

# Commissioning Differently:

Actions for Health & Social Care Partnerships to  
Implement a Community Led Approach

# Realising The Power in Our Communities

The experience of the last 18 months has reminded us of the compelling evidence which shows how the [power in our communities](#) plays a key role in supporting people's wellbeing. This is just as true within health as it is within social care. In a recent online blog '[The Community Cure?](#)' by [Katy Oglethorpe](#) she quotes Dr Matthew Harris's bold reflection of how important community is to wellbeing saying:

“  
If this model were a pill,  
we would all be taking it,  
Dr Matthew Harris  
”

We know a community led approach is not a pill and, in fact, requires nurturing.

Most current commissioning practices of Health and Social Care Partnerships direct rather than nurture. This report provides guidance for actions HSCPs should undertake to realise the power in our communities. This transformation of commissioning practice will ensure communities become equal partners in planning, decision making and delivery of health and social care services.

**This is the transformation identified in the Independent Review of Adult Social care- moving from 'Old Thinking to New Thinking'.**

Old Thinking	New Thinking
Social care support is a burden on society	Social care support is an investment
Managing need	Enabling rights and capabilities
Available in a crisis	Preventative and anticipatory
Competition and markets	Collaboration
Transactions	Relationships
A place for services (e.g. a care home)	A vehicle for supporting independent living
Variable	Consistent and fair

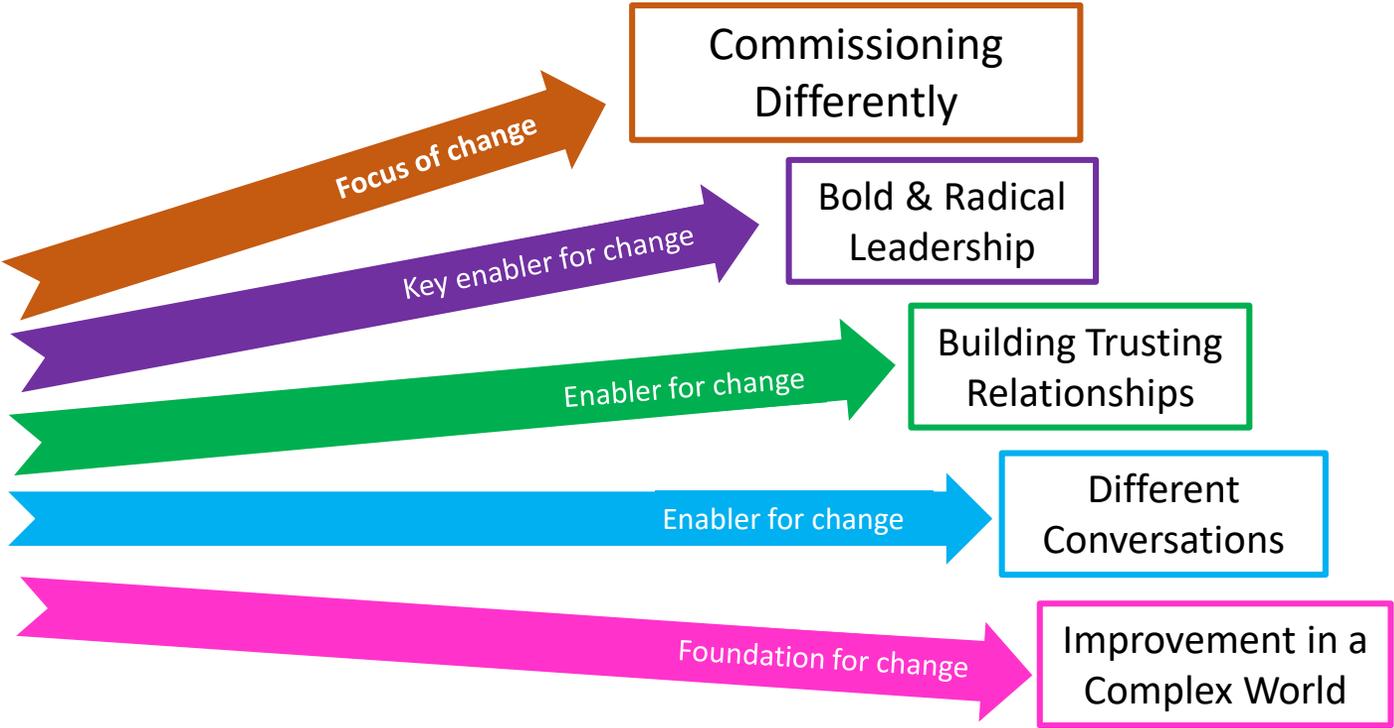
**In order to understand what it takes make this transition to delivering a community led approach we asked\* HSCPs what support they needed to do this and realise the Power in our Communities.**

\*Workshop for Health and Social Care Partnerships on 15<sup>th</sup> June- 'Working with Communities'. The content from this workshop can be accessed on the [ihub Website - Commissioning for Community Solutions](#)

# What Health and Social Care Partnerships Said They Need:

A workshop with participants from x HSCPs explored what were the most important areas that would support their move to a community led approach to planning and delivery of health and social care. This identified the main focus of change to be 'Commissioning Differently' with three enablers 'Bold & Radical Leadership', 'Building Trusting Relationships', 'Different Conversations' and a foundation for this change to be 'Improvement in a Complex World'.

