approach should reduce or at least stabilise demands on formal and acute services. There is a considerable amount of interest in introducing a greater degree of user engagement and service transformation within acute hospital and criminal justice systems. Such an approach would seek to design services using the multiplicity of resources which improve wellbeing of both users and carers in such situations.

Twilight service: 'out of hours' home from hospital transport and risk assessment
This service prevents unnecessary admission to hospital by offering transport home from hospital for patients over 55 year old who are medically fit for discharge from A&E at two local General Hospitals, and to prevent readmission to hospital by risk assessments in the home and referrals to community and statutory support organisations.

The Twilight service is funded by health and social services and operates five days a week, between 2pm and 10pm. Drivers, all of whom are bilingual, are available in the two hospitals to transport patients home in a friendly manner. Each patient is transported home, helped to settle and offered a home safety check and referral to other activities/services if appropriate.

F Zinovieff & B Collis (2010) The Role of the Voluntary Sector in Delayed Transfer of Care (DToC)/Hospital Discharge and Prevention of Readmission

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Recommendations

132. This submission describes a new approach to public services which combines professionals, individuals and communities in both service design and delivery: we call this "co-production". We have a number of recommendations that will, if adopted, enable the approach set out in this submission to be advanced.

133. Our four primary recommendations are that:

- Welsh Government should restate and strengthen its commitment to real citizen engagement in the design and scrutiny of public services

- Co-production should be placed at the heart of future public service thinking, design and delivery

- There should be a duty on local authorities to develop an early intervention and support strategy in partnership with the third sector, to identify the help that is available and can be developed, and to ensure that it is adequately resourced

- There should be a duty placed on public bodies to seek to risk-assess and co-produce alternative ways of maintaining and developing local services and amenities that are no longer wholly affordable, before any decision on closure is taken

134. To support the approach, we make the following further recommendations:

- Welsh Government's endorsement of the principle of citizen-led services should underpinned by a long-term commitment to *Participation Cymru*

- A duty to ensure citizen and third sector involvement in scrutiny processes is required

- There should be a strong rationale for, and a consistent and coherent approach to, any future regional structures that operate between national and local government levels

- Community hubs should be developed and supported as bases of community co-production

- Street Ambassadors, community currencies and Timebanking and similar very local initiatives should be developed and supported

- Local support to groups including funding, governance, fundraising and volunteering should be maintained to underpin community resilience and social capital

- Local amenities should be recognised and safeguarded as an essential part of future public services

- Public bodies considering reducing or ending funding or other support to a third sector organisation should undertake a risk assessment to evaluate the real costs and impact of the decision, including an assessment of the value of other resources they may be lost if funding is reduced or withdrawn (including additional funding from other sources, volunteer time, use of assets)
- Citizen directed support should be expanded, and introduced where necessary

- New forms of community services to enhance and meet the needs of people should be developed, including piloting new service models through co-operatives, mutuals, community interest companies and charities

- Public bodies should make use of flexible and new forms of finance which can then be recycled into other initiatives

- Joint statutory/third sector special purpose vehicles or public / social partnerships should be considered to pilot and deliver innovation

Graham Benfield OBE
Chief Executive, Wales Council for Voluntary Action

20 August 2013