

Evaluating the Impact of Bolton's Co-design and Engagement Enabling Group

- The Co-design Enabling Group see themselves as diverse professionals at the heart of co-design in Bolton with a mission to change the relationships between providers and recipients of their services.

Objectives

The overall objectives of the evaluation were;

- To explore how far Bolton has come in terms of embedding Co-design as standard practice in health and social care service development and delivery.
- To explore how useful the group itself, the output from the Engagement Alliance and the co-design training initiated by the group have been for the people that came into contact with these resources.
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- To understand to what extent members of the Co-design Enabling Group and Co feel that the group is meeting its objectives.
- To understand to what extent group members value the Group as a source of support and coordination.
- To appreciate how members of the Group feel their work can be best continued in the medium to long term.

Methodology

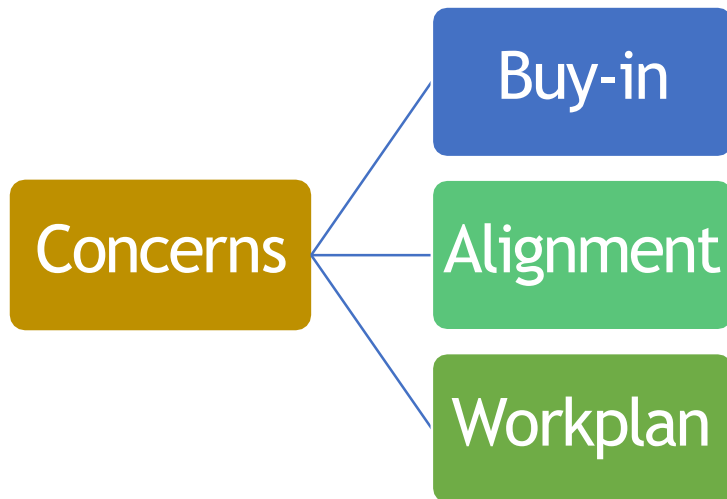
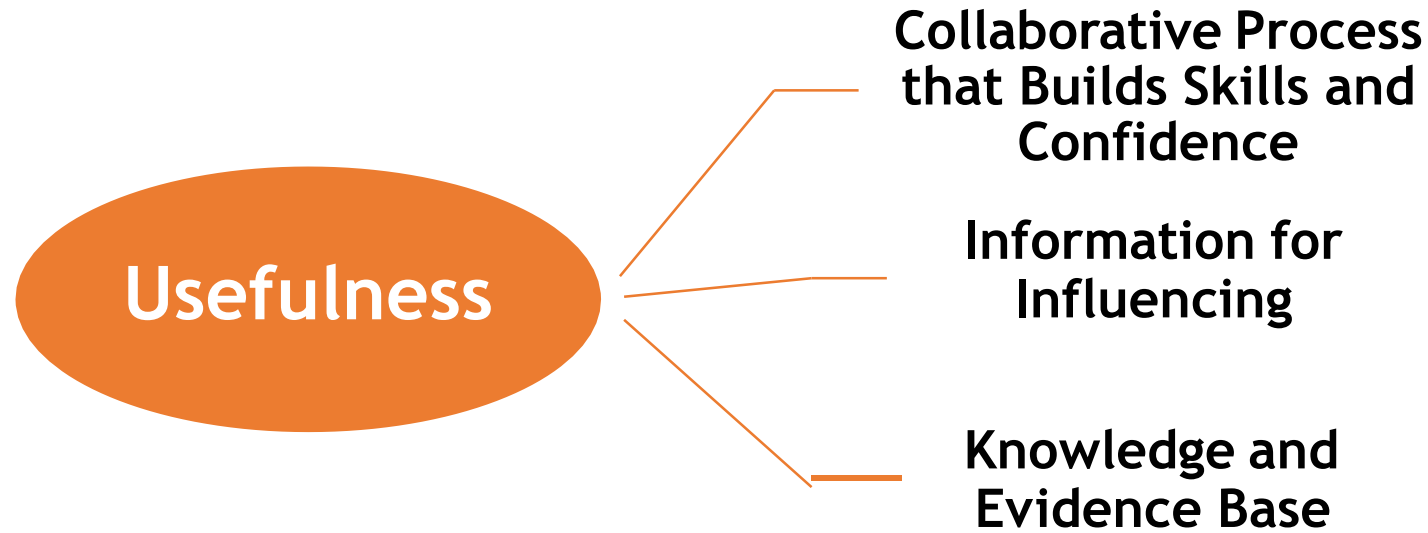
- desk research
- semi-structured interviews with group members
- survey with co-design trainees

‘Usefulness’ - of the reports, of the co-design training and of the co-ordination infrastructure.

