

## Focus on: Co-production in Commissioning

In 2017 WY-FI and North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) at NHS England were winners of the GO Procurement Innovation Award. The national Government Opportunities awards celebrates excellence in public procurement. WY-FI and NECS were selected from 150 finalists for working together to commission healthcare services in four adult prisons. Two WY-FI Network Members were part of the project team buying in prison healthcare services worth £20 million.

AWARD  
WINNING

### Background

NHS England has direct commissioning responsibility for healthcare for people detained in prisons and prescribed places of detention, which for this project included:

- A high security prison
- Two adult male prisons
- Two female prisons
- A Young offenders' institution
- A secure children's home

Previously, these services were commissioned by Primary Care Trusts for prisons in their locality. Consequently a range of different commissioning and contracting models were inherited, resulting in variability of provision, service quality and insufficient value for money. This was never a sustainable position and this procurement represented a critical milestone to correct this.

Scope of the procurement:

- 18 month long commissioning cycle
- £20 million budget
- High profile
- High risk



### The role of the WY-FI Network Members

- WY-FI Network Members were part of the bid evaluation project team and the presentation evaluation panel
- A male Network Member worked on the male high security prison and adult male prisons
- A female Network Member worked on the adult female prisons
- Both Network Members suggested specific questions to ask providers

### WY-FI Project provided:

- Advice on accessing patient voice
- Access to Network Members with specialist knowledge
- Experience and expertise in working with Network Members
- Support to Network Members
- A venue/location for meetings, briefings and training
- A trusted organisation to work with
- Network Members' expenses paid and invoiced



### Learning

WY-FI learnt that Network Members need:

- A venue/location for meetings, briefings and training
- Coaching and support
- IT system training
- Expenses paid



### Benefits for Network Members

Network Members reported:

- Feeling more empowered
- Feeling more confident
- Enjoying participating in an interesting and enjoyable process
- Feeling better knowing they had

made a real  
difference



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### Benefits for the commissioner

- Improved patient engagement
- Patient engagement becomes a central part of the procurement process
- Enables NHS organisations to deliver against the NHS England Patient and Public Participation Policy and meet the objectives in the NHS Five Year Forward View
- A positive impact on project outputs
- Clear evidence to show this was not a tokenistic gesture
- Commissioners perceived as pioneering
- Services are targeted to want and need
- Better use of resources
- Organisation learns and develops
- Positive change in organisational culture
- Public/patient involvement becomes a given
- Systems and processes established which will make it easier and quicker next time around



### Challenges

- Fully embedding the patient voice into health and justice commissioning due to access and security issues with service users. Existing prisoners could not take part – as current recipients of the service, there was a conflict of interest
- Nervousness from both professionals and Network Members – how much value would this process really add?
- Process being perceived as tokenistic
- Fears that Network Members would not be ready to be involved in such a complex process
- Misconceptions around skills and abilities of Network Members, e.g. IT and literacy skills
- Funding Network Members' expenses
- Project timescales changing which led to the loss of one Network Member
- Fear of change



### Keys to success

- A clear service level agreement outlining roles and responsibilities of all organisations involved
- Being brave
- Rather than asking 'What can Network Members do?' Ask yourself 'What cannot be done by Network Members?'
- Keep jargon to a minimum
- Engage Network Members from a diverse ethnic background
- Ensure commissioners are in the same room as Network Members often
- Have robust project management
- Be steadfast in your resolve to improve and change