

Co-producing Falls Prevention: a Community Led Approach

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Background/rationale Why did you do it?

The Scottish Government's "Health and Social Care Delivery Plan" and "Active and Independent Living Programme" focus on prevention, anticipation and supported self management; the vision being one of a significant culture change in how people access and receive services. A clear emphasis is made on supporting people to self manage, live active and independent lives and participate in local communities. Both nationally and locally there has also been a focus on co-production as an approach that will facilitate this change.

In 2018 a series of co-production Labs were delivered by "Governance International" to a mixed group of staff from Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership, members of the community and partner organisations. Locality based co-production projects were developed and the North locality of Aberdeen chose to work on Falls Prevention. Nearly two years have elapsed and this project continues to grow.

Project Description

After sharing stories and ideas as a group our aim was to:

- Recruit volunteer "Falls Ambassadors" from the community
- Co- design a falls prevention session
- Co-deliver the session to older people in "their spaces"
- Co- evaluate the outcome
- Gather feedback from groups about behaviour change
- Gather feedback from "Falls Ambassadors" about how co-production has changed their understanding of falls risk



Ideas

I have had a fall. I'm an "expert by experience"- our peers relate to our falls stories – let's become 'Falls Ambassadors' and do this together.

Let's have an event in the park and invite the people who have been to our falls prevention sessions.

People keep their falls to themselves – let's make a film to encourage people to talk about their falls.

We could link with communications students to get a Facebook page and a website started.

We have 14 Falls Ambassadors – 7 volunteer regularly

We have been to 19 groups and spoken to over 250 people

Results

100% of participants have rated our sessions 'useful' or very 'useful'

Data shows a >21% increase in taking part in exercise and >30% increase in knowledge about falls prevention following sessions

Library course has started its own exercise group with support from a Falls Ambassador.



Conclusion

Using co-production fostered parity between the group's eclectic members. The project united third sector partners (Sport Aberdeen and the British Red Cross), service users, staff from Occupational Therapy and Public Health co-ordinators in a common goal.

The rich seam of ideas created by adopting this approach was a revelation to all parties. The whole group benefited from engaging in this work, none more so than the Falls Ambassadors who were learning so much about services, resources and self management options by being an equal part of the project.

As a group we are now spreading this approach by talking about the project locally, nationally and internationally. We are also linking up with other organisations doing similar work.

We are working with the British Red Cross to support use of the "Ambassador Model" on inpatient wards at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

We have started a research project into the impact of co-production on self management and well being with support from the Robert Gordon University, and hope to extend this by linking with Strathclyde University to consider the impact on staff.

Personal Reflections

Using a co-production approach is exciting, interesting and rewarding. It throws up possibilities outside those that are "usual" to AHPs.

The Falls Ambassadors have carried their falls prevention message beyond the groups we've visited, out into their everyday lives to friends and family members and beyond. They have taken an active role in talking about our work to falls steering groups, students, professional groups and charities. There is nothing that has happened in this project without the group being party to it.

We decided our group are like wild geese – share leadership, communicate constantly, have a clear aim, are more efficient as a group than as individuals and are all looking out for each other.

I have learned that co-production relies on trust. You don't just invest time, but part of yourself.

References:

- Scottish Government, Edinburgh, Health and Social Care Delivery Plan, Crown Publications, 2016
- Scottish Government, Edinburgh, Active and Independent Living Programme, Crown Publications, 2017

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