‘Embeddedness’ -of co-design practice and the practice of using public insight data.

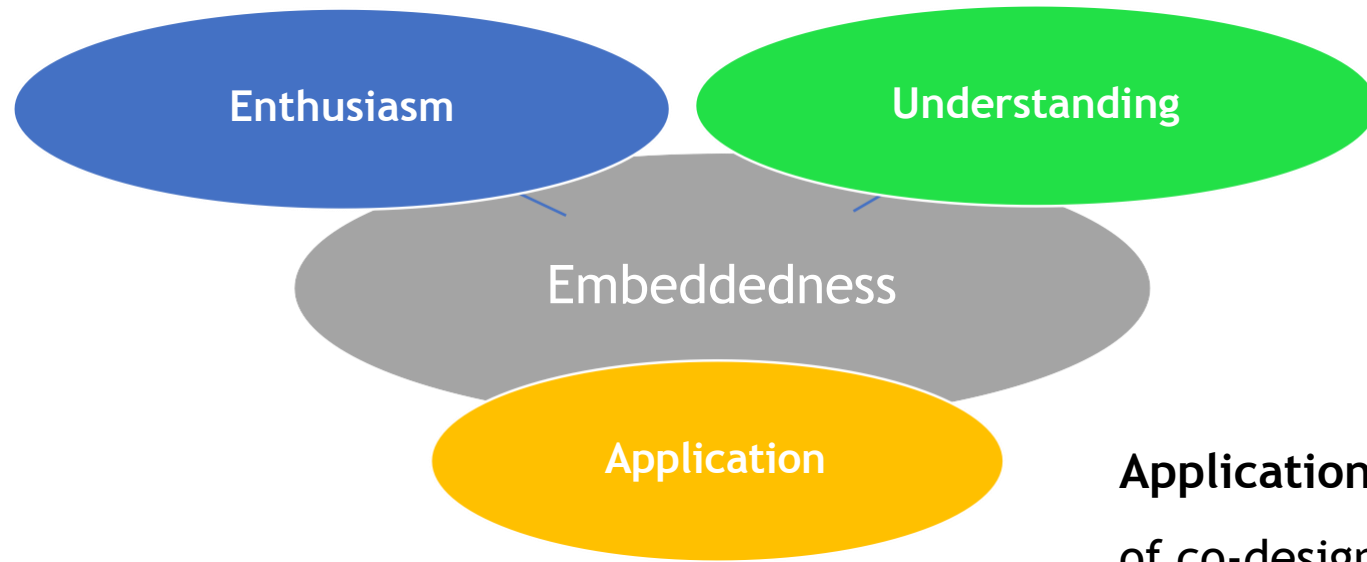
‘Impact’ - people’s perceptions of the value of co-design now as opposed to before the Co-design Enabling Group was established.

‘Support’ - people’s perceptions of how the Group and its outputs have supported them to progress understanding of engagement and co-design in their wider organisational contexts.



- Limited 'buy in' from system leaders / top executives/ decision makers
- Group members are not always clear how they can use the evidence and reports created.
- There is no long term work plan - prioritising was difficult.

Understanding and Enthusiasm - Members of the group reported that their personal understanding of co-design has shifted over the past 12 months, and that the work of the Group had helped to create a much needed 'enthusiasm' for co-design in the Borough.

