The Role of Co-Production in Combating Loneliness and Social Isolation in Later Life

A Case Study of the Time to Shine Programme

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Abstract

This thesis was commissioned by collaborative partners, the University of Sheffield and Time to Shine, part of the National Lottery Community Fund Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme. The aim of this thesis was to bring three bodies of knowledge: loneliness and social isolation; co-production and theories of power and empowerment in a unique way to explore how co-production could be used to combat loneliness and social isolation. The research questions were central to the thesis: 1. What are the lived experiences of loneliness and social isolation of older people? 2. How do people's lived experiences contribute to strategies and services to address loneliness and social isolation? 3. What are the important elements necessary for co-production? 4. Can a model of co-production be developed to inform future work with older people who are socially isolated and lonely?

The empirical research took place in Leeds, using the Time to Shine programme as a case study. The researcher took an interpretivist ontological and social constructionist epistemological stance and a Participatory Action Research approach. The empirical research used a range of qualitative research methods including literature review, semi structured interviews, sensory and mapping interviews, and a focus group.

This thesis argues that co-production is both paradigm and praxis and that power plays a central role in the relationships between stakeholders. It also details the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation in later life and incorporates this into an understanding of co-production with older people who are lonely and isolated. The thesis cements its contribution to knowledge with its recommendations for practice in several areas, including approaches to research in this area work, loneliness and social isolation services and the essential elements required for successful co-production. The thesis culminates with a recommended model for co-production with older people who are lonely and isolated with elements of learning which is transferable to other contexts.

I, Louise Whitehead, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

A co-production practice toolkit has been developed using the findings from this thesis in conjunction with the Time to Shine programme, to be launched in January 2021.

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Table of Contents

Table of Figures

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The inception of this thesis was the result of collaborative work between the University of Sheffield and the Time to Shine programme, the Leeds-based site of The National Lottery Community Fund initiative, Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better. The focus of this collaborative work was to evaluate the impact of interventions to reduce social isolation and loneliness in later life in the Leeds area.

The Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme which has been funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, running from 2015-2021. The Time to Shine programme is one of fourteen cross-sector partnerships which has used the funding to tackle loneliness and social isolation for people over the age of 50 in England, with the goal to test and learn from creative ways to promote connection and inclusion. In Leeds, the Time to Shine programme has formed a strategic board and sub-group structure which is chaired and supported by people who are 50+ who are working for all older people across Leeds, supported by a small, employed staff team. Alongside older people and the staff team, other partners connected to the Time to Shine programme are the statutory partners of Leeds City Council and NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group. It also includes third sector organisations in Leeds who work with older people such as Age UK; Otley Action for Older People; Leeds Irish Health and Homes; Health for All; and Feel-Good Factor. Organisations that serve the wider population such as Yorkshire Dance, Yorkshire MESMAC, MIND, Carers Leeds, The Conservation Volunteers and Canal Connections.

The most significant amount of funding has been used to commission projects in local communities across Leeds. Some of these projects have focused on supporting older people in particular geographical locations, including running social and community groups or projects to match local people based on shared interests. Other projects have been funded to support people who are in similar circumstances; for example, groups for people who live in residential and nursing care; shared tables events in restaurants for people who want to meet for meals; connections for people from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, or sexual orientation from across Leeds; or people who have interests such as canal boats or walking groups.

Interest in the PhD topic grew out of the work of Time to Shine and was based on the knowledge and experience of the collaborative partners as they identified specific areas of practice that required further research. From this, a PhD opportunity to focus on co-production and its relevance and potential to make a difference for older people who are lonely and socially isolated was advertised and taken up by the researcher.

The researcher's background is in adult social work, primarily a social worker supporting older people, and included people who expressed they were lonely and isolated. The researcher had always held a professional interest in person-centred and strengths-based approaches to practice, and it was this interest that motivated the researcher when they took up this opportunity. Although the topic area was established by the collaborative partners; once appointed, the researcher shaped the research approach.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to situate the topic and to lay out evidence which is important and relevant to current practice. This includes an outline of the research questions and content of each thesis chapter. Prior to doing this, the chapter now moves on to situate the topic in the broader context of practice.

Context

The experience of loneliness and social isolation has attracted research and policy focus in recent years, particularly in response to multi-organisational public awareness campaigns. An example of this is the Campaign to End Loneliness which was set up in 2011 to share research, evidence, and knowledge with organisations and the wider public.   Public awareness was raised significantly following the murder of the Batley and Spen Member of Parliament Jo Cox in 2016. Jo Cox had initiated a cross-party commission to explore ways to address the 'hidden crisis of loneliness' across the life course just before she died. The commission continued in her name and ran until the end of 2017, working with 13 organisations to understand loneliness from childhood to later life, and for people in specific circumstances, such as people with disabilities, refugees and carers. The commission published its findings in a report *Combating loneliness one conversation at a time: A call to action* (2017). The commission, along with the Campaign to End Loneliness successfully raised awareness of this important issue, which led to Government action with the appointment of a minister for loneliness in January 2018, and the publication of the Government strategy *A connected society: A strategy for tackling loneliness* in late 2018. This thesis has made a timely contribution to this body of knowledge about what can work to combat loneliness and social isolation.

It is clear that loneliness and social isolation are not experiences which are unique to later life; in fact, the most recent data from the Office for National Statistics (2018) shows that younger people aged 16-24 reported feeling lonely more than other age groups, including those in later life. The ONS (2018) identified three profiles of people who were most likely to identify as lonely: widowed older homeowners living with long-term health conditions; unmarried middle- aged people with long-term health conditions; and young people who rent their homes who have little sense or trust in their local area. Drawing on this data, the profile of those who do report feeling lonely, are often in circumstances

which are more likely to be experienced in later life, such as those who are single or widowed and people with poor health or life limiting conditions and could fall within the scope of people whom the Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme targets, which is the focus of the empirical research for this thesis.

In recent years there has also been increased academic interest about maintenance of health and wellbeing in later life, characterised as maintaining independence, mobility and making an active contribution to society, which Bowling and Gabriel (2004) describe 'to add quality to the years of life' (pg. 2). Loneliness and social isolation have been identified as critical issues in this work, and Findley (2003) recognises these experiences are a risk to wellbeing in later life because of their significant association with decline in physical and mental health. Conversely, Cornwall and Waite (2009) recognise social connectedness as a key component of successful ageing because older people remain integrated in society, which provides access to information and support, essential for wellbeing and improved quality of life. Bowling and Gabriel (2004) also identify societal benefits where supporting older people to sustain their health and wellbeing has a wider economic imperative. They argue that by promoting health and sustained independence, there is prevention and delay in the need to access funded services such as the National Health Service and Local Authority adult social care budgets.

Alongside the raised profile of loneliness and social isolation, and growing recognition of the importance of maintaining health and wellbeing in later life, co-production has also risen to the forefront of practice across care and support services in England and Wales. Culture and practice in care and support services in the U.K. has shifted in recent decades. Beresford and Croft (1996) identified movement in the 1980's towards user-centred and user-led support and that people have the right to be involved in decisions and actions taken in relation to them. Although this was progressive in its time, it became increasingly clear that the concept of involvement did not tackle one of the most fundamental issues of power redistribution. Beresford (2003) argues, user involvement sought to gather information from service users, but did not challenge the underlying power relationships or decision-making processes between service and service user. The concept of co-production was first coined by Ostrom (1973) to shift to a more equal relationship between those who provide services and those who use them to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Cahn (2000) supports this conceptualisation of co-production and argues that individuals and communities have untapped potential which can be unlocked through co-production. This approach has influenced the legal and policy context for adult social care in the statutory and third sector. The policy guidance of Putting People First (HM Government 2007) introduced co-production, moving from user involvement to recognition that people who use services are 'experts by experience' and partners in the

commissioning, design, delivery and evaluation of services. This fundamental shift was consolidated in practice through the Care Act (HM Government 2014) and the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) (Care Council for Wales 2014) which outlined the expectations for culture change in work across the health and social care support services landscape and made co-production the expected approach to practice.

Aim of this Thesis

The aim of this thesis was to bring together three bodies of knowledge; loneliness and social isolation, co-production, and power and empowerment in a unique way to understand how co-production could be used to combat loneliness and social isolation in later life. The Time to Shine programme was used as a case study for the empirical research. To shape this fieldwork, four research questions were developed by the researcher:

Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of loneliness and social isolation of older people?

2. How do people's lived experiences contribute to strategies and services to address loneliness and social isolation?

3. What are the important elements necessary for co-production?

4. Can a model of co-production be developed to inform future work with older people who are socially isolated and lonely?

Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis has made several contributions to knowledge. It has brought together three bodies of literature: loneliness and social isolation, co-production, and power and empowerment and uses them in a combined way as an integrated theoretical lens to interpret the fieldwork data. The research methods used for the fieldwork increased knowledge about the practice of co-production and how to capture the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation. The fieldwork findings also contribute to knowledge about the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation in later life and this new perspective offers insight into alternative service provision focus. Finally, the thesis makes two significant contributions to knowledge about co-production. It introduces a new way of thinking about co-production that recognises the duality of the concept; that co-production is both paradigm and praxis. The thesis culminates by drawing together the findings to offers a new definition of co-production and a model for practice.

Thesis Structure

This thesis has an eight-chapter structure. Following on from this introductory chapter, two chapters review the key literature in the field. Chapter two examines the existing body of knowledge around loneliness and social isolation, and chapter three, co-production and theories of power and empowerment.

Chapter two begins with reflection on the emergence of the conceptualisation of loneliness and social isolation and links this to modern understanding and definitions. The chapter then refines and reflects on the specific issues and experience of loneliness and social isolation in later life and considers prevalence, risk factors and impact. Finally, the chapter concludes with an exploration of the range of current interventions used to address loneliness and social isolation with older people. This chapter predominantly contributes to answering research question one as it has examined existing literature about definitions and experiences of loneliness and social isolation. It also addresses research question two, as it has explored current interventions in this area of work.

Chapter three, the second literature-based chapter, opens with the exploration of co-production by the elucidation of the symbiotic relationship between the influence of legislation and policy, and cultural change in the sector. It then moves on to set out the argument that co-production is both a paradigm and praxis. It explores the concept of co-production as paradigm, and the changing nature of the relationship between the state and the individual to enable co-production. At the heart of this is the acknowledgement of the nature of power and how it shapes relationships and influences decision-making. The chapter explores the range of theories of power which are drawn on in chapters six, seven and eight to frame the findings from the thesis fieldwork. This chapter makes the case for acknowledgment of the importance of shifting these power dynamics to support a more equal relationship between state and individual, service and service user.

Chapter three then explores the praxis of co-production. It begins with empowerment theory and identifies pillars to enact the changes in power relationships necessary to connect paradigm and praxis for co-production. It then sets out the key messages from the academic and grey literature about the elements that are considered to signify co-production in practice. This chapter addresses research question three as it identifies the background and necessary elements for co-production and informed the thesis about current models of practice. It also contributes to question four with identified elements for a model of co-production with older people who are lonely and isolated.

Chapter four, the methodology and research methods chapter, expands on the ontological, epistemological, and methodological stance of the researcher and the use of PAR outlined the links to the case study approach and the range of qualitative research methods used including literature

review, semi-structured interview, sensory and mapping interviews, and a focus group. This chapter contributes to research question one as it outlines how this research method provided insight into the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation. It also addresses the second research question as it provided insight into how these lived experiences inform existing services and identified the potential to further inform development of future strategies and services.

The thesis then moves on to introduce three chapters based on the empirical findings of the research. Chapter five, the first findings chapter, addresses research questions one and two as it detailed the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation and makes links to strategies and services. The chapter begins with explication of the findings and establishes the working definitions of loneliness and social isolation across the Time to Shine programme. It then moves on to engage in analysis of lived experience, including expectations for relationships, issues linked to health and wellbeing, and the sensory experience of being alone and using services. This chapter contributes to knowledge as it not only identifies but also connects lived experience of loneliness and social isolation and existing services and provision. This addresses research question two of how services and provision are currently influenced by lived experience but has also identified the potential to inform the future direction of change.

Chapter six, the next findings chapter, moves on to elucidate the findings for a new paradigm for co-production. It draws on the theories of power and empowerment outlined in chapter three and explored the nature of power in co-production practice. Here, the thesis contributes to knowledge as it uses established theories of power and empowerment to build a comprehensive framework in the context of co-production with older people who are lonely and isolated. This framework takes account of the nature of power in co-production, the relationship between the individual and the system, relationship between organisations and the operation of power across the co-production cycle. These connections support the new paradigm of co-production detailed in chapter three. It also outlines the foundations of practice for co-production, addressing research questions three and four.

Chapter seven, the final findings chapter, details the current elements of co-production in practice at the Time to Shine programme and makes a substantial contribution to addressing research questions three and four. The chapter opens with exploration of understanding of what individuals understand by the term co-production and draws together these elements to establish how it is understood across the programme. Here, the thesis contributes to knowledge as it expands current definitions of co-production with recognition of the power relationships between individuals and services, as described in the co-production paradigm. The chapter then moves on to examine the action required for co-production, including the identification of the range of stakeholders and what they need to work

together effectively, the importance of diverse representation and the values of co-production. The chapter concludes with reflections on the importance of co-production as meaningful activity, summarises the necessary elements of co-production and addresses research question four with the provision of the underlying framework of a model of co-production for older people who are lonely and socially isolated.

Chapter eight consolidates the findings from across the thesis and provided a clear response to all four research questions. It identifies recommendations from the research about the research methods and for services for older people who are lonely and isolated. It then specifically addresses research question four as it recommends a model for co-production with older people who are lonely and isolated based on the research findings. This final chapter concludes with a summary of the thesis, the limitations of the research, recommendations for future research and reflections from the researcher.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

This chapter explores the existing body of academic literature about loneliness and social isolation. It opens by tracing the origins of the terms and how their conceptualisation has influenced current thinking. It then progresses to recognise the unique experience and issues related to loneliness and social isolation in later life, taking a more nuanced stance to examine some of the specific factors which have an impact on experience. Finally, this chapter concludes with reflection on the relative merits of a range of current interventions available for people in these circumstances.

Conceptualisation of Loneliness and Social Isolation

One of the earliest sociological researchers of loneliness and social isolation was Margaret Mary Wood writing in 1953. Wood (1953) argued at the time that these concepts (which she termed as 'aloneness') were more intrinsically linked to 'sentimental musings', that these feelings were more likely expressed through fiction, poetry and biography rather than sociological study. Wood (1953) acknowledged that these 'sentimental musings' brought the problem to the foreground for sociological study.

In Wood's (1953) work, the terms 'loneliness', 'isolation' and 'aloneness' are used interchangeably and without distinction between the lived experiences of individuals. Wood (1953) cites the work of Zimmerman - Solitude, or the Effect of Occasional Retirement on the Mind, the Heart and General Society in Exile, in Old Age and on the Bed of Death (1827). Wood acknowledges the concept of 'aloneness' in Zimmerman's work, pointing to an 'irrational or unnatural solitude' and its disadvantages, and that its effects are dependent on the individual's mental and emotional attitudes. These are some of the first conceptualisations of loneliness and social isolation; i.e. that it is an unwanted state and a subjective experience, as Zimmerman (1827) suggests that the effect of the solitude depends on the individual and their attitude towards their situation. This fundamental perception from 1827 continues to remain a key part of the conceptualisation of loneliness and social isolation in current academic thinking and in practice. Wood (1953) points to the fact that 'aloneness' is the absence of desired relationships rather than the absence of contacts. This also resonates with contemporary thinking as recognition of the importance of quality of the relationships is central to modern thinking about loneliness.

Wood (1953) goes on to explore the relationship between the experience of 'aloneness' and the nature of society, looking at how highly organised societal arrangements can be dissociative and isolating. Here, Wood (1953) identifies two categories of social relationships; interest relations

(contacts are selected on the basis of the service they can provide, they are a means to an end) and sentiment relations (contacts are selected by the desire for affectionate responses). These differentiations in types of relationships have been further refined in recent years; however, it is clear to see how Wood's (1953) work provided the foundations for current knowledge and practice.

Themes of 'aloneness', 'loneliness' and 'isolation' are further explored by Mannin (1966) who argued that loneliness is mental and emotional isolation, and that physical isolation has 'little or nothing to do with it' (pg. 11). Mannin (1966) acknowledges that physical aloneness may not add up to loneliness (dependent on individual temperament), but that it is mental aloneness (the lack of contact with others the individual identifies with or isolated in own ideas) that is the most acute form of loneliness. Mannin's ideas link to Wood's work, recognising that isolation is linked to the individual's mental and emotional attitudes, and that it is the absence of desired relationships rather than the absence of contacts which shapes the experience. Mannin (1966) further developed the notion of quality contacts, arguing that they are not defined by their purpose as outlined by Wood (1953) but by how the individual identifies with others, whether they are relationships with people of 'one's own kind' or where similar ideas are shared (Mannin 1966 pg 9).

The experience of loneliness was further explored by Weiss (1973), who acknowledged that it is widely distributed and severely distressing, but that there was little research in existence about the experience. Weiss suggested that loneliness was neglected because 'there was no theory with which to begin to cope with its manifestations' (Weiss 1973 pg. 33). Here, Weiss recognised that loneliness was a nuanced experience and the term had been used to describe a range of conditions. Weiss (1973) identified that loneliness had been used to describe a positive condition where an individual has an opportunity for reflection on their situation as separate others to recognise their 'true self'. This interpretation of loneliness is more closely aligned to Wood's (1953) description of 'aloneness' rather than 'loneliness'. Weiss (1973) acknowledged that this description is not congruent with most peoples' lived experience, which is described as 'gnawing rather than ennobling, a chronic distress without redeeming features' (pg. 15). Weiss (1973) goes on to describe loneliness as 'unwanted individuation', being separate from others and responsible for one's self. Here, Weiss identified social isolation as a distinct and separate experience from loneliness with a description of ordinary loneliness' not caused by being alone but by being without some definite needed relationship(s). Weiss (1973) describes this as 'the exceedingly unpleasant and driving experience connected with inadequate discharge of the need for human intimacy', not cured by ending aloneness. Weiss describes that some circumstances can exacerbate the experience; for example, people whose partners has died may feel excluded from

family life and feeling marginalised and with an absence of relationship provision. Finally, Weiss (1973) makes recommendations for practice, with indication that different types of experience require different responses; for example, where people lack close emotional attachment require different support to those who have an absence of engaging social network.

Drawing on the work of Wood (1953), Mannin (1966) and Weiss (1973), it is possible to see the foundations on which current work on loneliness and social isolation has been built. Although there is no distinction in this early body of literature between the loneliness and social isolation. The role perception of individual situation plays in the experience is vital. It is the experience of being separate from others and responsible for one's self, whether this stems from withdrawal from others or a deliberate choice to be alone, and the absence of desired relationships which drives these individual feelings and perceptions. Finally, social relationships fulfil different purposes, either they provide a 'function' or affection is the purpose of the relationship. It is both the quantity of the relationships and the quality of the relationship which should be with people of 'one's own kind', or where similar ideas are shared. Recognition of these different types of relationship is imperative for practice, as those who lack close relationships require different support to those who may not have the social relationships they desire. There are clear links from these foundational texts to current academic thinking and practice; however, this knowledge has been built on terminology which was used interchangeably and without distinction. The academic field has sought to identify delineated conceptualisations of the terms and to provide clarity for this thesis, they will now be examined in greater detail.

This chapter now draws on academic literature in the exploration of how loneliness and social isolation are currently understood. Despite this, it is important to recognise that the Time to Shine programme, and as Fakoya, McCorry and Donnelly (2020) indicate, along with other services in the sector, do not differentiate between the experiences of loneliness and social isolation in their service provision. This thesis acknowledges that although there is value in the exploration of the academic writing to separate the concepts, there is a significant overlap in practice which makes it difficult to untangle in a meaningful way. Nonetheless, the thesis now explores each concept separately.

Conceptualising Loneliness

The academic conceptualisation of loneliness starts from the idea that it is a subjective experience connected to emotion. This is supported by Townsend (1963), who made the link between the emotion of loneliness and an unwelcome feeling from a lack or loss of companionship. Peplau and

Perlman (1982) concur with the idea that loneliness is an unpleasant and distressing experience, which is not desired or welcomed by the individual who experiences this.

The connection of loneliness as an emotion indicates it is a subjective experience linked to how the individual perceives their feelings about their situation, as indicated earlier by Wood (1953), who argued that it is the individual's personality traits and attitudes that were central to their experience of the mental and emotional effects of their situation. This interpretation was adopted by Kaasa (1998) who understood loneliness is a subjective, negative feeling which is related to the person's own experience of deficient social relations, and Boldy and Grenade (2011) who recognised loneliness as related to an individual's subjective evaluation of their situation. This conceptualisation of loneliness also underpinned approaches to policy. Age UK/Campaign to End Loneliness (2015) defined loneliness as a subjective, deeply personal experience set in the context of the individual's values, needs, wishes and feelings. The Jo Cox Commission for loneliness (2017) adopted a similar definition and described loneliness as 'a subjective, unwelcome feelings which happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we have and those we want'. This understanding of loneliness not only has implications for practice, but as Rantakokko et al. (2014) argue that there is an imperative for research on loneliness to focus on how satisfied the individual is with their relationships. This interpretation of loneliness has been adopted by the researcher and implemented in the fieldwork for this thesis, outlined in further detail in chapter five.

As it has been established that loneliness is linked to emotion, it is important to recognise the importance of quality in relationships, with emphasis on how people feel about the relationships in their lives. Peplau and Perlman's (1982) work on loneliness identify that this emotion results from deficiencies in the relationships of the individual. This view is supported in later work; Victor, Grenade and Boldy (2005) identified that feelings of loneliness are in the individual's assessment of a gap between what they want and what they have in their interaction with others. Dickens et al. (2011) also argued that loneliness arises from negative feelings from the absence of meaningful relationships and social integration.

Loneliness should be understood as part of the human condition. Peplau and Perlman (1982) contextualise loneliness as part of a continuum of social experience and contrasts with an unwanted excess of interaction at the other end of the continuum. Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) agree that there is an inherent human need for connection, and that individuals do become distressed and experience psychological and physiological harm when their need is not met. It appears most likely that it is the

interplay between genetic inheritance and the individual experience which influences individual perceptions of quality of relationships. The level at which the individual experiences distress is dependent on the needs and resilience factors of the individual. As this is a common human experience, Peplau and Perlman (1982) expressed a concern at pathologising loneliness, arguing that it should only become a concern when it is chronic and creates a 'persistent self-reinforcing loop' of negative thoughts, sensations and behaviours.

As loneliness is an emotion linked to feelings about relationships; research has responded with a focus on the nature of the relationships for people who are lonely. De Jong Giervald and Van Tillburg (2006) have explored ways to understand the nature of relationships, concluding that people are lonely because of the absence of an attachment figure or confidant. Although this is a critical element of the relationship, there are other relevant dimensions, as Age UK (2010) identify, loneliness can also result from an individual feeling that they lack a useful role in society.

The literature indicates that there is a link between experiencing the emotion of loneliness to the perception the individual has of their relationships. As this is the case, it is important to gain insight into the lives of people who have experienced loneliness. Peplau and Perlman (1982) locates how feelings of loneliness are generated because of the inherent human need for intimacy. They draw on the work of Fromm-Reichmann (1959); Weiss (1973); and Bowlby (1973) who concur that there is an evolutionary biological imperative and drive for humans to forge relationships to satisfy their social needs. Peplau and Perlman (1982) recognise that loneliness contradicts this biological imperative and therefore, creates conditions in which the individual's wellbeing is threatened. The work of Weiss (1973) supports this, as he argues that the drive to avoid loneliness is so strong, individuals will do practically anything to avoid it.

This biological drive of human need for intimacy sets the scene for the importance of addressing loneliness; however, it can be argued that it goes beyond a purely biological drive. The range of circumstances in which individuals are born and raised (for example, the difference between a rural and urban existence, smaller and larger families, those who were raised in a care setting rather than a family setting) appears to have an inevitable impact on the drive for connection and intimacy, and a combination of nature and nurture appears to provide a more probable explanation. This is also supported by Age UK (2011), who argue that although the experience of loneliness is connected to emotion, it is also influenced by circumstances and events and is subject to cultural and psychological factors. Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) also make connections between nature and nurture. They argue

that loneliness is a tandem experience driven by both genetic inheritance and individual needs. They posit that there is a genetic predisposition for an individual's experience of loneliness which sets the standards for social connection from individual's experience with their families and caregivers from when they were very young; so where connections were strong in early experience, it sets the standard by which the individual judges their subsequent relationships.

Perception of relationships is not the only concern; it is also the challenge of sustaining relationships which can contribute to feelings of loneliness. Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) offer explanation on the complexity of the relationship between the individual and those with whom they seek a connection. Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) argue loneliness is insidious because it creates a Catch 22 situation. They recognise that real relief from loneliness requires the co-operation of at least one other person, but the lonelier an individual becomes, the less equipped they are to engage others in this relationship. As people frame their social reality around the difficulties of these relationships, the 'lens of loneliness' influences their understanding of the world. Their interactions reinforced through experience, they are less able to evaluate the intentions of others and they are forced into a 'defensive crouch' and appear to others to be more critical, competitive, denigrating or unwelcoming. The result of this behaviour is that others are more likely to reject their attempts to engage and form new relationships. The work of Hawkley and Cacioppo (2010) builds on this, suggesting that the experience of loneliness initiates hypervigilance of environmental and social threat; because of this, with the result that lonely people actively avoid social interaction, which in turn creates situations where they are more likely to feel lonely. This research suggests that the behaviour of the individual in the social exchange underpins its chance of success. The complex processes which are involved as posited by Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) provide insight into how these relationships are influenced and can form the basis of potential interventions for people who experience loneliness.

To contextualise the importance of loneliness in human experience, it is important to draw on wider theoretical influence. The well-established theory developed by Maslow (1943) on hierarchy of needs clearly situates the importance of social connection in human need. Maslow (1943) identifies social connection in the third tier, the psychological needs for belongingness and love which becomes a focus when physiological (food, water, warmth etc) and safety (security) needs are met. Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) challenge this position as they argue that loneliness has a much deeper impact on physiological needs. They argue that chronic feelings of loneliness drive a cascade of physiological events which trigger the physiological fight or flight responses in the human limbic system. This in turn triggers chemical responses, sending hormones and chemicals to the body's main muscle groups as a

biological reaction to the fight or flight response in readiness to fight or run away from the threat. The chemicals and hormones remain unused in this circumstance, resulting in a build-up of these chemicals and hormones which become corrosive to the body and accelerates the ageing process.

Attachment theory also contributes to the understanding of loneliness. Although it is more commonly associated with childhood attachment to parental figures, attachment theory also offers explanations about the need for relationships throughout the life course. Bowlby 's (1969) attachment theory indicates that the need for strong and efficient bonds with others is built into human biological inheritance. Not only in parent-child relationships, but where individuals are bonded to partners, they will generally seek to remain in proximity to each other, seeking to return to each other if apart. Strong emotional responses are associated with these bonds. Parkes (1969) recognises separation anxiety in the context of adult life as continuing to arise whenever temporary separations occur, or more lasting separations are anticipated. Parkes (1969) looks to the behaviour of bereaved adults which show that on hearing about the death of a loved one, they call and search for that person, but at the same time they are aware that this is irrational, useless, and painful, causing them to avoid, deny and restrict the expression of that search. The result is a compromise, a partial expression of the search which varies in degree from person to person over time which include restless movement and scanning the environment, thinking intensely about the person, develop a perceptual set of that person, directing themselves to the environment where the person is likely to be, and calling for the lost person. Parkes (1969) identifies that this behaviour has a 2-fold impact; if the separation is temporary, it will maximise the chance of reuniting with that person, but if the loss is permanent, the process of pining and searching plays an important part of unlearning the attachment to the lost person.

To summarise, the evidence points to loneliness as a complex human experience. It is an unwanted social state which is influenced by both biological and environmental circumstances which underpin the individual's interpretation of and response to their subjective experience. It is connected to whether the individual's relationships are satisfying either in a social or emotional sense, or whether the individual feels they have a useful role in society. Loneliness is a universal human experience which can happen at any time over the life course; but becomes problematic when it is chronic and creates a self-reinforcing loop. Responses to loneliness need to take account of the complexities of the experience of loneliness in the planned execution of interventions and services. This summary cements the understanding of loneliness for this thesis and is used in chapter five to contextualise the fieldwork findings. This chapter now moves on to discuss the concept of social isolation in further detail.

Conceptualising Social Isolation

Social isolation is a distinct and separate experience from loneliness which moves aware from feelings to a more prosaic, objective measurement of the number of an individual's social contacts. Peter Townsend (1963) described social isolation as a phenomenon of having few contacts with family and community; this definition is influential in current thinking and service provision. Social isolation is identified by de Jong Gierveld and Van Tilburg (2006) as an absence of relationships with others. Bolton (2012) supports this view, characterising social isolation as an absence of social relationship; Rantakokko et al. (2014) social isolation refers to a lack of contacts which can be objectively measured; and Pettigrew et al. (2014) who concur that social isolation is objectively measured by the size of the individual's network.

Although an individual's network can be measured by counting contacts, it is imperative that understanding about the nature of the contacts is further refined; not all contacts hold the same value for the individual. Pantell et al. (2013) included social ties, institutional involvement or community participation; and Machielse (2015) found that these networks included personal relationships with family, friends and acquaintances. Machielse (2015) developed a typology for reasons why someone can become socially isolated, Firstly, situational isolation was identified, which includes people termed as 'actives' who seek contact but are unable to because of circumstances; 'secures' who are not active but feel safe in family and friend networks, and people termed as 'laggers' who relied on a small number of intensive contacts for support and dependents who never move out of the parental home, remain in contact with family members and don't build their own social life. Secondly, Machielse (2015) identifies structural isolation, which includes 'compensators' who have a few social contacts but compensate with functional activities such as charity work, 'outsiders' who have never found a connection with others and turn away from society, 'hopefuls' who have a strong need for contacts but have never managed to engage in stable relationships, and 'survivors' who avoid contact with others as much as possible. This typology offers a more nuanced understanding of the experience of social isolation, with a focus on motivations and desires for the types of relationships people want in their lives which will help to combat social isolation. It also illustrates the importance of taking a nuanced approach to understanding social isolation; it may be linked to the number of contacts in the life of an individual, but a refined understanding of what the individual wants and the types of support provided by the contact are essential contributions to understanding of social isolation. This indicates there is a spread of contacts to include when examining the networks of individuals, which this thesis has adopted in the conceptualisation of social isolation. Cornwell and Waite (2009) also identify that when an individual becomes socially isolated, this can create further difficulty to establish meaningful relationships because they lack existing relationships and resources. The issue raised by Cornwell and

Waite (2009) echoes issues about the impact of loneliness earlier in this chapter raised by Cacioppo and Patrick (2008), that when people are lonely, they are less equipped to develop the relationships which might help to alleviate the feelings of loneliness.

Understanding social isolation requires more than an objective measurement of number of contacts in a person's network. Pettigrew et al. (2014) argue that a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach which takes account of the different meaning and value of relationships in the individual's network is critical to aid understanding of an individual's circumstance. Ellwardt et al. (2013) and Machielse (2015) identify those individuals receive different types of support from connections in their networks. This includes emotional support, which attends to individual's feelings and experiences, and instrumental support, which is the provision of practical or material help. Machielse (2015) added companionship support, where the individual is supported to engage in activities. These types of support are not necessarily clearly defined in the context of peoples' everyday lives and these different types of support may also be provided by the same person. An example of this is that family members may provide both emotional and instrumental support, or paid carers may provide instrumental support, but as rapport builds, companionship support may also be provided. Recognition of types of support provided by different relationships is also advocated by Foley and Edwards (1999), who argue that any measure of social connectedness should distinguish between the quantity and quality of social. It can be difficult to be clear about the exact types of support available within the social network at any given time and it is clearly more complex than a simple quantitative analysis of the number of contacts within an individual's network. As Woolcock and Narayan (2000) argue, one single, true measure for social connectedness is not possible because of the multidimensional character of social relationships.

A comprehensive measurement for social isolation should consider how to bring together the different elements of social isolation, drawing together the measurement of the number of social gatherings as identified earlier in this section, but as Hughes et al (2004) agree, should also include subjective measures for those social contacts which includes satisfaction with social contacts, feelings of isolation or disconnectedness. There are challenges for using subjective measures of for social isolation, as Cohen-Mansfield and Parpura-Gill (2007) identify, subjective measures may not show the same decline in social connectedness for age groups as objective measures do and that it is difficult to compare subjective measures of experience to develop meaningful knowledge which can be used to understand experiences of social isolation.

Although loneliness and social isolation are distinctly different experiences, there are some links which can be identified. The complexity of the relationship between loneliness and social isolation also lies in the potential for them to have a mutual and reciprocal impact on experience. Both Age UK (2010) and Toepoel (2013) found that social isolation may also be accompanied by feelings of loneliness and socially isolated people may be at higher risk of loneliness because of the number and nature of relationships in their network.

The Time to Shine programme recognises loneliness and social isolation as separate terms but does not differentiate its services and provision according to the concepts which are available for people who are either lonely and/or isolated. The most helpful use of the literature has been to explore the difference in the definitions for conceptual clarity, but with the understanding that in practice this is difficult to sustain. This thesis recognises that social isolation and loneliness are conceptually distinct; however, they are closely entwined when considering issues of prevalence, risk factors and interventions; therefore, they will be considered together for these elements of the literature.

Prevalence in Later Life

The U.K. has an ageing population. The ONS (2019) data indicates in 2018, there were 11.9 million residents in Great Britain aged 65 years and over (18% of the total population) and by 2050, there are projected to be 17.7 million people aged 65 years and over (24.8% of the population). Those over 85 are projected to double to 3.6 million by 2050 (5% of the population). Age UK and the Campaign to End Loneliness (2015) acknowledged the ageing population, highlighting the potential for the number of lonely and isolated older people to also increase. The ONS (2019) data indicates that average life expectancy is currently 79.9 for males and 83.6 for females.

The ageing population is also becoming more diverse, with an increasing percentage of the population from Black and Minority Ethnic communities (21.2% in 2015 to an estimated 28.4% by 2026). This is also a predicted increase of people in the older population who openly identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community (Local Government Association 2015). The most recent data from the ONS (2016) on sexual identity found that in 2015, 0.3% of the over 65 population identifies as gay or lesbian and 0.3% as bisexual; however, for 16-24-year olds, 3.3% of the population identify as members of the LGBTQ+ population, which suggests that the older LGBTQ+ population will also increase over time.

Loneliness has long been associated with later life; however, recent Office for National Statistics (2018) data on loneliness found that the likelihood of reporting feeling lonely more often tends to decrease with age. The 25 to 34 years, 65 to 74 years and 75 years and over age groups were all

significantly less likely to report being lonely than the 16 to 24 years age group and that people aged 75 or over are 63% less likely to report loneliness than those aged 16 to 24 years old. The researcher was unable to access any separate data on the experience of social isolation in later life, which may represent a social trend towards discussing the experience of social isolation under the broader umbrella of loneliness.

The recent ONS (2018) data is interesting as it challenges preconceptions about the ageing experience; however, the profiles of those who are most likely to report feeling lonely represent common experiences in later life. These profiles include widowed older homeowners living alone with long-term health conditions, unmarried, middle agers with long-term health conditions and younger renters with little trust and sense of belonging to their area. Looking at these common experiences, there are two issues recognised by this thesis; that the features of loneliness are more likely to occur in later life, and that prevention of loneliness should begin much earlier in the life course. The literature suggests that the experiences associated with ageing mean that there is increased risk of loneliness and social isolation because of the changing nature of relationships. Lynch (1977) highlights this issue, indicating that the disruption of human relationships at regular intervals throughout the life course, such as death of parents, partner, family members, children leaving home, divorce, moving home, changing job or retirement. Lynch (1977) recognises that these things can happen to anyone at any age, but the older someone becomes, there is an increased likelihood that they will experience one or a combination of these factors. This view is supported by the Hastings Women's Study Group (1984) who also argue that it is not ageing which causes loneliness, but ageing increases the likelihood of experiencing losses. Pettigrew et al. (2014) also support this view, finding loneliness and social isolation are more likely to be experienced in later life because of the increased likelihood of the combination of factors including shrinking social networks due to bereavement and retirement, greater likelihood of living alone and increased risk of experiencing physical and mental health problems. Furthermore, Rantakokko et al. (2014) found that negative life-events, such as declining health or loss of spouse, and a reduced level of social activity increase feelings of loneliness.

It can be difficult to be precise about the number of older people who experience loneliness as the data appears contradictory. Steed et al. (2007) report that around 1/3 of older people experience loneliness; Dickens et al. (2011) estimate around 40% experience loneliness, whereas Siddique (2017) estimates that three quarters of older people feel lonely. Nicolson (2012) estimates that between 10%-43% of older people experience loneliness and social isolation. This could be attributed to reporting differences; Pettigrew et al. (2014) argue that social isolation has been a highly stigmatised

condition and Victor, Grenade and Boldy (2005) found that when asked about their experiences of loneliness and social isolation, older people are more likely to give a more socially acceptable response than a true response about their feelings and experience. Individual's may not perceive themselves as being lonely or isolated; Nicholson (2012) found that people are either reluctant to self-identify as socially isolated or they do not recognise themselves in that position where an objective assessment may deem them to be isolated. Furthermore, as Perissinotto and Covinsky (2014) identify, the true number of older people in these circumstances may be masked, as older people may move in with family or others when they are no longer able to live independent lives, and assumptions are made that these arrangements also reduce their feelings of loneliness or social isolation. It can also be challenging to contact older people who are lonely and socially isolated is difficult, because of the nature of their circumstances. Pettigrew et al. (2014) argue that because, by definition, those who lack social interaction are less likely to be 'out and about' and are therefore more difficult to identify and approach. This has significant implication for service provision, as discussed in further detail in chapter five.

The Intersection of Experience of Loneliness and Social Isolation in Later Life

As identified earlier in this chapter, people in later life are not a homogenous group, they are only united through chronological age. Perlman (2004) argues, loneliness is bound in cultural context and influenced by cultural factors including prevalence, intensity, and antecedents. The equality strands continue to impact on experience of loneliness and social isolation; as Holme`n et al. (1992) conducted an extensive study in Stockholm (of 1725 individuals aged over 75 years) concluded that loneliness is related to age, sex, marital status, number of social contacts, number of friends, health and cognitive function. This chapter will now explore these strands in further detail.

Socio-Economic Factors

Socio-economic factors have a significant impact on loneliness and social isolation in later life. Age UK (2019) identified that around 16% of people at pension age live below the poverty line, a measure taken from the DWP Households below average Income report (2019) and poverty identified as less than 60% of median income for working households of a similar size. There is also a clearly disproportionate experience of poverty for older people from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, as Age UK (2019) identified, from those older people living in poverty, 63% of people are from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Age UK (2019) also identified primary issues of poverty in later life related to housing (35% of older people who are private tenants and 29% of social tenants, compared to 13% of homeowners) and higher costs related to care needs. Dickens et al. (2011) argue that costs

related to care needs for the ageing population has resulted in emphasis being placed on health status trends of older people due to the anticipated increased demand for health and social care services.

