

Putting people at the centre

**Start with the people, not the systems
and empower us all to take part**

Wales Council for Voluntary Action represents, campaigns for and supports voluntary organisations, community action and volunteering in Wales.

WCVA is committed to a strong and active third sector building resilient, cohesive and inclusive communities, giving people a stake in their future through their own actions and services, creating a strong, healthy and fair society and demonstrating the value of volunteering and community involvement.

We believe that there is an urgent need to transform public services in Wales by:

- Treating people and communities as assets and equals in design and delivery
- Building services around the person and community
- Unlocking potential resources of time, money and expertise to combine with state funding
- Using existing state resources to enable and maximise citizen and community action, capital and care

Change is needed now because:

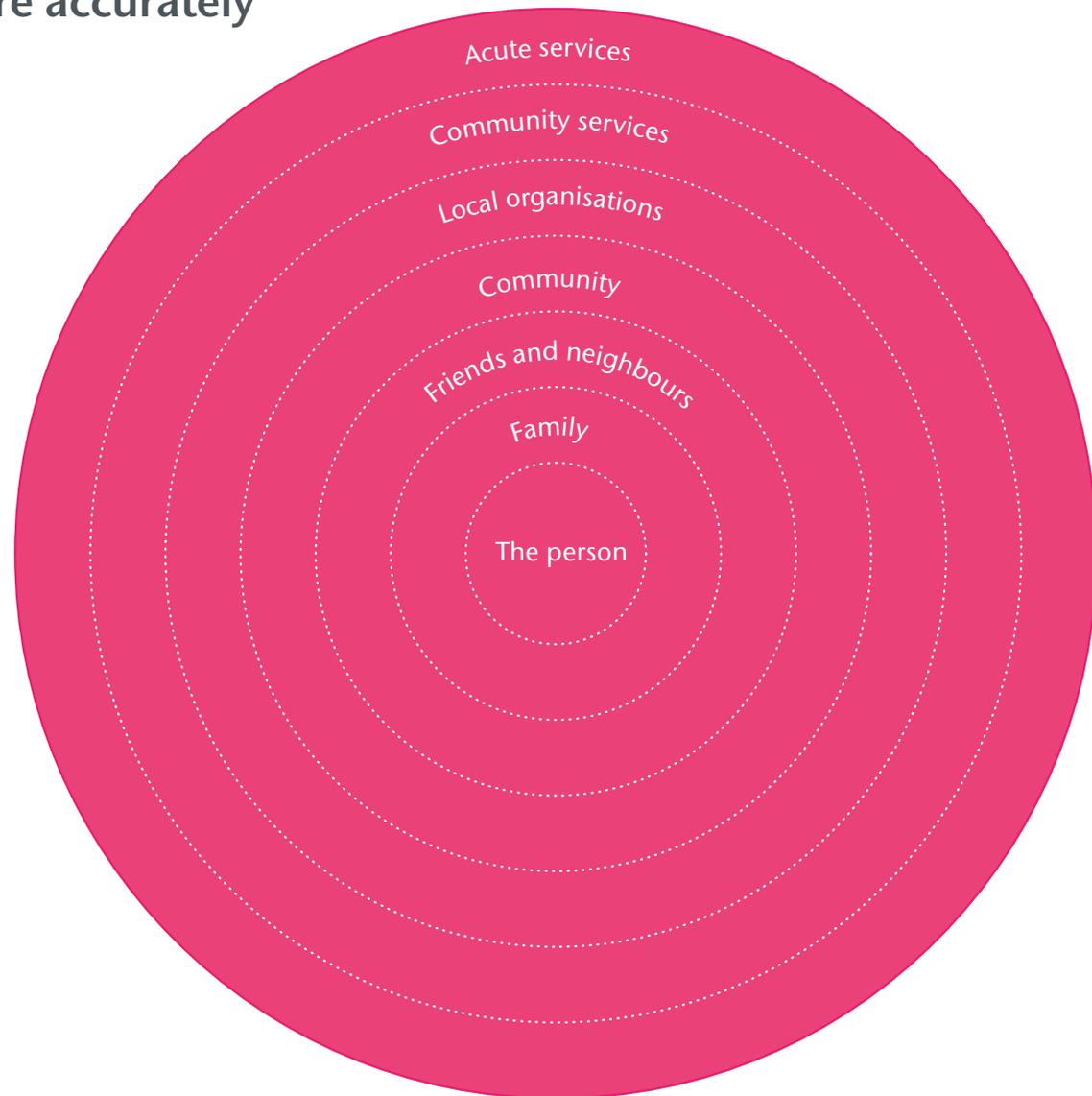
- Money is running out
- Efficiencies alone will not be enough
- Demand for acute services is rising
- Preventative and community services are being cut
- Quality of life cannot be delivered by the state alone
- Community action and volunteering is not being capitalised
- Communities need to be resilient at the local neighbourhood level