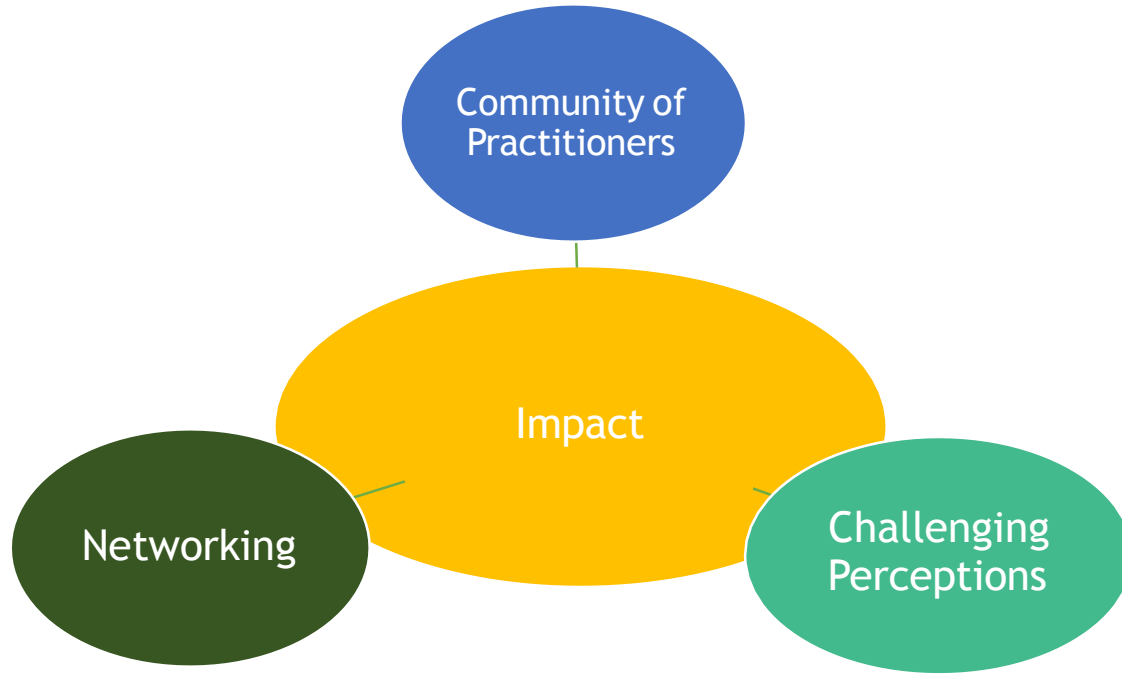


Application - Participants felt, however, that application of co-design in local service provision remains largely uncoordinated, and at best 'hit and miss'. People feel that the following things need to happen if co-design and engagement is to become properly embedded.

Support

The group felt that they had created:

- Opportunities to share and learn locally and regionally - monthly meetings, & training for local providers
- Co-design Evidence Bank - these include reports, co-design statements, co-design checklist, & co-design toolkit
- Culture of joint working - pooling knowledge and expertise, creating mutually useful projects, joining up knowledge.