Gender

The literature suggests that there is a gender difference in how loneliness and social isolation in later life are experienced. Men are less likely to report feeling lonely; Beach and Bamford (2008) found that women were significantly more likely than men to report feeling lonely "often/always", "some of the time" and "occasionally" and were much less likely than men to say they "never" felt lonely. and suggest that there is underreporting of feelings of loneliness by men. Beach and Bamford (2008) argue that that reason why men are less likely to report is either because it is more socially acceptable for women to admit they are lonely than men, or it is that men do not connect with the terminology of loneliness. This perspective is supported by the work of Apesoa-Varano et al. (2015) who concurs that women report feeling lonely more often than men, but it is not clear whether this is because of experience or research reporting differences. The gender difference is an area which requires further exploration, as Fayoka, McCorry and Donnelly (2020) identify in the most recent scoping of the relevant literature, where researchers focused on gender, it tended to be about intervention designed specifically for men rather than seeking to understand the difference in experience.

Older People from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

Evidence suggests that older people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities in England and Wales were more likely to experience loneliness and social isolation because of obstacles to systems and services. The British Red Cross/Co-Operative (2019) published a report 'Barriers to Belonging' which examined the specific barriers faced by people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities in England and Wales which created feelings of loneliness and social isolation. The research found that experiences of receiving discrimination, bullying and xenophobia increased likelihood of feelings of loneliness by around 49%, that people from BAME communities felt less able to access support as they didn't feel supported or felt they were not welcome. Around 60% of respondents in the survey felt there was stigma attached to feeling lonely, did not feel confident talking about loneliness and more than 1/3 said they would never admit to feeling lonely. The work of Hayanga et al. (2020) echoes this work, they found that older people from BAME communities were more likely to report fewer close friends and fewer friends living locally and that friendship networks may be restricted in quantity and reliability compared to White UK older people. Alongside these experiences, older people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities are also more likely to live in poverty. As discussed in the previous section, Age UK (2019) identified that 31% of Asian and British Asian older people and 32% of Black British older people live in poverty, compared to 15% of White pensioners.

Assumptions made about family structure and support influence approaches and interventions to working with older people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Burholt and Dobbs (2014) developed a typology of elders from a South Asian population living in the U.K. which challenged the notion that those from, what they term, as a family-oriented culture, for those whose network was not located in the family and were reliant on a non-kinship support network were more likely to feel lonely and their support networks were more likely to be overlooked. These specific experiences for people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities require further attention, as Hayanga et al. (2020) reflect, the specific needs of this group of people have been overlooked in recent government policy and approach.

Older People from LGBTQ+ Communities

Evidence from the literature also points to an increased risk of experience of loneliness and social isolation in later life. Perone et al. (2019) recognised people from the LGBTQ+ community were more likely to face higher risks of social isolation, and Hughes (2017) found higher rates of loneliness amongst people from LGBTQ+ population than in the general population. In this study, Hughes (2017) found that loneliness for LGBTQ+ identifying people was associated with living alone, not being in a relationship, higher psychological distress and with a more significant impact on mental health. Most participants in the sample did have a friend to rely on and engaged in social activities but often said they wanted to socialise more; and the barriers to this included anxiety, depression, not knowing how to connect to others in the LGBT community, recently 'coming out' and physical health issues. Fredriksen-Goldsen (2018) supported this view, identifying that older people may have 'come out' or recognised their sexuality at a time when this was still a criminal offence, resulting in decreased likelihood of forming partnerships which last into later life, and which in turn increased the risk of loneliness and social isolation as they age. This was also supported by Espinoza (2011) who found that people from the LGBTQ+ community are twice as likely to live alone and four times as likely not to have children.

Circumstantial and Environmental Factors

There are other circumstances which increased risk of loneliness and social isolation in later life. Donaldson and Watson (1996) argue that the loosening of social and family ties, increasing divorce rates and migration, indicating that a combination of these factors can lead to an increase in feelings of loneliness and social isolation amongst older people. This is also supported by others (McLaughlin et al. 2011; Heylen, 2010; Kobayashi et al. 2009) who have concluded that shrinking networks due to retirement and bereavement in later life contribute to loneliness and social isolation.

Those who experience ill health in later life are also more likely to experience loneliness and social isolation. The ONS (2018) data concluded where people reported health as 'very bad' or 'bad' were significantly more likely to report feeling lonely "often/always" and significantly less likely to say they "hardly ever" felt lonely compared with all other groups. Those who reported having a long-term illness or disability were significantly more likely to report feeling lonely 'often/always' and 'some of the time'. The literature indicates that there are some significant consequences of illness and disability, and as Banks et al (2006) argue, there is a connection between people with long-term health problems, low contact with family members and perceived poor quality of life. This was also supported by Koc (2012) who found that people who have a chronic disease feel lonelier, and that illness threatens bio-psychosocial unity and creates the fear of loneliness in the future.

It was also clear from the literature that environmental factors also influence individual experience. Rantakokko et al. (2014) identified a link between the experience of loneliness and environmental barriers such as snow and ice, long distances to services and a lack of resting places. Issues such as walking difficulties did offer a partial explanation; however, Rantakokko et al. (2014) found that despite these associations, there was still a statistically significantly relationship with loneliness.

This section has identified some of the specific challenges for people from a diverse range of communities and specific circumstances, acknowledging that ageing in not a linear or universal experience. This chapter now builds on this exploration of experiences to examine the risk factors associated with experiencing loneliness and social isolation in later life.

Impact of Loneliness and Social Isolation in Later Life

The evidence suggests that physical and mental health and wellbeing in later life is closely linked to loneliness and social isolation. It can be difficult to establish links because these aspects are so closely related it can be challenging to establish whether loneliness and social isolation lead to poor physical health or vice versa. Each of these areas will now be explored in greater depth.

Evidence from the literature suggests that loneliness and social isolation has a significant impact on various dimensions of mental health. Functional mental health was identified as affected. Boldy and Grenade (2011); Koc (2012); Rantakokko et al. (2014); and Perissinotto and Covinsky (2014) make links between functional mental health issues and social isolation and loneliness, including depression and deteriorating abilities for self-care. Victor, Grenade and Boldy (2005) identify difficulties in recognising loneliness and its co-morbidity with other conditions such as depression as loneliness is often masked

by clinical syndromes, and they also indicate a strong association between loneliness and depression. Loneliness and social isolation is also associated with cognitive decline. O'Luanaigh et al. (2012); Cacioppo and Cacioppo (2013); Age UK/Campaign to End Loneliness (2015) identified that those who are lonely and isolated experience an accelerated cognitive decline compared to those who are socially connected. There are also links to dementia with Rantakokko et al. (2014) and Age UK/Campaign to End Loneliness (2015) who identified an increased risk of developing dementia for people who identified as lonely or socially isolated.

The effect of loneliness and social isolation can also result in poor physical health outcomes. Hawkley, Preacher and Cacioppo (2010) and the Age UK/campaign to end Loneliness (2015) identified that lonely individuals are at higher risk of physical and sensory disability. Physical health issues which can reduce mobility, vision and hearing impairment, incontinence, and dementia were also seen as influential causes of social isolation and loneliness (Cornwell & Waite, 2009; Nicholson, 2012). The links between loneliness and social isolation and physical heart health have been examined in detail by Lynch (1977), who explored the relationship between human contact and the impact on human coronary systems. Lynch argues there is a complex relationship between physical heart health and human relationships; although the heart is a physical mechanical pump, it can be influenced by the subtlest human feelings and social situations. This symbiotic relationship reflects a biological basis of the human need for loving relationships, which Lynch highlights that we 'fail to fulfil at our peril'.

The links between loneliness and social isolation and physical and mental health are clear; there is a significantly increased risk of ill health and impact on wellbeing when people are lonely and isolated in later life. It can be argued that a societal approach is critical to dealing with this issue as there is significant cost for providing health and social care services. Preventing deterioration of physical and mental health in later life through addressing loneliness and social isolation is an investment. The London School of Economics (2018) estimated that each lonely older person costs health and social care services £6,000 over ten years, and for every £1 spent to address loneliness and social isolation, £3 is saved in health and support services. This section has outlined the consequences of loneliness and social isolation in later life for physical and mental health, linking to the societal and financial imperative for intervention. This chapter will now turn to the examination of the range of interventions available for older people.

Interventions to Reduce Loneliness and Social Isolation in Later Life

The first key theme addressed in the literature is the importance of the social environment. Victor, Grenade and Boldy (2005) recognised the importance of the social environment for older people. They recognised that engagement, particularly within family and social networks, contributes to good quality of life for older people. Weiss's (1973) exploration of the social environment found that where connections were lost, some individuals tried to get what they needed from others within their support network; however, Weiss found that these were often disappointing, as relationships are not easily modified as they are often constrained by underlying assumptions about the interactions in the existing relationship by both participants. Some people deal with loneliness and social isolation by 'gritting their teeth' and acceptance of the isolation, placing more emphasis on dignity and reduced risk of rejection and humiliation. Finally, some people may seek to establish new relationships, either by integrating into existing networks or by developing supplementary relationships which provide something which is not available in their existing relationship.

Weiss (1973) argued that supplementary relationships tend to be time-limited, sometimes formed with professionals, or formed with groups or volunteer work which could be indefinite. Individuals may also enter supplementary communities which can be beneficial as there is less consequence if the relationship fails. These relationships are artificial and formed with less knowledge and trust, but can be less risky and superficial, and more easily managed as there is no impact on other areas of life. Weiss (1973) argues that these supplementary relationships may also be more suitable for individuals who are experiencing chronic loneliness or social isolation; as the burden of sustaining deep friendship can be exhausting when dealing with other, more challenging issues. This work by Weiss is important, as there is often emphasis on individuals developing meaningful relationships to overcome loneliness and social isolation; however, for some people it appears that these less meaningful relationships may also serve a useful function.

The second issue addressed in the literature is how to develop appropriate services. Age UK (2010) acknowledge that developing appropriate services to respond to social isolation and loneliness can be a complex task and very time-consuming, and the result is often very low participation from older people. Four systematic reviews of interventions for social isolation and loneliness (Dickens et al 2011; Hawkley and Cacioppo 2010; Cattan et al 2005 and Findlay 2003) have resulted in limited and inconclusive results about the success of interventions in this area of work. Cattan (2002) found that much of the provision is inadequate and unsuccessful because most interventions have been seeking to promote social participation and active engagement in local communities or expansion of the social

network. These goals may not be appropriate for older people who are socially isolated or may have an adverse impact for people in this situation.

There has also been limited examination of the role of psycho-social interventions for people who are lonely and isolated. Routasalo et al. (2008) explored the effect of psychosocial group interventions on feelings of loneliness and social activity and psychological wellbeing. They found that the people in the intervention group did increase their social networks with new friends in their following year and psychological wellbeing improved. The study did not report changes in feelings of loneliness; however, the researchers commented that a limitation of their study was that this was because the instruments to measure loneliness and social isolation were not sufficiently sensitive to measure fluctuations.

Kall et al. (2020) used a randomised control trial using cognitive behavioural therapy with those who experience loneliness. They found it showed positive effects to alleviate loneliness with people for whom loneliness was a primary concern. Participants experienced behavioural activation (positive behaviour to counteract feelings of loneliness) resulting in a decrease in feelings of loneliness and social anxiety and a significant increase in quality of life. Kall et al.'s (2020) follow up study, 'Lonesome No More' used internet based cognitive behaviour therapy found in a two-year follow up that the benefits of the cognitive behavioural therapy continued to show decreased feelings of loneliness along with reduced social anxiety and increased quality of life, suggesting the benefits of these types of interventions endures.

Age UK/Campaign to End Loneliness (2015) developed a framework based on a three-level intervention and outcomes structure. Firstly, the importance of foundation services is outlined, this includes traditional services working directly with socially isolated and lonely older people. These foundation services include befriending schemes (seen as the most successful foundation services, with recognitions these need to be used in conjunction with other group activities) (Age UK 2010). Banks et al (2006) also identify those intergenerational schemes are more effective than contact with one's own age group, with children being an especially effective antidote to loneliness. The second level in the framework are gateway services, which 'act as the glue' to make services possible. One of the most important examples of this type of services is transport, identified as critical by Cattan (2002); Boldy and Grenade (2011); and Dickens et al (2011). Finally, the third level of services seeks to develop structural enablers to create the right conditions for addressing social isolation and loneliness. This includes approaches which support older people to be involved with the development of services.

Cattan (2002) and Age UK (2010) agree that older people need to be involved in the planning, development, delivery and assessment of services if they are to be effective.

A comment on the existing research base for services appears to indicate that initiatives to address social isolation and loneliness in later life have tended to be design and delivered by professionals and evaluated by researchers. It is difficult to see the extent of the input from older people, and without this, a link can be made with earlier issues identified about difficulties identifying those who experience social isolation and loneliness, and the reasons why services do not make their anticipated impact is that they have not been developed in collaboration with people for whom the services are intended.

Conclusion

This chapter has consolidated the range of literature dealing with loneliness and social isolation, and has addressed the first two research questions for this thesis; what are the lived experiences of loneliness and social isolation of older people? and how do people's lived experiences contribute to strategies and services to address loneliness and social isolation? It began with an examination of the emergence of the concepts in the academic context and how they underpin modern conceptualisations of loneliness and social isolation. The chapter then moved on to refine the examination to how it impacts in later life, acknowledging that older people do not have an homogenous experience and that socio-economic position, equality strands, circumstance and environmental factors can influence how loneliness and social isolation is experienced in later life. Following this, the chapter explored risk factors and impacts on physical and mental health. Finally, this chapter concluded by outlining current interventions to address loneliness and social isolation in later life, drawing the conclusion that the perceived lack of impact of services can be linked to the lack of collaborative work with older people to develop appropriate approaches, setting the scene for the following chapter on co-production and its impact in the sector and for people in later life.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE CHAPTER CO-PRODUCTION

This second literature chapter deals with the current body of knowledge related to co-production, which includes the history and emergence of co-production as a concept, the links it has to other approaches which support and facilitate participation and inclusion, and the defining values and principles which separate it from other approaches. The inclusion of these elements in the chapter contribute knowledge to address research question three, what are the essential elements necessary for co-production? The chapter also starts to explore some of the information which addresses research question four can a model of co-production be developed to inform future work with older people who are socially isolated and lonely? as it signposts the necessary elements required for a model of co-production.

This chapter begins with an exploration of the roots of co-production in the policy and practice context. It then sets out one of the central arguments of this thesis of co-production as paradigm and praxis. It deals with co-production as a paradigm, drawing on academic literature on power to understand the renegotiated power relationship between citizen and state. The thesis recognises the role of addressing power dynamics in this co-production paradigm, outlining theories of empowerment which make the connection between the paradigm and praxis of co-production. The final section of this chapter provides an overview of co-production in current practice, including elements related to culture and values, and the co-production cycle and its relevant tasks. The chapter then concludes with an exploration of the barriers, criticisms and problems with co-production.

Emergence of the Concept of Co-production

Conceptualisation and elements of practice recognised now as co-production stem back to the user involvement movement in the United Kingdom, rising from the campaign for the advancement of civil rights for people with disabilities and mental ill-health in the 1970's and 1980's. Beresford and Croft (1996 pp 184-5) reflect that the 1980's saw a shift for new policy and terminology to move towards user-centred and user-led support and more responsive and engaged services; this new approach introduced the terminology of user involvement. Croft and Beresford (1994) defined an approach to user involvement, based on the notion that people have the right to be involved in decisions and actions taken in relation to them. They outlined four elements to support this participation, including challenging oppression and making it possible for people to take charge of matters which affect them; having control in defining their needs and having a say in decision making and planning; equipping people with personal resources to take power by developing their confidence, self-esteem, assertiveness and knowledge and skills and organising the agency to be open to participation.

The term co-production was first conceptualised by Elinor Ostrom (1973) in her examination of the relationship the Chicago police department had with the local community. The term described the potential shift to an equal relationship that could exist between the 'regular producer' (the organisation which usually provides the service) and 'clients' (those who receive the service). Ostrom (1973) frames this work around the need for more efficient and effective services and the renegotiation of the relationship between the state and its citizens in an area as critical to the state function as policing indicates a commitment to this shifting, more equal relationship.

The user involvement movement focused on a renewed shift in perspective from those who needed care and support perceived as passive recipients of services from the state to recognise the agency of people as active participants in their support services and their influence in wider institutions. Hasler (1993); and Radden (2012) recognise the significant role of the user involvement movement in trying to change laws, treatments, services and public policies to reflect inclusion and increased individual choice and control about issues affecting their lives. Although this indicated a shift to a new approach, Beresford (2012 pp 23) was cautious about the term user involvement because of a lack of clarity about the values and ideology that underpinned the terminology. Without this clarity it was impossible to determine the extent of the actual impact on the lives of people who used the services. Beresford (2003) makes the criticism that user involvement focused more on information gathering from those who used the services rather than a fundamental shift in the relationship between user and service.

Although there is caution, the term reflected a cultural shift, moving from a strictly hierarchical approach of services delivered to individuals, to a more egalitarian, collaborative approach with developed methods of input and influence for those who use services. This shift was first seen in 1974, when the Government created Community Health Councils to give users (or potential users) of healthcare services a voice in how they were designed and operated. The key functions of the CHC's was to represent the 'public interest' in monitoring health services, be consulted by the Local Authority on health matters, deal with patient complaints, veto proposals related to service design and to inspect and monitor health services. Here, it is possible to identify some of the core elements of co-production beginning to emerge, such as recognising the need to involve a wide range of partners in consultation (although consultation is not co-production, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter), influence on design and delivery of services, and quality monitoring. Although the creation of CHC's was a move in the right direction, as Barnes and Cotterell (2011) recognise, CHC's had limited ability to meaningfully represent the public interest and there was a lack of independence. Community Health Councils were disbanded in 2003 (Parliament UK 2007) and

replaced with Public and Patient Involvement forums, whose role to involve the public was enshrined in legislation in the Health and Social Care Act (2001). PPI's built on the work of CHC's, developing approaches to involving patients and the public in healthcare, with responsibility for service monitoring reports (with a right to visit venues), taking a role on Boards and committees, and engagement with wider communities about health issues. Although it is possible to see how the creation of PPI's was intended to further the user involvement agenda, it was not without issues and challenges. The Kings Fund (2008) identified there were challenges around the cost of support for these initiatives and there were recruitment challenges generally, and those who were recruited tended to be from White UK backgrounds, with a gap in representation for people from diverse and under-served communities. These challenges are relevant to this thesis as they echo its findings from the fieldwork which will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven.

Moving on to the political influence of the 1980's, Scott-Samuel et al. (2014) identify that the election of the Conservative government in 1979 and the birth of Thatcherism in the 1980's promoted free-market ideology in all areas of public life. In the Health and Social Care sector, this was embodied through the NHS and Community Care Act (1990) which created a purchaser/provider split with a requirement for consultation about plans for care and user involvement in assessments. The Griffiths report (Griffiths 1988) introduced ideas of feedback about satisfaction about NHS services. Here we can see that the precursor to co-production in the centralisation of the user of services in developing and evaluating their services enshrined in the emerging legal and policy context of the time.

There was a shift in pace under the 1997 New Labour Government developed the '3rd way' approach. Glasby and Littlechild (2009) identified the New Labour 3rd way approach as a marked difference to Thatcherism as it established a competitive, mixed market of provision and increased autonomy for those who used health and social care services. Cowden and Singh (2007) differentiate this from the Thatcherism years as this 'fleshes out' the ideological concepts as the state which acts to facilitate private citizens to run their own affairs. The essence of the model is the withdrawal of the state, rather than building community resources. These New Labour ideas of the 3rd way link ideas and definitions of social capital, which as Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992 p.119) identify is the sum of resources available to individuals and groups through their networks and relationships.

Cowden and Singh (2007) outline concerns with the New Labour 3rd way approach. They question what happens when users do not engage in 'good citizenship' what happens to those who are unable to engage? They argue that these issues highlight the problems with user involvement, they illustrate an underlying problem in the unbalanced power dynamic. This is supported by Heyes (1993) who

argues that there is something more than merely reframing users of services as consumers which enables the transfer of power in a meaningful way. Cowden and Singh (2007) argue the voice of the user has been fetishised, something representing authenticity and truth, but without power for real change. This is supported by Beresford (2003) who argues that user involvement is framed in terms of information gathering from service users to inform and distribute policy and has never reframed power relationships or decision-making.

In recent years, the foundation of user rights has been the Human Rights Act (1998). This is a fundamental legal instrument which lays the foundations for the social contract between the state and U.K. citizens across a range of areas of social and political life. More specifically for co-production, article 8 of the Act outlines the relationship regarding rights to private and family life. Within the interpretation of this legal provision Chetty, Dalrymple and Simmons (2012) argue that these article 8 duties include the right to personal autonomy, personal development and 'to conduct one's life in the manner of one's choosing', including a right to information in a form and language which enables people to take part in decisions which affect their human rights. There is a link between these article 8 duties and the renegotiated relationship between the state and citizen. It is not for the state to determine the shape of its service provision, but that citizens should be supported to engage in determining how services are shaped which enable them to 'conduct one's life in the manner of one's choosing', co-terminus with the values of co-production. Although there is an overarching duty from the Human Rights Act (1998), it has not been enough to influence practice on its own; a shift in the political discourse and philosophy has been necessary to raise the profile of co-production.

Co-production took a more central role when conceptualising approaches to user engagement and involvement around this time. The work of Edgar Cahn and his book 'No More Throwaway People'(2000), was particularly influential in the development of co-production in the U.K. Cahn, a former civil rights U.S. lawyer, identified the importance of unlocking the potential co-production has for change through political action which was particularly influential in grassroots movements such as the growing co-production movement in Wales. Cahn recognises co-production is more than a method of engagement; it is political action with the potential to renegotiate an equal relationship between the citizen and the state. Cahn (2000) argues that the state had traditionally held power in the 'market economy' (driven by financial transactions and traditional top-down commissioned services). Cahn (2000) argues that this model represents a poor return on investment and that a new approach is required. This new approach is to expand the base of resources to include what Cahn calls the non-market economy, centred around capacity for support available in families, neighbourhoods and

communities. Cahn (2000) argues that structural inequality has fuelled demand for services, which cannot be met by the market economy alone and that the 'forgotten engine of change' of the non-market economy could be used to meet demand. Cahn (2000) argues that it is co-production which has the potential to provide the necessary bridge between the market and non-market economy to tap into all the available resources.

These successive government initiatives signalled a commitment to this renegotiated relationship of co-production between the state and its citizens, but the development of social policy was necessary to drive the change. Putting People First (2007) was the first policy document which significantly influenced co-production through the inception of the Personalisation agenda in the adult social care sector. Putting People First (2007) outlined requirements for citizens who use health and social care services to have greater choice and control over the services they receive. It signalled a significant shift in the political sphere, recognising the importance of autonomy for individuals, but also that how services are delivered should be a critical dimension of the structure across the sector. In tandem with 'Putting People First' (2007), health service policy also reflected this shifting paradigm with the launch of the White Paper 'Equality and Excellence: Liberating the NHS' (DoH 2010). This policy paper sought to place importance on shared decision making, recognising that healthcare outcomes and increased satisfaction in services could only be achieved by involving patients in their own care, rather than the traditional approach based on the health professional as the 'expert' and patient as the recipient of medical expertise. This perspective is of importance in the context of this thesis, as loneliness and social isolation is a Public Health crisis. As interventions require a joint health and social care response, services need to have a consistent, co-produced approach—policies which mirror expectations and requirements for professionals across the sector increase the likelihood of achieving consistency. Gardner (2014) discussed Putting People First (2007) and recognised how the shared aims and values has potential to shift services to deliver a more personalised experience of adult social care. Leadbeater (2004) described a society where service users would be placed at the heart of services, becoming participants in the design and delivery of services, making services more effective, moving the concept of choice and control from a solely financial focus. This represents a shift from earlier approaches to user involvement, which as Beresford (2013) highlighted, focused on information gathering and consultation, not the shift in the balance of power and proactive involvement and agency from individuals in services which affect their lives.

The notion of the shifting relationship between the individual of the state was challenged by Boxall et al (2009), who argue that without the support of legislative change, there was no real shift in power

and local authorities were still able to ensure that professionals could refuse service users choices on the basis of a 'duty of care' with power remaining with professional judgements and regulation. Ramsden (2010) highlights that, co-production has gained a higher profile in U.K. public services policy, particularly in health and social care policy development. Its influence is evident as Chetty et al. (2012) highlight, co-production has gained currency as a way of talking about sharing power and knowledge in social care services in the U.K. This view is also supported by the work of Bovaird (2007) who argues that there has been a cultural shift across the sector; it is not only the legal and policy frame which has influenced the development of co-production, but now the sector views co-production as 'a hallmark of quality services', more desirable than organisation-led approaches.

The legal and policy framework significantly shifted in response to these criticisms through the introduction of the Care Act (2014) in England and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. These pieces of legislation provided a clear commitment to co-production as it details a requirement to reconfigure relationships between services and those who use them. There was a shift from representation and consultation to more integrated ways of working which facilitate authentic renegotiation between citizen and state and authentic re-balancing of power. It is essential to take the initiative to embed co-production as the new 'norm' for the health and social care sector. There are clear indicators that this shifting legal and policy framework and political discourse are there is an impact on practice in the sector.

Defining co-production in practice is an ongoing challenge as it applies in a range of situations and contexts, including (but is not limited to) co-producing services for individuals and families, such as social care assessments and mental health services; and organisational co-production (the cycle of commissioning, design, delivery and evaluation of services). There is a direct link for organisations to translate co-production from the legal and policy context to strategic commitment for change. Definitions of co-production centre on the changing relationship between services and those who use them, linking to the original definition by Ostrom (1969) outlined earlier in this chapter. Hunter and Richie (2007) define co-production as an approach to a partnership between people who rely on services and agencies providing those services. Durose et al. (2017) include the notion that co-production is the 'joint working between people or groups who have traditionally been separated into categories of user and producer' (pg.135) and Boyle et al. (2010) coin the term co-production as 'delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours'(pg. 3).

A range of documents provide which attempt organisational support; for example, the New Economics Foundation/NESTA have outline principles of co-production with examples of implementation in a range of settings. Boyle and Harris (2013), authors of the NEF/NESTA document identify a definition of co-production which has been influential across the health and social care sector in understanding the nature of co-production:

> Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families, and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change (Boyle and Harris 2013).

The Social Care Institute for Excellence has similar guides in a social care context. Working with the Think Personal, Act Local, the national co-production advisory group, developed a similarly influential definition of co-production:

> Co-production is a relationship where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support together, recognising that both have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities (National Co-production Critical Friends Group 2015).

The Care Act (2014) (brought into practice in 2015) enshrines a definition of co-production in its supporting statutory guidance, which mirrors some of the earlier definitions:

> When an individual influences the support and services received, or when groups of people get together to influence the way services are designed, commissioned, and delivered (H.M. Government 2014).

Similarly, in Wales, the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) adopted a similar definition of co-production in its practice guidance:

> A way of working whereby practitioners and people work together as equal partners to plan and deliver care and support (Care Council for Wales 2017).

All these definitions offer similar themes around services and people, working equally for services, but

there is little in the way of explicit direction in the praxis of co-production. This highlights one of the central challenges, achieving the right balance in guidance. Co-production needs to be sufficiently flexible to be able to work across a range of contexts and services described above. As SCIE (2015) identify; if the definition is too narrow and prescriptive, it can stifle practice and limit the potential of co-production. However, the looser definition of co-production can result in a loss of meaning. Needham and Carr (2009) identify that an 'excessively elastic' definition risks dilution of its meaning and practice lacks authenticity. Nonetheless, without this clarity, there is a gap in practice which is filled by those in practice, which is driven by their existing knowledge and experience. Because of this, as Clark (2015) identifies, excessive dilution and a lack of clarity about the concept leaves room for other ideologies and concepts to be coupled with it. This risks the logic and philosophy of co-production, resulting in stakeholders who work with differing ideals and expectations.

The user involvement movement experience has influenced the emergence of co-production around definition. Beresford (2012) identified earlier in this chapter, as the user involvement movement emerged there were concerns that the terminology lacked underpinning values and ideology. The development of co-production has responded to this gap by seeking to explicitly define these values and its overarching ideology. The values of co-production will be discussed later in this chapter, now it will turn to the ideas of co-production as both paradigm and praxis.

Co-production as Paradigm

The paradigm of co-production is built on the concept of the renegotiated relationship between citizen and state as detailed by Ostrom (1973) and Cahn (2000). The central notion of co-production is that it recognises the political position of the construct and that the renegotiation of the relationship between the state and citizen is fundamental, as this differentiates co-production from other methods such as 'really good user involvement'. To understand this paradigm, it is crucial to reflect on the nature of power in this context. Although the literature and current practice guidance recognises issues of power, there is little connection to definitions or theories of power. Some models have been explored to understand the nature of power, one of the most well-known of which is the explores the nature of citizen engagement is the Ladder of Participation developed by Sherry Arnstein (1969). The ladder model examined the relationship between the state with citizens when working with people from traditionally underrepresented and underserved communities. This approach sought to reveal the intentions of state actors and their interest in preserving existing structures. Arnstein (1969) recognised that the state used a range of techniques to engage with citizens, but that not all interventions were equal and authentic; each rung of the ladder representing a type of citizen participation linked to a level of power.

Arnstein's ladder corresponds to different methods; the bottom rungs represent approaches with limited engagement with community members, including activities such as manipulation (convincing the population to agree with the views of the state) and therapy (pathologising views different from the state). The middle rungs of informing (providing information), consultation (seeking views) and placation (offering some conciliatory gestures to citizens on issues the state may not view as important) see a move towards a situation where the state seeks tokenistic involvement with its citizens and does not offer any real negotiation of power in the relationship between citizen and state. Finally, Arnstein identifies three forms of engagement at the top of the ladder, partnership, delegated power and citizen control. In this model, activities at the top of the ladder move towards a more authentic engagement with the true renegotiation of power relations between citizen and state. Arnstein identifies community engagement as a political action; it is not merely about the activity but is about addressing structural inequality and using new approaches to redistribute power and influence.

The Ladder of Participation model is popular in co-production practice, as practice is set in an empowerment framework. Although it the model is influential, there are inherent contradictions in the model. Rosen and Painter (2019) identify that although the model seeks transparency about the nature of the relationships between citizen and state, recognition of this does not fundamentally change the political and economic power differences which exist between the parties. It is these differences which ultimately limit the capacity for influence and change for citizens in their relationship with the state.

More recent models of power in co-production have been developed to take a critical stance in the exploration of the relationship between the service and individual. Needham and Carr (2009) introduced a three-level model to illustrate the nature of co-production relationships. The first level in the model is descriptive, which takes place in the context of service delivery, where those who use the service contribute to each stage of the service process. The intermediate level builds on this to develop and recognise the contribution of those who use the service, including their influence in how services are designed and how they contribute to activities such as a recruitment and training. The third level in the model is the transformative level, which links to the recognition of power, repositioning those who use services as experts in their own experience and reframing this as an asset or strength to contribute to the collaborative process. This model is echoed in the work of Slay and Stephens (2013), who explore co-production in the context of mental-health services, identifying with three of approach to evaluate activity and its authenticity in co-production including 'doing to',

'shallow involvement' and 'doing with' to strive for a shift in power from professionals and services to citizens who use the services.

Although these models recognise the importance of power, there is little offered to bring clarity to the understanding of the concept of power. This thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge as it will now draw on well-established theories of power which have informed the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the fieldwork data, particularly in chapters six and seven of this thesis.

Understanding Power

The notion of power has been identified repeatedly in the co-production literature, with little exploration or definition of what power is. This thesis now turns to the well-established theories of the fundamental nature of power and how it extends and influences individuals and groups in all areas of social life. Russell (1938) recognises that power is one of the most fundamental concepts in social sciences; and Dahl (1957) describes power as 'one of the most palpable facts of human existence'. Gohler (2009) concurs with this view, arguing that power is something all humans have experienced, either as the use of power over others or the experience of others having power over them. Weber (1946), C. Wright Mills (1956) and Dahl (1957) drew similar conclusions in their exploration of this issue, that power can be defined as an individual or a collective being able to influence another individual or collective to do something they would not do otherwise. In this context, power relates to influencing other people, which Foucault (1975) identified could relate to the capacity to change someone's beliefs and values or as Russell (1938) identified, could include influencing others to achieve desired social outcomes, or as Rossi (1957) argues, to avoid potential negative sanctions.

As power is defined in more detail, the debate on whether power can be created or increased, or whether the amount of power is a 'zero sum', never increasing or decreasing. Hinchliffe (2000) argues for power as a constant and that it is gravitational, only moving in one direction, from the weak to the strong and as bodies grow stronger, they subject larger bodies to their power. Jack (1995b) acknowledges if power is given from an organisation or individual, it is given from a place of power and that it must be taken, rather than given, because of its nature. This understanding of the constant and finite sum of power is challenged by Barnes and Walker (1996) as they argue that this interpretation does not tell the whole story, that there are ways to increase the overall sum of power, through perceiving power not only as influence over others, but also by considering it as personal development. In this context, Barnes and Walker (1996) suggest that the overall sum of power increases through individual and collective growth.

From this theoretical exploration, it can appear that power is negative, something used by the powerful to subjugate those with less power to ensure that the interests of the powerful are served; however, there is an alternative, more empowering perspective on power. Domhoff (2012) argues that it should not be assumed that power is only coercive, but as both Pitkin (1972) and Hay (1997) argue, power can also be used to achieve something independent of others. Hannah Arendt (1970) offers clarification on the definition of power in her series of essays 'On Violence', exploring the nature of power and how is distinguished from other concept including strength, force, authority and violence. Arendt (1970) argues that power is not something which is held by an individual, but is gained when people act together, consenting to the actions and this in turn gives legitimacy to the actions. In this way, Arendt (1970) argues, power can only exist if the people involved continue to consent to these actions. This is a double-edged sword for co-production, power will continue to exist in traditional approaches if the people give legitimacy to this way of operating. Once the consent of the people is withdrawn, traditional methods of operating are no longer legitimate, but as Arendt (1970) goes on to argue, for a revolution in practice to happen, it is not simply the disintegration of power and therefore legitimacy, it also requires people to pick up the power and which is present because it has the consent of the people, and to operate in the new way. To apply this theory to co-production, it is important for stakeholders in co-production to withdraw their consent (and therefore power) for traditional methods of engagement by non-engagement, and to give their consent (and therefore power) by engagement in co-production.

Taking Arendt's perspectives on power, there is a theoretical gap as participants are not seeking to fill the power void in this context. As Bell and Hindmoor (2012) identify, individual actors do not always act out of self-interest, but instead take the opportunity to contribute to the 'collective good' and further collective long-term interests. Taking this at face value it can appear that this reluctance to seek power is beneficial, but Bell and Hindmoor (2012) term this as bonding capital, which brings a range and depth of relations between similar groups in society, bridging capital as the range and depth of relations among different groups of people. Szreter (2002) supports this view and recognises that social capital is symbiotically related to the state and government activity, not as a patch for the failings of government, but to restore it as an effective community servant.

Once the nature of power has been established, there is a question of how power can be used. Traditional explanations of power describe it as the ability to use force or dominance to achieve the desired outcome. Here, Olsen (1970) identifies power as force which requires individuals, groups or institutions to employ additional resources and be prepared to use them to overcome any resistance

to the course of action. Olsen (1970) argues that there are finite resources available to the actor or institution, the amount of force or dominance which can be executed at any time is also limited.

Force is not the only source to execute power. Foucault (1975) and Gramsci (1971) both identify methods where power can be legitimately granted by using authoritative directives, identified by Gramsci as hegemony and Foucault as governmentality, but both recognise that power through authority includes the implicit agreement of individuals to follow the directives of the institutions. This is problematised by both Gramsci and Foucault regarding the extent to what agreement means in these circumstances for individual free will, this will be discussed later in the chapter; however, the notion of authority and consent are important to recognise as a method by which power can be utilised. Linked to authority, Olsen (1970) identifies legitimacy as a method to execute power. Legitimacy is a form of power which is granted by individuals by virtue of traditional belief systems, formal or informal agreements or specialist and expert knowledge the individual or person possesses. This is linked to ideas of power from ideology, as Smith (1990) identifies, power is located where ideas and expectations form social thinking. Power is also ascribed, particularly to individuals and institutions, is present in attraction or charisma, as French and Raven (1959), Bottomore (1964) and C. Wright Mills, (1956) identify that power is located with the physical attributes of the individual or institution as it generates identification with and positive feelings towards them. Power comes from the feelings which are generated as this type of power on the basis that those with power have perceived exceptional qualities which are required to lead others. Finally, power is also located in a psycho-social dynamic, as Domhoff (2012) identifies, power exists where the thoughts of those who currently hold power reinforce their position. This is supported by Burton and Higley (1987) as they mirror this idea, that powerlessness is also reinforced when those who do not hold and this lack of power reinforces the thoughts and actions of those who do not hold power, maintaining their powerlessness.

This thesis draws on these interpretations of what power is and where it exists in later chapters, particularly in chapters six and seven where the fieldwork data explores the nature of power and how it can be understood in the praxis of co-production. This exploration of power now turns to theories which deal with the nature and operation of power. These theories have been ordered according to a continuum model ranging from theories which consider power to be diffuse and in the hands of many people; to those theories which consider power to be more concentrated and in the hands of the few.

Pluralist Theory

Pluralist perspectives address the concept of power from a consideration of the operation of power in a democratic society. Robert Dahl (1961) remains one of the most influential authors and this thesis has drawn on Dahl's 1957 definition of power earlier in this chapter to understand what is meant by the term power. Dahl built on this work and began to address the nature of power in a Pluralist context in his work in 'Who Governs?' (1961) about democratic society in New England, U.S. and considers power and influence in relationships between individuals, groups, governments and associations. Dahl (1961) posited the question of who holds the ultimate decision-making power within a political system where every adult can vote, but where knowledge, wealth, social position, access to officials and other resources are unequally distributed. Dahl (1961) argues that whilst power is distributed unequally, it is dispersed amongst several groups in competition with each other, rather than located with a small network of elite individuals, using the term polyarchy to characterise systems which are open, inclusive and competitive. This is based on the notion of principle of representation, rather than direct democracy, but each group which is represented is a democracy. Hirst (1993) supports this interpretation of pluralism, arguing that power as diffuse across a range of organised interest groups and free associations (where individuals come together freely and without government interference) and actors use these groups as conduits for power to influence government policy to achieve their goals. Hirst (1993) maintains that the plurality of these different groups is central to a democratic society; that there is no 'common good' and society does not exist as a single entity but is created by individuals who contribute to interest groups and free associations. These interest groups and free associations in turn address specific issues of its members and it is the plurality of these which creates society. Hirst (1993) contends that the vitality and legitimacy of these interest groups and free associations are crucial to democracy because their influence limits the scope of power and influence the state has available to it. Without free development, the self-development of individuals will be negatively impacted. Coombs (1993) argues this pluralist assumption is based ideas freely competing in a marketplace, and Smith (1990) argues that pluralism is based on an 'ideal type' where all parties have equal access and equal power in the marketplace of ideas which influence government.