This is why many people are now looking at a different co-produced public service, which places the citizen and community at the centre, with the state as the enabler and facilitator.

This co-production or sharing of responsibility, power and resource recognises more accurately how we actually live our lives.

It meets our needs to live in safe, healthy and prosperous and attractive places and accords with our understanding that quality of life is determined by a mix of individual, family, community and state action in which the former will often be the most important.

Wales has a strong and proud history of community action and mutualism and the third sector can build upon this history of shared vision, mobilisation, responsibility and action in the following ways.



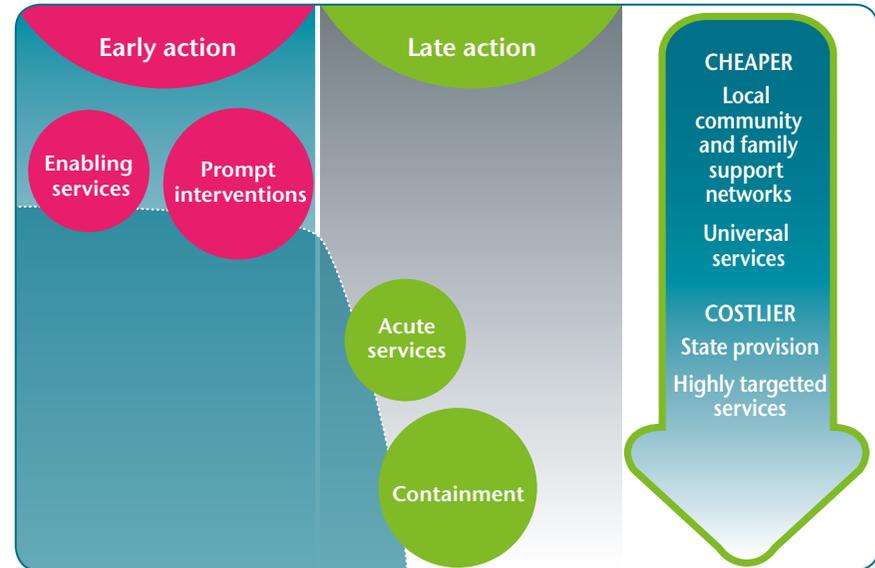
1 Engaging individuals and communities in identifying need or working together to meet those challenges. Co-designed services are often more likely to succeed in every way and enable the individual and community to be strengthened and empowered.

Llwynhendy is a community of 4,500 people outside Llanelli. Community consultation highlighted concern about an area of derelict land known as the tip used for fly tipping and a magnet for anti social behaviour. A project was set up to transform the 'tip' into a growing green space and with government money and planning permission, volunteers from across the community. Project not only transformed the site but is also considering taking on adjacent garages as workshops and developing a garden share scheme.

This is a good example of co-production, using community development techniques to solve a set of interrelated problems in a deprived Communities First area which has since moved up the deprivation rating and lost its Communities First status.

2 Taking action early to avoid longer term demands on more expensive services

Early action is cheaper than late action, but we spend most of our public money on the latter.



