

Co-production in action - partnership working during the pandemic

With the  **Booth Centre**



Overview

- Enabling factors at the Booth Centre
- Benefits and challenges of partnership working in 2020
- Redesigning the service
- How we co-delivered
- Connecting Through Activities
- What next?

The Booth Centre is a community centre run with and for people affected by homelessness.

The Booth Centre provides a warm welcome, an opportunity to belong, to gain a purpose and rebuild lives. Our programme includes activities such as volunteering, creative projects and sports, as well as training and help to gain employment. We also support people to improve health and wellbeing, to access emergency accommodation, and to secure and maintain a permanent home.

The Centre is run in partnership with the people who attend and they apply their skills and experience to influence strategic change.

Partnership



We recognise the importance of working collaboratively with people who come to the centre to design, deliver and evaluate our services. We work jointly with other organisations to achieve the best outcomes.

Enabling factors at the Booth Centre

- Partnership working value since 1995
- Regular reflective practice sessions
- Ethos embedded in recruitment process for all staff
- Open and non-judgmental environment
- Working in partnership via groups expected part of job roles
- Established communication channels with people accessing the service

But for many of us collaboration is not a luxury that can be set aside easily. We are facing complex questions, and to find solutions that truly work for all, hearing different perspectives and experiences is key.

Manchester Street Support team, May 2020

Co-production in a crisis - challenges

- We relied on existing relationships
- Limited time and the fast-moving nature meant meetings and actions were not always as well planned
- Meeting with people to discuss staying apart(!)
- Digital divide

How we co-designed

- Meeting with people who come to the Centre – starting with supported volunteers we invited people to talk about what is important about the Booth Centre. If the world is about to change what are people going to need and want and how can that be done safely.
- A full staff meeting was then held to discuss the learnings and design the procedures needed to implement the new service.
- The new service focused on same values – person led support.

Which services matter most to people?



Safety and wellbeing considerations

Support into single room accommodation was prioritised as this would keep people safe during the pandemic. But referrals and support couldn't run as normal.

Providing emergency support and advice in person would have to be rationed due to space and social distancing. Covid-secure measures in place.

The active, creative and social aspects of the Booth Centre mean a lot to people and it was clear this couldn't just stop but it wasn't safe to open the café.

The redesigned service

Worked with partners to set up 47 single room accommodation project. Referrals from the garden drop-in service with resettlement support via phone and by accommodation visits. Three meals a day were provided for the accommodation project.

Phone support was introduced for wellbeing and practical advice including food provision. After the first two weeks of lockdown the garden drop-in service was reserved for those currently rough sleeping. We kept open the toilet but had to close the shower.

Activity packs put together by supported volunteers were sent out weekly to over 300 people. A private Facebook group and daily activity session started - 48 thirty minute broadcasts have been produced.

Another redesign

- We were able to invite more people into the Centre to meet and discuss the future service.
- Discussion around why people come to the Booth Centre and what makes it the Booth Centre.
- Health and safety procedures discussed and planned together.
- Move away from emergency advice needed during lockdown back towards holistic support for long term change.



A community centre ran with and for people affected by homelessness



How we co-delivered

- Supported volunteering – key workers – activity programme and preparation of food
- New relationships created when visiting accommodation projects
- Making the Centre Covid-secure – practical involvement

Connecting Through Activities

- Weekly activity meetings to design and create the packs. Actions included designing the activities, producing the activity sheets, putting together the packs and addressing envelopes.
- People contributed artwork, poetry, taught languages on camera, joined discussions and led exercises.

David Bowie Lyrics
"Heroes"

I, I will be king
And you, you will be queen
Though nothing will drive them away
We can beat them, just for one day
We can be Heroes, just for one day

And you, you can be mean
And I, I'll drink all the time
'Cause we're lovers, and that is a fact
Yes we're lovers, and that is that
Though nothing will keep us together
We could steal time, just for one day
We can be Heroes, for ever and ever
What d'you say?

I, I wish you could swim
Like the dolphins, like dolphins can swim
Though nothing, nothing will keep us together
We can beat them, for ever and ever
Oh we can be Heroes, just for one day

I, I will be king
And you, you will be queen
Though nothing will drive them away
We can be Heroes, just for one day
We can be us, just for one day



Singing



Connecting
Through
Activities

What next?

- Continuing aspects from the 'lockdown service' that were successful whilst maintaining commitment to holistic support – text messages and increased 1-1 time.
- Supporting people to stay active when not at the Centre – activity packs.
- Volunteers remain essential to organisation.

Thank you

Charlotte Vale, Booth Centre charlotte@boothcentre.org.uk