Figgis (1913, cited in Nicholls, 1994) takes a pluralist perspective that the freedom of individuals to form associations which are separate from state control are examples of objective measures of the diffuse nature of power, and that the partnership between the state and free associations are how social interests are represented. Figgis (1913) goes on to identify that groups should develop organically and be based on the co-operation of individual members, deciding their own internal affairs. They do not have a single 'mind', nor reduced to the will of individuals in the group, but that they are collectivities with decision-making procedures and new activities and aspects exist because

of the nature of the group. There are inherent tensions which arise because of the nature of the group; this pluralist perspective presents an idealistic view of group dynamics which do not acknowledge the struggle that individuals can experience as they strive to retain their individual freedom in the group context.

There are criticisms which can be made of pluralism. Coombs (1993) argues it is simplistic and implies that all groups have equal access to the system; this is problematic as it does not acknowledge the different in power dynamics between the groups and how it affects their access to the marketplace of ideas and their influence on government. This critique is supported by Anderson (1979), who argues that to influence, groups need to be well organised and gain access to a range of resources which include the size and cohesiveness of the group, the amount of money it controls, the skills of its leadership, its social status and prevailing public attitudes. Building on this critique, Smith (1990) outlines identifiable factors which make competition less open, access to resources grants a more favoured status and conversely, the less resource held by the group, the less access they have. Smith (1990) also argues that the state favours some groups over others and thus, policy is created which advantages those favoured groups. As Berman (1988) argues, the idea that power is equally diffused across all social groups is not realistic and doesn't acknowledge the differing access to power and its translation to inequality across the system and C. Wright Mills (1956) goes as far to dismiss pluralism as 'a set of images out of a fairy-tale'.

Pluralism offers an important theoretical foundation to explore co-production as it offers explanations of how power operates in the context of groups and stakeholders in a service setting, but this is not the complete picture. This chapter will now turn to the next theoretical perspective on the continuum which explores the complexities of the phenomenon, Stephen Lukes (1974) and the theory of three dimensions of power.

Stephen Lukes and Three Dimensions of Power

Lukes (1974) outlines three dimensions as an analytical lens to explore the nature of operation of power, which sits towards the more dispersed end of the continuum. The first of these dimensions recognised by Lukes accepts Dahl's (1957) proposition of power discussed earlier in this chapter, where A has control of B, even if B is resistant to participating in the action. Lukes builds on this, recognising the complexity of the nature of power, drawing on the work of Bachrach and Baratz (1962), acknowledging that power is operationalised in the context of the relationship in a more subtle way, that A creates or reinforces social values which supports their power by limiting scope others have to challenge them. In this context B is prevented from raising issues which may be to the

detriment of A, reinforcing the system in favour of A. Bachrach and Baratz (1970) develop this idea further, recognising 'mobilization of bias', where a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals, and institutional procedures that operate systematically and consistently to benefit A at the expense of B. This echoes some of the earlier critiques of pluralism as Smith (1990) recognised that certain groups have more power than others and create policy to help them sustain this power. Finally, Lukes (1974) identifies a third dimension of power, where A may exercise power over B by shaping and influencing B's desires, which means that A influences B to the extent that they can influence what B wants for themselves. This three-dimension model offers a more complex understanding of the nature of power and how it operates. Digester (1992) argues that Foucault (1977) offers a fourth face of power to add to Lukes' (1974) model as Foucault (1977) argues that individual actors are constituted through power relations and the development of individual agency is historically defined. Foucault's writing on power offers a rich and complex dynamic on power will now be considered in further detail.

Foucault and Governmentality

Foucault's view on power moves towards the dispersed end of the power continuum, as Foucault (2004b) argues that power is ubiquitous because it comes from everywhere and as it comes from everywhere, every person is constituted through its influence in relationships. Foucault's (1975) writing in *Discipline and Punish* argues that all members of society are constituted through the societal power relations, it is impossible for members to avoid because of these relationships and therefore there are no individuals who are not constituted by power, it is as ubiquitous as Dahl (1957) and Gohler (2009) suggests earlier in this chapter. Foucault (1975) reflects that because of the ubiquitous nature of these social relationships, the capacity to change someone's beliefs and values lies with already powerful individuals and institutions and constitutes an important source of power.

Foucault's view of power moves from the dispersed to its more concentrated form in its role in capitalism, as it uses 'technologies of power' to exploit peoples' bodies and time to transform them to labour power and to create surplus value. Foucault coins this as Governmentality, which as Ettlinger (2011) describes as 'the governance of mentality'. It is possible to see links here with Lukes' (1974) three dimensions of power, particularly the third dimension which explores the notion of shaping the wishes and desires of other people. Foucault (1975) outlines this changing nature of how power is used by social institutions, illustrating it through discussion on changing state approaches to punishment from control of the body to control of the mind and soul. Jessop (2007) supports this view, arguing that the power and control of the modern state now exists in social norms, institutions and distinctive forms of knowledge. Ettlinger (2011) argues that this relationship between individual and institutions provides a useful analytical lens to explore how power is exploited, and it is this

relationship where analysis of power should begin. Although the nature of power in this context feels unchangeably, Foucault (1988) argues that the individual can make a difference and resist the power in these relationships by gaining a holistic and critical understanding of the system and recognise the extent of the power to objectify, dominate and control the behaviour. This holistic and critical understanding requires reflection for the individual to see themselves in the context of the system and how they have been constituted by external forces, and with support they can adopt a critical approach as they reject the construction of their identity in the context of these power relationships. Foucault's perceptions of power move further up the continuum of power, perception of it becoming more concentrated. This chapter now turns to the next step up the continuum, Elite theory.

Elite Theory

Elite theory offers an alternative perspective based on the concept that power exists in social structures and moves towards the concentrated end of the power continuum. Bottomore (1964) conceptualised power as wielded by a dominant, elite class of people who possess certain characteristics and access to power is gained through the ability to use resources, occupy strategic positions in relevant organisations and utilise networks of influence. Although there are similarities to Foucault's governmentality, elite theory concentrates the base of power further to a smaller group of individuals and institutions.

In the context of Elite theory, power slightly differs from the Dahl (1957) definition of power discussed earlier in this chapter, where A has control of B, even if B is resistant to participating in the action; Russell (1938) summarises a subtle shift in its definition, framing it as having power is the ability to achieve desired social outcomes. This offers a more fluid interpretation of power, which Domhoff (2012) identified, means it is applicable in a range of circumstances. Domhoff (2012) expanded the definition of power to include two intertwined dimensions of collective power (the sum of power of group which combines its resources) and distributive power (the ability of a group, class or nation to be successful over others) and these types of power are 'entwined in a deadly embrace'. Domhoff (2012) identified in the social structures have developed to meet the requirements of the division of labour in an increasingly complex society to enable individuals to specialise their functions at all social levels; however, this creates and reinforces hierarchy and develops a context where distributive power can flourish. Domhoff (2012) argues that leaders are initially chosen because they possess the skills and knowledge to lead, but the psycho-social impact of the position of leader often turns them from leaders to dominators who take advantage of their position for their own pleasure or advantage. The psycho-social impact of hierarchy is supported by Burton and Higley (1987), who found that those who are less powerful are also more likely to think narrowly and suffer small defects in their thinking

than those who are made to feel powerful, because of stress from a lack of power. This is used by those who are more powerful to evidence their superiority, but Burton and Higley (1987) suggest that it is the lack of power, rather than the superiority of those who hold power which is the key factor.

C. Wright Mills (1956) undertook an examination elite theory in his book based on American society, which sought to understand who holds power and how society is governed. Here, Mills (1956) defines power as being able to realise your will, even if others resist it the truly powerful can only be those who are able to command major institutions. Mills (1956) acknowledges that power can exist outside of these institutions, but that command of these institutions is necessary if continued and consistent power can be held. Mills (1956) begins from the position that individuals in mass society are driven by forces which govern their conduct and outlook, but that they can neither understand nor govern these forces. Mills (1956) argues that as wealth, information and power becomes increasingly more centralised, it becomes possible for some individuals to occupy social positions where they look down on and make decisions with far reaching consequences which affect the everyday lives of those in mass society. They exist as a network of advisors, consultants, spokesmen and opinion-makers, who execute the higher thought and decision-making, across 'command posts' (positions in organisations which have access to resources and have high level influence) in the military, political and economic sectors. Mills (1956) identifies these individuals as members of The Power Elite, who exist as a conscious social class who recognise and behave differently towards each other, believing themselves to possess personal characteristics which bestow on them the right to rule the masses and that their possessions and privilege are extensions of themselves. Yamokoski and Dubrow (2008) supported the work of Mills, identifying nine sources of power including the ability to affect change, resource control, political clout, strategic position, being well-known, connections, community participation, personality and being respected. Although these were influential characteristics, Yamokoski and Dubrow (2008), possessing them was not the only factor, but more importantly, that it was imperative that an individual's attributes must be recognised by other members of the Elite to be validated.

Elite power is also sourced through involvement in voluntary and community work and affairs as both Hunter (1953) and Form and Miller (1960) identify, as this involvement can help to generate further income, maintain existing positions of power and helps to forge wider networks of influence. In this context, Form and Miller (1960) define power is defined as the existence of possible lines of action; power is increased by more open lines of action and that power is visible through the web of relationships surrounding collective activity and resulting individual acts which are influenced by these relationships.

Elite theory can be critiqued for its perception of power existing within social structures. Barrow (2007) argues Elite theory lacks political economy and fails to account for structural nature of power across different social groups. Without this understanding, Barrow (2007) argues, elite theory renders the masses powerless does not explore other sources of power. Elite theory is also critiqued by Sweezy (1968), who argues that, in particular, Mills'(1956) hypothesis of the power elite as a conscious national class recruited from the upper levels of the class system actually argues that power exists within individuals, rather than positions, moving elite theory closer to marxism and class consciousness. This is supported by Kahn (2012), who identifies that elite theory holds two strands of thought: a weberian definition of class, where elites are relative to the power and resources they possess; and a marxist definition, where elites occupy a dominant position within social relations. Kahn (2012) acknowledges that both views locate power and resources with elites, but conflict as one perspective looks at the individual control over properties and the other explores the social relations and structures which empowers groups.

Weberian Theory

Max Weber's (1946) work on bureaucracy and organisations recognises power in a more concentrated capacity. Weber's definition of power centres on the probability of a person or group to realise their will despite the resistance of others (Weber 1946). This definition is developed further by Rossi (1957) to include the notion that to possess power is to have the ability to avoid negative sanctions in the relationship. Rossi (1957) argues that a relationship is implied in which the actor or organisation A affects the behaviour of organisation or actor B because B wants to avoid the sanctions A can implement if B does not comply. Weber (1946) identifies how power is exerted over others. This includes force (including the intentional exertion of social pressures to achieve outcomes, including inducement or compensation, constraint or deprivation and information or communication which alters beliefs, emotions, motivations); authority (based on sets of impersonal rules) and charisma or attraction (where a leader is perceived to have exceptional qualities and can persuade others).

Weber's interpretation of power underpins his theory of bureaucracy, highlighted in his description of bureaucracy as a 'Janus-faced organisation'. Bureaucracy in organisations, Weber argues, has administration as based on both expertise and discipline, both of which utilise the routes of power Weber identifies. Firstly, administration based on expertise takes a positive, rational view and highlights expertise and technical merits of bureaucracy in organisations (which is enforced by Weber's Rational-Legal and Charismatic forms of authority). Secondly, administration based on discipline is enforced by Weber's Force via the intentional exertion of social pressures to achieve

outcomes. There is a human cost for this, as bureaucracy through discipline results in the induction of incapacity, timidity and rigidity (Merton 1940) and it allows political rivalries to flourish (Crozier 1964). Clawson (1980) critiques the human cost of bureaucracy, and identifies that it serves no productive purpose, but reinforces the domination of employers over employees.

Marxist Theory

Marxist theory addresses power locates class struggle between the oppressor and oppressed and that division between the proletariat and bourgeoisie as the true social division. Marx (1848) argues that power can be understood by its 'conjured up' relationship between the means of production and exchange. Levin and Wright (1980) argue that power originates with economic production and that this power pervades all social structures. The dominant class own the means of economic production hold the power, which is wielded to further the interests of the dominant class. Dorothy Smith (1990) highlights Marx's perspective on how ideology is used by the dominant class, describing 3 tricks which enforce the application of ideology to (i) separate what people say they think about their circumstances from the actual conditions of their lives; (ii) arrange them to demonstrate a circumstance which reflect what is said about their lives then (iii) change the ideas into distinct entities to which agency or causation can be attributed. This is then held up as the "reality". This idea of ideology is developed further by Gramsci's and the concept of hegemony discussed in the context of a Marxist paradigm. Gramsci seeks to explain how the supremacy of the dominant class is facilitated, describing the role of domination and coercion, which involves influencing behaviour and choice through external and objective punishment and reward. Gramsci contrasts this with the notion of intellectual and moral leadership, which occurs subjectively and internally by moulding individuals to comply with prevailing social norms and attitudes. It is this internal moulding which Gramsci defines as hegemony; individual cognitive functions are shaped to influence how individual actors perceive and evaluate social reality. This in turn creates a common social-moral language between actors, which in turn structures and governs reality, and is reinforced through an iterative process through the construction and excise of power through institutions such as educational, religious and associational social institutions. Gramsci argues that this process is not divorced from the experience of class struggle and relationship to the means of production. Hegemony must be economic as its roots are located in the ability to make these decisions about the social norms and attitudes, as the group which holds power needs the power of economic activity as the 'decisive nucleus' of its actions. Femia (1975) argues there is a lack of conceptual refinement around hegemony, and the world of the expanded state, it is through intellectual activity that hegemony is constructing and contesting hegemony. Morton (2007) supports this perspective, arguing that hegemony is a dynamic process which is constantly reconstructed and contested, not only through intellectual activity, but also

through different forms of class struggle or 'counter' hegemonic initiatives. Morton (2007) argues, that hegemony is a contested, fragile and tenuous process which is a result of activity struggle between 'relations of force' rather than a consolidated social structure.

Power Network Theory

In contrast to theories of power which explore structural approaches, power network theory provides a framework to explore individual relationships. From this perspective, power is located with individual characteristics or in the structure of the network they belong to. French and Raven (1959) describes power as the latent potential of a person or group to influence the beliefs, attitudes or behaviour of another person or group and Emerson (1976) argues that power is not so much of a property of an individual as a property of a relation between two individuals. French and Raven (1959) offer a typology of power to explore how individuals can hold power, including reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power and referent power. Raven (1993) updated this model to include informational power (the ability to persuade another through information or logical argument). Walker et al. (2000) argue that network exchange theory identifies and analyses the structural conditions of power which includes how actors are positioned in the network, the resources available to them and how they are interconnected. They argue that by this analysis it is possible to understand the distribution of power throughout the network. Willer, Lovaglia and Markovsky (1997) argue that the concepts of power and influence has been conflated and define power as the structurally determined potential for obtaining favoured payoffs and influence as the socially induced modification of a belief, attitude or expectation effected without recourse to sanctions. Willer et al (1997) argue that power produces influence and influence produces power.

The intention of examining these theories of power is to expand current knowledge of co-production. As highlighted earlier in this chapter, the existing literature recognises that power dynamics exist when co-production is taking place; however, there appears to be little substance of recognition of the nature of this power or any tangible and usable measurement for stakeholders to use when co-producing.

These theories of power have been explored in turn, using the concept of moving along a continuum to examine the range of relevant power theories. The purpose of this was to develop a useful lens to examine how power is dispersed in co-production, used to analyse the thesis fieldwork data and contribute helpful knowledge for co-producing stakeholders to understand their context of their work. The continuum began with Pluralism, which discusses the nature of power being dispersed amongst many people and accessible to all people through interest groups and associations and has moved

through the work of Lukes (1974) and Foucault (1975), to Elite and Weberian theory and finally to Marxism and Power Network Theory that conceptualise power as concentrated in the hands of few people. The notion of power as negatively coercive has also been challenged, using the work of Domhoff (2012); Pitkin (1972); Hay (1997); and Arendt (1970) to understand how power shared between people can be used to effect social change.

Although most of these power theories contribute something to knowledge about co-production, it was possible to identify theories which are of particularly useful to understand the nature and sources of power. Firstly, Pluralist theory offers detailed analysis of the nature of stakeholders working together which is at the heart of co-production. Once Dahl's (1961) conceptualisation has been grasped, the critique of Pluralism from Hirst (1993); Coombs (1993); and Smith (1990) offer a helpful dissection of the reality of power dynamics and the imbalances between stakeholders. Secondly, the work of Lukes (1974) and the three dimensions of power model supports reflection on how power is locates across services and organisations and use of the model can help to articulate the nature of power. Use of this model can support challenge of the more powerful stakeholders to improve transparency and accountability about their power and influence. Finally, the work of Domhoff (2012); Pitkin (1972); and Hay (1997) contribute to the reshaping of notions of power, moving from power as negatively coercive by those who hold power, to something which exists between groups of people who are work together to achieve change which speaks to the central values of co-production including empowerment; equality; strengths-based approach; authenticity; credibility; and reciprocity.

This analysis on theories of power is critical to the understanding of the wider context of co-production and to explore methods of work which have the potential to contribute to its success. Understanding the nature of power is not necessarily sufficient for co-production, particularly in the praxis of co-production. To successfully implement ways of working, it is critical to understand the nature of empowerment, how work can take place to redistribute power more equally amongst the stakeholders in co-production. To understand how this can be operationalised, this chapter now moves examine theories of empowerment and its contribution to a theoretical foundation for co-production.

Theories of Empowerment

The section builds on understanding of theories of power as it juxtaposes these theories to understand how the nature of power can be used to bring about social change, particularly for people who are in traditionally disempowered and underserved positions. Barbara Solomon (1976) explored the nature

of powerlessness in her work with people from Black, marginalised communities. Solomon identified that people in this situation had been valued so negatively for so long their powerlessness is extensive and 'crippling' and this negativity featured in practices, organisation and negative language using derogatory words. This is particularly relevant to this thesis, as in chapter three the thesis explores in more detail the challenges of being lonely and socially isolated in later life; as Thursz et al. (1995) argues, empowerment is particularly appropriate for older adults because mutual support in adulthood allows people to share experience of stigmatisation and reduce isolation.

The term empowerment has been criticised as a current 'buzzword' in health and social care settings, which has creating an idealistic and misleading objective for practice where there are financial controls it is also problematic because the concept has been undermined by the experience of those involved. Pigg (2002) critiques the use of the concept of empowerment argues that it has been used as a buzzword, without evidence of substantive change. Rappaport (1984) supports this critique, identifying that people have become suspicious of the terminology; an issue also identified in this thesis as participants in chapter seven comment on the terminology of co-production. Kabeer (1990) recognises this problem, arguing that part of this problem is that empowerment has a lack conceptual or empirical clarity.

Empowerment theoretical perspectives seek to explain how people gain power of decision and action by reducing the effect of social or personal blocks to exercising existing power. As earlier discussions on power identified, power is relational and takes place both in interpersonal relationships and within social structures. Rappaport and Rappaport (1988) conceptualise power as the individual determination over one's own life and democratic participation in the life of your community. Walker and Barnes (1996) connect with this interpretation, defining empowerment as the process of enabling excluded and marginalised groups to exercise greater autonomy in decision-making. as the process of enabling excluded and marginalised groups to exercise greater autonomy in decision-making. Rees (1991) states that the basic objective of empowerment is social justice, giving people greater security and political and social equality through mutual support and shared learning building towards wider goals.

To understand the nature of empowerment, a key question needs to be addressed; as Carr (2003) identifies, is it the process of being involved which empowers people or is it the outcome of the activity which contributes to the empowerment of participants and others? Carr (2003) wrestles with this idea, debating whether the process of empowerment is linear (the process through to the outcome)

or whether empowerment is a cyclical process (where both process and outcome contribute to empowerment.

There are a range of elements which are relevant to the conceptualisation of empowerment. Rappaport and Rappaport (1988) posit that empowerment is a construct which links individual strengths and competencies, natural helping systems and proactive behaviours to matters of social policy and social change. These elements are echoed in Gutierrez's (1995) work on empowerment; she conceptualises it as the process of increasing personal, interpersonal or political power so that individuals, families and communities can take action to improve their situations in defining empowerment. From these definitions it is possible to see that there are two emerging strands to empowerment; to challenge existing political systems for change and support for the individual to build their personal resources.

Empowerment as Political Action

Empowerment as political action is a critical notion as it recognises that social relationships and interactions are influenced by the wider context. Russel-Erlich and Rivera (1986) recognise that political and economic trends can result in oppression of communities and that empowerment is essential to counter-act the impact of these trends. Understanding the circumstance of those in such situations and working with them is a fundamental element of empowerment. Paolo Freire in his book 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' (1970) argues that only those who are powerless can generate sufficient power to free the oppressed and the oppressors. If those who hold power try to give it, it manifests in a false generosity, perpetuating an unjust social order. Gomm (1993) supports this view, arguing that when power is given, it leaves power with the giver, it is the institutional response which needs to be changed to support authentic power taking by those who have not held it in the past. Freire (1970) argues that true solidarity with the oppressed means fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them 'other'; empowerment requires an end to 'othering' and seeing people in the reality of circumstances and context. To make sense of the political context, Rees (1991) developed five essential ideas for empowerment; biography to understand and analyse experience of struggle; power as both liberation and oppression; political understanding of power relations; skills which can be used for liberation and recognition of the role and interdependence of policy and practice.

Empowerment to Support Individual Change

The role of the individual is central to theories of empowerment, with a focus on consciousness-raising as central to the process. Rose and Black (1985) identify that critical debate supports individuals to

explore their subjective and objective reality to see the world and the limits of their control in their environment, and empowerment takes place as they connect with their circumstances. This notion of the role of the individual is harnessed by Gutierrez (1995) in her work with marginalised communities, recognised that fundamental change in an individual and groups consciousness is necessary to enable action. To achieve this, Gutierrez (1995) defines a 3-stage psychological process to achieve empowerment with both individuals and communities. The first stage involves group identification, where members shared their areas of common concern and experiences, exploring norms and values and developing a sense of group membership. The second stage includes work to understand issues of power and status to connect issues for individual group members to the issues of the group. Finally, the model needs to develop beliefs in its members that they can achieve the changes they desire, a sense of self and collective efficacy. In developing this model, Gutierrez (1995) argues that these components often develop sequentially and are mutually reinforcing, developing a critical consciousness which links to empowerment as individuals and groups develop belief in their ability to influence change. Kieffer (1984) also supports this consciousness raising approach, as it supports individuals to achieve a better self-concept and self-confidence, critical understanding of their environment and emerging personal and collective resources to undertake action.

Although this approach to support for individuals is laudable, it is not necessarily without difficulty. Empowerment in this way may mean that individuals and group are able to articulate their situation, situate themselves in the political context and have improved self-image and confidence; however, access to resources, the means to achieving improved circumstances are needed. Pigg (2002) recognises that this is an element of empowerment; that there is rarely a transfer of power but it is the means of resources of power which effect change, and it is influence over these which is critical for empowerment. Kabeer (1999) supports this view, arguing that without the power to enact those changes, empowerment is a toothless process. This suggests that empowerment moves beyond ideology and ways of thinking, to include access to resources which can make sure that the necessary actions take place, rather than remaining in the realm of discussion without real change.

Kenneth Pigg and Three Faces of Empowerment

To draw together the strands of empowerment discussed, Pigg (2002) developed a model of empowerment to mirror the Lukes (1975) three dimensions of power model. This model draws together the strands of empowerment, both for the individual and the political arena to develop multi-dimensional model which seeks to address the complexity in its execution.

In the first face of empowerment, Pigg (2002) argues that firstly, self-empowerment takes place through an individual acting, which develops the individual's sense of personal power and efficacy. Antonovsky (1988) supports this view, arguing that efficacy is gained when individuals gain a sense of control over their destiny. Breton (1994) concurs, identifying that empowerment is conceptualised based on the individual's self-perception, coupled with an understanding of the structural allocation of power. Kabeer (1999) supports this view, recognising that empowerment has two interrelated dimensions of resources and individual agency. Kizilos (1990) identifies three simultaneous ways in which this can take place within organisations; (i) empowering employees through information sharing, resource sharing and participative management through formal and informal changes to management design; (ii) encouraging individuals to examine their own beliefs and values concerning autonomy and behaviour; and (iii) teaching individuals techniques to develop their communication and influencing skills. Rappaport (1987) acknowledges that empowerment is not only an individual psychological construct, but has a range of dimensions which include organisational, political, sociological, economic and spiritual aspects.

The second face of Pigg's empowerment model is mutual empowerment which stems from interpersonal relations. Kanter (1983) and Gardner (1990) argue that empowering and strengthening others is a function of those who lead in organisations; although Kizilos (1990) notes that in this context, mutual empowerment originated in the management concerns of how to control individuals. Guttierez (1995) supports this view as they found that group discussion and problem solving can contribute to consciousness raising. This can affect thinking about specific problems and strategies for change. Guttierez (1995) found that there was a strong direct effect of consciousness on problem construal, specific problems and intention to engage in activism. Freire (1973) and Guttierez (1990) support the view that these dimensions of empowerment exist and to access this power communities need to band together and take action to improve their situation.

Finally, Pigg's (2002) the third face of empowerment is empowerment through social institutions and social action. This face of empowerment draws on the work of Solomon (1976) who identifies that empowerment is achieved through the outcomes of social action. Pigg (2002) argues that these three faces of empowerment to be inseparable; this is supported by Gutierrez (1995), who contends that these components can develop independently or in conjunction with one another, but that they tend to develop sequentially and can be mutually reinforcing. Gutierrez (1995) highlights the importance of feedback loops, as they allow the experience of group consciousness to heighten group identification or exercising group efficacy to deepen a sense of group consciousness.

This section of work has drawn on the theoretical perspectives of empowerment and how it can contribute to the bedrock of ideology for co-production. This work will be drawn on in chapters six, seven and eight to explore their current and potential influence. This chapter now moves on to reflect on the current literature around the praxis of co-production.

The Praxis of Co-production

The previous section has dealt with the paradigm of co-production in some detail; this chapter now turns to of co-production praxis. One of the pioneers of co-production, Elinor Ostrom identified in 1996 that the conceptual divide between government and civil society was a trap which held potential synergies, and that co-production could harness these synergies by creating four conditions that could heighten the probability that coproduction is an improvement over other approaches. Ostrom (1996) made explicit the four conditions, to facilitate its execution. Firstly, she argues that co-production should add to, rather than substitute current work. Secondly, she recognises the importance of flexibility for participants, to support their involvement, recognising that citizen input is often on a different footing from service input because of the nature of respective circumstances. The third condition Ostrom identified was the need for all participants of co-production to commit to each other; that individual input will at least be matched by the other participants. Finally, co-production should be incentivised appropriately, something agreed upon in principle but not made explicit by Ostrom. These four conditions have guided initial approaches to co-production from the 1990's and it is possible to see how they feature in thinking about current co-production practice, as discussed later in this chapter.

Culture and Environment

The first task for co-production is to adopt a positive culture and environment to support practice to flourish. One of the challenges is that it has been several years since Putting People First (2007) and the initial interest and commitment to co-production has waned, particularly now the focus has moved to sustainability in the climate of austerity. For successful co-production, it is imperative to regain a sense of trust and commitment to reinforce a supportive culture. When an individual is involved in co-producing a service, they become invested in it, much more so than in traditional top-down approaches. This change in relationship creates a sense of ownership and that because those who use the service take responsibility for it, they are much more likely to be supportive of it. Ridley and Jones (2002) argue that individuals and communities build up a sense of ownership of services when they engage in co-production. It also has community impact, as Fox (2012) highlights, co-

production enables individuals, families and communities to do more for themselves, which in turn produces a stronger sense of responsible citizenship and stronger, more connected communities.

Developing a positive culture and environment stems from understanding the benefits of co-production practice. Firstly, it is important that the evidence shows that where co-production is implemented, it makes a difference in the lives of people who use the services. Evans and Vallely (2007) argue that the opportunity to get involved in care decisions and service improvement discussions makes a fundamental difference to an individual's sense of wellbeing, resulting in improved outcomes and quality of life. Personal wellbeing increases when people can have a level of influence over the support they receive. Slay and Stephens (2013)support this, they identify that inherent characteristics of individuals such as self-esteem, confidence, resilience, improved physical health, skills and knowledge, problem-solving, and negotiation and communication skills were enhanced or depleted depending on the extent of the individual's involvement in design and delivery of services and autonomy over long-term goals. This benefit can also depend on the inherent characteristics of the individual. Slay and Stephens (2013) found individual characteristics in almost all cases were either enhanced or depleted depending on the extent of involvement. It also depends on whether individuals feel that the development of these skills is worthwhile and something they wish to develop as Bown (2013) found, older people are keen to be involved in development work and are keen to share their knowledge, experience and skills. Co-production is a way of achieving this to create local services that work for a wide range of people while making the best use of limited resources. Recognising the benefits of co-production for people who use the service contributes to a positive culture and environment in which co-production can flourish.

Positive culture and environment also stem from benefits for other stakeholders to drive their commitment to practice in this way. Front-line paid staff can also benefit from co-production, it is particularly important to be clear about these benefits as the changing approach can (quite naturally) create anxiety because there is a changing expectation about their role. Organisations that are genuinely committed to successful co-production need to work sensitively with staff to help them to understand the expectations for their work. Paid staff need support to change their fundamental perceptions of their professional identity and the nature of their work. As discussed earlier in this chapter when thinking about strengths-based approaches, the traditional construction of organisations to understand people who use their services as having 'problems' and as Moyle (2014 p.41) identified earlier, casting paid staff in the role of 'experts' to solve the 'problems'. For co-production to be successful, the role of paid workers must change. Boyle, Clark and Burns (2006) argue

that the role of workers changes to become catalysts and facilitators, who work alongside people who use services as equal stakeholders. To contribute to a positive culture and environment where co-production can flourish, organisations need to support their paid staff to adapt to this change and to help them manage any anxieties this may cause. This task raises training and development issues; to help paid staff align with new ways of working, organisations need to provide training and reflection opportunities where paid staff can explore professional values, reflection on the nature of power and inequality in their organisations and to work with creative methods to address barriers to inclusion and to facilitate the participation of all stakeholders. Hunter and Richie (2007) recognise that a successful connection between co-production paradigm and method require paid staff to have skills and qualities which enable them to work within an open system which encourage diverse discussion and identification of multiple goals and outcomes. Hunter and Richie (2007) recognise that this approach calls for skills in facilitation, trust-building, reflecting, negotiation, resource finding, interpretation, and conflict management. This approach also brings with it a requirement for a higher level of consciousness about their role and greater accountability, particularly as people may make high risk choices, or make decisions which paid staff disagree with. This approach exposes staff to ambiguity, uncertainty and challenge, which managers and organisations need to recognise and implement effective supervision and other sources of support.

Cultural change to influence co-production needs to influence bureaucratic processes and institutional systems with recognition of the power which exists in these processes and systems. It is important to recognise their role in cultural change for paid staff as they can reinforce resistance to change. Carr and Patel (2016) identify that the system is set up in such a way that some decisions can only be made by senior policy makers, which limits the scope of co-production and as Slay and Robinson (2011) identify, a new culture which shifts responsibility for recognising and addressing problems from staff to issues which are shared in the co-production context. Engaging in co-production requires significant time and organisational resources, SCIE (2015) identify that staff often become isolated and overstretched when working in these conditions, which creates a risk that co-production becomes too difficult, particularly with a lack of support from the organisation.

Durose et al. (2014) identify four key characteristics shared by staff who work successfully in the co-production context: entrepreneurial ways of working, an understanding of the broader context of their work, a shared broader commitment to social change and in-depth understanding of local communities built through their lived and professional experience which brings a level of credibility with their work. These useful characteristics are useful to explore with paid staff when developing a

positive environment to nurture co-production.

The final element required for a positive culture and environment is positive leadership. There needs to be a consistent commitment to supporting co-production, even when it becomes difficult and challenging. Boyle, Clark and Burns (2006) suggest that it is the efforts and inspiration of committed leaders who can make co-production a success. As SCIE (2015) identify, these changes need recognition and reward where progression and change happen. These are the elements which foster cultural and environmental change where co-production can flourish.

Co-production Tasks

This chapter now turns to the exploration of the more specific tasks required for co-production practice. Each co-production situation is specific to its circumstance; Carr and Patel (2016) recognise that the practice of co-production is specific to the task, context and the people involved. Despite this, there are some common elements which will now be explored in turn. Wilson (1994) introduced a series of tasks for exploration for co-production with older people, grown from the roots of the user involvement movement. This model included consideration of the relationship between service users and providers and service ethos, service user input into issues such as service specification and quality control, and aspects drawn from empowerment theory including increase in self-respect for all co-production partners and exploration of levels of empowerment. These continue to be important elements; however, current thinking in modern literature indicates that co-production practice hangs on a four-phase cycle of co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery and co-evaluation. This will now be explored in greater detail.

Cycle of Co-production

Figure 1
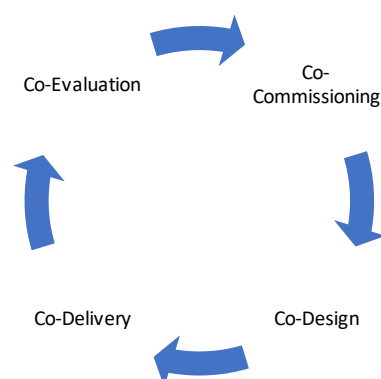
Co-Commissioning

The first stage of the cycle of co-commissioning of services is an arena where people who use services can take a more active and influential role. Boyle and Harris (2009) identify that stakeholders can influence the direction of services, using their knowledge and access to local resources and greater insight into the needs of people who use services. SCIE (2015) identifies a range of tasks to include under the umbrella of co-commissioning, including co-planning of policy, co-prioritisation of services and co-financial decision-making with joint responsibility for all stakeholders.

Co-commissioning does not come without risks. Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) argue that by widening participation to include non-conventional stakeholders comes with risks. However, the value of the experience non-traditional stakeholders brings about the needs of intended users of services and the practicalities of service implementation to contribute to the commissioning process. This contribution can only be successful by taking their contribution seriously, and there is evidence that they can influence decisions about priorities, spending and other factors which visible impact in the organisation.

Co-Design

The second stage of co-design of services brings together the experience of users and their communities, using a range of tools to work with citizens. Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) identify that elements and tasks of co-design should go beyond consultation and use creative methods of engagement such as storytelling, diary studies and scenario building to capture the experience as part of the co-design process. An example of a creative approach is provided by Carr and Patel (2016) reflected on their experience of using the Expereince-Based Co-Design (EBCD) toolkit developed by King's Fund to support the co-design of services which includes developing a shared consensus for service improvement, ensuring the process of co-design takes account of all perspectives and developing a collaborative action plan for change.

Delivering the co-design of services can present some challenges, as it brings the possibility of involving people who may have vested interests in specific changes. This concern does not take account of the risks of continuing with services solely designed by professionals as this may result in services which are not designed appropriately for those people who use a theme, risking financial loss and damage to organisational reputation.

Co-Delivery

The third stage of co-delivery of services is, as defined by Bovaird and Loeffler (2012), the joining of stakeholders to draw on their joint assets and abilities to perform the service collaboratively and efficiently. Co-delivery is the most common conceptualisation of co-production; Brandsen and Pestoff (2006) identify the origins of co-production as citizens involved in production, i.e. the task of delivery. There has been a shift beyond this idea with recognition that more is required beyond delivery, as Hunter and Ritchie (2007) argue, define co-production as an approach to design and delivery which is informed by a distinct world view and requires certain skills and methods to make it work.

Co-Evaluation

The final stage of the co-production cycle is co-evaluation. The literature indicates that this aspect of the cycle provokes the most anxiety in the process as it is not clear what to evaluate when implementing the co-evaluation of services. There is an argument to move away from traditional methods of evaluation. Rather than measuring outputs, there should be a move to measuring the important elements of co-production. This could include factors such as the experience of involvement in the process. Durose et al. (2014) argue that this lack of consistency in understanding and evaluating co-production makes it challenging to work co-productively, and its most significant challenge is to manage it and make it more systematic. Glasby and Beresford (2006) argue for a rejection of evidence hierarchies and argue the best method of is that which will answer the research question most effectively. Glasby (2011) posits the lived experience of the service users or carers and the practice wisdom of the practitioners is as valid a way of understanding the world. Glasby (2011) argues for greater use of this type of experiential evidence to understand the experience of those who user services and how they contribute to these outcomes.

The debates around the co-evaluation of services centre on trying to establish what to include in the co-evaluation process needs a new approach. Richards and Coulter (2007) argue that co-evaluating services should move away from measuring outputs to the inclusion of elements of relational practice. The rationale offered for this is that citizens who use services tend to prioritise aspects such as respect, dignity and being treated as an individual above service output. This view is supported by Durose et al. (2014) as they identify that customers do not evaluate service quality by merely judging the final quality-of-life outcomes, they also place considerable weight on the process of service delivery. Co-evaluation should include understanding that the journey of co-production is as, if not more, important that the outcome of the work.

Although these four phases or stages of co-production emerge from the literature, Newbigging (2016)

highlights that the process not as well defined in practice. It is useful to explore these four stages in practice, as it provides a context for the range of co-production activity needed to help services to take place; but further exploration about the types of tasks which take place to implement the practice of co-production is needed.

This cycle is not the only influence in current practice. It is clear from an analysis of the current literature and guidance that there are co-production values which influence how practice is conducted, something indicated by Croft and Beresford earlier in this chapter as a key element missing from understanding of the user involvement movement. This chapter will now turn to an exploration of overarching values which guide co-production.

Co-production Values

The cornerstone of co-production practice is developing a shared set of values which guide practice. Putting values into practice includes developing a shared understanding of what co-production is and why working in this way is different from other approaches. Developing these shared values is imperative, as asking stakeholders to come together to co-produce in the context of institutional rules, cultural norms and administrative and strategic processes which can heavily influence and undermine shaping relationships.

Authenticity and Transparency

Authenticity and transparency are two fundamental values which provide the foundations for co-production work. From the outset, all stakeholders and organisations involved must be clear about the benefits of co-production for the work and honesty about what may not be possible to achieve and the extent to which power can be shared, and equality can be achieved (Carr and Patel 2016).

