



Pembrokeshire Housing's sheltered housing co-design service review

This is a Case Study of a review of services for older people carried out by Pembrokeshire Housing. It focussed on five sheltered schemes and three linked semi-sheltered schemes. At its heart was full engagement with residents, tapping into their unique expertise as a prerequisite for designing a service that meets the needs of older people now and in the future. It was based on Co-production principles and an open and transparent approach.



Written by **Keith Edwards**, former director of the Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru, and **Noreen Blanluet**, co-founder of Co-production Wales, for the Housing Learning and Improvement Network.

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Background

Our scheme managers

'The scheme manager is an essential link and catalyst'

Pembrokeshire Housing has around 230 sheltered properties in five schemes in Haverfordwest, Milford Haven, Narberth, Pembroke Dock and Tenby and three linked semi-sheltered schemes. Demand is high and allocations restricted to people over 60 for sheltered and 55 plus for semi-sheltered.

The association wanted to develop an effective strategy and implementation plan for the sheltered housing service, to address a number of current and emerging challenges including:

- responding to the recommendations of the [Aylward Review](#) that the eligibility criteria for older people receiving supporting people funding should now be based on need rather than age or tenure;
- anticipating changes to local authority commissioning of supporting people services for older people;
- managing service changes already underway including the end of live-in sheltered scheme managers;
- meeting the expectations of current residents whilst balancing this against unmet need of other Pembrokeshire Housing residents and the wider public.

Officers from Pembrokeshire made contact with colleagues at NPT Homes who had recently carried out a similar review of sheltered housing services. They were impressed with both the co-production process and the outcomes for residents, staff and the association and asked the authors to design and deliver a similar but bespoke project for Pembrokeshire Housing.

Why co-production is different

Co-production is based on the premise that people using public services have valuable insights to offer regarding issues and solutions, and how services can best meet their needs.

Regardless of the sector, the audience or the service, it begins with asking the question “what does a good life look like for you?” This opens the conversation into enquiring how the service can give people autonomy and help them build on the assets in their networks, families and communities – while it remains for the service to fill the gaps, which refocuses and saves organisational resources.

A generally accepted definition of co-production used by the Co-production Network for Wales is: *“an asset-based approach to public services which enables citizens and professionals to share power and work together in equal and reciprocal relationships.”*



What makes a good life for PHA residents

What happened?

Redesigning the service

'We were able to redesign the service and start a trial at one of our sheltered schemes. Tenants will continue to be involved during the trial to help us review and tailor the service before we roll it out across our other schemes in 2018'

Stage 1: Resident Drop-in Sessions – initial engagement

Residents were invited to a series of five sessions either at one of their schemes or in a nearby venue with good access. There was also a separate session with scheme managers. The purpose was to:

- engage with residents before any decisions on the service had been taken;
- introduce co-production and co-design as a way of ensuring residents were fully involved in the review;
- place the review within context of current and future challenges;
- recruit 30 volunteers to attend the co-design workshop sessions.

The sessions were facilitated by Keith Edwards, supported by Mike Wiseman of the Tenant Advisory Panel, an independent and unpaid observer. The Supported Housing Manager attended the sessions along with the local scheme managers.

Stage 2: Co-design sessions with residents and staff

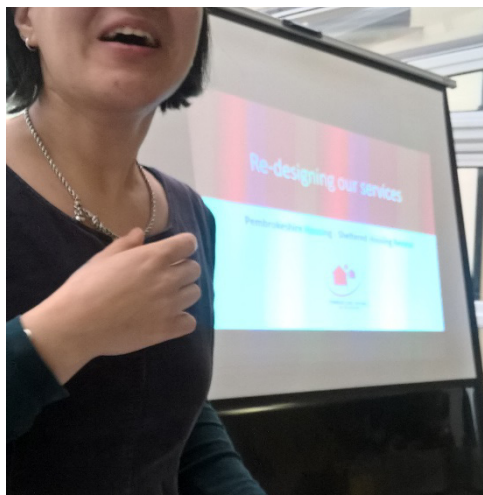
Doing more together

'We can bring people in, and become a sort of hub, and invite people who live in the community to attend scheme functions'

Co-production practitioner Noreen Blanluet led the four service co-design workshops with resident volunteers, scheme managers and other Pembrokeshire Housing staff.

