

“What Works”: iNetwork Innovation Awards 2015

Title	Co-operative Working
Organisation(s)	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Author	Iain Robinson
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Service area ¹	867. Service Delivery Consultation, 1745. Public Health Strategic needs assessment
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Description of project

Co-operative Working is a uniquely innovative, outcome-focused approach to helping individuals and households to extricate themselves from crises which would ordinarily require costly and complex multi-agency interventions. Building on conventional methodology around Troubled Families, Co-operative Working is a ‘whole system’ service delivery model offering tailored solutions which are co-designed with individual participants. Built-in operational principles ensure that success is measured solely in terms of participants’ progress towards agreed outcomes that will enable them to lead balanced, productive and healthier lives. This holistic



approach is unlocking significant shared benefits for public sector partners and driving transformation across local services. Once fully rolled out citywide, Co-operative Working will radically improve the way in which all local services respond to the needs of people with multiple and complex problems. The result will be far more efficient and effective services which are easier for users to access and which have the capability to transform lives and reshape the local landscape of public service delivery.

What makes this initiative remarkable?

Co-operative Working is a unique approach to resolving core problems which lead about 9,500 households citywide to repeatedly access frontline services. It is a ‘whole-system’ approach to dealing with multiple complex problems which perpetuate dysfunctional behaviour and leave households and individuals mired in crisis. Traditional interventions failed because they involved multiple agencies working in isolation, and prioritised outputs over outcomes. By reshaping how services identify and

¹ Based on the Local Government Service List.

<http://standards.esd.org.uk/?uri=list%2FenglishAndWelshServices&tab=downloads>

respond to problems, Co-operative Working has transformed the structure and operational priorities of council services and is driving a wider cultural shift across local public services to improve responsiveness and deliver meaningful outcomes. It was designed around an innovative set of principles which only recognise work that brings the recipient measurably closer to resolving their problems. Participants are allocated a dedicated support worker for the duration of the process, and support can only be withdrawn with the participants' agreement that their problems have been resolved or there is no prospect of further progress. This ensures that services are focused on individual outcomes and are responsive to users' needs.

What has the project achieved?

Co-operative Working is a collaboration between the city council and other local services, including police, the fire service and the NHS. Data sharing has provided a more accurate picture of demand for support and the extent to which problems transcended traditional organisational boundaries and service areas. This has also highlighted the potential shared benefits of collaboration. Projected per case savings of £6,200 to £14,500, depending on complexity, indicate potential citywide savings of more than £36m a year, with police and NHS services the main beneficiaries. Helping households out of crisis also improves overall community resilience and reduces reliance on public services. Encompassing more than 20 conventional council services, alongside a range of specialist intervention teams and input from public sector partners, Co-operative Working uses a specially created IT system to enable partners to identify and track individual cases and deliver a seamless service tailored to users' specific needs. This cohesive multi-agency approach to service redesign has been endorsed by central government, which awarded £4.9m through the Transformation Challenge Award fund in January to accelerate the expansion of Co-operative Working.

Video case study:	http://devolution.i-network.org.uk/effective-service-redesign-reform-award-finalist-videos/
Links:	http://www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/community-and-living/cooperative-working/
For more information please contact:	Catherine O'Neil catherine.oneill@tameside.gov.uk

For more iNetwork “What Works” studies see:

<http://i-network.org.uk/case-studies/>