Reciprocity

Reciprocity is also a fundamental element of the value-based for co-production, as SCIE (2015) identify, one of the crucial offers of these stakeholder relationships is to offer a range of incentives to engage in reciprocal relationships with mutual responsibilities and expectations. The desire to 'give something back' is something which Cahn (2000) argues is universal and Boyle, Clark and Burns (2006) support this idea as they argue that a reciprocal relationship between people, professionals and each other is the natural state of affairs but has been undermined in recent generations by over professionalisation and dependency. Boyle and Harris (2009) identify that this reciprocal relationship means providing mutual support, which in turn strengthens the delivery of productive services.

Diversity and Equality

Recognition of diversity and a commitment to equality is a vital principle for co-production. In the context of services for lonely and isolated older people, these are issues which can cut across people from all these communities. Co-production must take account of the diverse range of needs and experiences, and action is required to address barriers to inclusion. Despite its best intentions, there is evidence to suggest that co-production in and of itself if not enough to address inequality and exclusion of marginalised groups. SCIE (2015) found that the groups who are under-represented or excluded from such work tended to be people from black and minority ethnic communities, people from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, people who communicate differently, people with dementia, older people who need a high level of support, people who are unaffiliated to any organised group or 'community'. SCIE (2015) also identify that living arrangements can also be a barrier to participation, such as people living in residential homes, homeless people, Gypsy and Traveller communities and people in prison experience exclusion on this basis. Without ensuring that people from these groups represented in co-production, co-production cannot fulfil its purpose without ensuring that people who have traditionally excluded from decision-making about services can take their place as stakeholders.

Communication also needs to be tailored to support and encourage diverse representation. There is an existing narrative about the concept of 'hard to reach communities' to try to understand why people are not engaged in processes; however, this approach locates the problem of engagement with the community without critical reflection on how engagement takes place. Ramsden (2010) challenges this narrative, arguing that the traditional methods of engagement used by organisations are inflexible and routinely exclude people from these under-represented group and that planning for co-production needs to ensure accessibility, including physical access and access to information through appropriate channels, formats and languages used for communication. SCIE (2015) note that alternative methods of communication such as 'word of mouth' may play a particularly important role in co-production as information can reach people who may not have had access to information provided in the more traditional methods.

Strengths-Based Approach

As discussed earlier this chapter, co-production is a strengths-based approach which is built on a central idea if that every stakeholder has equal value. There is also an explicit requirement to adopt strengths-based approaches. Saleeby (1996) defines strengths-based approaches as an approach which demands that individuals, families and communities are seen in the light of their capacities, talents, competencies, possibilities, visions, values and hopes. Working in this way requires a different

standpoint rather than seeing people solely in the contexts of their needs or 'deficits', which reinforces ideas of dependence and inability. Saleeby (1996) recognised that traditional organisations and systems do not usually support strengths-based approaches, they prefer the vocabulary of disease and problems which makes it difficult for those in positions of support to see people in who use services in light of their strengths. Moyle (2014) describes strengths-based approaches move away from tasks and problems to see the person and their abilities. Moyle (2014 p.41) goes on to outline that approaches based on problems rely on 'experts' to fix the problems and the person with the experience is not considered able to participate, control or learn from their problem. Strengths-based approaches focus on ability rather than pathology. Moyle goes on to argue that people will do better when they recognise their strengths and resources than when solutions are presented and 'done to' them. This mirrors the co-production paradigm, and ties are built with strengths-based approaches, reinforced with policy and legislation to put it in a strong position to influence current practice.

SCIE (2015) identify that no stakeholder is more important than another. The strengths which citizens who use services bring to co-production is the knowledge of the circumstances experienced by people the service seeks to support and alongside the knowledge of those who provide services, which Ewert and Evers (2012) summarise as a contribution of 'emotional knowledge'. As co-production relies on the contribution from all stakeholders, co-production must begin by helping stakeholders to recognise the strengths they offer. The co-producing group then need to conduct a mapping exercise across the group so it can understand the available range of strengths and assets available, but also identify the essential gaps, which can then feed into the recruitment of future stakeholders and other work the co-producing group may need to undertake to address the identified gaps. Engaging the right stakeholders right at the beginning of the process is challenging, and it may not be possible to get together all the right people at this time. The time and commitment required for co-production are challenging to sustain over time, particularly over the co-production cycle of commission, design, deliver and evaluate services. These challenges are particularly relevant for stakeholders who use services, as their availability to take part in co-production activity can be impacted by issues such as fluctuations in physical or mental health, or other aspects such as caring responsibilities. Stakeholders may be enthusiastic and demonstrate a high level of commitment at the beginning of the co-production activity; however, as Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) acknowledge, over time, other commitments have an impact on participation. Carr and Patel (2016) refer to this as 'cycles of availability' which should be taken into account when planning co-production to maximise participation for those who use services. These cycles should not stop the co-production process; it should be a journey where the right stakeholders can become involved over time.

Building Effective and Authentic Relationships

Once the core values of the co-producing group are established, the stakeholders can then begin to build effective and authentic relationships which are the foundations for the success of the work. Realpe and Wallace (2010) identify that the collaborative approach required for co-production challenges the usual service user-professional relationship, as they need to move beyond rhetoric and buzzwords. Bown (2013) acknowledges that co-production needs structures to ensure that the different voices of stakeholders are acknowledged and heard, particularly those whose voices are not usually well heard or involved. Bown (2013) goes on to argue that this approach should be creative, flexible and dynamic, which creates a sense of being 'in it together'. Carr and Patel (2016) recommend that this approach should not only focus on solutions but also honesty about problems and difficulties and stakeholders should work to establish ground rules for work, which include how to resolve disagreements and problems. Hunter and Richie (2007) identify distinguishing features of co-production as people who rely on services involved in defining the problem as well as developing and implementing solutions. Discussion of tensions and differences between stakeholders focus on the quality of life issues, not just clinical, service or engagement issues.

Co-production provides the opportunity to build peer and personal support networks, which particularly crucial for co-production in the context of services for older people who may be lonely or socially isolated. As Cahn (2000) identifies, these networks as part of the crucial infrastructure of co-production, but they can also serve different functions, as 'critical friends' (Ramsden 2010), or inspiring others and leading by example (Richardson 2008). To access these benefits and ensure their sustained success, Cahn (2000) identifies that networks require an ongoing investment of social capital; the co-producing group and its organisations must understand this requirement from the outset and build it into co-production planning.

Co-production is time-consuming and requires financial resources, and without this, there is an impact on the success of the co-production activity and has an impact on what it can achieve. Carr and Patel (2016) acknowledge that accessible venues can be costly and problematic, the impact is differentiated according to the setting, for example, in rural areas, the costs of co-production will be particularly high because people will be coming to the project from a wide geographical area. They may need to travel some distance. A degree of creativity is required with resources to facilitate co-production, as Durose et al. (2013) identify, co-production is time-consuming, and without a commitment to securing

resources, there will be an impact on the progress of any co-production activity and a limitation on potential achievement.

Terminology

This new approach to relationships in co-production reflects the terminology used to describe those who are involved in the work. Freeman (1984) uses the term stakeholder includes any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives. In the context of this thesis, the meaning of the term stakeholder moves beyond traditional perceptions and includes anyone involved in co-production such as clients, beneficiaries, volunteers, paid staff, commissioners or strategic management. They are identified as 'stakeholders' as it reflects the fact that they have a stake in the work undertaken, but more than this, as Ledger and Slade (2015) recognise, this language symbolises a newly renegotiated, more equal relationship.

Information

One of the tasks of co-production is to provide information to all stakeholders; as Granville et al. (2011) recognise it is essential to provide information, advice, and advocacy to all stakeholders to support their full participation. Communication in the co-production context should avoid the use of professional jargon as this reinforces unequal relationships between professionals and older people and elements of discussion could become inaccessible for some members of the co-production team.

Ostrom et al. (2002) argue that co-production provides a forum for information exchange which is sufficiently flexible in responding to individual need; however, it is also essential to recognise that sharing information should be done in a way which maintains privacy and confidentiality for all stakeholders and follows the rules which govern information sharing. It should be noted, particularly in the context of co-production examined in this thesis, stakeholders may be sharing particularly sensitive information about their circumstances to contribute to the work. It is vital that from the outset of co-production, governance of information should be made explicit and action is taken to ensure that appropriate information-sharing protocols and systems are in place.

Communication

Creative approaches to communication contribute to the success of co-production. Stakeholders should consider using newer channels for communication, such as social media. SCIE (2015) identify that using methods such as social media can make information more readily available, it is a medium that people are more likely to use and it can help people to overcome some of the barriers people face when trying to access information and services. More than this, as Needham and Carr (2009)

highlight, these methods of communication can provide information to people in a way which bypasses and is not controlled by those who are responsible for providing services. As any organisational filter has not influenced the information provided, it has the chance to provide a degree of independence and unbiased information.

Barriers, Criticisms and Problems with Co-Production

It is clear from this exploration of the literature landscape that there is a significant argument for co-production from a growing and strengthened legal and policy agenda, commitment from organisations and individuals whose values are in line with the concept of co-production as power-sharing, and prudent financial management in a time of austerity for services. Co-production is not without criticism. One of the central difficulties, to which this thesis seeks to contribute knowledge is the question of why co-production has not yet achieved wide-ranging social change? If power is held in the 'forgotten engine of change' as argued by Cahn (2000), why has co-production not yet realised that potential. The U.K. has experienced ten years of an austerity-driven agenda, yet that untapped potential has not yet been realised for individuals and communities. This thesis examines why co-production has not yet achieved its aspirations.

The changing legal and policy context has not been the only driver for this shifting paradigm; it would be naïve to suggest that the state seeks to reduce its power solely for charitable purposes. As Lymbery (2012) identifies, the extent to which users of services has shifted to consumerism could be deeply problematic, and the rhetoric of transformative relationships is merely used to deliver a neo-liberal, cost cutting austerity agenda. There is an argument that the commitment of the state to the change in practice is being used as a 'trojan horse' to save money in the current austerity climate. As Needham and Carr (2009) identify, the traditional approach of a top-down delivery model of health and social care services has given a poor return on investment. The alternative approach offered by co-production taps into the resources in the 'non-market economy', utilising the strengths and assets available in community members rather than services. It fosters a culture of independence from traditional service arrangements, with the consequence of reducing the costs to the state. The co-production paradigm is at risk of devaluation because organisations use it as a cost-cutting approach rather than a commitment to new ways of working. Although this thesis identifies the paradigm of co-production, it recognises that there is still a gap between paradigm and practice.

One of the central dilemmas is that the question of payment is also a resource issue. SCIE (2015) recommend that people's expenses are paid but what payment people should receive beyond

expenses is not clear in the literature. Carter and Beresford (2000) acknowledge, providing or paying for transport and other expenses; however, there is a gap in the literature here examining what type of other recompense stakeholders who are unpaid members of organisations should receive. Financial recompense is not always something which stakeholders seek, so there should be some caution. Voorberg et al. (2018) found that modest financial compensation (two euros per hour) did not have a significant impact on peoples' willingness to engage in co-production of public services and even significant compensation (determined as 10 euros per hour) only have a small impact on willingness to co-production. Voorberg et al. (2018) conclude that financial incentives only play a small impact in co-production and that promotion of other things such as solidarity and charity have a more significant when trying to engage people in co-production. Financial recompense is not the only, or indeed main motivation for people to get involved in co-production. Van Eijk and Steen (2016) argue that people are often involved in co-production on an ad hoc basis and cannot be involved in every issue and use a decision-ladder model of motivation to decide what they can be involved with. People begin with an assessment of their perception of the task and their competency to contribute, the connection to their individual characteristics and how the issue connects to issues related to them or their community. The individual assesses the effort required to engage, weighing up the pro's and cons of their involvement and the dynamics in the co-production networks. Van Eijk and Steen (2016) argue that it is these factors which motivate involvement in co-production, not the prospect of financial recompense. Munoz et al. (2014) in the study of co-production of services for older people in a Scottish rural community found that co-production is a form of participation that requires attributes of volunteering and social involvement. They argue for a 5-level model of co-production which ranges from attendance at community events, active membership of local organisations, taking part in community projects, membership of a management committee and organisation of new services. Munoz et al. (2013) argue that it is those who are most well-resourced in terms of education and health are most likely to participate, but they are most likely to already formally participate in community activities and that further research is needed to find out what could encourage older people who are not already involved to engage in co-production.

Co-production is not a panacea; there is potential for the identification of conflicting priorities between stakeholders and organisations, which can often only be resolved by political decision-makers. Although co-production can achieve major improvements, there are also likely resource consequences, such as substantial time, set up funds and support costs. Input from citizens is not free (SCIE 2015), and as Boyle, Clark and Burns (2006) identify, public services are stretched; therefore, developing capacity to participate is critical for all stakeholders in co-production.

It is also essential for the aspirations for co-production to be communicated to stakeholders. Durose et al. (2013) identify that relationships and trust in co-production can be damaged if stakeholders feel the goal is saving money, not service improvement and empowerment 'It is damaging if it becomes associated with a cost-cutting mentality... it is becoming a byword for passing responsibilities onto the communities, and that is leading to cynicism and anxiety' (pg.3). This perception of co-production has significant potential for damage as it undermines the commitment to making necessary changes required for co-production.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the body of academic and grey literature relevant for co-production. The chapter opens with an examination of the legal and cultural shift in recent decades, exploring the setting for the emergence of co-production. The chapter then introduces one of the central arguments of the thesis, that co-production is both a paradigm and praxis. The paradigm of co-production is then explored in more detail, the notion of a more equal, renegotiated relationship between individual and state as central for co-production. The chapter recognised power as central to this paradigm and drew on established theories of power to understand the nature of power, moving through a continuum of theories from dispersed to concentrated power. Empowerment theories were then explored to examine how they can provide a foundation for a co-production paradigm. The second half of the chapter then looked a co-production praxis including the type of environment needed for co-production to flourish, the co-production cycle, principles and values of co-production. Finally, the chapter concluded with a discussion about the challenges, barriers and problems for co-production. This thesis now moves on to the fieldwork and will detail the methodological approach and the empirical findings chapters.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the methodology and methods adopted for this thesis. It begins by outlining the aims of the research and the research questions (which were summarised in chapter one) and establishes the ontological, epistemological, and methodological standpoint of the thesis. The chapter then moves on to outline the fieldwork and research methods, beginning with a detailed exploration of the complexities of navigating entry to the research field and the establishment of a participatory action research group. The practicalities of the fieldwork, research methods and data analysis are then discussed in more detail. Finally, the chapter concludes with research reflexivity and an analysis of the emerging research ethical issues and how they were managed in the field.

The aims and research questions for this thesis, outlined in the introductory chapter, emerged following researcher engagement with both the literature and the Time to Shine programme. Drawing on the existing knowledge, the researcher developed four research questions:

1   What are the lived experiences of loneliness and social isolation of older people?

2   How do people's lived experiences contribute to strategies and services to address loneliness and social isolation?

3   What are the essential elements necessary for co-production?

4   Can a model of co-production be developed to inform future work with older people who are socially isolated and lonely?

The researcher established their ontological, epistemological, and methodological position from the outset, as they recognised that this had significant implications for how the research was conducted, which is now laid out in further detail.

Ontological, Epistemological and Methodological Position

This research took a social constructionist ontological standpoint which, as Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue, that society is created through social actors, both those who created this in the past and those creating it in the moment. In this sense, as Dreher (2015), identifies, the meaning of society and social phenomena are continuously regenerated through a dialectical relationship between objective and subjective reality. The researcher took this standpoint because it reflected the complex nature of the concepts of this thesis. Chapter two discussed the complex and subjective experience of loneliness and social isolation. The existing knowledge about loneliness indicates that it is an individually defined experience (Wood 1953; Kaasa 1998; and Boldy and Grenade 2011). Chapter three explored the complexity of defining co-production and the extent to which it is context-bound. There is no

universally accepted definition of co-production, and as Needham and Carr (2009) identify, making its definition too specific may also limit its potential. Equally, without clear definition, co-production loses its potential, as Clark (2015) stated in chapter three, other values and concepts become connected and undermines the logic of the concept, which then limits the potential co-production holds. These concepts have been socially constructed by past and present participants and are in a state of constant flux. The social constructionist ontological position of the thesis recognised the challenges of working with these concepts and contributed to societal understanding of them.

In tandem with this ontological stance, the researcher adopted an interpretivist epistemological position, which as Bryman (2012) argues, recognised that the social world is fundamentally different from natural sciences and requires different approaches to inquiry to understand the subjective meaning of social action. O'Reilly (2012) describes interpretivist epistemological position as how we can gain knowledge about the world from loose interpretations of meanings ascribed to actions. As the definitions explored in this thesis are fluid and context-bound, it became clear early on that an interpretivist epistemological stance was the most appropriate approach.

This epistemological stance has its roots in Weber's 'Verstehen' (understanding) as a tool, as Tucker (1965) states, action which is meaningfully oriented to actions of others. The researcher's standpoint recognised that the concepts are constructions based on the researcher's prior experience of the social world and a specific version of reality. Gouldner (1962) argues that 'value-free' research is dishonest and that researchers should be explicit about their values so others can decide the extent to which their values have influenced their research. The researcher recognised that she held her understanding about the concepts of loneliness and social isolation and the essence of co-production from her own personal and professional experience and values as a social worker, which in turn influenced the interpretation of the academic literature and how the fieldwork was approached. As she took this stance, it was necessary that the researcher made her values explicit so others could make a judgement about the extent to which they influenced the research. As Kleinman (2007) argues, researchers are instruments of research shaped by their identities, group memberships and values. Social work professional ethics are integral to the identity and values of the researcher. The British Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (BASW 2014) outlines these ethical standards in full. There are specific standards which were relevant to this thesis which included respect for the right to self-determination, promoting the right to participation, and a commitment to social justice and change. It was important for the researcher to reflect on these values and to examine the potential influence across the thesis. The researcher recognised that she held power in this research process,

and her narrative was embodied in the design of the research instruments, the selection and execution of the research methods and the interpretation of the findings.

The researcher navigated a dilemma about whether the fieldwork could or should be co-produced. The topic originated with the PhD supervisors and the Time to Shine programme, with agreement for funding from the Economic and Social Research Council. Initially, the researcher felt that the fieldwork should be co-produced, as well as looking at how Time to Shine programme services were co-produced. The first issue identified was that co-producing knowledge with research participants, particularly older people who were connected to Time to Shine programme services, most closely aligned with the personal and professional values of the researcher. As the researcher's knowledge about co-production grew, it became increasingly clear that it was not possible to achieve authentic co-production in these circumstances. Older people who were connected to these services were not involved in the inception of the PhD, which meant they were unable to influence its scope or funding. As discussed in chapter three, involvement in this type of activity is critical for authentic co-production. From the outset, the thesis would have failed to adhere to some of the principles recommended for co-production. Secondly, as the PhD candidate, the researcher was accountable to the University of Sheffield and the Economic and Social Research Council to demonstrate the academic ability required for the PhD award. This situation created an imbalance that could have undermined co-production, as the ultimate power for decision-making about the content of the thesis would not rest with those involved in the process, but with the researcher in the drive to meet the PhD requirements. These tensions are highlighted by Klocker (2012), who acknowledges these inherent tensions between co-production and meeting academic requirements for PhD candidates. The researcher concluded it would be disingenuous to attempt to co-produce this thesis as the process would be authentic co-production and would have contributed confusion to co-production practice rather than make a contribution to theoretical understanding and clarity. Considering this, the thesis recommends that future organisations and funding bodies recognise that co-production should begin at the inception stage, and initiate processes which adhere to co-production principles from the outset.

The researcher recognised there was a gap between her values and intentions when the thesis commenced. The complexities of translating the commitment to her values and the practicalities of research required a practical compromise. This was reflected in the approach which adhered to the researcher's values but was also honest about the possible level of influence that the participants, particularly older people who were lonely and isolated, were able to achieve. The researcher adopted a combination of elements of grounded theory and participatory action research to form the methodological framework. Teram et al. (2016) argue that using an adapted method of Glaser and

Strauss's (1967) grounded theory model alongside participatory action theory. Using this method, the researcher collected the fieldwork data without using a pre-defined framework and checked this data as it emerged with the participants so they could confirm that the knowledge was reflective of their experience. As Kvale (2002) recognised, this approach contributed to qualitative data validity, but also as Teram et al. (2016) identified, it addressed the inherent power imbalance between the researcher and participants, as they influenced the representation of their experience. The practicalities the researcher faced when using this approach are detailed later in this chapter.

Case Study Approach

The researcher explored loneliness, social isolation and co-production and explored them in a real-life rather than theoretical context and worked with the collaborative partner, the Time to Shine programme, as a case study for the empirical fieldwork. The researcher used a case study approach as described by Yin (1984 p.23) as this method supports the investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Yin (1984) outlines that it can be difficult to establish boundaries and context for the phenomenon which are under research when they are identified in the 'real world' rather than explored as part of academic theoretical discussion. Yin (1984) identified six steps for case study method: determining and defining the research questions; selecting the cases and determining data gathering and analysis technique; preparing to collect data; collecting the data in the field; evaluating and analysing the data; and preparing the report. The researcher was guided by these steps throughout the data gathering and evaluation of the empirical data. Within the overarching case study, the researcher included two of the Time to Shine programme funded projects, community group one and two (see below for further details).

Collaborative Partners

The Time to Shine programme is part of the wider Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund which is a non-departmental public body, created by the National Lottery Act (2006) and is regulated by the Government Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Included in the remit for the National Lottery Community Fund is to distribute 40% of funds raised via the National Lottery to good causes and one strand of this financial support has been to establish the national Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme.

The purpose of the Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme is to support older people who are aged 50 and over at risk of being marginalised or social isolation and loneliness to lead more fulfilling lives (National Lottery Community Fund 2015). In 2015, the Fund selected 15 areas across England to receive funding, with £78 million divided between the areas, distributed over six years.

The National Lottery Community Fund Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme measures loneliness and social isolation via a national evaluation questionnaire (referred to as the common measurement framework (CMF) based on a combination of the de Jong Giervald and Van Tilburg (2006) Overall emotional and social loneliness scale, which was designed to explore feelings of missing intimate emotional relationships or wider social networks. The original de Jong Giervald and Van Tilburg 11-item scale was difficult to use in large scale surveys, it was reduced and validated by de Jong Giervald and Van Tilburg in 2006, making the 6-item scale a reliable and valid method to collect data in large scale surveys, suitable for the data collection methods of the Ageing Better: Fulfilling Lives programme. Along with this, the CMF incorporated elements of the 20-item UCLA loneliness scale, developed by Russell (1996) to assess how disconnected people feel from others. Finally, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales, developed in 2007 has a 14-item and short 7-item scale to monitor general mental wellbeing. These three tools were brought together by the national evaluation team Ecorys on behalf of the National Lottery Community Fund   to develop a single evaluation questionnaire used across the Ageing Better: Fulfilling Lives programme, including the Time to Shine programme in Leeds to monitor and evaluate the impact and success of interventions funded by National Lottery Community Fund. People who use these services are asked complete a questionnaire when they begin to attend or receive support and then again once they have had experience or are ending their service or intervention.

Alongside the national evaluation surveys for Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better, the Time to Shine programme also has a local evaluation programme, delivered by the Centre for Loneliness Studies at the University of Sheffield. The local evaluation programme uses qualitative research methods, mainly focus groups and interviews to supplement the provide some rich qualitative data about the experience of services funded in Leeds through the Time to Shine programme.

Leeds Older Peoples Forum (LOPF), an organisation which facilitates and supports a network of third sector organisations who worked with older people across Leeds, bid successfully with support from associated statutory and voluntary sector partners and awarded £6million awarded over six years. To manage this fund, LOPF created the Time to Shine programme. They used this money to commission projects across Leeds to combat social isolation and loneliness for people over 50 in Leeds. The work is overseen by the Time to Shine programme Board, chaired by representatives from LOPF and working alongside statutory and third sector service providers. The Time to Shine programme has a small team of paid staff that also work alongside the board. The paid staff work alongside Delivery Partners are organisations across Leeds who have received funds from the Time to Shine programme to delivery services for older people who are lonely and socially isolated. The programme uses the terminology

of volunteers and beneficiaries for people who either volunteer their time at these groups or attend the groups as participants. There is significant overlap between volunteers and beneficiaries, this is highlighted later in this thesis, as people often volunteers as a way of overcoming feelings of loneliness and social isolation, or volunteers in some parts of the service but attend other groups as beneficiaries. An overview of all research participants is available in appendix 1, and the structure of the programme is as follows:

Structure of the Time to Shine Programme:

Figure 2
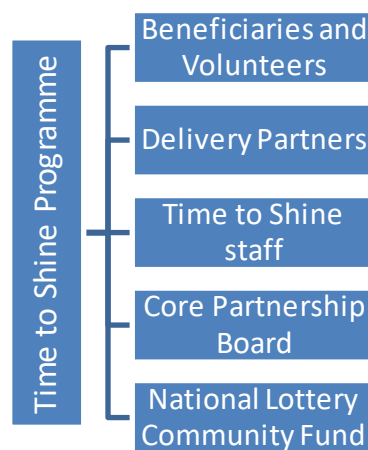
Mini Case Studies

The Time to Shine programme was the overarching case study for the empirical data collection and within this, the researcher undertook two mini case studies with two community groups which were funded by the programme.

Community Group One

Community group one was a Time to Shine funded project in an urban area to the West of Leeds in the Stanningley ward. The design of the project was to promote wellbeing with older people in their homes to address loneliness and social isolation. This project was run by a delivery partner organisation which appointed a specific paid member of staff to deliver this project.

The organisation in community group one was not group-based but provided support to people at home. As part of the support service, various groups were also run locally by the delivery partner, which beneficiary and volunteer participants chose to attend along with the support received at home. Two participants from community group one were beneficiaries who received support at home from the organisation, and one participant was both a beneficiary as they received a support service, but

also undertook some volunteer work with the organisation as a strategy to help them to address their feelings of loneliness and social isolation following bereavement.

Community Group Two

The second community group was located over two rural sites in the East of Leeds across the Garforth and Swillington ward and Harewood ward in East Leeds. The remit of the project was to address loneliness and social isolation for people over 50 who live in rural locations in Leeds. This project was run mostly by volunteers who are over 50, with long-arm support from a delivery partner.

The researcher used the Leeds City Council (2017) ward data provide some background geographic information about the context in which the case studies selected for the thesis were operating, available in appendix 2. The ward data in 2017 showed community group two site two as the more affluent area, with house prices significantly higher and life expectancy is higher in the Harewood ward than Garforth and Swillington ward, although the wards are very close geographically, with a similar percentage of the population over the age of 50. Community group one is significantly different. It is in the Stanningley ward, which is an urban area and significantly less affluent than both research sites in community group two. There is a smaller percentage of the population aged over 50 and a significantly reduced life expectancy compared to community group two. Appendix 3 provides an overview of characteristics of all beneficiaries and volunteers at community groups one and two. This data has been shared with the researcher from Ecorys, the national evaluator body for the National Lottery Community Fund. The CMF questionnaire completed by each beneficiary and volunteer and inputted and analysed as part of the national evaluation process. The researcher was very conscious about replicating existing data collection processes and several participants had already expressed annoyance because they were asked to complete the CMF questionnaire on a few occasions.

Sampling

A purposeful sampling approach for participants was taken by the researcher. Purposeful sampling is a method of sampling which relies on the researcher using their own judgement when selecting participants. The benefits of this approach are identified by Emmel (2013) as a pragmatic and practical approach to selecting participants which the richest information and experience, which as Patton (2002) outlines, relies on the real-life experience to inform the judgement of the researcher. Given the context and fluidity of participant connection to the Time to Shine programme, this flexibility was vital for the research to be able to approach participants with a range of experience and knowledge about co-production and the experience of loneliness and social isolation.

The researcher sought to include participants were included from across the Time to Shine programme, including a representative from the National Lottery Community Fund who worked

closely with the programme, Time to Shine core partnership board members, Time to Shine members of staff who worked to support the programme and delivery partners, volunteers and beneficiaries. The purpose was to obtain a cross-section across the interested parties, to seek their views and explore how the concepts of loneliness, social isolation and co-production were constructed by those engaged with the programme. Participants were selected because of their rich knowledge and experience with co-production, loneliness, and social isolation either as someone who had lived experience or had supported people in these circumstances.

Recruitment

The researcher recruited participants from across the Time to Shine programme. The Time to Shine programme paid staff and core partnership board welcomed the researcher and a warm, professional rapport was established from the outset of the fieldwork. The researcher recognised the possibility that Time to Shine staff members could have been defensive about the presence of the researcher and worried about the potential for criticism of their work; however, this was not evident in the researcher's interactions with the team. Where potential participants from the staff team were approached but unable to take part, it was clear that their work capacity prevented their participation rather than a willingness to engage. A National Lottery Community Fund representative was also willing to take part and made time to take part in a research interview on an occasion when they travelled to Leeds to attend a core partnership board meeting.

Participants for the focus group were recruited following their participation in the co-produced commissioning activity. The Time to Shine programme staff facilitated and supported a group of older people to lead the commissioning activity to support them to take control of an activity with power and influence across the Time to Shine programme. Following this activity, participants were contacted by the paid staff who acted as gatekeepers to request they take part in a follow up focus group with the researcher to feedback on their experiences of co-production.

The researcher worked closely with the delivery partners to recruit participants from the community groups. Delivery partners acted as gatekeepers, the intermediaries between the researcher and potential volunteer and beneficiary participants, as well as being potential participants for the research. To negotiate this, the researcher initially approached them via a delivery partner meeting held by the staff team at Time to Shine. At this meeting, the researcher delivered a short presentation to raise awareness about the researcher, then follow this up with individual discussions with delivery partners to allow them to ask further questions which were specifically relevant for their organisations. The researcher also provided several participant information sheets (see appendix 4 and 5) for the delivery partners to take back to their organisations to pass onto their volunteers and

beneficiaries, with a view to encouraging them to take part. The researcher then followed this up with an email to ask if it was possible to attend the various groups and services to begin to build a dialogue with potential participants. It was at this stage that interest from delivery partners began to wane and only two community groups agreed for the research to progress within their organisations. As Keesling (2008) identified, gatekeepers, by virtue of their position, can control access for researchers to potential participants and are responsible for relaying information about the research. In this circumstance, enthusiasm and engagement with research are reliant on how this is portrayed by the gatekeepers and, particularly in this circumstance, the researcher perceived that they had a significant impact on the non-response for their organisation.

An issue quickly identified by the researcher was that representation across all diversity strands was not possible in the sample. There was diversity across age, disability (both across the life course and in later life), experiences of mental ill-health and levels of income. However, unfortunately, diversity strands related to ethnicity, race, religion, and sexuality were not represented in this research, despite attempts by the researcher to contact groups which specifically supported people from a range of diverse communities to engage in the research. In some instances, groups did not respond to the researcher's request and other groups responded to advise that felt they had made their contribution to feedback about the Time to Shine programme and declined to take part.

The researcher reflected on the benefits and drawbacks of the Time to Shine programme as the collaborative partner for this thesis. The benefits were that the researcher had access to the established relationships to delivery partners, beneficiaries, and volunteers across the Time to Shine programme so immediately began to develop research relationships with potential participants through attending strategic and operational meetings and visiting groups funded via the Time to Shine programme. The drawbacks on working with a collaborative partner created two primary challenges for participant recruitment for the fieldwork via the delivery partners. The first difficulty for the researcher was the challenge in working in a heavily researched field, working alongside both the local and national evaluation of for the Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme. In particular, groups which supported people from under-served communities, such as people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, or groups supporting LGBTQ+ communities stated that they did not have the space to take part in the fieldwork for this thesis because of their commitment to the ongoing evaluation programme.

The second challenge experienced by the researcher was the nature of the commissioning process for the Time to Shine programme which fund delivery partners for contracts of different lengths. Not all projects received funds for the entirety of the programme. At the time the researcher approached

delivery partners, several projects were approaching the end of their funding period and was a sensitive time for the partners, and the result was that some were unwilling to get involved because their future relationship with Time to Shine was unclear.

The impact for this thesis was although participants may have been interested in the thesis, they declined to take part they already felt over-researched (both declining the research invitation and non-response), particularly those who supported beneficiaries and volunteers from under-served communities linked to the range of equality strands, particularly ethnicity, race and sexuality. This situation had an impact on the sampling within the boundaries of the Time to Shine programme, but also limited the researcher as they were unable to approach participants outside of the boundaries of Time to Shine to generate a more diverse sample of participants. Although there was experience of drawbacks, on balance, the researcher felt that the benefits of the collaborative relationship with Time to Shine outweighed the drawbacks. The recruitment process with community groups did result in two groups taking up the offer of inclusion in the research.

The participants from across the Time to Shine programme. This included a representative from the National Lottery Community Fund, three members of the core partnership board, five paid staff members from the Time to Shine programme, four delivery partners and seven volunteers and beneficiaries from Time to Shine programme funded services. Four older people were also invited to take part in the research as they had been involved in specific co-produced commissioning activity which the researcher deemed essential to include in the fieldwork data collection. A full breakdown of research participants is available in appendix 1, and a summary of participants (identified by participant number) is provided here in figure 4:

Figure 3

Time to Shine	Participatory Action Research Group	Community Group One	Community Group Two	Focus Group
P001 – TTS Staff P002 – TTS Staff P003 – TTS Staff P004 – TTS Staff P005 – TTS Staff P006 – Board Member P007 – Board - Member P008 – Board - Member P009 – Funding Body	P016 - Volunteer P017 - Volunteer P018 - Beneficiary P019 - Beneficiary P020 - Beneficiary P021 - Beneficiary P023 - Beneficiary	P013 -Delivery Partner P022 - Beneficiary P023 - Beneficiary P024 – Volunteer and Beneficiary	P014 – Delivery Partner P015 - Volunteer P016 - Volunteer P017 - Volunteer P018 - Beneficiary P019 - Beneficiary P020 - Beneficiary P021 - Beneficiary	P007 – Board Member and Commissioning Panel P010 – Beneficiary and Commissioning Panel P011 – Beneficiary and Commissioning Panel P012 – Beneficiary and Commissioning Panel

Entering the Field

Entering the field is a landmark in qualitative research, as Chughtai and Myers (2017) argue, entering the field is a distinct phase of the fieldwork and marks a critical moment. It is more than an 'administrative issue' as it is the time when researchers learn about social and cultural practices and their meanings. Turner (1997) argues these critical moments are periods of sense and meaning making and researchers need to be vulnerable to make sense of practice; as Kunda (2013) it is one thing to gain physical entry and another to enter the practice world, to be alongside participants in everyday situations.

The researcher entered the field prior to the fieldwork data collection phase to spend an introductory period with the Time to Shine programme. This included spending time with the Time to Shine programme staff, observing Board and sub-group meeting and attending groups with delivery partners, beneficiaries and volunteers to build rapport with people from across the spectrum of the Time to Shine programme and gain insight into their connections to the programme.

The researcher's questions about co-production developed from the researcher's understanding of the literature and the experience of the introductory phase at Time to Shine. Although there are some co-production models in existence, as indicated in chapter five, there is no unifying definition or model to encapsulate the form of co-production in use across the Ageing Better programme.

When the researcher entered the field and spent time observing the core partnership board meetings and delivery partner meetings, she found the term co-production had some negative connotations attached, people suggested it was the latest 'buzzword' for ways of working which were already in place. Considering this, the researcher felt it necessary to try to find out what was understood by the term co-production, what people were doing across the Time to Shine programme in the name of co-production, and to draw conclusions about whether it was possible to identify a model that could be useful for future co-production.

Although the Time to Shine staff and core partnership board welcomed the researcher as they worked alongside team members; forging a close relationship with the Time to Shine staff team could have increased the risk of bias. This positive experience could have influenced how the researcher interpreted the research data to amplify the positive work of Time to Shine and to minimise any critique of the programme. The researcher was mindful of the need to retain research independence and minimise the potential for researcher bias throughout the fieldwork.

Entering the Field: Community Group One
The researcher worked closely with the delivery partner prior to entering the field with community group one. The delivery partner was instrumental in recruiting the participants for this project. Although the researcher did not have the opportunity to meet the participants in the group setting, the delivery partner consulted with beneficiaries who used their service to ask if they would be interested in taking part in the research. Once beneficiaries had consented to take part, the researcher made an appointment visit, either in the community group one day centre building or the home of the beneficiary. This meeting took place before the research started so the researcher could introduce themselves and spend time one to one with the participant to discuss all aspects of the research including the participant information sheet and the consent form. Once they had the opportunity to consider the request, the researcher confirmed they would like to continue to be involved and, on this occasion, they all agreed to continue to take part.

Entering the Field: Community Group Two
When preparing to enter the research field at community project two, the researcher was able to spend preparatory time attending the groups and taking part in the group activities. For community group two, site one, the researcher spent time chatting with group members, playing table tennis and

carpet bowls, taking part in some work to do the costings to put on a community cinema in the community centre and sitting with volunteers and participants to complete the CMF questionnaires to return for the Time to Shine programme. At site two, the research spent time with the different activity groups, again chatting and playing games such as scrabble.

The opportunity to do this with the potential research participants was valuable. The researcher was able to develop a positive relationship and spend time speaking with people about the thesis. This opportunity helped to overcome some of the barriers between participants and the researcher. It was still a challenge to recruit participants from within site two even with this opportunity; the researcher found that individuals were willing to chat, but then shied away from taking part in the research. One participant from site one initially declared interest then withdrew due to time constraints and one participant from site two initially consented to take part, but then withdrew on health grounds. For community group two, both site one and two, it should be recognised that the volunteer participant was critical for recruitment and without their input and encouragement to take part, the researcher would have had difficulty recruiting beneficiary participants.

The chapter now turns to discussion about the researcher's use of participatory action research and the research methods used in the fieldwork.

Participatory Action Research

Earlier in this chapter, the researcher discussed the rationale for using PAR to recognise that the researcher and participants as partners in the research. This is recognised by Minkler (2000) who discusses of the use of PAR for the 'purpose of education or effecting social change'. Reason and Bradbury (2006) similarly argue that PAR 'affirms peoples' rights and ability to have a say in decisions which affect them' (pg.10). Maguire (1987) argues PAR increases the likelihood that both process and outcomes of research should be beneficial to participants. The researcher recognised the importance of benefits for participants of PAR and anticipated that providing an opportunity for them to gain insight into the research process and contribute to their strengths which could in turn support their future involvement of co-production of services.

It was decided to established a PAR Group, with the anticipated purpose of providing a channel for participant input into the thesis, particularly about the proposed research methods and to check that the researcher's interpretation of the research data accurately reflected the research participant's lived experience.

The researcher decided that she would use the PAR initially with research participants who were either volunteers or beneficiaries of the services of the Time to Shine programme, not participants who were

members of staff, core partnership board members or representatives from National Lottery Community Fund. This decision was based on the concern that older people who were volunteers or beneficiaries may be less experienced in attending groups to voice their opinions and if all research participants attended there was a possibility that the process could have replicated some of the existing power structures and they may not feel free to express their views. At the outset, it was anticipated that other participants would be invited to future meetings once volunteer and beneficiary participants were established group member and were comfortable with the introduction of other participants.

