

Video transcript: Co-production in Birmingham – commissioning the information, advice and guidance offer

Matthew Cloke: I'm the service manager for Connect to Support part of our information, advice and guidance offer, and we manage this in co-production with citizens, of one of which is Tim.

Tim Phillips: Its been quite interesting getting into the technical minutiae of developing and almost from scratch, and putting into the place the web area that is Connect to Support.

MC: It is important for me having citizens co-produce, citizens being involved in implementing the services like Connect to Support. Hearing that end user voice in decisions and discussions about how the site is run is really helpful. It helps shape those decisions there and then in the oversight board, and for those bigger changes and alterations when wider co-production is needed. The initial discussions have already been had so it highlights those areas of agreement and of tension.

In many ways it helps us focus on the actual impact of the item being discussed on the end user, and while it may take a little longer to prepare and discuss it does mean that there is that better result first time hopefully ,and that saves time overall, and I hope and think a better quality of outcome.

Continuing that involvement from implementation and design, commissioning and also that having them there and then in place to shape that outcome really focus on the citizen user, that user experience as we manage it through the contract life of the services.

In many ways it is just the same as working with officers. An oversight board should be that place for debate and sharing different views, and officers often come with those strong views they want to get across and citizens are no different.

They do, citizens, bring that different end user view and that's very helpful to keep the focus on that, because otherwise you can sometimes get drawn into internal service views that officers can sometimes bring that been working with for extended periods which will be hard to always drop.

But I mean the challenges that get raised in the meetings should happen anyway, so it's good to have them inside the group or a board and have that discussion there. The difficulty of diary commitments is there: citizens have a life of their own, but it's very hard to get into some officers' diaries.