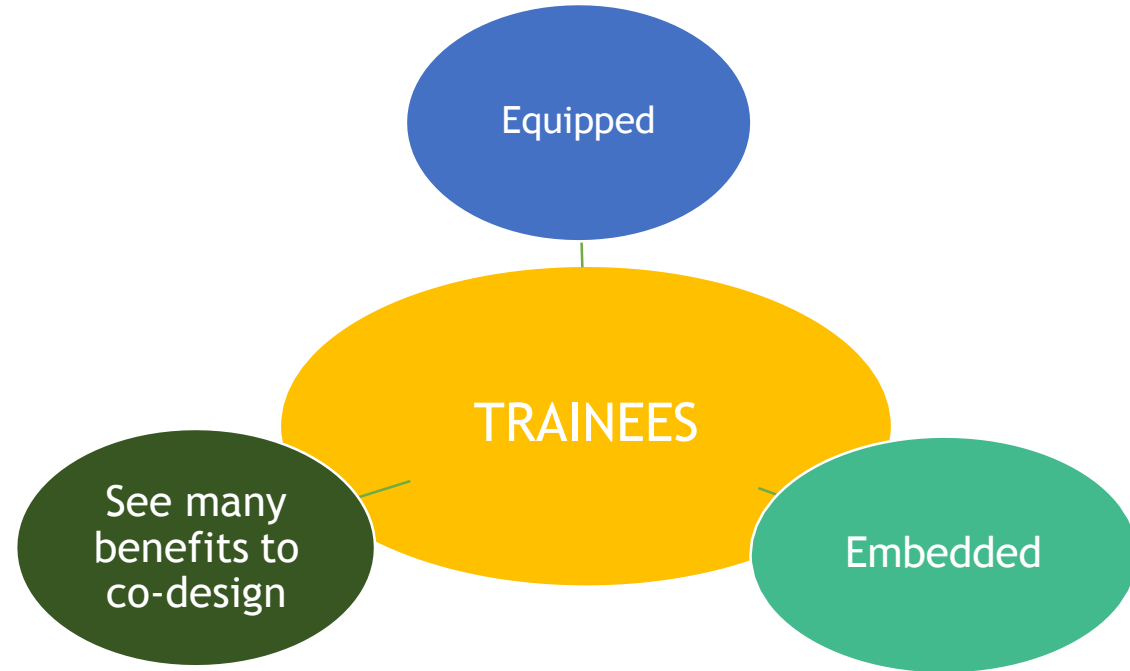


- **Networking** - Building relationships, and creating a culture of co-working, and co-planning is seen as an important positive benefit that had impacted on people's way of working more broadly.

- **Community of Practitioners** - The group felt that they had created a community of practice who had a shared view of how engagement and co-design should be done, who understood and valued each others contributions and who are working on a joint venture.

- **Challenging Perceptions** -The group felt they helped to debunk myths around co-design, and shift the perceptions of decision makers from thinking co-design is impossible to thinking it doable.

Equipped - Respondents reported that they had learned something valuable, felt inspired and empowered. They also reported a better understanding of what needed to be done to make co-design real.



Perceived Benefits of Using Co-design - trainees saw both direct and indirect benefits of using co-design and co-design methods.

Embedding Co-design - Trainees reported mixed results in this respect Some, have not continued with the co-design journey beyond the training itself, others have taken tangible steps to move beyond the co-design training and embed co-design in their activities and routines.

Conclusions

Achievements of the Co-Design Enabling Group

- Generated discussion about co-design and increased understanding of, and enthusiasm for co-design.
- Created a shared understanding locally about what co-design is and what it is for.
- Begun to build an evidence base of reports and tools for co-design which people are reading and using
- Empowered and equipped people to use co-design methods in their ‘day jobs’.
- Supported people to use co-design in their ‘day jobs’
- Created and supported some co-design champions in a variety of organisations across the health and care system.
- Created a community of practice for co-designers.

On-Going Challenges

- Need to move co-design from ‘Nice to do’ to ‘need to do’.
- Organisations are at different stages of the co-design journey not all understand or value co-design and many are not equipped to do it.
- There is a lack of visible leadership from the most senior decision makers on the co-design agenda.
- It is not clear exactly who has used the co-design toolkit and the Engagement Alliance reports and to what end.

Suggestions for Future Development

- **Leadership** - there is a need to develop a shared approach at system level. System leaders to recognise co-design as an essential part of their processes More funding to shift approach from ‘strategy’ to ‘operation’ - need to redouble the effort to get senior people on board.
- **Develop a broader training, development and mentoring programme**
 - The organisations found the co-design training very useful but described it as a ‘one-off’ provision. For co-design culture to take charge, some organisations have requested an on-going co-design training and support programme.
 - Wider reach - increasing contact with individuals, organisations, and groups to increase the size and diversity of the developing co-design community of practice.

- **Co-design Resource Bank** - Extend and promote the Co-design Resource Bank so more people know about it and use it. Resources to include;
 - Examples or ‘case studies’ of how a pathway or a service is made better with co-design that could be shared amongst organisations that have completed the training
 - Examples of good practice and case studies relating to co-design
 - Some more detailed resources exploring the mechanics of co-design in different context need to be developed and created for example; Exploring in detail how and where we can use co-design in making a pathway or a service better.
 - Develop some methods or tools to monitor and evaluate whether the intended benefits of Co-design are actually realised.
- **Workplan** - Develop a more robust long-term workplan that combines influencing and practical support priorities.