The process of PAR involves an iterative, cyclical process, reflecting on practice, acting, reflecting, and then taking further action. The following diagram produced by Reil (2007) illustrates the process:

Figure 4

Progressive Problem Solving with Action Research
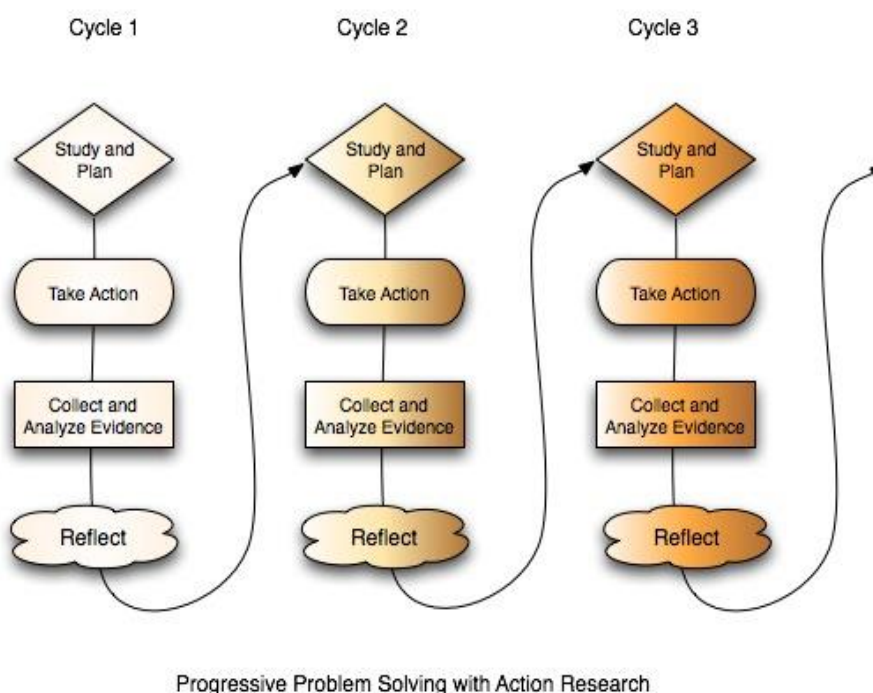
The researcher envisaged that a Participatory Action Research Groups would be initiated to enable research participants to get involved in refining the research methods, continuing feedback through data collection and culminating with final feedback following the data analysis, allowing participants to provide final feedback before submission of the thesis.

The PAR was initiated by designing and distributing a flyer which was circulated through two Time to Shine groups for beneficiaries and volunteers who had agreed to take part in the fieldwork. Bi-monthly meetings dates were then arranged over twelve months of fieldwork phase. The researcher carefully considered accessibility for the PAR group meeting and anticipated six meetings would run throughout

the year, rotating across the three sites. This timetable allowed people to attend a group in the familiar environment of their usual service but also allowed attending groups in other areas of the city. Participants would then have the option of only attending their local group which ran in their usual venue, attending more of the groups across the city.

Expenses of participants were quickly identified as a critical issue by the researcher, who ensured that funds would be made available which reflected the preferences of the participants, either providing funds in advance for people to access to facilitate their travel or making funds available at the group to reimburse travel expenses.

The flyer also encouraged group members to contact the researcher if there were any issues which may impact on their attendance, such as caring responsibilities or difficulties travelling alone. At this point, the researcher had visited the community groups on several occasions and had been introduced to all participants. In total two PAR Group meetings were held.

PAR Meeting One

The first PAR meeting took place at the venue used for one of the community groups and was attended by p023 from community group one and p016, p017, p018 and p019 from community group two. The aim of the first PAR meeting was to a) introduce the concept and role of the PAR group, b) introduce the research c) discuss and refine conceptualisation of the term co-production and the use of language, and d) explore the use of the research methods, with reference to the sensory and mapping interviews. Members of the PAR group were given Participant Information Sheets (appendix 4) which the researcher talked through with the group the start of the meeting. The researcher then asked the group members to sign Participant Consent Forms (appendix 6).

The introduction of the research and concept of PAR was positively received by the members of the group and they enthusiastically listened and asked questions about the thesis. The role of the PAR group was well received, and members agreed that this approach would assist in helping them have a say in the development of the thesis.

The researcher found the discussion on the concept of co-production challenging as it was complicated to engage members of the PAR group in the discussion without influencing their understanding of the concept, which the researcher recognised influenced the research field. The researcher has learned from this experience that when discussing concepts which are not familiar for laypeople that preparatory work is needed to support those taking part to engage in the discussion. It means engaging a broader range of voices talking about conceptualisation to ensure a more independent level of thought and discussion.

An essential area of feedback from the PAR group was the importance of the researcher taking a more informal approach when involving beneficiaries and volunteers in the research process. This informal approach was evident in the discussion about the language used by the researcher; for example, when discussing the terminology of co-production, the group felt that the term 'working together' was less formal and more suitable for the approach. They also provided feedback that the researcher should use the term 'chat' in place of the word 'interview' or 'conversation' as group members felt it was less formal and would help people to feel less intimidated of the research process.

The researcher found this feedback helpful as it highlighted the need to take an informal approach in the fieldwork. The researcher was not able to adopt the changes suggested; it would not be appropriate to adopt the term 'working together' in place of 'co-production' because, as explored in chapter five, co-production is conceptually distinct and to use alternative terms would hinder the conceptual clarity the researcher was striving to achieve in this thesis. The use of the word 'chat' in place of 'interview' or 'conversation' was given careful consideration by the researcher, who decided that it was possible to adopt this terminology. There was a balance between adopting an informal approach and ethical research which is honest and transparent with participants about the nature of research conversations and how these conversations are used as research data. The researcher concluded that they could use the word 'chat' with the beneficiary and volunteer participants. However, it required qualification in the preparatory discussions to clarify the scope and boundaries of the 'chat', using the participant information sheet and consent form to shape the discussion. The experience of the researcher was that this approach did work well with the beneficiary and volunteer participants, it did help to create a less formal research environment, but participants were clear about how the researcher intended to use their information in the thesis.

The researcher then moved to introduce the proposed research methods, with a focus on a proposal of sensory and mapping interviewing techniques. To explore the approach to sensory interviewing, the researcher developed the activity 'What's in a picture?' to explore the power of pictures and photographs to trigger memories. The pictures used for this activity are available in appendix 7. The researcher selected photographs which had potential to trigger memories about shared, collective experiences which included photographs from history (of the royal wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer and the assassination of U.S. President JF Kennedy) and photographs of meals (Christmas dinner and a full English breakfast) to try to evoke memories and stimulate conversation. Initially, the PAR group members expressed cynicism towards the method (for example, when asked what smells the picture of the full English breakfast might evoke, someone replied 'paper'). The researcher shared their memories of the day of the royal wedding to prompt discussion, including

where they watched the ceremony, who they were with and what they wore on the day. The researcher was conscious of the dilemma making sure there was a balance of input, sharing enough so the participants could see the value of the method, but not too much which could set a template for the type of conversation around the photographs. Sharing this information did stimulate further discussion and the group accepted the method had potential to engage participants to share information about their lives.

The PAR group members then considered the Helen Sanderson Associates relationship circle (available in appendix 8) and discussed its potential to be used as an icebreaker activity. The researcher suggested that it could be used in the initial mapping interview to assist volunteers and beneficiaries to think about the people in their lives and the types of relationship they have. The researcher anticipated this would be the right approach for the first interview with the beneficiary and volunteer interviews as it was perhaps less intrusive than the sensory interviews and would help to build rapport with the participant to prepare for a more in-depth, second sensory interview which gathered information about the lived experience of loneliness, social isolation, and co-production of the individual.

The PAR group challenged the ordering of this interview approach. They felt that the Helen Sanderson Associates relationship circle might be complicated and result in participant disengagement from the research process. The PAR group suggested the researcher should use the sensory interview should first, followed by a subsequent mapping interview. Following discussion, the researcher took this recommendation into account and changed the order of the interviews as recommended by the PAR group.

The researcher reflected that this was a successful first meeting for the PAR group. Although the researcher had hoped for higher attendance, the engagement and participation from group members was excellent and made a significant contribution to the fieldwork process and by this, the overall thesis.

PAR Meeting Two
Following the first meeting, the researcher was optimistic about the continuation of the PAR approach. As per the commitment to rotate the venue, the second PAR meeting took place at another venue used by one of the community groups. Unfortunately, this meeting generated much less interest and only two participants from community group two, p020 and p021 (who had not attended the previous PAR group meeting) attended the second PAR meeting.

The meeting began again with the researcher distributing Participant Information Sheets (appendix 4), discussing this with participants in detail, then asking them to sign the Participant Consent Form (appendix 6). The researcher then talked about the purpose of the PAR meeting and discussed feedback about the changes made because of the discussion at the first PAR group meeting. This conversation led to subsequent discussion but no further actions or changes to agree for the progress of the fieldwork at this stage. The researcher's reflections about this meeting were that there was some useful discussion with the participants who attended, but concern for the success of future meetings. This concern was justified as unfortunately, it was not possible to generate enough interest to run further PAR group meetings.

Learning from PAR

The researcher discussed the lack of interest with PAR group participants and others who took part in the research. The consensus was that feedback from the thesis should be delivered separately to each of the research sites rather than trying to bringing people together from across Leeds. Although no further full PAR meetings went ahead, the researcher took the time to visit each community group to discuss progress with participants so they were able to see the progression of the fieldwork and feedback to the researcher about how their data was represented in the thesis.

The researcher anticipated that participants would be interested in taking part in the process, particularly having the opportunity to influence the direction of the thesis. The researcher found it difficult to live up to the aspirations for PAR as laid out earlier in the chapter, particularly by Maguire (1987) as it was difficult for the researcher to determine that the PAR process in this instance had been beneficial to participants. The most significant learning for the researcher was that it is difficult to sustain interest in this type of activity. The reason for this was not apparent, but the researcher concluded that several factors had an impact. Firstly, the process did not involve participants from the beginning of the process, including the inception of the thesis or initiating the PAR approach. Without a sense of ownership, participants may not have an interest where no difference was made directly in their lives. Secondly, they needed to go out of their way to take part in the PAR groups; something which potential participants did not wish to do. Finally, it is important to acknowledge there was no immediate, tangible outcome, so taking part was not perceived as something necessary for most of the groups or individuals asked to take part and although the researcher perceived it as an essential activity, others did not share this view. This links to the work of Van Eijk and Steen (2016) outlined in chapter three, who argue that when people decide to get involved in these types of activity, they weigh up the pros and cons, taking account of issues such as their perception of the task, connection to their individual characteristics and how the issues relate to them or their community. This is also supported by Ridley and Jones (2002), who linked the success of groups of people who are co-

producing to a sense of ownership in their work. This connection was not made in this PAR process, the learning from this process is the importance of making sure that this connection is firmly established in future similar activities.

The experience of the PAR group also highlighted learning about the importance of checking with people about specific issues. This was highlighted with research participant p023, a research participant and PAR group member. P023 lived a significant distance from the venue for the first PAR meeting. She was a wheelchair user and indicated she required an accessible taxi with support to attend the meeting. To meet this need, the researcher arranged the transport and planned to travel with them to provide support during the journey. The researcher also funded transport because the upfront costs would have been prohibitive to p023 attending. The culture of reimbursing expenses rather than paying upfront is prohibitive as often participants may not be able to afford the initial outlay. This method of providing funds is an important issue to identify as it has implications for inclusion of participants in future PAR activity, but also broader co-production activity. Those who initiate the work sign up to inclusion and for this to be authentic, action needs to be meaningful and that barriers and accessibility are addressed from the outset. The challenge for this is it does not mean only addressing barriers with individuals once they have signed up to take part but should be built into and made explicit from the outset. It should not be an 'add on' to help people attend as, without the information about the available support, some participants may discount the opportunity because of prior experience of barriers to inclusion. Addressing inclusion before the start of any process and recognising the history of experience has potential to influence a cultural shift to a climate which is more conducive to inclusion. This approach reflects the social model of disability (Oliver 1983), creating an approach to PAR which sought to remove disabling barriers to inclusion.

There is some critical learning, not only when using PAR but also lessons for co-production. The learning is that those who take part need to be involved in having a sense of ownership right from the beginning of any process or project, rather than be approached following initiation sustain interest and involvement. Participants should also be able to take part without having to go out of their way, where they already spend time should be utilised to support their ability to take part. Participants should also be aware of the progression and outcomes of any process or project, linking to areas of interest for participants to sustain their involvement. To achieve this, when planning activities need careful consideration of methods for engagement which promote this sustained involvement.

Research Methods

As outlined earlier, the case study used qualitative research methods which links appropriately to the ontological, epistemological and methodological framework discussed earlier in this chapter. It also

supports the case study approach, as it offered space for the researcher to use a broad range of approaches and data which, as Thomas (2011) outlines, helps to provide a rich picture which represents different perspectives and explores the texture and weave of social reality.

As discussed in the earlier section of this thesis chapter on the background to the collaborative partners, it was clear to the researcher from the outset that there were well-established research initiatives already at the Time to Shine programme (including both a national and local evaluation) and the researcher needed to think carefully about their role and how they could make an original contribution to knowledge in this research-rich environment. The research methods selected by the researcher were selected with these issues in mind and are now be discussed in turn:

Summary of Research Methods:

Figure 5

Literature Review	Qualitative Semi-Structured Interviews	Sensory and Mapping Interviews	Focus Group
• Researcher	• National Lottery Community Fund Representative • Time to Shine programme board members • Time to Shine paid staff • Delivery Partners	• Volunteers • Beneficiaries	• Older people involved in the co-produced commissioing project.
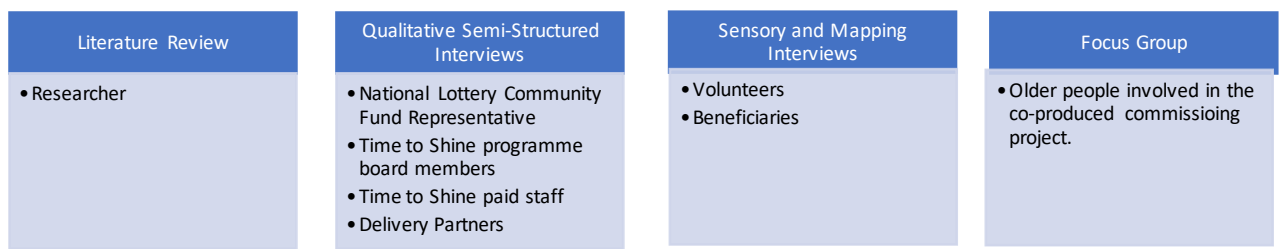
Literature Review

A thematic literature review began in the first year of the thesis. The researcher began by using the Star Plus library search engine at the University of Sheffield to explore the knowledge base. The researcher used an approach to scoping review as identified by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) rather than a systematic literature search. This provided greater flexibility in the literature search. The researcher had greater freedom to rapidly map the key concepts and the types of available literature. Arksey and O'Malley (2005) identify a five-stage framework for scoping literature which the researcher used to structure the literature review which included 1. Identifying the research question; 2. Identify the relevant studies; 3. Select the studies; 4. Chart the data and 5. Collate, summarise and report the results.

The research questions were reasonably well formulated from the beginning of the thesis to initiate the literature search and the researcher was quite quickly able to identify the relevant literature. The researcher used 'co-production' as a search term; however, using this term alone returned a high number of unusable results. It was clear that the concept of co-production referred to a range of contexts, including community drainage systems, refuse removal and housing initiatives. The

researcher decided to limit the inclusion of literature to only co-production in the context of adult services and social care in the United Kingdom.

The researcher decided to limit the scope of the search on co-production to the health and social care context, using Boolean search strings such as 'co-production'+ 'social care' and/or 'third sector' 'UK' to refine the scope of the literature search. The literature on loneliness and social isolation was broad at this stage. With co-production, there was less established academic literature, but the grey literature was much more developed, with some particularly influential policy documents which set out the practice of co-production. As the literature search progressed, the focus of the search shifted to search for a was the roots of co-production, including civil rights, user involvement, community participation and social capital theory. The introduction of the Care Act (2014) also consolidated co-production practice and influenced terminology in the area with a stronger focus on strengths-based approaches for practice in health and social care which was included in the search terms as the thesis progressed.

The search terms the researcher used for loneliness and social isolation included 'loneliness', 'social isolation', 'wellbeing', 'ageing', 'older people', 'older adults'. The terms 'older people' and 'older adults' returned literature which was more recent, to find earlier academic literature it was necessary to use terminology which would not usually be used in current thinking, such as referring to older people as 'elderly'. To narrow down the literature, the researcher used Boolean logic strings to narrow the search such as 'older people'+ 'loneliness' +'UK' or 'older adults' + 'social isolation' + 'UK'. As the fieldwork progressed, work in this area appeared to be on social isolation; however, following reports from the Jo Cox commission 'Combating loneliness one conversation at a time: a call to action' (2017) and the Government strategy 'A Connected Society: A Strategy for Tackling Loneliness' (2018) along with the appointment of a Minister for Loneliness, the focus has changed to loneliness rather than social isolation.

The researcher also used Boolean logic strings to narrow the literature search to explore the intersection of literature of 'co-production'+ 'older people', and 'co-production' + 'older people' + 'loneliness' and/or 'social isolation'. This search determined that there was only a small amount of literature on co-production specifically with older people and the researcher determined that there was an absence of literature on co-production with older people who are lonely and socially isolated, which highlighted the gap in knowledge this thesis seeks to address.

The Glaser and Strauss (1967) grounded theory approach described earlier was evident in the emerging literature search. It was clear when the researcher entered the field that power and

empowerment would be a critical issue for exploration, this led to an expansion of the literature search to include theory on power and empowerment. The researcher expanded the literature search to include Boolean logic strings such as 'co-production' + 'power' and 'co-production' + 'empowerment'. This search produced some literature related to issues of power, but the researcher identified a gap in knowledge as this discussion of power and co-production was not linked into the well-established sociological theories of power. The researcher identified this opportunity for the thesis to cement these links to form a clear theoretical foundation for the thesis.

Qualitative Semi-Structured Interviews

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were an integral part of the research methods. This style of interview was selected because as Burgess (1984) identifies, they are a flexible conversation with a purpose. A set of research questions are developed as per the interview schedule, but as Mason (2002) advocates, they encourage interviewees to tell a story, but allow a flexible to structure to respond to unexpected themes. As Kvale (1996) identifies, this style of interview supports an inductive approach to generating data.

The researcher completed thirteen semi-structured interviews with National Lottery Community Fund representatives, core partnership board members, Time to Shine staff and delivery partners, who were all provided with Participant Information Sheets (see appendix 10) prior to the interview. The information sheets were then discussed at the start of the interview, then participants were asked to sign the consent form (appendix 6). The researcher developed the interview schedule (see interview schedule in appendix 9) and piloted this with two members of the Time to Shine staff team, which resulted in a minor rewording of the questions to simplify and streamline the interview. Both Time to Shine staff members who took part in the pilot provided feedback which stated that during the interview felt they had taken part in a job interview. The researcher reflected on this and made adjustments to her interview style; however, the research interview did require formality because it was a formal data-gathering method, the researcher felt that as the environment created feelings of anxiety similar to the experience of a job interview, the interview environment and approach of the researcher required change. Although the structure of the interview did not change as part of the review of the approach, the changes the researcher made included increasing the time spent before the interview engaging the participant in discussion to help them to feel at ease. The researcher ensured further thought was given to the seating arrangements to help the participant feel at ease, which included the researcher not sitting on the opposite side of the table to the staff participant. The researcher reassured the participants about the purpose of the interview during the rapport phase, including reassurance that their responses were confidential. These actions appeared to have a positive impact on participants as they appeared to be relaxed as they took part and the interviews

resulted in the quality of information gathered from participants where they shared in-depth knowledge and experience of the area of practice.

The researcher determined that the strength of this approach was that it provided an excellent opportunity to access meanings, feelings, stories, experiences, and memories of the social world which are complex, nuanced, and contradictory. Given that, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the concepts of loneliness, social isolation and co-production are subjective, it was important the researcher selected research methods which were sufficiently flexible to capture the broad range of perspectives and interpretations expressed by participants to enable the researcher to build the data gathered into findings which informed the fields of knowledge which were subject to inquiry. Although qualitative interviews were the most appropriate research method, there are some challenges which are acknowledged. The nature of the interviews meant that direct comparison of interviews between participants was difficult because each interview was context-bound and relied on interpretation by the researcher to generate meaning. The interviews were dependent on the skills and ability of the researcher and the rapport they developed with the participant.

The semi-structured interviews with Time to Shine staff, core partnership board members, delivery partners and National Lottery Community Fund representative explored the range of understanding of loneliness, social isolation, and co-production. Each interview lasted around an hour, and as the interview progressed, the answers given by participants tended to be longer and more in-depth. Members of staff from the Time to Shine programme appeared to engage in the interviews very well and were happy to share their knowledge and experience with the researcher. The core partnership board members appeared to be relaxed and open in the interview process. They provided some useful insight into the background and underpinning values from Leeds Older Peoples' Forum and its impact on Time to Shine. The interview with the National Lottery Community Fund representative provided a richer context to the staff interviews as this participant was able to draw on a more comprehensive national experience to their contribution. Interviews with delivery partners were also very informative; the researcher acknowledged that delivery partners did have the potential to feel uncomfortable about taking part in the research. The researcher acknowledged the nature of the relationship between the Time to Shine staff team, and the delivery partners was built on the commissioning relationship, and by its nature, held an imbalance of power. The researcher recognised that delivery partners could have perceived them as a potential threat to their future funding arrangements with the Time to Shine programme if the nature of the answers they gave in the research indicated a lack of knowledge or a lack of success in their work with older people they were commissioned to work with on behalf of the Time to Shine programme. The researcher acknowledged

this at the outset of the interviews, reassuring the delivery partner participants that answers they gave would not be used in that context and that the only time information would be shared would be in the context of feedback about the research or if safeguarding concerns were identified, which was specified in the participant feedback sheet. Delivery partners appeared to acknowledge this, and the researcher's perspective was that this reassurance contributed to the quality of these interviews as delivery partners appeared to be relaxed and comfortable to share their knowledge and experience without any defensiveness, particularly when work may not have been as successful as they may have liked it to be.

The researcher took an alternative approach for beneficiary and volunteer interviews. The researcher decided to undertake seven two-stage interviews, a sensory interview and a mapping interview with these participants to explore the use of these methods as a way of gaining insight into their lived experience of loneliness and social isolation in a way which used before.

Sensory Interviews

The purpose of the sensory interview was to explore the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation, asking participants to think about and reflect on what they could see, smell, hear and feel at times when they felt lonely and isolated. As Mason and Davies (2009) recognise, there is a complex way in which the senses are attuned to knowing the world and by paying attention to the complex interplay between the tangible and intangible sensory experience, researchers can explore lived experience with participants. This approach is an alternative method to the Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better national and local evaluation approach which use questions that ask participants to rate their ongoing feelings but do not give indications of the specific environment or circumstance which leads to those feelings. Using these qualitative interview methods is an area where this thesis has made an original contribution to knowledge.

The prompts focused on asking participants to explore the sensory aspects of their experience, so at times they acknowledged feelings lonely and socially isolated, the researcher prompted them to think about what they could hear, taste, see, touch and smell. This approach encouraged the participant to think about their broader situation when they have this experience, which revealed interesting contextual information related to of their experience which they may not have thought about or connected to times when they felt lonely or isolated. This approach is supported by Pink (2015 pg.79), who argues that when participants use words to describe the experience, they are placing verbal definitions on sensory embodied categories. Making this connection can help people to make sense of their wider experience.

Harris and Guillemin (2012) argue that this approach provides a portal to unexplored health and social care experiences which are either too difficult to articulate or intangible to describe. The experience of loneliness and social isolation in later life falls into these categories; the researcher asked participants if they are lonely or isolated, but there is less focus on how that experience feels. By gaining further insight into this, individuals may be able to either identify when it is happening (there may be a reluctance to recognise and admit to the self) or to give voice to those when they are attempting to articulate a genuine feeling and experience to another person. Pink (2015) identifies that in an interview context, this approach helps to develop the relationship between participant and researcher, as it helps to bring a context and a shared understanding of the experience. This issue was particularly important for people in this situation, who have, by the very nature of being lonely and socially isolated, been underserved because of a lack of understanding about their circumstances. Participant Information Sheets (appendix 4) were provided to all participants in advance of the interview. The sheets were then discussed with the participant at the start of the interview, then participants were then asked to sign the consent form (appendix 6).

The research method used two strands. For the first strand, the researcher asked participants to bring an object or photograph to the interview to use as the basis for discussion in the research interview (examples of objects and photographs are available in appendix 12). For the second strand, the researcher used prompt questions during unstructured interviews at points in the conversation when the participant spoke about their experience of loneliness and social isolation, or conversely feelings of inclusion and connectedness (see appendix 13). The purpose was to support the participant to reflect further on their experience to give a more vibrant picture of their experience in their space.

One pilot interview was conducted using this method with one of the beneficiaries in the sample. The sensory interview was successful, the participant in the pilot interview chose an object to discuss at the interview and responded well to the sensory prompts used throughout the unstructured interview.

Seven sensory interviews were conducted in total. Not all participants chose to bring an object, and in this circumstance, the researcher proceeded to the sensory interview questions. This approach was selected based on arguments of Harper (2002), who recognises that photograph and object elicitation can evoke deeper elements of human consciousness that words. The researcher concluded that asking participants to have conversations around representative photographs and objects may support discussion of their emotions and lived experience of loneliness. Where participants brought an object or photograph which best represented their experience, the interviews began with a discussion around the object. An interesting range of objects was used, including a handbag, a mining lamp and

several family photographs (appendix 12). The objects were the basis for fascinating discussion and provided insight into the factors that participants considered to be important in their lives; for example, increased self-esteem, previous careers working the colliery and the changing shape of family relationships. The opinion of the researcher was that this research method worked well, particularly to develop a rapport with the participant at the start of the interview. Participants appeared to be more relaxed and more willing to share personal information relating to loneliness and social isolation, and this impact this may have on their readiness or willingness to be involved in co-production activity.

Although the beneficiary and volunteer interviews were unstructured, a natural pattern emerged from the interview discussion around a life course approach. Participants tended to begin the interview with their childhood experiences and end with their current situation. Although using life course approach when working with older people is a common, but the usual tools used to explore experiences of loneliness and social isolation focus on the person's experience at the time of asking the questions. The use of these sensory interviewing techniques, in this setting, is a further example of the way in which this thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge. Other researchers have used sensory interviewing techniques in other situations, this is the first time it has been used with older people who have experienced loneliness and social isolation. Using it in this way helps to explore the history and experience of the older person using a life course approach. This approach brings contextual meaning to the understanding their current experience of loneliness and social isolation.

Chapter two of this thesis detailed that loneliness was an unwanted, emotional experience which depended on the perception of the individual; this was argued by Wood in 1953, that the individual's personality traits and attitudes were central to their experience of the mental and emotional effects of loneliness. This understanding has been sustained in knowledge; as supported by, amongst others, Kaasa (1998), Boldy and Grenade (2011) and Age UK/Campaign to End Loneliness (2015), that loneliness is a subjective, deeply personal experience which is set in the context of the individual's values, needs, wishes and feelings.

The research began the selection of the research methods with this interpretation of loneliness in mind, drawing on the work of Harris and Guillemin (2012), and Pink (2015), who reported some success in using sensory interviewing techniques to help bring language to embodied experience. The researcher also reflected on the work of Harper (2002) and included the use of objects and photographs as a method to prompt discussion with participants in the sensory interviews.

The researcher concluded that the sensory interviewing techniques were successful. Using a combination of object and photograph elicitation did reveal information about the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation, particularly about the sensory experience of being alone and coping when alone. This revealed the importance of approaches to helping people cope in that moment, rather than focusing on providing different types of services. Discussing sensory experiences about the groups also revealed some of the elements which were important to people who used the groups, such as the welcoming sounds the groups make and the importance of feeling the group 'makes space' for the individual. It was clear that it is not necessarily the quality of conversation was also an essential sensory element for people to feel welcomed as several participants identified the importance of being able to have 'banter' with other group members. This reflects the work of Weiss (1973) in chapter two, that these supplementary relationships are important to combating these experiences of loneliness and social isolation. The fieldwork data supported this position as it indicated that it was not necessarily the group activity, which was important, but the quality of relationships formed at the groups which was the most important element.

The reflections from the researcher are that the sensory interviewing technique did encourage people to speak more freely about their current circumstances and their experience. One of the emerging issues regarding the use of sensory interviewing was that future researchers should be mindful of the emerging ethical issues related to using methods which encourage participants to feel comfortable sharing personal information. The researcher found that on two occasions, it was necessary to pause the interview and recording as two people were reminded of very painful memories and became upset. During these pauses, the researcher asked the participants if they wished to continue with the interviews and reminded them that they were under no obligation to share any personal information they did not wish to share. On this occasion, both participants chose to continue with the interview when they had composed themselves. The learning for the researcher about this interviewing technique was that it could be particularly effective in engaging people to talk about their unique life experiences. It may mean that they are encouraged to think about significant life experiences or share more personal information about themselves than they intended to or would have if a more traditional interviewing technique had been used. From this experience, the researcher acknowledged that when using this method, researchers need to be even more mindful of taking an ethical approach and confirm with people that they are sharing as much as they want to share, not just what they are thinking about at that moment.

Mapping Interviews

The researcher decided to use the Helen Sanderson Associates (2015) relationships circle (available in appendix 8) to as a response to the academic literature on social isolation; as discussed in chapter

three, the literature identifies that loneliness is the individual's perception of the quality of their relationships and social isolation is measured by the number of contacts a person has in their life. The researcher also anticipated that having a better understanding of the link between these relationships and how organisations engaged them in co-production activity. Seven mapping interviews took place.

One pilot interview took place with a beneficiary from the sample. The pilot used the Helen Sanderson Associates (2015) relationship mapping tool (see appendix 8), which was used as a method of engaging participants in a conversation, along with an interview schedule (available in appendix 14). The HSA (2015) tool worked well in the interview, and no changes were required.

The HSA (2015) relationship tool is designed to prompt conversation about the types of relationships people have in their lives. In the context of the mapping interview for this thesis, using the HSA (2015) tool, the participants and the researcher worked together to develop a comprehensive overview of the participant's relationships. In doing this, the nature of the interview between the participant and the researcher produced rich research data about the nature, value and function of these relationships as using the tool prompted a form of conversation which may not have been achieved using a more traditional, semi-structured interview format.

The unstructured interviews with beneficiaries and volunteers were more successful than the researcher anticipated. The sensory and mapping interviews were an exploratory approach used by the researcher to consider whether an alternative research method could be successful when interviewing participants who had the experience of loneliness and social isolation. The sensory interviews were conducted at the venue of the choosing of the participant; it was emphasised that this was their choice and that they could choose where they felt most comfortable. All participants from community group two site one chose to hold their interviews in the community centre where the group meets. All other participants from community group one and two chose for the researcher to visit them at their home to conduct their interview.

The order in which to conduct the sensory and mapping interviews was given significant consideration. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the researcher initially planned to start with the mapping interview, followed by the sensory interview. The rationale for this was that the researcher felt that the mapping interview was less intrusive and would act as a conduit to develop rapport between the researcher and participant in preparation for the sensory interview. When this idea was presented at the PAR group, members recommended that the order of the interviews was switched, so the sensory interview was conducted first, followed by the mapping interview. The rationale for this was that the sensory interview would help to develop the research relationship between the participant and

researcher in readiness for the mapping interview, which PAR group members perceived as more complicated because of the use of the HSA tool to support discussion.

When the interviews commenced, the researcher followed the recommendations of the PAR group, completing the sensory interview first, followed by the mapping interview and found it a successful approach. The researcher found that the initial sensory interview assisted participants to reflect on their personal circumstances, and this continued after the end of the interview. Participants often said at the beginning of the mapping interview that they had remembered other things, either about their current personal circumstances or from earlier periods in their lives. The researcher found this to be very useful as the two interviews were more connected rather than two distinct and separate pieces of work, which helped people to talk about their lives in a more compelling, less compartmentalised way.

The other strand to interviewing beneficiaries and volunteers used by the researcher included the use of an adapted Helen Sanderson Associates tool. The literature in chapter two, including de Jong Gierveld and Van Tilburg (2006); and Bolton (2012) amongst others, characterised social isolation as an observable absence of relationships with others. It is also a more nuanced experience, as Pettigrew et al. (2014) amongst others identify that relationships in a person's network have different meaning and value. The HSA tool both prompted conversation with participants not just about the number of social contacts in the person's network but also the participant's perception of the quality and nature of those relationships.

This approach led to the findings in the fieldwork which indicate that assumptions should not be made about the quality of close relationships such as those with partners and adult children because those relationships may not be perceived by the person as meeting their expectations and fulfilling needs for connection. In particular, using this approach facilitated conversation about the early lives and experiences of participants, particularly about their early family life and relationships and how this experience formed their perceptions about what these relationships should be like, creating a gap between their expectations for them in later life and the reality of what those relationships can offer. It is clear the sensory and mapping interview approach helped people to describe their lived experience of loneliness and social isolation in a way which moves beyond scaling tools which capture a snapshot of the individual's circumstances.

The combination of the research methods used produced interesting results. The sensory and mapping interviews were unstructured and participants led the process; from this the researcher found that a natural pattern emerged, where participants began by discussing their childhood then

moved through their life course experience to their present day. This led to some very interesting findings, as it became clear from the small range of interviews conducted with participants that their experience in childhood influenced their perception of their situation in later life. As Peplau and Perlman (1982) amongst others argue that feelings of loneliness and social isolation stem from perceived deficiencies in the relationships of the individual; using the life course approach prompted conversation with participants, to bring context to their feelings about their current situation. Research participants p018 and p024 talked about close relationships with parents and grandparents when they were young, and research participant p023 talked about being close to her siblings in childhood. All these participants talked about currently feeling lonely and expressed some sense of dissatisfaction with their families, comparing their situation to those in their childhood.

Focus Group

Towards the end of the fieldwork phase of the thesis, Time to Shine staff identified to the researcher that a recent piece of work had taken place with older people connected to Time to Shine around the second round of commissioning for new services. In this piece of work, Time to Shine staff had purposefully attempted to use a co-production approach to this round of commissioning. The researcher determined that it was important for the research to include the experiences of older people who took part in this process would make a significant contribution to an understanding of co-production. To capture this experience, the researcher decided to include a focus group for people who had taken part in this commissioning activity. Powell et al. (1996) define a focus group as a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research**.**

Older people who had taken part in the second round of commissioning were contacted by Time to Shine staff to request their involvement in a focus group, held a venue close to the Time to Shine offices in central Leeds. Contact was made via email, which was the usual route of communication for this group. This venue was selected as it was in very close proximity to the venue where the second round of commissioning had taken place, so the researcher was confident it was a venue that potential participants were familiar with and able to travel to easily. The researcher also provided lunch for participants and reimbursement of travel expenses; the researcher made these details available when they approached potential participants to assist their decision on whether to attend the focus group.

The researcher added a focus group to the research methods towards the end of the fieldwork phase of the thesis. The purpose was to work with beneficiaries who were involved with the second round of commissioning exercise. This included selecting, interviewing, and awarding contracts to delivery partners on behalf of Time to Shine. This activity was of interest because it explored the nature of co-

production in the context of the Time to Shine programme, and the researcher determined it was essential to capture the experience of the participants. Rather than engaging in further individual interviews, the researcher determined that a focus group would be an appropriate research method to gather the data from those who took part in this commissioning exercise. Between the initial round of interviews and the focus group, the Data Protection Act (2018) and G.D.P.R. required a change to the Updated Participant Information Sheet (appendix 5) and the Participant Consent Form (appendix 15) were both updated in line with the requirements and approved by the University of Sheffield Ethics Board. Participants of the focus group were provided with the new Participant Information Sheet (appendix 14) and consent form (appendix 14) in advance of the focus group. At the beginning of the focus group, the researcher talked through the information sheet and asked participants to sign their consent form.

Four participants chose to attend the focus group; one person had previously been interviewed as a core partnership board member. The four people had been involved in different groups in the commissioning process and had a range of different experiences to share, which in turn illustrated their experience of co-production. The researcher used questions posed to the group as a springboard for discussion, rather than rigorously adhering to a set of questions (focus group schedule is available in appendix 15).

Focus group dynamics were positive and participants had already developed a rapport from their work in the second round of commissioning and from the outset of the focus group they had a natural interaction where all four people contributed to the conversation. One participant did appear to lead the others; however, this created a positive group dynamic as they made sure that everyone had an opportunity to contribute to the conversation, rather than dominate proceedings. The researcher acknowledged that this research method has the potential for participants with strong personalities to dominate the process; however, it was the researcher's view that this did not happen on this occasion and all group members had the opportunity to take part.

The researcher also felt that the discussion of the group evidenced the positive group dynamics. The researcher observed that the group felt comfortable to discuss difficult topics, for example, the honestly in the response from group members when asked about challenges in the dynamics between participants in the commissioning process, they shared examples of different perspectives and approaches to commissioning and how it was addressed. The focus group was very lively; however, it should be noted that three of the four participants have had significant experience of taking part in commissioning and engagement activities, both when in employment as paid members of staff and post-retirement as volunteers. For the fourth person, this opportunity had been their first experience

of commissioning activity, and as their experience had been so positive, it had encouraged them to take part in other similar opportunities, such as the focus group. This issue was particularly interesting for the researcher to note, not only in the context of the research method but for broader implications of activities such as co-production. The importance of taking time to try to ensure participants have a positive experience in this type of arena is an essential foundation for long-term participant engagement in co-production.

Although the research method was successful, it was not without difficulty. Emphasis was placed on the discussion about how the commissioning process was conducted, rather than the end decisions. The researcher found it challenging to keep the focus on their experience of the process, rather than the outcomes and decisions made from the commissioning process. Although retaining this focus was necessary for the research, the researcher also recognised that by steering the discussion in this way, it was inevitable that they were shaping the content of the research data. The researcher was aware of the potential for this from the beginning of the focus group and attempted to retain reflexive awareness throughout by giving careful consideration to the questions and prompts given during the focus group to try to be as open and non-leading as possible. The researcher recognised the challenge of balancing the need to generate focused research data with the requirement to minimise their influence, navigating this ethical dilemma is something the researcher felt was undertaken successfully in this case.