The sessions included:

- what a good life looks like for residents as defined by them;
- the roles of the scheme managers;
- asset mapping the skills and resources of residents and their wider community;
- building sustainable community and support;
- how residents and the community can meet their needs, and where Pembrokeshire Housing can support.



Stage 3: Resident Drop-in Sessions – two-way feedback

Active in our community

'We can link up with local schools and share knowledge of local history and keep it alive'

Residents were invited to a second series of five sessions either at a scheme or in a nearby venue with good access.

The purpose was to:

- feedback results of the co-design sessions to all residents;
- share recommendations and get resident feedback;
- present ideas on implementation and make a commitment for action.



Stage 4: Report and Implementation

The main recommendations of the report were to:

For Pembrokeshire Housing

- pilot a co-designed service in one scheme;
- support further meetings of the volunteer group without taking too heavy-handed a role;
- ensure the Tenant Involvement and Community Investment officer attends the meetings when requested;
- review the general approach to communications, feedback and tenant involvement;
- build buy-in and adoption at all staff levels;
- consider other service areas that may benefit from co-production.

For Residents

- keep meeting as a group to exchange information and updates;
- take a lead in organising meetings e.g. venue, refreshments, food and transport (which Pembrokeshire Housing would support);
- ensure that all residents have an opportunity to feed into meetings and that what happens at meetings is fed back to all residents.



Outcomes

Using technology

'Access to technology will make a lot of this easier and quicker including knowing how to through skills exchange and learning'

The immediate outcomes from the project were:

- the group became a cross-scheme community that wished to keep meeting;
- they constructively challenged Pembrokeshire Housing to communicate better and engage residents more;
- there was support for a shift from reliance on Pembrokeshire Housing to greater resident autonomy;
- Pembrokeshire Housing made a commitment to look at other ways of adopting a co-production approach with residents and other service areas.

Next steps

There was a commitment by Pembrokeshire Housing to maintain momentum by supporting regular meetings of the group and piloting a co-designed service in one scheme. Experience to date had highlighted positive outcomes to be built on including:

- better resident engagement
- stronger resident-landlord relationships

- more effective services
- increased resident self-sufficiency and resilience
- improved resident wellbeing indicators
- reduced need for some aspects of current services
- refocus of budgets and activities on actual areas of need



Asset map: skills and resources of residents and community

Key Learning Points

- Being open and transparent about the challenges with residents – ‘treating them like adults’ – whilst initially uncomfortable, paid dividends in terms of the trust it instilled and quickly established that there are no hidden agendas.
- Co-production was a genuine process from the outset. Whilst there were absolute limits around what was possible eg. changes to funding, legal requirements, it was fundamentally important to give residents and staff the maximum scope to redesign the service.
- The co-production process encouraged a great deal of imagination amongst residents and staff as true ‘experts’ and led to the identification and untapping of new resources.
- Pembrokeshire Housing found the process rewarding and one that will influence future service reviews.

Note

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network.

About the authors

Keith Edwards is a former director of the Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru and Tenant Participation Advisory Service Cymru. He is chair of a housing association board and former chair of the democratic body of Wales' first tenant/worker housing mutual. He is the author of the 2015 *Is the Feeling Mutual?* report for Welsh Government on alternative models for public service delivery.

Noreen Blanluet was a co-founder of Co-production Wales (All in this Together), a voluntary collective of citizens campaigning for co-production to be integrated into the Welsh political agenda, which contributed to the current progressive devolved Welsh legislation.

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- connect people, ideas and resources to inform and improve the range of housing choices that enable older and disabled people to live independently
- provide intelligence on latest funding, research, policy and practice developments, and
- raise the profile of specialist housing with developers, commissioners and providers to plan, design and deliver aspirational housing for an ageing population

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