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Capturing Ageing Better's Co-production Journey!

This is the first in a series of blog posts shared by Vicky O'Donoghue (Age Better in Sheffield's Senior Co-production lead), which is set to feature lots of the 14 Ageing Better programmes from across England! Have a read of the first blog post to find out more about the exciting project she's working on...

At the end of 2019 we were really pleased to welcome [Vicky O'Donoghue](#) to the Age Better in Sheffield team. Vicky is working on an exciting collaborative project which brings the 14 Ageing Better partners together around one important theme: co-production!

There are a number of aims for this project, the biggest being about getting to the heart of what co-production work has been happening across Ageing Better (and more importantly, what impact this has had for hundreds of people up and down the country). Vicky's work also ensures that the co-production approaches that have been fostered, and the learning that has been gained, can continue to be used to deliver change in the future.

Over the next 12 months Vicky's going to be sharing lots of blog updates about the incredible work that's been happening across the programme. The first is below!

What an adventure it's been so far!

There have been so many highlights of my first meetings with teams. In this first blog I'm going to focus on my visit to London where I met with lots of the wonderful people involved with Ageing Better Camden.

A Warm & Inspiring Welcome in Camden

A warm & inspiring welcome in Camden...

[Ageing Better in Camden](#) pride themselves on their [Warm Welcome](#) approach which demonstrates how something so simple such as meeting and greeting people with a friendly face can have such a huge impact! I certainly received this when attending the [Older People Advisory Group](#) meeting in January! The OPAG are a lively, vocal and inspiring group and a fantastic example of co-governance and co-design in action.



There is so much learning to be shared from this group who help shape all of Ageing Better in Camden's older people projects & activities, driving forward the voice of older people to ensure that their views are listened to and needs understood.

Part of the meeting included an activity facilitated by Camden Council's ["We Can Move"](#) campaign which looks to engage people over the age of 60 and inspire them to become more active. They were keen to run their ideas past the OPAG group, after all they are the experts on what would help reach older people and understand why "Mary" (a 70+ year old lady depicted in a case study) might get involved! Members certainly gave rich and frank feedback and one member Costas said that he *"couldn't really relate to stepping into the shoes of a 70-year old female"*, which is a fair point!

The meeting then focused on the future, with discussions around the role & responsibilities of OPAG when Ageing Better ends; such as what that means and the sustainable options that are available post June 2021. Something tells me that this passionate and invested group of older people will still be thriving for many years to come!

I also met with [Corinna Hyman](#), ABC Programme Manager, who had lots of ideas about how Camden might contribute to the wider co-production project. One of the key themes that Corinna is keen to explore are the challenges around "power sharing" and how to ensure that *everyone's*

voice is equal. This is something that the team have worked tirelessly to improve, often initiating

voice is equal. This is something that the team have worked tirelessly to improve, often initiating conversations with local statutory organisations, professionals & services to encourage them to integrate the core principles of true co-production.

A big thank you to Corinna & the ABC team for supporting the project so fully and to OPAG members for a lovely “warm” welcome and such insightful discussions.

Ageing Better partners will be guest blogging about co-production too and next up are Bristol Ageing Better (otherwise known as BAB) featuring an exciting piece of work around BAB's success of “Growing Groups”. This will follow the journey of a co-designed & co-delivered Bereavement Peer Support Group!

If you're interested in finding out more about the approach I'm taking as I continue to explore this exciting work, [please have a read of the full brief which outlines future plans!](#)

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Age Better in Sheffield

Age Better in Sheffield was set up in 2015 with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund with a remit to reduce loneliness and social isolation amongst people aged over 50 in Sheffield. In the 7th year of the programme, we are taking the learning, resources, partnerships

and projects forward with a renewed focus and passion towards building an Age friendly

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