Evaluation and Analysis of the Data

The researcher voice recorded all the interviews and the focus group at the time they took place, then interviews were transcribed for analysis. All participants consented to this as part of the research consent process as detailed in the participant information sheet and consent form (appendix). The researcher used the Glaser and Strauss (1977) grounded theory approach to analysis as a model for practice to inductively building theory from the data gathered from the fieldwork, taking as case rather than variable perspective.

Open Coding

The researcher used an approach to data coding following the Strauss and Corbin (2008; Pp 159) began by analysing the pilot interview for staff, board members, funding body and delivery partners, identified as research participant p001. This initial script was read and opened coding used line by line to identify, name and categorise the text. The researcher also revisited the literature review to make links between the academic work and the analysis of the text to develop theoretical sensitivity. An example of this is given here how the researcher developed the conceptualisation of loneliness. P001 described loneliness as:

> Loneliness is more about the quality of those contact and whether or they, yeah, whether those contacts are the kinds of connections that people want on an emotional level (p001).

Here, the researcher identified three elements about the experience of loneliness which were coded as 1) quality; 2) contacts/connections; and 3) emotion. The researcher then revisited the academic literature which also identified these elements in the conceptualisation of loneliness; the work of Townsend (1963); Peplau and Perlman (1982); Kaasa (1998); Boldy and Grenade (2011); and Age UK (2015) link loneliness to individual feelings about the quality of relationships and connections. This process built the theory from the first interview p001 which was then used analyse the subsequent interviews with staff, board members, funding body and delivery partners. When the researcher used this theory about the conceptualisation of loneliness to analyse the second pilot interview transcript, identified as research participant p002, the conceptualisation of loneliness was described as:

> Loneliness is more the emotional side of things and that's I think a bit harder to measure and pin down because you might see people all the time but still feel quite lonely because maybe you don't feel like you are connecting with people or anything like that (p002)

The theory developed from coding the interview was strengthened as similar codes were identified in this interview. Emotion and connection were identified from the interview with p002, the researcher also interpreted the phrasing 'you don't feel like you are connecting with people' as comment on quality of relationship. From this the researcher used this theory on conceptualising loneliness as the lens to analyse the subsequent fieldwork data, which further validated this theory as the subsequent staff, board member, funding body and delivery partner interviews identified elements of this conceptualising in the fieldwork data.

Similarly, the sensory and mapping interviews with beneficiaries and volunteers, the initial pilot interviews with p022 was open coded. P022 identified that the local radio was very important to them to help combat loneliness and social isolation when at home. The researcher revisited the academic literature on strategies to combat these experiences. Although no specific literature about radio was identified, it does recognise the importance of meaningful connections, something which local radio has the capacity to provide. Subsequent analysis of the beneficiary and volunteer interviews revealed that participants p018 and p019 also identified that local radio was important to help them combat feelings of loneliness and social isolation at home. The researcher identified this as evidence of how people with lived experience have found methods to support themselves as this time, making a theoretical contribution to knowledge which can be generalised beyond the boundaries of this thesis.

Axial Coding

When the open coding phase was complete, the researcher then axial coded across themes to explore connections between phenomena. An example of this is the relationship established in the beneficiary and volunteer interviews between experiences in childhood and individual perceptions of experience in later life. This theory was developed from the open coding of p018, who talked about their family situation in childhood, then made a comparison with their current day experience. From this, the researcher developed theory about the impact of childhood experience, linking to the academic literature and particularly the work of Bowlby (1969) and theory of attachment. The researcher then used this theory to analyse subsequent interviews and developed groups of similar codes for research participants p019, p020, p021, p023 and p024 also shared experiences in childhood which connected to their interpretation of their perception of their current situation.

This approach to data analysis developed insight into the fieldwork data both for understanding of concepts and relationships between phenomena, validating theory built from the case study. This approach also reflected the integrated approach of this thesis, co-production in the context of services for older people who are experiencing loneliness and social isolation. The researcher was able to develop theory from the case study which can be generalised to beyond the boundaries of the thesis.

In keeping with the PAR approach discussed earlier in this chapter, the researcher contacted the volunteer and beneficiary participants to plan to discuss the findings with them to check that they had accurately represented their contribution. This had limited success as around one year had passed between the initial interviews and the draft of the findings. Some participants were keen to meet and the researcher was able to share and discuss the thesis findings. Other participants were not interested in meeting, either by refusing to meet or by non-response. When the researcher did meet with participants, they agreed with the interpretation of the researcher and the context in which their information had been used.

Dissemination

The researcher used the findings from the thesis to develop a co-production toolkit which will be disseminated through the Time to Shine programme, using a launch event as a springboard for dissemination through the programme. The research has also been disseminated through Ageing Better programme training events, feedback presentations to the Time to Shine board subgroups, individual delivery partner events and research blogs.

Reflexivity

The researcher adopted a reflexive approach throughout the thesis; it was imperative to recognise the role of the researcher in understanding and shaping the research. This included the researcher

adopting an approach to reflexivity advocated by Attia and Edge (2017) which involved the researcher 'stepping back' to theorise what is happening and 'stepping up' and recognising their part in the research and how their values, knowledge, feelings and biases could affect the reading of the data.

The researcher took the opportunity to spend a lot of preparation time before data collection, developing relationships with potential research participants. At the Time to Shine programme, the researcher spent days working with the Time to Shine staff team at the Leeds office base, attending team meetings and working with individuals from the team to experience the range of work they undertaken by the team. The researcher also attended the core partnership board and delivery partner meetings, which helped to initiate contact with potential research participants. The researcher benefited from being introduced to delivery partners because there was an existing relationship between Time to Shine and the delivery partners which the researcher could build on. Attending the delivery partner meetings proved particularly fruitful as the researcher was able to deliver a presentation about the research to provide context about the scope and level of commitment required for participation.

The delivery partners were then contacted via email by the researcher to request the opportunity to spend time with their projects to explore the possibility of their participation. From this request, interest was much less than indicated at the delivery partner meeting, and four organisations consented to a follow-up visit by the researcher. Other organisations either responded to confirm that they did not wish to take part because of their existing commitments, others did not respond to the email. Following the initial visits with the four organisations, only two of the organisations consented to take part in the research.

Following the identification of the participating organisations, the researcher spent time before the data collection phase with the groups to develop the research relationships. This activity was critical to the engagement of beneficiaries and volunteers, although the groups had consented to take part and the staff and volunteers had agreed to participate, this did not guarantee that beneficiaries would consent to take part. The experience of the researcher on the first couple of visits was that the beneficiaries were reluctant to take part. When the role of the University of Sheffield was explained, one beneficiary commented that they were not clever enough to take part. The researcher immediately offered reassurance to that participant that their opinions and experience would be gladly welcomed if they chose to take part. It was also a valuable lesson for the researcher. As beneficiaries grew to know the researcher from regular attendance at the group and participation in group activities, the research relationships began to emerge and over time, beneficiaries consented to take part in the research.

Experiencing travel with research participant p023 also made the researcher more keenly aware of the arrangements for and the lived experience of using accessible transport, which is a well-established key issue for older people who are lonely and socially isolated, discussed in further detail in chapter four. The researcher observed the experience of p023, which included the driver wheeling p023 in her wheelchair up a ramp into the back of the taxi. P023 was then strapped in facing forward, with no space for anyone to sit alongside them. This arrangement focused on physical safety, but the researcher observed that p023 did shake around in their wheelchair during travel. When the researcher asked, they said they were fine; however, from the researcher's observations, it appeared to be an uncomfortable and undignified process. The researcher reflected on these expectations for travel and that they would not find it acceptable to travel even short distances in this manner. Whether the participant truly felt fine, or whether they did not feel in a position to voice their true feelings as they were away from home and the funding for the return journey was in the hands of the researcher, or whether this was a standard for travel they had come to expect as someone who uses a wheelchair and accessible transport. It also appeared to the researcher to be an isolating experience. The participant sat in the back alone, while the researcher travelled upfront with the taxi driver as it was the only available seat for the. Although the researcher made several attempts at conversation, it was challenging to talk to them because of the seating position and the noise of the taxi and traffic. Although this experience was something they were used to, it appeared to be an undignified and isolated experience. The researcher reflected on this experience in the context of the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation. This experience provided insight into the potential of this transport to reinforce feelings of loneliness and social isolation, even when using this as a method to access other opportunities. This should be considered by those who organise support and services for people who experience loneliness and social isolation, recognising that transport provision has the potential to make a difference for people in those circumstances.

Although these research methods were broadly successful, there were some implementation challenges. Using this interviewing technique felt precarious; as an emerging researcher, using an unstructured interviewing technique because the researcher was aware that there was potential for the interview to be stilted or unfocused, both of which would have been a risk to the quality of the data gathered. Fortunately, in practice, the researcher found that these concerns did not present an issue as the research interviews were focused and relevant to the research.

The researcher has read widely around using these research methods, and although they have been used in the context of other research projects, they have not been used in the context of research with older people who are lonely and socially isolated. By using these research methods, this thesis

has made an original contribution to knowledge, particularly in using new approaches to research to explore the experience of loneliness and social isolation.

One element of the fieldwork I would have done differently would have been to take a more co-productive approach from the outset, working with a range of stakeholders affected by the research. This would have helped to adhere more closely to the principles of co-production advocated in this thesis and would have helped to build a sense of ownership about the research and engagement in the PAR process.

Ethics

Ethical approval was sought from and agreed by the University of Sheffield ethics committee before commencing the fieldwork phase of the research. The researcher submitted a further ethics application to include the focus group because it was not identified in the initial application, the University of Sheffield ethics committee gave agreement through the amendment process.

There were several ethical issues which were considered before the fieldwork phase of this thesis. The researcher needed to consider that beneficiary and volunteer participants were vulnerable from the outset of the research, due to the nature of physical and mental health needs; this proved to be valid for several participants for these interviews and the focus group. The researcher was aware of this and ensured that they were given information throughout the process, the interviews took place at a venue of their choice (some at home, some at the group they regularly attended) and were provided with information about where to obtain ongoing support should they need it. The beneficiary and volunteer participants were already connected to a Time to Shine funded service before agreeing to take part in the interviews or focus group, and delivery partners for these groups were aware of their participation and were also available to provide support if required. The researcher is not aware of any participant who felt the need to access support following their participation.

The researcher was also aware of an ethical issue for delivery partners and the Time to Shine programme. Participation in the research could have created reputational risk, particularly for delivery partners as they are dependent on Time to Shine for funds for some or all their project.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the approach to the thesis fieldwork undertaken by the researcher. It began by identifying the aims and research questions which shaped the thesis. It then moved on to explore the theoretical position of the research, making links between the theoretical stance and the research methods. It then moved on to explore entering the field, issues of recruitment and sampling, with some exploration of the contextual information and background to services included in the sample. It

then explored the research methods in detail, discussing each one in turn. Finally, the chapter concluded with a section on reflexive thinking about the execution of the research methods and exploration of the arising ethical issues and how they were managed in the field.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS CHAPTER LIVED EXPEREINCE OF LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

Introduction

This chapter addresses research questions one: What is the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation for older people? And research question two: How do people's lived experiences contribute to strategies and services to address loneliness and social isolation? The chapter addresses research question one as it critically reviews definitions and use of the terms of loneliness and social isolation in the context of policy and service developed and the impact this has for the people who use the service. It them moves on to examine the day to day lived experience of older people who feel lonely and isolated, or who recognise that they may be at risk of this and have taken preventative action by joining groups funded by the Time to Shine programme.

Definitions of Loneliness and Social Isolation

The academic literature explored in chapter three highlighted the nuance between the terms loneliness and social isolation, where loneliness is defined by a wide range of authors and as a subjective experience evaluated as a negative experience by the person (Kaasa 1998, Boldy and Grenade 2011) and social isolation defined as an objective, observable experience characterised as an absence of relationships with others (Bolton 2012, de Jong Gierveld and Van Tilburg 2006). Although there has been significant work in this field to understand these concepts separately, it was acknowledged in this thesis in chapter three that there continues to be a mutual and reciprocal relationship on the experience of the individual. Although theoretically is it possible to explore the loneliness and social isolation as separate concepts, from the fieldwork it was clear that in practice, the terms loneliness and social isolation were interpreted and used subjectively and often used interchangeably. There was evidence that the terms loneliness and social isolation were used interchangeably by staff in the Time to Shine programme:

> I think Time to Shine and anybody who works in the business often just lumps them together, social isolation and loneliness because it's a bit easier just to say well that's what we work on (p002).

The interchangeable use of the terms also reflected the services provided by the Time to Shine programme, as they were not refined or promoted as addressing either loneliness or social isolation but were promoted as seeking to address both experiences. Experience in the real-world context suggests that this conceptual clarity of loneliness and social isolation is difficult to retain as the experience of individuals may not fit neatly into any more specific definition. Given the relationship

between the experience it is not beneficial or cost effective to narrow the scope of the Time to Shine programme service provision.

A key issue identified from the research data pointed to the challenges to engage participants because of the stigma that can be attached to anyone who expresses feelings of loneliness and social isolation, including older people. This was a key issue identified from the academic literature; as Pettigrew et al. (2014) found social isolation to be highly stigmatised, and Victor, Grenade and Boldy (2005) found that when asked about the condition, older people are more likely to provide a response which is deemed to be socially acceptable, rather than a true reflection of their situation. There was recognition of the stigma particularly associated with loneliness:

> More stigma around the idea of loneliness verses isolation because isolation you might be able to explain away by certain circumstance or you know something like that, but loneliness is a bit more hard (p002).

> Loneliness you know that's a bit more complex to express because there's a lot of stigma attached to that (p009).

Evidence gathered from interview with Time to Shine staff from the fieldwork for this thesis reflected on their experience of working with participants and expressed views about why stigma may be attached to loneliness and why people may be reluctant to talk about their feelings:

> I think it's a bit harder for people to talk about and to sort of admit that I am feeling lonely, especially if maybe on the surface it looks like they are quite involved in things or they have family or friend connections its harder to say well I'm still feeling lonely even though on paper my life looks quite connected you know and I think it's a bit harder to get to the bottom of why they are feeling lonely (p002).

This finding from the fieldwork reflects the work of Nicholson (2012) who recognises that people may either be reluctant to self-identify as socially isolated, or they may not recognise themselves as lonely or socially isolated and not associate themselves with the terminology of loneliness and social isolation. Examination of the issues surrounding terminology identified two central issues. The first issue was that there has been a significant increase in interest around the issues of loneliness and social isolation in recent years and as the representative from the National Lottery Community Fund indicated, a need to understand more about the experience for older people and what works to address it; therefore, the terminology does attracts public support:

> The media get a hold of something and public perception of certain things is attached to things like loneliness and social isolation and that's those are the terms that that have really gained traction and people wanting to support charities and organisations working with people with those (p009).

Although stigma was attached to the terminology of loneliness and social isolation, it also attracts public interest, particularly with the UK Government's appointment of the Minister for Loneliness recently. It was clear why the terms have been used from a service development perspective; however, it should be recognised that use of these terms may result in disengagement and exclusion from services for people who either consciously or unconsciously do not wish to see themselves or align their experience with those terms.

The second issue was that using these terms is contrary to strengths-based approaches, as they focus on the deficits rather than strengths. The result of this is that older people in these circumstances may experience further disempowerment, firstly from the lived experience, then secondly from societal perception. Combatting stigma through a change in language to reflect strength and asset-based approaches to practice was identified as important when helping older people to talk about their experience of loneliness and social isolation. The representative from the National Lottery Community Fund reflected:

> I think the other challenge is that funders are now moving into a space where we are using more asset-based approaches so asset-based language, asset-based ways of engaging with people so now even though we're moving away from loneliness and social isolation were saying things like social connection, so we try de-stigmatize the issue by talking about it (p009).

The evidence suggests the terms loneliness and social isolation are problematic. The recent interest in the experience may have increased awareness and generated funds, but there is stigma attached to the terms which may mean that people disengage from services. The terms are also deficit-based, consideration should be given to moving towards strengths-based terms.

Networks and Relationships

The nature of the lived experience of network and relationships for volunteers and beneficiaries was a prominent emerging theme from the data. The academic literature in chapter three emphasised the centrality of relationships when addressing loneliness and social isolation and presumed that because an individual has an existing close relationship, it meets the person's emotional and practical needs. The evidence from the fieldwork revealed ambiguity on this issue which will now be discussed in

further detail. A representative from the TTS core partnership board indicated that in their experience people could still feel lonely despite having close relationships:

> Loneliness can be experienced within a group of people in a marriage in a relationship living with a family. You can still be classed as being lonely or feeling lonely (p008).

The recognition of this definition of loneliness echoes the academic literature related to the experience of loneliness, as writers such as Kaasa (1998) and Boldy and Grenade (2011) identify that loneliness as the gap between what they want and what they have in their interaction with others, including perceptions of their relationships with their partners and families. What is it that creates these expectations for relationships? The fieldwork data indicated that there is a link between childhood experience and expectations for relationships in later life. Firstly, it was clear for some participants, that where they had a large family in childhood, a greater expectation was placed on family contact and interaction in later life. Research participant p018, a beneficiary of community group two, described her family life in some detail and indicates that she had close relationships with her family members. When research participant p018 then moved on to talk about her relationship with her immediate family (adult children) now, she expressed some dissatisfaction with the nature of those relationships:

> I think where are they all? I thought they're working they're trying to do their own places so basically what else can you expect, the family still working, they have to work to keep themselves going (p018).

Although research participant p018 acknowledged her family worked and had independent lives, there seemed to be dissatisfaction in the gap between expectation and reality of her family relationships. She highlighted her need for some support and some frustration about this:

> You know for a fact that there is always somebody you can ring or go to if you get stuck. little jobs that need, sometimes I could scream, I know how busy they are, jobs, little things that need doing such as mending that gate, he hadn't the time' (p018).

Research participant p024, a volunteer and beneficiary of community group one, went on to talk about his experience when he was a child when his grandfather died and the different approach to support which was available in his family:

> When my grandad died my grandma moved in with my mum and dad and there's no way that my kids would let me move in, not that I would want to…it would be nice but it's their life isn't

it, it's their life I'm thinking of making it easier for me they're thinking oh god he's not coming to live with us (p024).

Although research participant p024 recognised the reasons why family support is different for him than it was for his grandparent; expectations for the type of support appear to have changed over two generations and this impacted on p024's feelings of loneliness:

> I'm frightened of getting old, you know and it's alright having support but if your family aren't giving you the support that you need it's hard because everybody is busy today and that is one of the biggest problems, families split up they go their own separate ways and a lot of it is when I was a kid where we lived, everybody it was in the streets and everybody knew everybody else, whereas now we've all moved away and there's no community anymore it's all split up (p024).

Research participant p023, also a beneficiary of community group one, talked about the difference between her expectations and experience in her relationship with her sisters and how this has contributed to her feelings of loneliness and social isolation:

> I get angry because I've got four sisters in [local area], all working all they've got families of their own…but when I moved here, moved to [local area] I thought I would have more contact with them. I see more of the young ones, I never saw, there's five of us and [sister] has got a caravan and grandchildren. My sisters have all got families I get out very little (p023).

The proximity and volume of contacts in research participants p018, p023 and p024 extended family in childhood appears to have had a significant impact on their perceptions and expectations for connections with family in later life. Both research participant p018 and p024 grew up in large extended families which provided support for their grandparents, creating an expectation for support from their families. Now it is their turn to be the grandparent, that expectation is unfulfilled. For research participant p023, her relationships with her siblings indicates a difference between her expectation and her experience of her relationship with her siblings. This may be for a few reasons, including social mobility, dissemination of the family and potential other family relationship dynamics, but the expectation has been embedded, so as the distance between expectation and reality is established, the gap in which loneliness and social isolation is experienced becomes established.

The importance of this childhood experience and its influence on later expectations is also be linked to Bowlby (1969) and theory of attachment. Although attachment theory is more traditionally connected with work with children, Bowlby's theory offers some insight into how this expectation for family relationships is created. Bowlby argues that the need for strong and efficient bonds is built into

biological inheritance, and where these bonds exist, they will generally seek to remain in proximity to each other. So, where research participant p018 and p024 have strong family bonds with their family, when they seek to return to each other if apart, resisting attempts to keep them apart. Bowlby (1969) argues that these bonds are rooted in strong emotions and the formation, sustenance and dissolution of relationships are associated with some of the strongest emotional responses, which may feed the perceived distance between the relationship they want and the relationship they have with their families. In contrast to this, research participant p019, a beneficiary of community group two, had a different experience in her childhood, where she grew up on a farm with a very small immediate family. P019 appeared to have fewer expectations for family contact and seemed to be more content when alone:

> Yeah being on your own, yeah it doesn't bother me at all. So, I suppose I can't understand why people, when they're on their own, why they're bothered. But I think that it's in your nature isn't it? If you're that way inclined, you know you can't help it and you just start feeling sorry for yourself, but that's the way you are, but I'm not like that (p019).

The comparison between the experience of research participants p018, p019 and p024 appears to indicate that resilience factors for managing the experience of loneliness and social isolation in later life are linked to the interplay between genetic inheritance and the individual experience. This was outlined in chapter two, Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) acknowledged that there is an inherent human need for connection which causes distress and harm when this need is not met, but it is this different expectation which contributes to how some people subjectively experience loneliness and social isolation.

Partners are usually assumed to fulfil the emotional needs which address loneliness and social isolation; however, over time as relationships and expectations change, this may not always be the case. An example of this was from the research participant p018, whose husband died in 2001. During the research interview, she discussed that her and her husband had very different perceptions of how they would like to spend their time. Research participant p018's husband chose to relax at home, but p018 chose to engage in other activities outside the home:

> Well if that's how you feel like, you're on your own mate because I'm not joining you watching telly all day (p018).

Research participant p018 sought activities outside the home to fill her time to fulfil her needs for engagement and connection which were not met by her husband in those circumstances. It is important that services such as the Time to Shine programme do not assume that because someone

has this type of established relationship in their life, that all their needs for engagement and connection are met. Services that seek to address loneliness and social isolation need to recognise the changing nature of these relationships over the life course, people's needs may change and opportunities to develop other relationships may be required.

The issue of shifting relationships is also more prevalent in later life as people are more likely to experience bereavement and the loss of a life partner. The psychological impact of the loss of the attachment relationship is significant, as Bowlby (1969) identifies, the dissolution of this relationship prompts some of the strongest emotional responses from the bereaved individual. Parkes (1969) also considers the psychological response to bereavement and the 'grief work' attached to that response. In recent years, research has noted that social mobility has had an impact on family relationships, particularly with adult children. Donaldson and Watson (1996) identify that these loosening of family ties contribute to individual experiences of loneliness and social isolation. Most notably, there tends to be a societal perception that retaining connection with adult children is a protective factor for loneliness; however, the data gathered in the fieldwork for this thesis suggests that because of the nature of these relationships, they may contribute to feelings of loneliness as they highlight a gap between the desired and actual relationship. One of the most significant issues was that although the individual may perceive that the family relationships may fulfil the emotional need, the availability of these relationships may not always be as frequent as the person requires. Participants acknowledged that the limited availability of these relationships may be for good reasons; however, this does not negate the emotional need for the closeness of these relationships. Research participants p020 and p021, participants from community group two, discussed that although they considered that they had a good relationship with their children and grandchildren, the recognised that contact could not be as frequent as they may have preferred:

> We realise that because the family all the grandkids are working now, and they've got families of their own, so we don't see them quite as much as we thought (p020).

Social mobility and geographical family structure were also factors that contributed to the experience of older people connected to the Time to Shine programme. A delivery partner for community group two reflected on the change they had seen in their lifetime:

> People's families are very widespread these days geographically. Whereas when I was a youngster, everybody, all my aunties and uncles all lived close (p015).

One of the key experiences identified was the impact of bereavement was also a factor which had an impact, not just on people's desire to connect with others but also limits the level of meaningful

participation and satisfaction from the activity. It was clear from the research data that the emotional impact of bereavement can result in a significant impact on self-confidence and mental health, as described by research participant p024:

> Suddenly it's just, all the things that we wanted to do, did, and now I'm facing life on my own where I'm not able to do the things I've always wanted to do. It's the fear of going out on your own to different places (p024).

It is not only the psychological dimension of bereavement which causes the person to feel lonely and isolated, there are also the changes in social relationships which influence this experience. Koc (2012) recognises that bereavement can also create the loss of social links and networks. This loss of social links following bereavement was discussed by a research participant who was a staff member from Time to Shine reflected on the experiences of others they had observed:

> It might be that their lives were so well entwined, so much entwined that they never really had separate and independent social networks, things like that so that it could be that bereavement caused social isolation or loneliness (p001).

The loss of social networks also occurred as people experienced bereavement with the loss of friends as well as life partners. A participant from the core partnership board noted that as people are living longer, they are losing friendship groups: therefore, becoming disconnected from friendship networks and communities:

> We are also finding that people are living a lot longer, so they are losing a lot of friends. So, I've got members for example who might be the only person left in their street, the rest of their friends who are the same age or older have died. So that loneliness they are going to experience through the loss of their peers (p008).

This experience was shared by research participant p024, he identified that following the loss of his wide, he also experienced the loss of friendships:

> No, they've all died. You know, that's the fact of life, isn't it? You know, they were quite a bit older than us. We got three or four couples that we were friendly with, moved away, passed away. So, I'm not in contact with them now anyway, so that's as far as it goes with those (p024).

The changing shape of relationships and the impact on the ability to sustain connections and networks was also discussed by participants. Research participant p020 talked about his changing role to that on informal carer for his wife research participant p021 during her cancer treatment which resulted

in p020's early retirement from work. The loss of contact with former work colleagues was quite sudden in p020's experience:

> It can happen very, very quickly because I've worked all those years there's just a couple of people in the village but most of all the other people I worked with because they are all busy, that contact stopped more or less straight away (p020).

Research participant p024 talked about his connection to his neighbours, living in an urban part of the city. This is important as it illustrates a challenge to the notion that neighbours are a community asset:

> What it feels like to be on your own. you know, the isolation. And if you don't get many people calling, I mean both my neighbours have been here well over 30 years, but we are not close (p024).

Pantell et al. (2013) identifies a lack of community involvement as one of the elements which contributes to the experience of social isolation. The fieldwork data for this thesis identified that communities were changing shape, which had contributed to the experience of loss for older people:

> The community has changed in terms of people are out of work all day people with kids are at school you know the older person who may have lived amongst four or five peer age group and themselves have lost those and becomes the only person living there that is where it can be noticeable (p008).

The idea that local communities are available for older people to tap into to establish links with people to minimise the impact of loneliness and social isolation isn't necessarily an option any longer because of the changing shape of local communities. The social links that are lost are not only related to close personal relationships, but also those connections that help people to get by day-to-day.

Current academic and practice perspectives suggest that formal contact and support systems can meet some of the emotional needs for connection and contact people have. The exploration of the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation in the fieldwork for this thesis suggested this is not the case and that having a wide number of formal contacts and support systems such as home carers did not negate the feelings of loneliness. In fact, the evidence suggested that having regular carers who visit daily may provide physical support, but their presence does not necessarily meet the emotional needs of the individual:

Someone who is restricted to their home, they might have several different carers and medical agencies coming in, lots of different contact throughout the course of a day actually, they're actually very lonely (p001).

Research participant p022, a beneficiary from community group one, talked about her experience with her paid carers, who visit her on multiple calls each day. Different carers visit each day and p022 felt it was difficult to build meaningful relationship that addressed her emotional needs as well has her physical care needs:

Remembering all their names is the worst as I can have 4 different carers in 1 day and it adds up when the week goes on, so I suppose I need them but not in the way they think. They think I can't undress myself and I just can. If I get out of bed on my own it's a miracle to them, It's an everyday thing to me. I suppose it's because I'm at that age when you start going goo goo gaga (p022).

Research participant p022's experience of the relationship with formal carers also suggests that the imbalance of power in those relationships has the potential to be detrimental and may have a negative impact on her emotional needs:

Yeah, I have one carer that comes every night, bed call, and I put myself to bed, she doesn't ask me cos she knows I can do it. People stare at me and they don't look through me, they think she's only got one leg, she must be a bit thick and that annoys me cos I'm certainly not thick (p022).

Benefits in connecting to formal systems were identified in the fieldwork. It was acknowledged by participants that where individuals are able, it is advantageous for them to recognise the potential risk that they may become lonely and/or socially isolated in the future and to take steps where possible to mitigate that risk:

For some people if you live for a very long time then you are probably going to have to keep making new friendships new relationships (p007).

Research participants p020 and p021 talked about the importance of developing connections through more formal community groups is for them as it helps to keep them safe and to get help should they need it:

Well the other advantage from our point of view of joining the groups is that if we don't turn up one week, we know that in a few days if nobody has seen us in the village somebody will come and knock on the door and say 'are you alright?' so we regard that somewhat as a bit of

a safety net in a way. If we're not seen, we know it's not going to be days before somebody decides where we haven't seen you are you ok (p020).

The findings indicate that the nature of networks and relationships for older people who are lonely and socially isolated is nuanced and complex. Support services should not make assumptions that the existence of relationships and networks is enough to address feelings of loneliness and social isolation and further discussion and assessment of the person's individual circumstances is required.

This section has explored the nature of networks and relationships in the context of the Time to Shine programme. It now moves on to explore the findings about the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation and loneliness.

Lived Experience of Loneliness and Social Isolation

The research methods used in the fieldwork for this thesis provided rich, contextual data about how volunteers and beneficiaries experience loneliness and social isolation. This makes an original contribution to knowledge because these methods have not been used with older people who are lonely and socially isolated, so provides insight into their lived experience. This chapter now explores the nature of this lived experience, exploring in turn seven key themes: health and wellbeing; environment; times of loneliness and social isolation; the silence of loneliness; coping alone; the sensory experience of Time to Shine services; and the potential of psycho-social interventions.

Health and Wellbeing

Volunteer and beneficiary participants described experiencing a range of physical and mental health conditions, including cancer, Parkinson's, ischemic heart disease, anxiety and depression, social anxiety. Some participants have had enduring physical conditions including cerebral palsy and physical disability through amputation. Physical and mental health conditions are identified by several authors in the academic literature such as Dickens et al. (2011) to have a significant impact on the individual experience of loneliness and social isolation. Research participant p023 experiences physical ill health and mental health difficulties with social anxiety talked about how her mental health issues have impacted on her ability to engage with social activities:

I'm struggling at the moment with my social anxiety and actually getting out now. I went next door last Tuesday [social club] all the Tuesday before and had to come back around I couldn't handle the noise… I feel as if I'm getting worse through a lack of exposure to going out (p023).

The onset of dementia also has an impact on individuals experience of loneliness and social isolation. A core partnership board member who is also a delivery partner for an organisation in Leeds who

supports older people (including older people with dementia) reflected on how people with dementia experience their condition and how this impacts on their ability to connect with others:

> The loneliness we're finding is to do with the dementia and the memory loss work again we run a very active group for that, and people can be lonely within that because they are experiencing the onset of dementia or Alzheimer's and they cannot integrate and sort of interactive people in the same way that they did (p008).

The fieldwork data indicated links between physical disability and its impact on loneliness and social isolation. The delivery partner from community group one reflected on the nature of this link:

> Just looking at the physical aspect of being alone what I tend to see is people with quite complex medical needs whether its issues around their mobility so ulcers, or difficulty in walking or other health needs really that are preventing them from leaving the house independently (p014).

One of the research participants who has experience of this is p022. In recent years she has had operations for a broken back, leading to amputation of her leg. P022 reflected on the impact her physical disability has on her going out of her flat:

> Me hips mended now but my back hasn't so if I sit an hour I've got to go and lay down for an hour. I haven't to overdo it with anything. And it kills me when I come back from the [community group one], but I can't give into it because if I do, I'm just stuck in here again. And I only go out once a week (p022).

Although p022 found going out to have a significant physical impact on her, she was motivated to manage her physical condition to sustain her connections with services and other people, as she did not want to miss the weekly opportunity she has to meet with friends outside her flat and engage in social activities she enjoys. The difficulty doesn't only lie with the physical ability to get out and engage with some activities some participants described that their physical disability resulted in experiencing issues such as a loss of confidence:

> Some people had got mobility difficulties which they lost all confidence of going out and couldn't get out (p013).

To engage people in p022 or p023's situation, there needs to be flexibility in how to do it. The physical impact of health conditions was something which has an impact on the ability to sustain connections and networks. The participant from the National Lottery Community Fund summed up the issues:

> I think health diagnosis, getting the right medical support if you are again very isolated from things and you might have cognitive impairment things like that that can prevent you from feeling confident in engaging with the world around you (p009).

The multi-faceted experience of health needs and the ability to engage with others was identified by a Time to Shine staff member. It is not only the experience of health physical or mental health condition; it is the other worries that go alongside managing that condition that can be a barrier to people connecting with others:

> Looking at people who have complex medical needs and maybe have a lot of frailty and they might need a lot of other issues kind of dealt with first… if somebody has, you know, 10 medical appointments to fit in, in a week it doesn't work very well, you know they're not going to be ready to go to an activity or an event (p002).

One of the most significant challenges identified by a core partnership board member was the identification of people who are socially isolated:

> I think if we look at the most difficult situations, certainly we've come across at Time to Shine is where people are virtually housebound. they are very isolated, and they can be very difficult to identify because by definition there are very few people involved with that person and they don't go out (p006).

Participants who were members of staff from Time to Shine and delivery partner organisations identified the very specific challenges of working with people where loneliness and/or social isolation are deeply entrenched in the experience. A member of staff from the Time to Shine programme reflected on this experience:

> It's been really difficult to move people on who are incredibly lonely, especially people entrenched where they are really lonely for a long time (p004).

This was supported by a participant from the core partnership board, who recognised that supporting people in these circumstances requires sustained support and persistence:

So, I think those are really difficult and I do think then what's needed is first of all how do you identify those people and secondly you know how you can handhold? You can't barge in and drag people out so it has to be through some kind of relationship forming which may take quite a long time (p007).

One of the key issues identified was how to engage the loneliest and socially isolated older people. It was not simply enough to let people know about the opportunity, those who provide support needed to be persistent:

You can be meeting somebody I don't know for a year and eventually you will get that person out of the house to a group setting to a pub lunch on her on a trip and that is the most amazing feeling when you actually get somebody out of that scenario because you have doggedly gone in there, you've given them the information, you've given them the time and space to reflect about it to talk to the family or the people or just think about it and then you've kept discreet contact with them in the background, kept them up to date with like a newsletter (p008).

Environment

Issues with the physical environment were also identified as increasing feelings of loneliness and social isolation, as people have been in situations where they have been unable to leave the house and in this situation. Rantakokko et al. (2014) identify in their research that the environmental factors and physical mobility issues can contribute to circumstances which significantly increased the odds of experiencing loneliness. An example of this will illustrated in research participant p022's experience. She described that she felt like a prisoner in her flat when she first moved because of the environment in the flat. Shortly after she moved back to Leeds to be nearer to her family, she broke her back and had a leg amputated. She then began using a wheelchair, but the accessibility in her council-owned flat was not suitable for someone who used a wheelchair; it was in a high-rise block of flats and the front door to the flat had a high threshold, so she was unable to get the wheelchair over it. This resulted in her being trapped in the flat for several months, until her son in law was able to build a ramp to help her get out of the flat. Research participant p022 talked about the barriers in the environment in her flat. She described the experience:

Well I was a prisoner when I first came, I couldn't get out because there is a threshold and I couldn't get my wheelchair over it…the council said it would be impossible to make it work. My son in law, nothing beats him, he made me a ramp, its flat in the hallway then it goes over the threshold and it goes down to the carpet from the outside (p022).

This experience had a significant impact on research participant p022's feelings on her loss of independence; she compared her life in a small town with her life now she has moved to a big city and how she is now reliant on others to go out from her flat and the loss of home:

> It sounds silly doesn't it a little village [former town] and I really, really thought that I could go out on my own if I needed to. What do I do round here? I stay in 'til somebody comes and takes me out, which will be on Tuesday (p022).

The physical local environment was also seen as something which impacted on whether people would engage in local activities. Rantakokko et al. (2014) identify physical environment factors as very likely to increase feelings of loneliness. Research participant p018 talked about the impact of the physical environment in the village, which is split into two halves by a road. P018's view was that the environmental factor felt this may have had an impact:

> It's split as well into two halves so you've got the main road running straight through right through it so there is 1/2 that's down the hill, the other half is up this side (p018).

Research participant p017, a volunteer with community group two talked about the physical environment of community group two and the impact it has on older people in the village:

> I mean you get some come and say by I haven't seen you for, and they only probably live two or three doors apart from one another you know in the bungalows, old folks and they never see anybody (p017).

The World Health Organisation (2007) guide explores elements of what an 'age friendly' might look like, including physical structures of cities, housing, and transportation, but also how the role of participation, inclusion community can play. Research participant P002 discussed their perceptions of the challenges of the wider environment, particularly in the context of what an 'age friendly' city, might look like:

> Making Leeds more age friendly there's sort of guidelines about how to do that and could be concrete things or more cultural things but I think having so much experience working with older people and kind seeing the issues that they can start to face as they age, I think that's helped to inform how I think about what an age friendly city looks like and what does it need to be to be age friendly (p002).

As it was clear that the challenges of navigating the physical environment were clear, it highlighted the importance of transport, something which was identified by Age UK/Campaign to End Loneliness

(2015) in chapter two serves a critical function to connect people to services. Where people had a positive experience of transport, it made a difference to those who used it and helped people who are lonely and socially isolated to overcome their worries about going out. The delivery partner from community group one reflected:

> What I've found has helped with that is us having access to accessible transport. Being able to introduce people to the drivers and say or the escorts and say 'this is so and so, they'll knock at your door, they'll come in, they'll support you to go out, they'll support your arm' because you have to talk through those minutiae practicalities if they're willing to try going out (p014).

The reality of experience was identified by participants in the fieldwork and transport continues to be problematic. A core partnership board representative reflected on the challenges:

> Social isolation can be increased by the lack of public transport for the lack of access to shops, banks, amenities so people are spending more time on their own at home they're not able to just pop down the shops anymore unless it's a huge trip that's organised by taxi or somebody takes them (p008).

Access to transport is not the only significant issue, it is also the quality and experience of transport available. This was identified in research participant p022's interview as she talked about her experience of using the organisation transport to get to the group she attends:

> I'm getting over a broken back. I feel every flipping pothole…It's rather quiet because no one seems to speak. I sit right at the back of the bus so you know those lifts that they have will I go up in one of those and then I just get off my chair and sit in the back seat and with a bit of luck to get my chair in it depends on what bus they send (p022).

There was an indication from the research data that transport has the potential to become an opportunity to overcome loneliness and social isolation if more thought and attention was given to how it took place. A core partnership board member reflected on their experience of using their local bus service:

> I get buses quite a lot particularly coming into town and I'm very struck by how very neighbourly the bus route that I travel on is. There's a lot of Caribbean people who get on the bus. It's an exaggeration to say everybody knows everybody else but there is a huge amount of interaction and so on and so I think that, I think it's hard for people who get out of the house and go on that bus to feel socially isolated because there is such you know a real buzz (p007).