[The Triple Dividend Community Links]

Many third sector services eg, Care and Repair, community transport, befriending and social clubs are essential to maintaining people in their community but are now at risk through cuts. We need more third sector services not less, if demands on acute or residential services are not overwhelming.

3 Developing alternative forms of service delivery

There are some exciting examples of co-production in action but they are patchy, rarely replicated and again under threat. A major driver of co-production is citizen directed support (CDS), which enables the individual to choose and pay for the services they want. This can be done individually or pooled with others to develop new forms for patterns of service directly tailored and designed by the individual.

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

The backbone of a co-production approach is engagement with and support from the local community and this needs to be unlocked, enabled and nurtured with access to support information, training resources and the development of a portfolio of assets.

The continued existence of many local amenities can no longer be taken for granted, but developing and maintaining 'community hubs' is a crucial building block to the co-production approach which can also provide alternative ways of avoiding closures by ownership transfer, reconfiguring the service, community involvement and service reduction.

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 proposals 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 per cent less than previous expenditure. The service and at least one associated job are maintained.

4 Community services

Co-producing statutory services requires intelligent commissioning, which can involve the community and lead to broader requirements and new forms of service including users co-operatives, mutuals, community interest companies or charities.

Micro enterprises delivering services

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

5 Acute services

The success of a co-production approach should reduce or at least stabilise demands on 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. These approaches are seeking to design services using the multiplicity of resources which improve wellbeing of users, families, carers and communities in such situations.

Twilight service: 'out of ours' 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

6 Scrutiny

Independent scrutiny can improve the quality of a decision and therefore the outcomes. Measures to develop access and engagement for informed citizens are a key component of co-production, since scrutiny completes the design – delivery – assess cycle.

Local scrutineers

Mantell Gwynedd (the county voluntary council for Gwynedd) and Cyngor Gwynedd (Gwynedd Council) have worked closely in order to maximise third sector participation in the scrutiny process. Mantell Gwynedd has a formal system in place to ensure that the third sector has a strong voice in respect of the local authority's scrutinising processes. Mantell Gwynedd has a 'bank of scrutineers' from the third sector providing input in certain specialist areas. The third sector also has input in setting the scrutiny agenda for the county.

It must be noted however that the new cabinet regime in Gwynedd raises a fundamental question regarding the influence of scrutiny in the future. There have been incidences recently of the ten cabinet members making a decision despite scrutiny recommendations. Therefore Mantell Gwynedd anticipate that it may be more difficult to attract individuals from the third sector to scrutinise in light of these circumstances.

Bethan Russell Williams, Chief Officer, Mantell Gwynedd

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.

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The way forward for public service partners in Wales

WCVA asks our public service partners to commit to, and work with us in these actions for Wales:

1 Engagement

- Engage citizens and communities in design and delivery of services as an equal partner and active participant
- Develop and support community hubs as the 'backbone' of community co-production
- Maintain local support to groups including funding, governance, fundraising and volunteering
- Expand and introduce citizen directed support

2 Prevention and early intervention

- Invest in third sector services
- Adopt intelligent commissioning instead of short term competitive procurement practice
- Commission new forms of community services to enhance and meet the needs of people
- Consider the Wales Wellbeing Bond to create a new service or reengineer an existing one and decommission creatively
- Don't cut local amenities, but recognise them as an essential part of future public services and co-produce alternative ways of maintaining local amenities – do this as part of an 'early intervention and support strategy'

3 Seeking alternative models

- Use flexible and new forms of finance which can then be recycled into other community initiatives
- Pilot new service models of co-operatives, mutuals, community interest companies and charities
- Consider joint statutory/third sector special purpose vehicles, for instance to improve people's/carer's experiences of acute health and criminal justice services
- Support Street Ambassadors, community currencies and Timebanking

4 Scrutiny

- Introduce a duty to ensure citizen and third sector involvement in scrutiny processes
- Support the development of models of citizen scrutiny
- Work with the third sector to engage citizens' voices, as well as the expertise of the third sector in diverse policy and service areas