Areas Identified



## Commissioning Differently

to embed genuine **co production** values and increase range of choice for people in meeting their care and support needs. Current system is characterised by purchasing services to which people are then **allocated a limited resource**. This also encourages a dependency culture. Preferred commissioning system would **facilitate people's choice** to have care and support which allows them to **live their life their way**.

## HSCP Actions to Commission Differently

- Shifting the focus of resources in commissioning - reduce time spent tendering, more collaboration less competition
- Commissioning informed by understanding needs of communities & individuals
- Rethinking roles and responsibilities within Commissioning Cycle
- Measuring the impact of commissioning in terms of wellbeing and what is valued
- Improvement cycles based on learning

## Improvement in a Complex World

Embedding a learning system approach within commissioning practice as the norm, leading to increased capacity for people to achieve **coproduced outcomes**. The current system is characterised by **inertia (more of the same)** – with no significant changes to models of care and types of service provision. Preferred system would evolve in an **agile and dynamic** manner with all parties working on **testing** on small scale and **implementing to local conditions** based on continuous learning – what works and what do we learn from what doesn't work.

## HSCP Actions for Improvement in a Complex World

- Implementing a learning approach based on:
  - Understanding learning systems and impact on commissioning
  - Setting up systems to measure what matters rather than what is measurable
  - Embracing learning from what doesn't work
- Developing an approach to change based on continuous improvement

## Key Enabler of Change

### HSCP Actions for Bold & Radical Leadership

- Creating a permissive and empowering environment for staff to innovate and work differently
- Engender risk approach based on - don't break the law, don't break the bank but do break the mould
- Foster the transformation in commissioning practice outlined in Independent Review of Adult Social Care
- Drawing from inspiring leaders and being an inspiring leader

### Bold & Radical Leadership

development within public sector. Currently there are **pockets of innovative leadership** which are seen as the exception and not yet normalised practice. Preferred leadership practice would be based on, or supported by, a network of **connected peers** who exchange learning and **help others adapt** to their local circumstance so what seems like **radical leadership** becomes the norm. The bold and radical nature of change required at this time equally requires **bold and radical leadership** which is well served by peer support networks to give confidence to those within these roles.

## Building Trusting Relationships

between all sectors, communities and citizens. The current system is characterised by **an imbalance in power** which manifests as all players in system experiencing a limiting of ability to do the right thing including people being able to being able to live their life their way. The preference would be that power and decision making would be shared equally with the **main focus** on outcomes for individuals.

## HSCP Actions to enable Building Trusting Relationships

- Clear understanding of current level of engagement and coproduction
- Appetite and commitment to change
- Ceding power - willingness to work with communities in a different way
- Sharing knowledge with partners and communities to support capacity to make joint decisions
- Creating shared space for conversations, planning and actions

## HSCP Actions for Different Conversations

- Understanding the impact of a Good Conversation approach on commissioning
- Creating the conditions for collaborative conversations around innovation - using a Scottish Approach to Service Design
- Changing the conversations around Risk (Red and Blue rules) towards what can be done rather than what can't be done
- Follow the 'Different Conversations' with 'Working Differently'

## Different Conversations

Start and promote **different conversations** around commissioning practice which are **responsive** to the different conversations at the heart of community led approaches. The current system is characterised by conversations about service responses and how to buy best value. The preferred system will be characterised by conversations around **collaboration** and **continuous learning** leading to constantly adaptive and flexible support for wellbeing in communities.

## Focus on Collaboration

To enable a community led approach to health and social care an essential requirement is for HSCPs to work in a collaborative space with communities, community organisations, third sector, social enterprises and independent organisations.

### This needs:

- Focus on co-production
- Honest but respectful conversations
- Understanding & learning from different perspectives
- Being aware of power imbalances



Associated with this report is a parallel report produced by Outside the Box focussing on the community organisation perspective about collaboration with HSCPs. This is important reading for HSCPs as it identifies a range of actions that strengthens development and sustains ongoing collaboration with community organisations. Understanding the challenges of each part of the 'community sector' and helping support them will benefit the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

## ihub Support for HSCPs to Commission Differently

The Commissioning for Community Solutions team within ihub recognise three points:

1. Scale of change is both bold and extensive
2. This will require a lot of work within HSCPs, especially for staff involved in commissioning
3. There are several national organisations who will be helping support this transformation

We have identified the following priority actions:

- Sharing learning through examples of ‘what works’ through ‘Commissioning Differently’ case studies
- Reimagining the Commissioning Cycle to reflect collaboration rather than competition
- Adopt a learning system approach to underpin measurement for improvement within reimagined Commissioning cycle
- Supporting HSCPs to link this to the [Strategic Planning Good Practice Framework](#).
- Developing and establishing a learning network to test and adapt new ways of working
  - Acknowledging that Winter 2021 is bring a culmination of pressures (ongoing Covid, winter pressures and severe staffing shortages) during this period we will prioritise:
    - Host Drop In Sessions- these will give system leaders a space to share any challenges, discuss emerging solutions, make connections with peers, identify requests for national organisations to consider for support
    - Provide specific and targeted support to HSCPs to commission, measure and lead differently

To read more about the journey so far and resources available please visit our [webpage](#).

# Appendix: A focus on Commissioning Differently to deliver a community led approach to health and social care

Focus of change

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Foundation for change

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Key enabler for change

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Enablers for change

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