This example illustrated the potential public transport holds to be an opportunity to engage and connect with others.

Times of Loneliness and Social Isolation

One of key experiences identified by participants was that there are certain times/days, when people feel more isolated or lonely than others, with weekends being a time when people feel particularly lonely or isolated. Research participant p024 indicated that this was because there was nothing to do:

> Weekends are a drag, because there's nothing, there's nothing the same on a weekend (p024).

As there is nothing to do, this increases feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Pat described a time following her divorce when she felt most lonely and isolated:

> Sunday. I hated Sunday (p021).

This experience was also echoed by research participant p023:

> I do feel desperately lonely on a weekend (p023).

Although there were many reasons why there are changes at weekends, and a lack of opportunities for people to have contact with others at these times were mostly beyond the remit and influence of the Time to Shine programme, consideration should be given to areas where the programme could influence change. Services were usually accessed during the week, although research participant p024 does access services during the weekend from a service which was connected to the Time to Shine programme. Peoples' reported experience suggests that these opportunities were not as extensive or able to reach people to the same extent that the weekday services reach lonely and isolated older people and that services should include weekends as well as weekdays.

The Silence of Loneliness

Research participants talked about the sensory experience of being alone for long periods of time. One of the issues they identified was the challenge of coping with silence. Research participant p018 Bee talked about how she struggles to cope with silence when she is home alone:

> It's just I can't stand silence… I find that the silence just made me feel as though I want to get out (p018).

Volunteer and beneficiary participants were asked what they could hear at times when they felt lonely. Research participant p023, who lived in supported accommodation with several flats in the building and a care team of staff available on-site. P023 described the sounds she could hear when alone in her flat:

Yeah you hear the office door go bang, bang, bang all the time. And people talking in the corridors whether it be staff or residents…I'm sat here watching telly and that above me and I don't know if there's a meeting room upstairs and I can hear, people say you can't but there is a difference between telly and music and conference meetings (p023).

Research participant p023's perspective on this was that being able to hear things happening outside and above her flat increased her feelings of loneliness and social isolation as she was able to hear people speaking to each other and doing things.

The most prominent sound research participant p024 identified was a ticking clock, he felt that this sound was amplified as it was not part of a backdrop of sound in the house. Despite this, p024 felt the noise was important as when it was no longer there, it was missed:

I noticed it the other week when it's stopped. I had to put a battery in it, and you think you'll be grateful for you know the ticking stopping but no, it's just one of those things. It's been there all the time and when it's not there you miss it (p024).

Listening to the radio was a favoured source of entertainment for some of the participants. Research participant p018 listened to the radio regularly and said it helped her to feel more connected to the outside world:

Having the radio, it just feels like somebody's there, maybe talking to somebody else, but you can, you might even talk into your tea or whatever (p018).

Research participant p022 also talked about her enjoyment of the radio and how she listens to the radio when she is in her flat:

Oh yes that's on now. it was turned on the 10th of October or December when I moved, and it's never been turned off both day and night (p022).

There was one radio station that participants listened to:

Radio Leeds. Cause on a Sunday morning, there's a gardening programme. And you can ring in with problems and it's nice to hear the questions asked and the answers that are given cause it does help in a lot of ways to, oh yeah, that's what I could do with doing, things like that (p018).

Radio Leeds (p019).

> Radio Leeds, yeah, I like it... It's got a bit of everything on, it's not only in music, some of it, it's a phone in and that's about it but that goes on through the night as well (p022).

The information gathered from the range of research indicated that the radio, and particularly radio Leeds was an important source of connection when at home and source of information. The concept of 'gateway services' defined in the Age UK/Campaign to End Loneliness (2015) model of services could be expanded to recognise the role local radio can play in to connect services with some of the most lonely and isolated older people in way other services are unable to reach them. An example of this is research participant p022, who described that the local radio had been the most constant source of connection and information since moving to her flat. This also suggests that as Cattan (2002) outlines, services tend to focus on social participation and active engagement, which misses the potential that services such as local radio can offer to connect with people in this situation. This could be to provide support and connection at times when services are not available (such as nights and weekends) but can also provide the connection service to inform the most lonely and isolated older people about services and support available for them.

Coping Alone

The experience of coping alone was described by research participants as also most difficult. Research participant p024 talked about his experience of coping alone following the loss of his wife:

> It's not having company that's the worst part...it's just filling your time, that's the hardest thing to do, fill your time, you know finding things to do, you could only cut the lawn once a week, you can only vacuum when it wants vacuuming and things (p024).

P025 talked about the struggle of coping with day to day activities when alone following bereavement as one of toughest challenges:

> Yeah, it's coming home to an empty house and thinking that I've got to do this and I've got to do that and I don't always want to do it because I am diabetic there are lots of things that I must do and I try and look after myself as best as I can (p024).

The delivery partner from community group one identified that it is the mundane activities of daily life which accentuate the challenges of coping alone:

> The bereavement, depression and anxiety crops up a lot and so, and I think with loneliness as well its often that who do I talk to when the boiler breaks down, you know that really kind of, not mundane but stuff that happens day to day that people really miss out on (p014).

It is critical to identify and understand these experiences of coping alone as described by research participant p024, particularly when it is set in the context of the academic literature. Boldy and Grenade (2011); Koc (2012); Rantakokko et al. (2014); Perissinotto and Covinsky (2014) outlined in chapter two indicates that people who experience of loneliness and social isolation are at risk of functional mental health issues including deteriorating abilities for self-care. Understanding this lived experience is important to inform service, not only because of physical limitations, but also to prevent a decline in individual's capacity to cope with the day to day activities when living alone.

There was an assumption from the researcher that where people were living alone, it was likely they would be eating meals such as microwave meals for convenience. This was found not to be the case and almost all participants described regularly using a slow cooker to prepare meals. Research participant p017 talked about the meals he prepares at home:

> I've prepared all the dinner ready for when we get home well dinner's in the oven now, so it's braising steak today in the oven, low and slow (p017).

Research participant p019 talked about the difference buying a slow cooker has made for her, something she has picked up from research participant p017 at the group:

> Well, one of the things erm which I've picked up from [p017] actually, he had a slow cooker and I've been thinking about buying one. I thought I could cook in that, it sounds good. So, I was listening to what they all say and they all said 'Oh yes, you want to get one', I did. So, I do a lot of cooking you know, the way they tell me (p019)

Research participant p024 talked about the difficulties he has now he is alone, particularly cooking for one person, but also uses the slow cooker to prepare food:

> The rest of the time I do my slow cooker on Tuesdays because I am out all day and the same on Saturday, I do my slow cooker because it's easy you just took everything in, switch it on and you don't have to do anything apart from preparing it obviously (p024)

Although the literature on loneliness and social isolation indicates that people in this situation are more likely to engage in behaviour which may be harmful to health, including Age UK/campaign to end Loneliness (2015); Perissinotto and Covinsky (2014); Nicholson (2012; and Hawkley, Preacher and Cacioppo, (2010); this research suggested that, in the context of the Time to Shine programme, older people who are or are at risk of loneliness and social isolation engaged in positive health behaviours around food as they were regularly preparing healthy meals, even when they live alone and are

cooking only for themselves. Slow cookers contribute to support to sustain independence and health participants found them easy to use, and the method of cooking provides meals which people enjoyed.

The Sensory Experience of Time to Shine Services
Noise and Sound

The fieldwork data revealed information about the sensory experience of the services attended by volunteers and beneficiaries. Research participant p022 talked about the noises she could hear as she was on her way to a coffee morning group which is held weekly in her building. Through discussion it was identified that p022 also talked about the importance of the sound of conversation on arrival the coffee morning she attends:

> Yeah, I go down in the lift. when I get down to the ground floor and open I'm almost there and we can hear the voices before we open the door to get in. Yeah, they are a friendly lot (p022).

> (I)   So, what sort of sounds can you hear when you're going in. so you arrived in the lift?

> Voices (p022).

> (I)   And how does that make you feel when you start to hear those voices?

> Well I feel happy (p022).

P022 identified that these sounds were important as when she heard the voices, she felt happy and looking forward to attending the group. She also talked about the sounds and smells she associates with the groups which are welcoming and make her feel included:

> Oh, the rattle of cups and saucers. I'm the only one with a cup and saucer everybody else has a mug. Not that I asked for a cup and saucer apparently it goes down every Monday morning and comes back up after the coffee morning. it's one of Mary's it's a China one it's lovely. So, I'm honoured with that (p022).

The sound of the cups and saucers was a welcoming sound for p022, and having her own cup and saucer also made her feel welcomed and part of the group. This was indicative of a wider issue, the feeling that the group made space for them when they first arrived, a sense that the group changed because of their presence. P022 also shared the importance of feeling that space had been made for her the first time she attended the coffee group:

> I felt a bit left out because I was sat with my back to everybody. But when we went again it was all changed, they've made room for me…when I go down now, there's a chair moved from the table, so that I can get my wheelchair in, there's a cup of coffee on the table for me (p022).

This feeling was echoed by research participant p019 , who articulated how the interactions and conversations made them feel welcome her feel welcome when she joined the group:

> I think they realised erm you know 'She's on her own'. So, you know, they did, they just made you welcome straight away (p019)

Banter and Conversations

On arrival at the group, one of the most significant sensory factors participants associated with the groups was the quality of the conversation. Research participant p018 talked about the most significant thing she associates with the group is the chatter or the 'banter' as it was described:

> It's banter, it makes you feel welcome (p018).

Research participant p022 also indicated that banter was a very important part of feeling welcomed by the group. She gave an example of the types of conversations she regarded as banter:

> They take the mickey out of me, call me hop along. And I don't mind at all, I don't mind if they're laughing with me, but I will not tolerate being laughed at if you know what I mean…oh yes, I can give as good as I get (p022)

Research participants p020 and p021 also talked about the importance of conversation (which could be called 'banter' in the context that research participant p018 and p022 discussed previously) in the groups:

> It's just joining in with the activities and if somebody can't quite do it right, we all have a laugh and even the instructor is quite funny (p020).

There were important elements for groups to make people feel welcome which was not about the type of activity on offer, but also the quality of 'banter' and conversation that made people feel welcome. This reflects the importance of companionship support as identified by Machielse (2015) in chapter two that contributed to the success of these kinds of group activities.

Waiting for Contact

The research found that there was emphasis on service provision for older people who were feeling lonely and socially isolated, and those services do play an important role in alleviating these feelings.

It was also identified by a core partnership board member that relief this is often temporary and the overall life experience for the individual doesn't change:

> It is very difficult because whatever you do, especially for the most lonely people, they'll still be lonely a lot of the time because you're not transforming their lives you're helping them to be not lonely for part of their lives and maybe that's as much as we can do (p006).

Some beneficiary participants often spent long periods of time waiting in between contacts. Research participant p024 attended a number of groups and he also volunteered for the organisation, but when he was at home alone, he was always waiting for the next opportunity to go out:

> That's just what my life is. I'm just – I'm sat here waiting for – well, waiting for the phone to ring and it never does. So that's basically where I am (p024).

This indicated a gap in the provision of services and that there is space, alongside traditional services, to develop support which helps older people to build their individual resilience and gain the tools to manage the nuance and complexity of their experience of loneliness and social isolation. New approaches to services which move beyond the offer to attend groups or visits from befriending services to address some of the specific elements of the lived experience to complement traditional approaches to services, for example, those identified by Townsend (1969) in chapter two. This could include helping people to gain the skills to be able to deal with feeling lonely or socially isolated in between opportunities to engage with others through more traditional interventions.

Psycho-Social Interventions

Psycho-social interventions and approaches were identified by some participants as showing promise in addressing social isolation. A member of the core partnership board and the representative from the National Lottery Community Fund both expressed that there was some role for these types of interventions:

> That experience of working with that particular client group and using the sort of counselling and the motivational interviewing and the CBT stuff or the general kind of group work and peer support, it's nice to see it now coming across in older people services and with older people that wasn't something that was maybe happening traditionally years ago (p008).

> Psychological therapy Talking Therapies forms of CBT have shown really impressive results in some groups and I think that can be something we can consider (p009).

There may be some promising support through these routes, but it is important to be mindful that people may still need support to access and navigate the services. A delivery partner shared their experience of the referral process:

> I have tried the IAPT (Intensive Access to Psychological Therapies) route and I think the Pathway is really complicated for a lot of people I work with and I think without the support of a worker the few people I've tried to engage with it wouldn't have engaged, although my understanding is once they have engaged it works really well (p014).

Exploring these types of psychological approaches and interventions could be useful to address some of the issues raised in by exploring the lived experience in a way that traditional service approaches cannot.

Conclusion

This chapter now draws together the key messages from the fieldwork findings to conclude with the critical elements for practice and future research. The fieldwork findings identified that there was a separation from academia and practice in approach to conceptualisation of the terms loneliness and social isolation. The literature states clearly that loneliness and social isolation are distinct and separate concepts, with loneliness an unpleasant state connected to emotions (Peplau and Perlman 1982) and social isolation connected to the number and quality of contacts (de Jong Gierveld and Van Tilburg 2006). The findings from the fieldwork indicate that the terms loneliness and social isolation are used interchangeably in practice; staff from the Time to Shine programme reflected that it was easier to consider them in this way because it was easier to understand and describe the work of the programme. Services across the programme were not specialised or tailored to either loneliness or social isolation but catered for people experiencing either one or both of those things. Academic clarity is useful when developing knowledge about the concepts; however, it does not appear to be practical to extend that differentiation into the practice context.

Stigma also appeared to be attached to the term's loneliness and social isolation for older people. Members of staff from the Time to Shine programme identified that in particular, stigma appeared to be attached to the term loneliness, more so than social isolation. This echoed messages from the literature, as Pettigrew et al. (2014) recognise that social isolation as a highly stigmatised condition, and Victor, Grenade and Boldy (2005) found older people are more likely to give more socially acceptable responses to questions related to these issues and their particular circumstances rather than a true answer about their feelings. A paradox was identified in the thesis fieldwork, there has been a significant increase in interest in loneliness and social isolation in recent years, resulting in the Government strategy on loneliness, the appointment of a loneliness minister and significant funding

made available through programmes such as the Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme. When words such as loneliness and social isolation are used to raise money and promote services, it increases the stigma attached to the terms, with increased risk of driving older people away from these services rather than attracting them to the service.

The terms loneliness and social isolation indicate a deficit-based approach, as they focus on what people are lacking or negative experiences. This is contrary to the Care Act (2014) legislation governing the sector, which emphasises the importance of taking a strengths-based approach. Language is critical to strengths-based approaches, and using language which focuses on strengths such as connected and fulfilled could help to address the paradox, ensuring access to the necessary funding without driving people away by using stigmatising terminology.

There can be assumptions that because close relationships exist, that people do not feel lonely or socially isolated; however, the fieldwork data challenged this assumption. People can still feel lonely and socially isolated, despite existing close relationships, such as with partners or adult children. Research participants p028, p020, p021, p018, p023 and p024 all discussed having close relationships with family members, but that they did not always fulfil their needs in a way they would choose. They recognised that family members that relationships change over time or contact may not be as frequent (for good reasons) but still impacts on the individual. Families and friendships are important, but they are not always the panacea for loneliness and social isolation.

Assumptions are also made about quantity of relationships, that because people have an high number of contacts in their network, their emotional needs are met; for example, research participant p022 described having carers visits three times per day, but they did not meet emotional need because of the nature of the relationship. Nonetheless, it is important to take preventative measures and formal systems can play a role in this. Proactively connecting to local formal systems can be beneficial and if people recognise that that there is potential that they could become lonely or isolated in the future, they should be encouraged to take action to mitigate that risk.

Established relationships also featured in the findings from the fieldwork for this thesis. There appears to be some assumption from the literature and services that where people already have established relationships such as partners, family members and friends, their needs for connection with others is fulfilled; however, the data from beneficiary and volunteer participants in the fieldwork for this thesis indicated that this was not the case and people who have these relationships do still experience loneliness and social isolation. This indicates that it is important that assumptions are not made about existing relationships and their impact on the subjective feelings of individuals. The factors people

with lived experience of social isolation and loneliness identified as having the most significant impact were the experience of divorce, bereavement, friendships.

One of the key findings from beneficiary and volunteer participants was the significance of the influence of experiences in childhood and its impact on feelings of loneliness. As established in the examination of the literature, loneliness is a subjective experience, built on the individuals understand and expectation for contact. The interviews with beneficiary and volunteer participants in this thesis indicated that where participants had a large family and with contact with a range of family members including siblings, parents and grandparents (particularly where grandparents lived in the family home) this set the expectations for their connections with their children and grandchildren in later life. Even though participants acknowledged that societal arrangements had changes (i.e.-there was less contact between family members because of busy lifestyles), they did feel more lonely because there was a greater gap between their perception of what to expect from family relationships (set up in childhood) and the reality of their current relationships with their families. Conversely, where a participant indicated that they had less contact with family members (for example, as an only child living on a farm with their parents), they that they felt content when alone. This finding is important in the evaluation of services, as most evaluation tools focus on their feelings and current circumstances of the individual.

Environmental factors also made a significant contribution to the experience of loneliness and social isolation; for example, research participant p017 talked about the physical environment of the village in community group two and the impact this has on sustaining connections with peer groups and accessing activities which have potential to combat feelings of loneliness and social isolation. It was not a surprise to find that participants also found weekends to be the loneliest time of the week.

A final issue identified in the fieldwork was transport. The issue of availability of transport is well-established; for example, the Campaign to End Loneliness and Age UK (2015) included transport as a necessary gateway service in the Theories of Intervention model. however, the issue of quality of available transport was highlighted. Particularly where people use wheelchairs, the quality of the transport is an issue. Research participant p022 reported that she felt every pothole the bus drove over when going to the group, she also reported having to sit at the back of the bus. The researcher compared this to their experience with research participant p023 travelling in the taxi to the PAR group meeting. Again, the design of the transport meant that to travel safely, p023 was strapped in the back of the taxi, but this layout meant that p023 was travelling in a manner which appeared uncomfortable and undignified to the researcher. It also isolated p023 from any potential conversation. These modes of transport may be the safest and most available options and there was

a sense of acceptance by research participants p022 and p023 that this type of transport was the only type available for people in their situation; indeed there seems to be acceptance across the sector about the quality of the transport because of the very limited availability of transport.

The importance of the sensory experience of loneliness and social isolation also came through clearly in the fieldwork data. Participants talked about noises they can hear when alone, such as the ticking clock, or hearing others outside your flat when living in shared accommodation, as p023 described when she talked about being able to hear conversations between staff and others upstairs when she is alone in her flat. These sounds contributed to feelings of loneliness and social isolation in this way. Noise was also a strength and can be supportive for people who were lonely and isolated. Participants expressed that there were certain sounds which had a positive impact for them when they attended groups. An example of this was provided by research participant p022 as she described the rattle of cups and saucers as a welcoming and positive sound associated with the group.

Participants also identified the importance of space in the groups, people moving up, moving things around to make way for them when they arrived. This was a positive experience for participants, making them feel welcomed and part of the group. Finally, one of the most important elements participants identified was the quality of conversation, described as 'banter'. The opportunity to share a joke and have a laugh was valued over and above the types of activities which were on offer. Research participant p022 described it as 'taking the mickey' not something which is cruel but something where all parties equally participate, as p022 describes 'she gives as good as she gets'

There were two significant issues which came through in the research about the sensory experience of loneliness and social isolation: the sensory experience of the silence of loneliness and the sense of waiting. With a number of participants, particularly in community group one, they described the activities they attended, but there was a sense they were always waiting for the next activity and there was a lot of time in between which was not filled and created the gap of loneliness. This suggests that traditional approaches to dealing with loneliness and social isolation with groups and befriending services does not reflect the full picture and there is space for alternative provision to support people to develop coping strategies when they are lonely and isolated.

The data from the fieldwork indicates that the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation often revolved around coping when alone, not when engaging in services. Bereavement also results in the loss of social relationships as lives were so intertwined, it results in not just the loss of the person, but the loss of relationships, networks and connections to communities. There is also an impact of changing roles, such as becoming an informal carer, resulting in retirement and a loss of contact from

work colleagues and established networks. These personal circumstances were not just risk factors in their own experience, it is also the impact these things have on other aspects, such as mental health and confidence to do things alone. There is emphasis on accessing services but not on being able to cope afterwards, people just waiting for the next opportunity to go out. Participants who were beneficiaries and volunteers talked about their experience of being home alone (research participant p018 talked about feeling like she could scream, and p024 about how difficult he found being home alone). They also talked about the difficulties of managing day to day tasks, like gardening, decorating, fixing the boiler. It appears that it is coping with these mundane tasks can accentuate the feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Maslow's (1959) hierarchy of need is useful to draw on here to examine approaches to services. Firstly, services such as in community group one helped to address issues at the bottom of the hierarchy, physiological and safety needs. Once those needs are addressed, people are more able to address their needs for love and belonging, esteem and self-actualisation. Putting this understanding at the heart of service development could provide a foundation for successful services.

This is more complex than it first appears as the literature indicates, Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) indicate that the body's response of loneliness and isolation is a cascading physiological response in the body's systems. It can be argued that there is evidence of this as it contributes to the ageing process and physical and mental health. Alongside this, the evidence from this thesis indicates that although groups are things people look forward to for socialising and meeting other, to address loneliness and social isolation it is important to address 'the space between' which is the times when people are at home on their own. This points to a need for services with a psycho-social service which helps people to cope with the feelings which arise from their time alone, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy. The findings from Kall et al. (2020b) as detailed in chapter two show promise, that cognitive-behaviour therapy can have an impact for people who are experiencing loneliness and social isolation with benefits experienced two years from the initial treatment.

The other area where psycho-social support could be useful is where people are entrenched in their experience of loneliness and social isolation. One delivery partner indicated that they had used Motivational Interviewing techniques with some of the older people they worked with to help them understand more about their situation and make changes to engage in services so help them to feel less lonely and isolated. Motivational Interviewing is a counselling approach, initiated and supported initially by Miller and Rollnick (1995). It is a method of having a conversation to help people to understand their situation in a wider context and to explore what they want to achieve and how to achieve this. There are some services for people who are lonely and isolated where this approach has

limited use, for example, the Living Well programme in Cornwall uses Motivational Interviewing as part of their wraparound support package. This includes an individual who is lonely and isolated having a guided conversation with a trained counsellor to help people to recognise their situation and use the process to help them to move on from being stuck in that situation.

The research methods for this thesis have provided insight into the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation and indicates that services require a wider range of support services is required to meet the unique circumstances of individuals in these situations.

This chapter has explored the experience of loneliness and social isolation in later life in the context of the Time to Shine programme. It started with an exploration of the concepts, making links to their relevance in practice. The chapter then moved on to explore the nature of networks and relationships, their role, and challenges in addressing loneliness and social isolation. The chapter then moved focus to the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation for people connected to the Time to Shine programme, an exploration of the sensory experience of service provision and suggested psycho-social interventions. The chapter ends by drawing and summarising conclusions from the findings. The thesis now moves onto the next findings chapter on the paradigm of co-production and power relationships.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS POWER AND CO-PRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter explores the nature of power in the co-production process and contributes to addressing research question three, what are the important elements necessary for co-production? The chapter draws on the literature from chapter three as a theoretical framework to recognise the nature of power and empowerment in the context co-production. This chapter uses this theoretical frame to explore the nature of power and empowerment across the co-production cycle and identifies approaches to managing power dynamics more effectively.

Power in the Context of Co-production

Chapter three explored the nature of power from a range of theoretical perspectives and identified different definitions on the nature of power, theorising on the nature of how power operates. The first important factor for the success of co-production which emerged from the fieldwork, was the commitment to understand the nature of power in the co-production process. One of the challenges here was being honest about the power dynamics which are present between such a wide range of stakeholders, particularly when working with stakeholders such as older people who are lonely and isolated, volunteers and perhaps some of the smaller delivery partners where is there is a history of exclusion or voices which were not well heard in past experiences.

It was clear in discussion with participants that one of the key underpinning factors which make co-production a success was that it was built on core values of empowerment and involvement. One of the key themes from fieldwork data was the emphasis on doing things with people rather than for people:

> Co-production is this idea that you should be doing things with people, instead of for them or at them (p002).

Empowerment theory places this as a central idea, that empowerment is in self-empowerment, indeed this is the first face of Pigg's (2002) model of empowerment, and supported by Antonovsky (1988), that efficacy is gained when individuals gain a sense of control over their destiny.

From the research findings it was clear that there was a commitment in the Time to Shine programme to trying to understand the nature of power in the context of the programme. A member of staff reflected on the nature of power from their experience:

> I've kind of worked my way around the commissioning cycle to try and understand how services fit together and where the power lies within systems and why the power doesn't lie with the individual people when it's their lives (p005).

Here, power is understood in the context that there is a disconnect between the power in the system and the power held by individuals, resulting in attempts to minimise the power in systems by making a commitment to using non-hierarchical models with flattened power structures to promote equality. This was evident with the Time to Shine staff team:

> I do think it is power I think it's about trying to flatten power and structures (p005)

It was also evident in the projects funded by the Time to Shine programme. An example of this was given by the delivery partner from community group two, who described their commitment to a non-hierarchical model to run the group:

> If you start with a non-hierarchical model of running the group…you're establishing the model you're using for the whole of it that everybody's all on an equal level (p016).

Although using a non-hierarchical model was seen as the ideal approach, there was also a scepticism about how achievable this was. A member of staff from the Time to Shine programme recognised that not all stakeholders were working from an equal position of power:

> I suppose it's about equality of opportunity rather than pure equality because I don't think that is realistic, that every stakeholder is totally equal (p005).

What was not present was this discussion with older people who use the service, to truly bring about a shift in power to a more equal relationship, it is important to be open about the nature of power and to talk to older people about the service to find out more specifically would work for them. This might be an uncomfortable conversation where services and staff hear information that they find difficult; nonetheless, it is an important conversation to have with people who use the service.

There are other dynamics of power network theory which influence co-production, reflected in the dynamic between stakeholders, particularly stakeholders who are beneficiaries and those who are paid workers in services in the Time to Shine programme. The presence of expert and legitimate power within the network continues to influence the power dynamics even though paid staff being aware of the issue and taking action to address the power dynamic. This was evident when speaking to research participant p023 from community group one. Although they were keen to be involved and had taken part in the participatory action research group for this thesis, the dynamic still existed for this person, who described their feelings when speaking to someone they perceived to be in authority:

> I'm confident up to a point but people in authority scare me and that might not be… somebody that's high up on scale but leader of the group…sometimes need to be introduced more (p023).

This highlights the importance of developing effective relationships. Although action had been taken to address this imbalance, it appears that there is a mismatch between how successful actions are to minimise the impact of power between those in services who are perceived to be in authority and those who use the service. As Carr and Patel (2016) identify, preparatory work for co-production is about building trust, confidence and a sense of equality. For co-production, this could have a significant impact on how genuine the interaction is between stakeholders, with those who hold more power believing they have taken steps to minimise the impact of the power imbalance and those who hold less power feeling intimidated and unable to express their truly held views. This also indicates the importance of mutual empowerment, as Pigg (2002) identifies in the second face of empowerment.

To truly understand the nature of power in this context, it is important to make the link of the relationship between the individual and the system. It is the bridge of co-production which can help individuals exercise their individual power and access the power in the system. As Arendt (1970) identifies. By agreeing to work in these ways, people consent to their actions and gives legitimacy the process. In the context of Arendt (1970) this is how power is accessed as individuals act 'in concert' and the new, legitimate approach accesses the power and co-production operates with the consent of the people.

Facilitating meaningful action is initiated by those who hold the power, there is a requirement that they recognise the power they hold and to act for change. As acknowledged by Jack (1995b) in earlier chapters, power is not something which can be given, but because of its nature, it must be taken. Theoretically, this may be the case; however, in practice it appears that older people who are lonely and isolated are not necessarily in a position where they are able to rise up and take power in the way in which theory suggests. Co-production and power theoretical purity appears to be unhelpful and unrealistic, as it suggests that if this doesn't happen, that true co-production doesn't take place. The reality of practice is that those who hold the tools of power, such as finance or decision-making, have a responsibility to consider how the tools of power can be shared with those who hold less power.

The way in which the Time to Shine programme board was set up takes a pluralist approach as older people are a central part of the of the decision-making body by virtue of the way in which the programme board has been convened. The Time to Shine programme board are the arbiters of which

projects are commissioned in the Leeds area; the projects are the interest groups and free associations which seek to influence the programme board in the free marketplace. Older people are also part of the 'interest groups', those who seek funds from the programme. Here, power is more diffuse, as there are few barriers for organisations who wish to compete for Time to Shine programme monies and older people have increased power both in shaping the market as they influence the direct of services in the sector and decide how the funding is spent. It is important to note here that older people need to be close to the processes of decision-making as this provides access to the available power. It also provides power in the form of legitimacy as identified by Olsen (1970) and through ideology as Smith (1990) identifies as the requirement to co-produce brings about an ideology where older people are expected to contribute to co-production. There is also an inter-related dimension here for empowerment, as Kabeer (1999) acknowledges, the necessary inter-relationship of resources and agency exist here which contribute to empowerment through co-production.

Power network theory also offers a framework to understand the relationship between stakeholders in co-production. The research data from the fieldwork acknowledged that power was also present in the dynamic between stakeholders, whether this was because the both paid and unpaid stakeholders may be taking part together in the co-producing group, but also issues such as the difference in knowledge and experience of different stakeholders and the impact this has on the dynamic between members of the co-producing group. A staff member from Time to Shine described some of their experience of working co-productively with groups of people from different backgrounds:

> There are certain people on the group with vast amount of experience about research for instance and then that has, it can be hard then to allow that person to have a voice but then to not sort of affect the confidence of someone sitting next to them that's got equal voice but then doesn't have that experience (p004).

A member of staff from the Time to Shine programme reflected that it was difficult to see the power dynamics between stakeholders and it was not until after the work that it was recognised that power imbalances may have existed:

> I think there are times when we've done it well, but then there's times when we've done it, in hindsight you think well actually we, there has been a power dynamic there that we weren't aware of and people have felt a bit yeah like they were out of it a little bit in a way (p004).

The tools of power are imperative to address this and members of the focus group identified that the support and training from Time to Shine staff was invaluable. Research participant p007 identified the importance of the training session:

> There was a half day or however long it was of training session at Age UK and that was very explicit and helpful really, and actually gave us opportunities to narrow down what we wanted to be involved in, having heard a bit about what the whole set up was (p007).

Although this power imbalance exists, supporting people to take part can help people grow in confidence. Research participant p012, who took part in the focus group and the commissioning work reflected:

> I felt I have something to contribute, but to begin with I felt a little bit out of my comfort zone because I'd never done anything like it before, but very soon I got into it (p012).

The support research participant p012 received from the Time to Shine staff was invaluable to her growing confidence:

> I got quite a lot of support because I was very hesitant. I didn't know if I could do it but I was encouraged and [p005] especially saw my potential and encouraged me and I think I did a good job (p012).

This is not the end of the story, as there are still stakeholders who are more powerful than others and it is impossible to divorce the fact that this lies with finances, whether this is as funders or commissioners. A member of Time to Shine staff shared their experience of differences between organisations and its impact in the sector:

> I think the systems in terms of services I think the power lies with where the money is with funders and the commissioners and I think the power imbalance between sectors to me is still evident let alone the communities and individuals (p005).

This issue does not only exist between people who use services and organisations. One of the most significant areas where power resides is at the national level of the National Lottery Community Fund and the requirement to fulfil organisational responsibilities attached to the funding provided such as

the national evaluation obligations. This power is seen in the research data as a member of staff from the Time to Shine team acknowledged the power of the funding body:

> There definitely are power differentials um I would say the Lottery and Ecorys are up there because they fund the work that we do, so and rightly so really we need to be accountable for the work we do and the money that we spend (p003).

There are implications here for co-production. There is the inequity in the system of decision-making, as Coombs (1993) argues, the imbalance in the stakeholders results in changed dynamics in the marketplace of ideas, so those stakeholders who how the power because they influence finance have greater influence in this context. Secondly as French and Raven (1959) identify in their typology of power, reward power, as these stakeholders have the potential to offer or deny financial support to the co-producing group, making their voices more powerful than other stakeholders within the network. It also relates to the second face of empowerment, as Kanter (1983) and Gardner (1990) argue that empowering and strengthening others is a function of those who lead in organisations. It clear that preparation for co-production requires those stakeholders who hold power by virtue of their position, knowledge, skills and access to resources in organisations to reflect honestly on these and make explicit how they will ensure that these will be shared with other, less traditionally powerful stakeholders.

Power does exist in the actions of individuals which can be captured in co-production if the methods of exercising power are identified as legitimate expressions of power, such as in this example of when decisions are made about activities in the groups:

> This is how we found out that our keep fit was really too frequent, was once a fortnight, but I mean really it should be once a month. But people just found it was you know, they wanted it less often. And they voted with their feet, so when you know, when [keep fit instructor] was coming every fortnight there were fewer and fewer people who were getting up to do the keep fit cos they just you know, they wanted to sit and chat and talk to each other (p015).

There is power in this process, which is all too often overlooked, but it is a powerful way in which groups express their view. Co-producing should acknowledge this as a method of expression and plan to use it formally as an expression of power and decision-making by people who use services.

One of the indicators of power lies with how disagreements are resolved; when things get difficult, how much is the power still dispersed, or is it retained by the organisation. Alternative ways of

communicating with groups was seen as something to consider giving members the option of raising issues and concerns they may not feel comfortable with doing face to face:

> Perhaps we to need to have a comments box you know, might be a way to go and just ask people if they've got any comments because again, going back to people with low self-esteem or low confidence, then they might not want to say 'Oh well you know, I'd like to do this' or 'I really didn't like doing that (p015).

Having a named person who can deal with complaints was also identified as a successful method. Research participant p020 from community group two shared his knowledge about how to make a complaint if needed to and discussed their perception of the process:

> I suppose I'd just go speak to XXXX, as he seems to be the one who's in charge of it. If I had a problem, either (p016), or if he wasn't there, probably XXX, because they seem to be the two if you like, if you had to have leaders or whatever, then they would be the ones who seem to be in charge of that (p020).

The issue of conflict resolution was also discussed by participants. A delivery partner from community group two described when an issue arose with volunteers how it was resolved:

> If I just don't interfere, they can sort it out and they sorted it out because they are grown up adults. but it does take a level of knowing the people and trusting the people just to allow them to sort it out. But my, I had a really strong feeling that's if the third person came in, it might sort of escalate it, to say why is somebody else coming in here (p016).

Participants from community group one felt differently and p024's response when asked whether they were every able to give feedback about the service and the activities they have done revealed a different experience:

> They've never asked me. In fact, we - there's only once where we've – when I've said something, and it just fell on deaf ears. Nothing's happened, so that's how it is (p024).

This is one of the biggest challenges for co-production, for the process to continue to be open and to work even when there are disagreements. This tests where the power is truly loved in co-production, is it with the stakeholders in the co-producing group, or is it reclaimed by organisations when they are criticised by people who use the service.

The Co-production Cycle

It was clear that participants viewed co-production in four distinct phases of co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery, and co-evaluation. Each of these phases will now be explored in further detail.

Co-Commissioning

The research data raised some issues about the perception of older people as commissioners and the commissioning process. To address some of these issues, the power older people hold here could be used to influence more widely, not only awarding of the contracts and money, but to influence the way in which services deliver their services to enhance their understanding of co-production and to ensure their services adopt the principles, understanding and commitment to co-production. The inherent risks which Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) identify around widening the commissioning approach appear to be present here, not related to the ability of the older people involved, but the risk of the development of the discourse from unsuccessful organisations about the ability of older people involved to take part in commissioning. It is imperative here that organisations such as Time to Shine use their influence to support and validate the commissioning decisions which are made. This could also be addressed by as SCIE (2015) suggest, by using their commissioning influence across the section and build in a requirement to focus on building co-production as a key quality criterion on which tenders for services are judged to advance understanding and confidence in co-production across the sector.

As identified in chapter three, co-commissioning is a significant phase for the redistribution of power in co-production. There is clear reflection and recognition here about the power that these stakeholders have by virtue of their position and organisation. This is critical to the success of co-production, as this ability to recognise how power operates within the organisation and how it affects co-production contributes to its success. This reflects Pigg's (2002) second and third faces of empowerment. It is clear that there is recognition of the importance of sharing the means or resources to exert power are shared in both these circumstances, but also recognising that co-production is social action and changing social institutions empowers those who come to co-production with less power.

Boyle and Harris (2009) identify that through commissioning, people who use services have a route to make fundamental changes to the way services are delivered, with the objective of reducing need, rebuilding the social infrastructure and shifting the balance of power. This is an important step towards dispersing power, it was recognised the funding is a key source of power, as summarised by a member of staff from Time to Shine:

My belief that who holds the money tends to have the power that you know if older people hold the money that the power transfers through (p005).

An example of commitment to this was found in the commitment of Time to Shine staff, 'buying in' to the values of co-production and commit to living the rhetoric in a meaningful way:

The first time we commissioned we said that to live through the principle of older people being involved in the heart of everything Time to Shine that older people would be involved in writing the specifications and sitting on the panels and making the decisions(p005).

The staff recognised their role and how it can impact on the decision-making of others, how they held the potential to 'drive from the back seat':

I think because the programme's really big and the core partnership and Leeds Older Peoples Forum Board there's quite a lot of people, so actually I don't think it has. It could steer down a certain way and I sometimes feel is a sort of is a lot of responsibility for it not to be steered so that's sometimes quite a big thing (p004).

There was evidence from the focus group about the difference older people were able to make to the process. Research participant p011 reflected how older people taking the lead for this process made a material difference in changing the process:

We looked at the questions and whether we needed to add any questions or change any questions and I think that was a really important part of the process that we had put in that because we did change a couple of things on ours or add something (p011).

Research participant p011 also reflected on the reality of transfer of power and how this played out in the process:

I mean Time to Shine wrote the criteria, therefore, they had a huge influence on where the money is going because the applicants have to meet the criteria, so in that respect Time to Shine was in control of it. With regards to the process from the criteria to the grounds, I think the panel was very in control of it. We were well-guided professionally, we were well-supported professionally, but we made the decision out of the applicants as to who we thought best met the criteria (p011).

Recognising potential for influencing decisions was also present in the case studies. A delivery partner volunteer at community group two discussed the approach they use to supporting people to make decisions without 'driving from the back seat' and the importance of being open to all ideas from other people:

> I'm really non-directive so that if someone has an idea or a vision or something, we'll go with it. If I don't agree with it, it doesn't matter. It's their idea, we'll go with it (p016).

It was clear that this volunteer was aware of the potential their interaction had to influence other group members, not only in decision-making, but also in how ideas for the group are shaped. This reflects the importance of Lukes' (1974) three faces of power, recognising that not only does power exist in the first face and making decisions, but also in the second those people who use the services and the third face, where the desires of those who use the service are shaped by those who traditionally hold power.

Older people are already placed in positions within the organisational infrastructure and are in positions where they can influence change across the Time to Shine programme. The Time to Shine programme was set up within the existing infrastructure of the Leeds Older Peoples Forum, something which the National Lottery Community Fund:

> The National Lottery Community Fund are very keen on the approach that Time to Shine has, meaning that it is hosted within an older peoples' infrastructure organisation with a board of trustees that are older people (p003).

The representative from the funding body reflected on the positive approach taken by Time to Shine in engaging older people at board level in the programme level:

> I think Time to Shine is a great example of a good co-production in having older people sit on the board, having specialisms and having them you know oversee different elements of the programme based on their interest and their capability, evaluation being one (p009).

This was supported by research participant p007, who reflected on the extent to which older people have influence at partnership board level:

> The criteria for all the things [for commissioning] and the criteria for the themes didn't come solely from staff, they came from a much wider body which includes a lot of older people (p007)

Having older people places in these positions is critical from several theoretical perspectives. Firstly, pluralism highlights that the range of parties with interests make representation to the decision-makers; in this context, older people are at the forefront of the decision-making body. Secondly, it addresses Lukes' (1974) third face of power because there is influence in the shaping of desires and approaches in the organisation. The communication of the understanding of these concepts already takes place through the Time to Shine commissioning process. This is an important step; however, as discussed in chapter seven, more work is needed in the Time to Shine programme to encourage a more diverse population of older people to be involved at this level as it is this type of opportunity which tends to attract ex-professionals to these roles. They have a valuable contribution to make, but as argued in chapter seven, they do not represent the total experience of all older people and it is important to move beyond counting participation by the age of those involved to recognising how elements of diverse experience of later life also makes an important contribution to services.

As older people are in positions of power and influence in the organisation, they are in a stronger position to influence how the organisations is shaped. One example of this is the project specification agreed for commissioning. These are agreed by the core partnership board and was influenced by the older people involved. At this level, having this level of influence in the organisation arguably puts older people in a position of meaningful power to influence change:

> The criteria for the themes didn't come solely from staff, they came from a much wider body which includes a lot of older people (p007).

The approach which supports older people to access the tools of power is also embedded in the requirements for the application of funds from Time to Shine for delivery partners:

> One of the things that's really considered how are how is this scheme you're saying being produced jointly between older people who live in that area and the organisation wanting to run them. How is the organisation run in a way that allows that? (p006).

This power was shifted even more significantly within in the structure in the second round of commissioning, which took place around halfway through the programme. On this occasion, the Time to Shine staff explored how co-production could meaningfully take place in the commissioning process. The pot was £1.7m across eleven projects to be commissioned, which was a large amount of funding which carried significant responsibility, which as SCIE (2015) indicate as discussed in chapter three, includes recognising local assets and insights:

> The biggest difference I guess is in, has for me been having older people sit on commissioning panels and make decisions about the sorts of things that are going to be funded by bringing in their experience of how things work or their understanding of the local communities or yeah their experience of those organisations (p009).

Although co-commissioning is the enactment of the value base of Time to Shine and the wider Ageing Better programme, working with professionals in the wider sector has also been a challenge. There is evidence to suggest that some organisations have found it difficult to accept the shift in the balance of power and tried to use Lukes' (1974) second and third face of power to their advantage. An example of this was given by providers who submitted tenders for projects who were not successful, used the fact that older people were on the panels as leverage to query the outcomes, arguing that they should be professional positions as older people were not able to understand the complexity of the task; therefore, their decisions could be called into question.

> It's also been very difficult actually because people have, certain professional organisations have not liked the idea that older people are sitting on tender panels because they believe it is a professional position where you should have people with experience of tendering and commissioning, tendering and commissioning approaches. People have had feedback from organisations that weren't successful obviously rather than the ones that were, even if they had misgivings (p009).

In this instance, the language and discussion changes to revert to the former power bases, participants who have traditional held decision-making power can work to undermine the decisions they do not agree with or ones that reduce the power they hold. This can give co-production the feel of a privilege which could be withdrawn if decisions are not made which are coterminous with the desires and interests of stakeholders who have traditionally held power. Although initial steps are taken to share the tools of power, further thought needs to take place about other, less visible forms of power and how they are sustained through this subtle undermining of decisions made by older people.

Involving people in co-production has required them to understand complex processes and literature. The funding body representative identified a challenge to fully engage people at board level:

> I guess that's the challenge of co-production is that we've tried to navigate how do you bring in an effective policy base, and effective understanding of what works to people who may not have the experience or capability frankly of working with complex policy documents all working in a board setting (p009).

There seems to be an acceptance that these processes and documents are complex, sometimes for good reason; however, there is a remaining challenge. If the documents are about the people and the services they use, there is duty on organisations to ensure their best endeavours to make sure they are accessible for the people and a question remains about how organisations can be open to scrutiny at this level without accessibility.

It is also important to acknowledge here that Lukes (1974) offers a lens to critique these views. Here, the representative from the funding body has identified a narrative which shapes the funders approach to co-production. Ideas that stakeholders in co-production should be limited to those with perceived suitable experience or capability as defined by the funding body, reinforces the power dynamics which serve the interests of the funding body, ensuring they retain their power by defining who they perceive as suitable as a stakeholder. Using Lukes' (1974) second dimension of power which identifies the mobilisation of bias as a lens to explore the perspective of the funding body, as it evidences a reinforcing of their power by excluding threats and challenges reinforcing ideas of the ideal stakeholder who is absorbed in their ways of working.

Co-Design and Co-Delivery

Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) argue that the idea of co-design is that those who use services, their families and communities know best about how services should be designed. This underpinning principle was that service users and their families, friends and the communities they live in. Time to Shine acknowledged that older people had been influenced the design of services:

> I know that a lot of the service have been designed with the influence of older people themselves and people taking part in the service (p003)

In practice, the research data suggested that co-design and co-delivery of services tended to be co-dependent; that one function was very much related to another and that co-design was integral to the co-delivery process and vice versa. It was possible to identify some approaches which were used by a range of delivery partners across the Time to Shine programme. A Time to Shine member of staff noted that delivery partners broadly took the approach of developing a steering group which involves people who use the service:

> All of the delivery partners, a lot of them have their own steering groups about what do we want to be providing and doing so they've got kind of at that level as well. They've recruited their own people to have a say in what kind of services they are delivering on (p002).

This approach was identified in this research, particularly about community group two. A delivery partner from this group identified their approach in developing and supporting a committee:

> Yeah there is a committee, well we call it a steering committee and it's made up of some volunteers and some regular attendees, and we meet four times a year, well we obviously go through the regular things like you know, what we've done in the past, what we need to learn from, where we're going in the future, the financial status, we have got a treasurer. We've got a constitution and all that kind of stuff. So, you know, those are the sort of things that we discuss at the meeting (p015).

This was also found in community group two:

> We have sort of semi-formal meetings of all the leaders so if you're an activity leader, you're in our advisory group... we now have a secretary and the treasurer, rather than me being the nominal chairman of it. But we all are on an equal footing (p016).

Although both groups have some sort of committee to support the running of the group, decision-making power doesn't only lie with them, group members are also responsible for decision-making. An example of this was given by research participant p018 from community group two one about the way in which group outings are decided:

> He [p017] asks them where they want to go, he makes a list and probably decides between the committee and whatever whether they should go for this but this quite a number of them which is great...so basically, it's, he's got to whether people are interested before he books it (p018).

Research participant p017, a volunteer from community group two described the approach he uses to engage all members of the group to seek their views about types of activities they wanted to do:

> What I generally do at the beginning of the year, I hand some paper round and I say write down suggestions of where you'd like to go and then we'll see, whatever comes up I try to fit them in if we can (p017).

This is an example which could challenge Arnstein's ladder; on the face of the activity it looks like consultation; however, there is acknowledged power that whatever the group decides, that is what will happen, and actually its more of a negotiating stance about what is able to take place within existing resources.

The evidence indicated that although the steering groups dealt with the day to day business of the groups, it was the group members who were central in decision-making. Research participant p018 from community group two reflected that it was the group members who have the final say:

> Well the point is this it's the members that decide whether it's something they want like that or not (p018).

Co-Evaluation

Involving older people who are lonely and isolated in evaluation of services was an important contribution to the co-production of services. Staff at Time to Shine provided the example of how a co-produced approach to evaluation was developed through the Time to Shine programme:

> It felt good in a way to listen to somebody and say 'yep that sounds like a good idea, what can we do, how can we make this happen' because I felt that was an older person who was really at the heart of designing an evaluation programme (p003).

Some of the crucial elements of evaluation were determined by Time to Shine staff:

> What 'good 'looks like is determined by them (p001).

> If the Older Person was given the money, is this the service that they would buy? (p001).

This points to the fact that quality indicators need to think about evaluation from the perspective of those who use the services, which may need to include the way in which things are done as well as the final outcome, as Durose et al. (2014) found, customers do not evaluate service quality by simply judging the final quality- of-life outcomes, they also place considerable weight on the process of service delivery. This was reflected by Time to Shine staff who identified measurement which is focused on the product of co-production, rather than the impact on individuals involved:

> I think we evidence the sort of product of co-production but not necessarily the benefits of people being involved and listened to, or whether they feel they have been listened to because sometimes we often question whether we are doing it properly if that makes sense, but we know we haven't fully evaluated it enough I don't think (p004).

One of the ongoing questions identified was about how co-production could be measured, particularly from Time to Shine staff:

> I'm not sure if we have evidence that draws a straight line to say well older people designed this service and therefore older people are getting involved and therefore older people are less isolated. I hope so, but I suppose I don't know enough to say yes, we definitely are. I kind of would say I imagine we are (p002).

One aspect of measuring co-production in what quality evidence looks like about co-production, what counts towards identifying success or failure. This was identified by the representative from the National Lottery Community Fund:

> The challenge has always been I think is how do you ensure that quality evidence is built into the process because sometimes it feels like either you speak to the people or you speak to the expert and the combination of those is I think one of the biggest challenges that we've had as a funder' (p009).

Boyle and Harris (2009) who argue that culture of targets, standards and best practice tends to count against innovation (and co-production as an approach) and innovation which is designed to impact on more fundamental aspects of service delivery is particularly vulnerable. Durose et al. (2014) also argue that there is a danger that evidence thresholds which assert a formal hierarchy will narrow the range of interventions that can be evaluated, as evaluation becomes driven by methods rather than content and focused on the criteria for inclusion in evaluation rather than focusing on what is important about co-production.

There is a requirement to be accountable for the significant amount of money provided by National Lottery Community Fund. Although it is not perceived as a statutory service, such as the Local Authority or the NHS, the money is provided by central government from the proceeds of the National Lottery. There is accountability for money spent, there is also accountability to older people both locally and nationally to deliver findings about what works. This is an interesting perspective as it raises a question about the evaluation indicators and the extent to which co-evaluation is taking place at a national level in the Ageing Better programme. Richards and Coulter (2007) argue that evaluation should include aspects of relational practice which includes, dignity, respect and being treated as an individual; this does not appear to be present in the national picture as the research data indicates that evaluation is something distinct and separate. There is an argument to suggest that co-evaluation should be flexible to measure co-production activity, as Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) argue that co-evaluation should be about organisations working alongside those who use the service to measure how they feel about the service. In this circumstance, co-production and evaluation are seen as incongruent, rather than inherently joined, or as Ewert and Evers (2013) identify, the nature of co-production is that it is a 'fragmented set of activities, expectations and rationales', rather than systematically embedded across the programme, making it difficult to establish whether co-production has been done well.

This need for accountability; however, stifles alternatives ways of working which may be more conducive to co-production. A member of staff from the Time to Shine programme reflected on the challenge of negotiating creative approaches that could support co-production, yet retaining systems of accountability:

> You haven't really got free rein, you can't just say 'ahh we'll do whatever' because there's certain things that we just have to do so it kind of stifles co-production a little bit cos you can give a bit, it's not free rein but you can let people run with certain things, but then it's always got to come back and yeah, we can't say to the Lottery we just did all this fantastic stuff but I've no idea whether we're reaching the targets or not (p003).

It is clear in this context that reward power is present with these stakeholders and they have a significant influence shaping co-production in the Time to Shine programme. Although this power dynamic may be accepted by co-production stakeholders in the Time to Shine programme, a question needs to be asked about the influence of structures and how they sustain the interests of the status quo. Here, Lukes' (1974) second dimension of power and the 'mobilisation of bias', as there is an acceptance from stakeholders that the needs of the National Lottery Community Fund (and by extension Ecorys as the evaluation body for the Ageing Better programme) override the need for co-production. The institutional procedures (here in the guise of the evaluations requirements) are in play and they reinforce the shape of the power dynamics in favour of Big Lottery as the most powerful stakeholder. Further than this, Lukes' (1974) third dimension of power can lend context to the sustenance of these dynamics in favour of the National Lottery Community Fund , where this a shaping of desires of stakeholders, to provide National Lottery Community Fund and Ecorys with data which demonstrates the quality of the service without exploration of the issue about possibilities of evaluation methods which would allow greater flexibility and creativity for co-production. Foucault's (1975) concept of Governmentality as Ettlinger (2011) identifies is the 'governance of mentality', where the power of the dominant party is embedded through the accepted relationship between citizens and institutions so the concept of challenging the status quo does not arise, reinforcing the structures which support the interests of the powerful stakeholders, rather than exploring alternative approaches to evaluation which do not stifle co-production approaches.

Conclusion

This chapter now draws together the key findings about power and co-production. The fieldwork findings indicated that a clear understanding of power is integral to co-production. As Gohler (2009) amongst others identified the ubiquitous nature of power, this was reflected as power was identified in a range of forms across the Time to Shine programme. Pluralist theory provides a framework for

the programme as it operates on a commissioning model; power is diffuse across the programme as the relevant 'interest groups' (for example, those who seek to bid for funds from the programme) and those who make decisions about how the funds are spent and the services commissioned. As Hirst (1993) argues, it is this relationship between funder and service which supports the democratic marketplace to enable progress. To influence this process, it is imperative that this power is made explicit and that all stakeholders, including older people who are lonely or isolated, are on both sides of the equation, both as part of the relevant interest groups and those who are in positions of decision-making and are therefore, able to influence the shape of the programme. Marxist theory was also a key element to understanding the nature of power in this thesis, as Marx (1848) argues that power can be understood by its 'conjured up' relationship between the means of production and exchange. Interestingly, this is bound up with the Pluralist understanding of power, in so much as this power across the programme is situated in influence over decision-making about funding for the programme.

The Time to Shine programme at board level does have older people who are in influential positions; however, they have tended to be people who are experienced in these types of work environments, used to business meeting structures and confident to attend and contribute in such environments. Elite theory can offer some context here, as it suggests that there are certain individuals who are in positions to govern others. This is not only in employment, but as both Hunter (1953) and Form and Miller (1960) identify, this translates across to forums of voluntary and community work, helping people to maintain their existing positions of power and to forge wider networks of influence.

Structures which support co-production can be addressed but this does not necessarily mean equality. Sometimes the power dynamics and imbalances are not immediately obvious, and the paradigm of co-production and its renegotiated relationship also consider the less obvious nature of power. Here, Lukes' (1974) three dimensions of power has shown to be an important tool in this thesis as it revealed that some decisions are made outside of the public sphere. The thesis identified areas of power, including the second dimension and the 'mobilisation of bias' in the relationship between the programme and the Big Lottery Fund (and by extension the national evaluation approach) as the need for evaluation to influence and override the need for co-production, reinforcing the shape of the power dynamics in favour of Big Lottery as the most powerful stakeholder, or even the intentions of the Big Lottery Fund overruled by the Government department. Lukes (1974) third dimension of power can lend context in the shaping of desires of stakeholders, moving from evaluation over co-production, to a space where these two elements can co-exist.

Power network theory outlined by French and Raven (1959) amongst others, provided some context about the nature of relationships between stakeholders. Although there may be a spirit of equality in

co-production, this should not be mistaken for all stakeholder being equal. There should honesty about the disparity of power and influence between stakeholders. This can include the difference between paid staff and volunteers, or experienced and inexperienced volunteers. Co-production should take account of this and those who hold power should be encouraged to recognise their position. Although theoretically, as Jack (1995b) power needs to be taken because of its nature, some of the most disempowered potential stakeholders, including lonely and isolated older people may not be in that situation. Those with power need to make sure they 'buy in' to the values of co-production and commit to living the rhetoric and use co-production to take action to minimise the impact of power dynamics. A model of co-production should be explicit from the start about power relationships and the relationship between the individual and the state. It cannot be disingenuous, there needs to be honesty about the power held by each stakeholder and what work needs to happen to relinquish this. Without this, power restructuring has the feel of a privilege which could be withdrawn if older people are not compliant with the view and desired outcomes for the organisations. This was evidenced in the work of the Time to Shine programme as older people were supported to 'take the reins' of the second round of commissioning and it is learning from these actions, the honesty and transparency required from more powerful stakeholders which will form the renegotiated relationship Cahn (2000) identified. These actions result in increased and diffuse power, which as Arendt (1970), power is gained when people 'act in concert'.

If co-production is a process who is rooted in empowerment, then its processes should empower. As identified earlier in this section, both Pigg (2002) and Antonovsky (1988) argue that the first face of empowerment, personal power increases through taking action and Kizilos (1990) identifies ways of empowerment through organisations, that information sharing, resource sharing and participative management are central to empowerment. The importance of development of stakeholders in co-production is central to empowerment; skilling people empowers them in their co-production work and build capacity in local communities as those skills are transferred to other contexts.

By understanding the importance of sharing definitions and expectations for the conduct of co-production, the second face of empowerment can be addressed to make sure that co-production moves beyond rhetoric towards reality. The shaping of the language and concepts across the Time to Shine programme appears to start with Big Lottery and the Time to Shine core partnership board. It was evident that academic and policy understanding of the terms loneliness, social isolation and co-production were often rooted in the practice context here, as research participants often drew on these definitions in discussion. This is critical element to empowerment, as Guttierez (1995) argues, group discussion and problem solving can contribute to consciousness raising.

Chapter three of this thesis identifies potential for co-production to be understood as both paradigm and praxis and to enable this, there needed to be a renegotiated relationship between the service and those who use the service. This was evident throughout the Time to Shine programme, from the core partnership board and its sub-groups, the approaches to commissioning and the structure of the groups. Older people who use the services are in positions of influence and power across the infrastructure of the programme. Although this is not the full story and there are several further elements yet to deconstruct about power in this context, it was evident that understanding of the necessity of this was present.

Co-production was also understood in the context of practice. The fieldwork data demonstrated that conceptualisation of co-production was centred around tasks conducted across the co-production cycle, co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery and co-evaluation. An example of this was the task of co-commissioning, where older people from the programme were supported to take on the task of commissioning services with the Time the Shine programme grant. The renegotiated relationship between service and user was embodied in the process.

This thesis recommends that co-production is defined in terms of understanding the paradigm-praxis link. By understanding co-production in this context, it signifies understanding the necessary power shift and how it underpins the tasks necessary for co-production. This thesis recommends this definition to capture the necessary elements which can be used as a universal definition across the Time to Shine programme to bring definitional clarity with a view to consolidating co-production practice:

Co-production is both a paradigm and method. The paradigm is based in a renegotiated, more equal relationship between services and those who use them which takes account of power relationships. The method of co-production centres around co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery and co-evaluation with a range of stakeholders, one of whom should be those who use the services. It uses creative methods of engagement to harness the skills, knowledge, experience and strengths of those involved with benefits for individuals, groups, organisations and the wider community.

Evidence from the fieldwork indicated that co-production was understood across the Time to Shine programme around the well-established four-stage model:

Four Stage Model of Co-Production

Figure 6
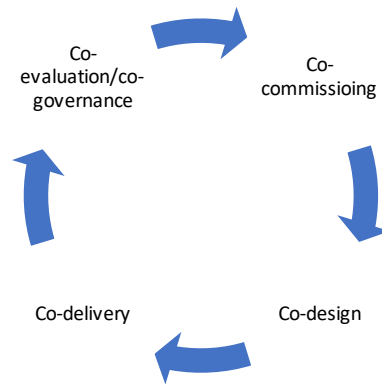
The fieldwork indicates that this model helps with clarity on co-production praxis as it sets out the necessary tasks and phases into clear activity. Being distinct about each phase is useful, as it helps to be clear about the critical stakeholders for each phase, which may be different for each phase of the co-production cycle. Although the phases are clear in the model, they are not separate, there may be overlap and blurring of boundaries, particularly between the co-design and co-delivery phases, as the findings appeared to indicate that there was a 'back and forth' between these phases as learning informed the ongoing process. This model also lends itself to cyclical rather than linear learning as recognised by Carr (2003); the opportunity to work through an iteration of co-production contributes to empowerment learning over the cycle.

This section has explored how power exists and operates in the context of the Time to Shine programme and how approaches to empowerment could be used to underpin the renegotiated relationship identified as the co-production paradigm. This thesis now moves onto the next chapter which addresses research questions three and four as it explores the praxis of co-production through identification of the necessary elements required for co-production and suggests a model for co-production.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS THE PRACTICE OF CO-PRODUCTION
Introduction

The two previous findings chapters have explored the experience of loneliness and social isolation and the nature of power in co-production. This chapter now builds on this knowledge to explore the practice of co-production and in particular addresses research question three, what are the important elements necessary for co-production? It explores interpretations of co-production across the Time to Shine programme and situates them in the context of the literature discussed in chapter three. The range of stakeholders connected to the programme and issues such as the interconnections of the role and effective support for stakeholders is explored. The chapter then moves on to identify central practice values. The chapter concludes with discussion about communication methods

Conceptualising Co-production in Practice

Chapter four detailed the experience of the researcher as she liaised with people from across the Time to Shine programme and realised that there was not a unifying definition used by the programme. To explore the concept, it was important that the researcher contextualised the data in local interpretations of the co-production.

The research data indicated that understanding of the term co-production also varied across Time to Shine partners and understanding and interpretation was based on the knowledge and prior experience of the individual. The perception of several participants was that the term co-production may be new, but the way in which co-production takes place was rooted in approaches to engagement and involvement which were well established. This was summarised by a staff member from the Time to Shine programme:

> I think it's one of those things that goes on a lot, people may not call it co-production, that's become a very big word in the last few years it seems, it's probably been called other things in the past (p002).

When exploring the conceptualisation of co-production across the Time to Shine programme, it was clear that there are differing interpretations. At National Lottery Community Fund level, co-production was understood as:

> Co-production is the process via which you bring individuals into plan the design and delivery of services that will affect them. that's probably the simplest way I can explain it; and it's just the way by which the you identify and engage with people who the services will affect and

have them shape the idea behind the services the design and then to inform the delivery of those services and being a part of that process (p009).

Staff from the Time to Shine programme understood co-production in terms of specific tasks they felt were part of the co-production process, centring around activities linked to tasks such as design (and other variations of design such as creating, informing, finding solutions), consultation and delivery of projects:

> It's more about going into the communities and talking to people who are actually going to take advantage of the service and allowing them to design it and consult on it (p002).

This interpretation of co-production reflects the understanding of the national Ageing Better programme and the link to the Time to Shine programme monitoring requirements:

> Our 3rd outcome within Time to Shine is about older people involved in designing, delivering evaluating the projects, it's one of our key outcomes throughout the programme (p003).

This definition of co-production locates the focus of the work with people who are the identified recipients of the potential service. This definition captures some elements of the joint working, but it limited. Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation could be used to critique this definition as this definition could be fulfilled by some of the activities which are located towards the bottom of the ladder. There is a lack of underpinning understanding about the renegotiation of the relationship between citizen and state as identified by Cahn (2000).

Other participants made connections between co-production and strengths-based approaches. The delivery partner from community group one discussed co-production in these terms and recognised the importance of identifying and working with the strengths of the individual:

> I see co-production as working together with an individual to sort of, to look at what's available, to look at their strengths, so some of that strengths-based work, what's already going on, what could we change, what is it that you want to do, sort of that involvement, that user involvement really, that, them having a say, empowering, that sort of things really (p014).

Along with identifying the strengths-based approach, this definition also begins to acknowledge that empowerment for the person involved should be part of co-production; however, this is not fully developed or embedded in the definition and lacks a critique of the wider landscape and power dynamics which exist between the participants in co-production activity. The definition from the staff member at Time to Shine reflects on 'allowing' people to design and consult on services, it doesn't

reflect an understanding of the need for renegotiated power dynamics between individuals and services which should sit at the heart of understand of co-production.

Other participants identified different interpretations of co-production; in particular, a few participants from the Time to Shine partnership board and delivery partners made links between their understanding of co-production and approaches to community development work. A member of the Time to Shine partnership board identified their understanding of co-production was connected to their experience of community development work:

> For me terms like co-production come and they go in and out of fashion and that's fine you know but the core element of it to me is community development (p006).

This understanding was echoed by a delivery partner who discussed the application of co-production in practice working to develop a new group and linked the co-production approach to community development approaches:

> I think by following the ABCD [Asset Based Community Development] approach, it was naturally quite co-productive yeah (p014).

This examination of the interpretation of co-production reveals that those who are responsible for the Time to Shine programme bring with them their experience, which shapes the interpretation of concepts such as co-production. This has both positive aspects and challenges, they bring with them their wealth of experience, but they also bring their preconceptions. One the challenges for co-production is why hasn't it achieved its transformative potential as Cahn (2000) claims Is it because the elasticity in its definition has become too loose, losing its transformative potential because there is an assumption that it is the same work with a different definition?

Time to Shine Programme Stakeholders

Co-production involves a range of stakeholders around an issue to draw on their skills, knowledge and experience to best resolve or address the issue. The theory of co-production is that all stakeholders are equal in the process, as SCIE (2015) identified in chapter three, no stakeholder is more important than another. This thesis explores the difficulties, dilemmas and reality of this in practice. Co-production requires work between a range of stakeholders and in the context of this research, every person who takes part in co-production has been seen as a stakeholder, whether they are an older person, who may or may not experience loneliness or social isolation, a volunteer, delivery partner, Time to Shine staff member or National Lottery Community Fund representative.

The central elements of co-production are relationships, the researcher has used the term stakeholder to reflect the partners in the co-production relationship. Traditionally, this term has been used to reflected professional stakeholders; however, in the context of this thesis, it has been used to identify any person who has been involved (or could potentially have been involved) in co-production across the Time to Shine programme. Use of this term is supported by Ledger and Slade (2015) who argue that the use of the term stakeholder symbolises the 'newly renegotiated, more equal relationship'. This moves away from traditional perspectives, but seeks to reflect the values of co-production, that all participants have something to contribute to any approach used; this may not be in the context of a traditional contribution such as gatekeeper to financial resources or service prover, but taking the view of Cahn (2000) and the value of their contribution in the context of the 'non-market economy'. As discussed later in this chapter, older people who experience or may be at risk of experiencing loneliness and social isolation can be disempowered by their circumstances in a range of ways; therefore, this thesis will set a boundary to acknowledge the circumstances of older people to accurately reflect the balance of power, diversity of representation and barriers to participation.

A range of stakeholders who should be key players in co-production with the Time to Shine programme were identified in the research. It was clear that there is a broad representation of stakeholders in the Time to Shine programme, with sign up and input from a range of people and organisation. As Bown (2013) identifies, this broad representation is critical for effective co-production.

Older People Using the Service

People who are already using the Time to Shine programme funded services are essential stakeholders in co-production, but there are also other essential parties who are key stakeholders in the co-production process. Older people in Leeds who are not already connected to the Time to Shine programme were identified as key stakeholders who should be engaged and connected to co-production:

> Older people in Leeds certainly, that should be an obvious one, hopefully we get that one in there (p002).

The Time to Shine programme approach to co-production is based on the key relationship between the organisation and those who use the service. It was identified that people who use services are intrinsic to the co-production process, in the context of the Time to Shine programme, this means that older people who experience or may be at risk of experiencing loneliness and social isolation should be at the heart of co-production:

In terms of co-production and Time to Shine or not just Time to Shine, services for older people, then older people are at the heart of that process. And if its people with mental health issues then its people with mental health issues that are at the heart, whatever that means (p001).

Discussion of the importance of this relationship was discussed in earlier chapters; Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) indicate that co-production is linked to the relationship between the organisation and those who used the service and their ability to collaborate in integral to successful co-production. This relationship is also central to the approach to address loneliness and social isolation as Pantell et al. (2013) argue, social institutions can be an important part of an individual's social network and as Machielse (2015) identified, for those people who are structurally isolated who use this type of opportunity to contact others to address the experience of social isolation. Recognition of this issue was present in the Time to Shine programme as a member of the core partnership board who took part in the research reflected the importance of this relationship and recognised that without working with people who use the service, successful co-production was not possible:

If those people are not involved at the heart of the matter, then you'll never be able to develop things like co-production or whatever you want to call it (p006).

The importance of this relationship in building successful services was also identified by a research participant who works with a partner organisation delivering Time to Shine funded services. They reflected on their success and how that was linked to the role that their members (older people who used the service) had in the development of their organisation over time:

Well I do think it's the members, I absolutely do, I think [partner organisation] has a long history with that from it being built up from people going out visiting to this really large organisation that's kept local (p014).

There was recognition from the Time to Shine core partnership board that involving older people in co-production challenges pre-conceptions about older people being passive recipients of services:

I think they will all have seen older people…I don't know sort of being creative and assertive and not just being kind of beneficiaries. Does that make sense? Being agents yeah and I think that is important (p007).

This perspective echoes the views of Slay and Robinson (2011) who argue that co-production presents a vision of the active role individuals can take in this context. This approach helps to provide insight into the lived experience through working with older people who have experienced or may be at risk

of experiencing loneliness and social isolation to develop approaches and services which have more likely to make a significant impact. Without insight into peoples' lived experiences, it is difficult to understand what support or intervention would work for people in those circumstances. It was clear that co-producing with older people in this way lends credibility to the programme:

> Having older people at the heart of the programme, talking about the programme as volunteers, engaging with their communities as volunteers gives the programme a credibility in the eyes of older people that it wouldn't have otherwise and brings more older people in (p009).

The involvement of people who use services (and in this case, older people who are lonely and socially isolated) is fundamental to credible services, and where this is lacking, services are actively perceived as lacking in credibility:

> So fundamental is that older people are taking the lead in, because if they're not then whatever happens below that level for me lacks credibility you know (p006).

This is supported by the co-production literature in chapter two, as Durose et al. (2014) identify that that services and staff gain credibility with professionals and communities when they understand their changing role in the co-production context.

The involvement of people who use the services in this way reflects the changing nature of their relationships with the organisation, as Realpe and Wallace (2010) indicate, the level of collaboration which is required for co-production changes the nature of the relationship and Slay and Stephens (2013) there is a dissolving of distinctions between stakeholders. Although the idea of renegotiated relationships between organisations and those who use the services is an ideal situation, the reality presents other challenges. The political position of older people who are lonely and isolated may mean that they are not in a situation where they perceive themselves as stakeholders:

> The people who suffer from social isolation and loneliness are stakeholders, but they may not know that they are stakeholders. They haven't staked their claim necessarily (p007).

Without this recognition, it is difficult to enact the principles of co-production and the start of co-production means it is imperative to make sure lonely and socially isolated older people are included in co-production needs to address the specific barriers they face. One of the most important aspects identified was about quality of relationships; it is not enough to offer a place, but it was also recognised that the issue was more complex and nuanced than simply making connections and networks; participants acknowledged that quality of relationships is to encourage genuine co-production with

this group of people, how to support quality relationships is crucial to success. What gets in the way for people developing connections, will also get in the way of successful co-production. As Ramsden (2010) argues, traditional methods of engagement used by organisations are inflexible and routinely exclude people from under-represented groups.

It was clear that there was a commitment to this principle when working co-productively in the Time to Shine programme; however, it was clear there were some inherent contradiction in the application of this principles to practice. Although the staff and core partnership board members all identified older people who experience social isolation and loneliness as stakeholders, further discussion was needed to explore the practicalities of implementing this. One of the most pertinent questions which arose in discussion with the participants was if there was a requirement to be an active stakeholder? There were some competing views on this staff at Time to Shine felt that people often preferred to be in receipt of services rather than actively involved:

> I've certainly spoken to older people who feel that they have spent their lives putting stuff in and all they want to do is be the recipient of services and not feel that they then have to be involved in designing those services, or as volunteers (p001).

It was identified by a core partnership board member that in their experience, some older people do not wish to contribute in this way, the nature of their experience and expectation for retirement is that they no longer wish to have the responsibility for things such as service commissioning, design, delivery or evaluation:

> Some groups want to sit and be looked after because they've got to 50 or whatever and it's their time to rest (p007).

Before co-production takes place, there needs to be clarification about what the expectation is, whether co-production is a responsibility for older people or whether it is optional for those who wish to take part. Fox (2012) talks about co-production promoting a stronger sense of responsible citizenship; however, discussion needs to take place with people who use services to find out if this 'responsible citizenship' is what they want.

Volunteering and Recompense

Despite a clear sign-up and commitment to equality of older people (older people are at the heart of everything we do) from the staff at the Time to Shine programme, there was also concern about the amount of responsibility asked of older people, particularly as taking part in the types of activity required for co-production are quite different from the other types of activities offered by Time to Shine. The types of activity were usually work-based activities, such as attending meetings, which

other stakeholders are usually paid for their time. Staff from the Time to Shine programme identified that it felt exploitative to ask older people to undertake the same types of activity without financial recompense:

> The problem I see with co-production is that you are always kind of asking for people to do free work...you try to be non-hierarchical but at the end of the day its usually going to be somebody who's getting paid to do this work and a bunch of people who are not getting paid for their time and effort and all of that (p002).

Time and effort is contributed by older people who are in receipt of services or may potentially be in receipt of services in the future without pay, other stakeholders – National Lottery Community Fund representative, Time to Shine staff and delivery partners are financially recompensed for their time. This perception has an impact, not because Time to Shine staff do not perceive that older people are not capable of undertaking these tasks or are not equal in decision-making, but that what is asked of older people has the potential to be exploitative, and it is feelings of guilt about this which may influence the co-production process:

> I usually feel a little bit guilty asking people to come to a meeting or a focus group or this or that you know because it is asking them to give up their time and their psychological energy and all those things (p002).

There was also concern from Time to Shine staff that co-production involves older people without payment and a reliance on goodwill, taking advantage of the role of volunteer, which challenged the professional values of individual workers:

> I think we can use this idea about the nobility of volunteering as sometimes an excuse to not pay people for their work, I don't really like that aspect of it (p002).

The issue that some stakeholders are paid and others aren't does seem to create an imbalance of power, where those who are paid hold more power than those who aren't:

> It is hard because obviously where they're there in a paid capacity and other people aren't there is a little bit of a power dynamic which you wouldn't, you know, you wouldn't want there to be, but I suppose there has to be (p004).

SCIE (2015) questions about how people should be compensated for their involvement and Carter and Beresford (2000) acknowledge that there is an ongoing debate about how people who are not formally

employed by organisations should be compensated for their time and input. This disparity of pay was not a stand-alone issue, but it was recognised that payment for time to take part went hand in hand with power in the relationship.

This suggests that older people are not necessarily motivated by financial recompense to get involved in co-production activity, which is echoes the research by Voorberg et al. (2018) identified in earlier chapters and there is evidence that it is other things which are more significant motivating factors when trying to engage people in co-production. The opportunity to have these types of relationship are important when seeking to combat loneliness and social isolation as Weiss (1973) identifies, these types of supplementary relationship provide something for individuals which may not be ordinarily in their existing network, they can be easily managed outside established relationships and there is less consequence if these relationships do not succeed. Weiss (1973) recognises that the opportunity for these types of relationship is important as they are usually with professionals or other in a similar situation. This network-oriented approach is also identified by Cornwall and Waite (2009) as the direction of travel for services for people who are lonely and socially isolated.

Although the research evidence appears to indicate that there are other benefits volunteers benefits for volunteers may not be financial, it is important to recognise the individuals are giving their time and energy without pay; therefore, anyone engaging in a co-production process needs to be open about this disparity as it has an impact for both paid and unpaid stakeholders. As explored throughout this thesis, power imbalances exist in several areas which affect co-production. Recompense for all stakeholders is prosaic action which can be taken relatively easily (compared to other issued of power) and should be addressed when co-producing.

The fieldwork for this thesis indicated that older people who were involved in co-producing benefitted from other forms of reward and recompense. Interestingly, this issue wasn't shared by older people who were current volunteers. They identified benefits they experienced from being part the process and the experience of volunteering other than financial, which was enough for them to continue to give their time and energy. An older person who volunteered for the core partnership board and the commissioning panels described the benefits they experience from this type of work:

> You'll find that there are a lot of older people who love to come to things and give their opinion so it is about just somehow giving it to the level where somebody could come be interested in what is being said be encouraged to participate and have the sort of onus to do that (p008).

The opportunity to feel valued was also key to addressing the type of loneliness identified by Age UK (2010), derived from feelings of a lack of usefulness. Undertaking a volunteering role can contribute

to reducing these feelings. This view was supported by a delivery partner who reflected that they had identified how volunteering contributes to addressing issues such as emotional loneliness and feelings of having a purpose for older people in the service they work:

> I think befriending or doing things like volunteering, sort of that purposefulness really kicks in with the emotional loneliness. You hear people saying 'I don't feel useful anymore' or you know I used to do this, and it's about how do we get that sense of purpose back, what was it that you enjoyed doing that once gave you that (p014).

A member of the Time to Shine core partnership board who is an older person who volunteers their time indicated that part of the reward for volunteers is the opportunity to continue to develop their life experience:

> I think it has happened with organisations that are running their own programs that got Time to Shine funding see that as important to involve beneficiaries which is a bit of a funny word but to evolve them as much as possible and that can help with sustainability not only in terms of the program but in terms of their own life experience (p006).

This view on 'giving back' is supported by Cahn (2000) who acknowledged that this is a universal impulse, which Boyle, Clark and Burns (2006) recognise is a more natural state of relationship between organisations and the people who use their services. One of the ways to fulfil emotional needs that was indicated by participants was the opportunity for reciprocity The opportunity to 'give something back' was something that was a motivating factor and fulfilled an emotional need, not only for co-production, but also for developing and existing friendships. Research participant p017 talked about the importance of reciprocity, not only in community group two , but also more broadly in his relationships with others where he lives, that the chance to help others was beneficial for him:

> The benefits to me is knowing that I am helping people who's a lot worse off than me I say worse off in one way, not money wise but in health and movement and stuff and I enjoy it, I don't mind helping anybody (p017).

Research participant p024 gave an example of this issue with a friendship he has developed with someone who attends a group at community group one:

> There's another old guy that I see, more just go and visit him to see if he's ok...so I think he's taking me under his wing more than anything else. He probably feels that he gives me a bit of support so that's good... I hoped it would be a two-way street I'd get something out of it, and they get something out of it and which I do (p024).

Research participant p023 also talks about how important she feels it is to help others, and expressed a wish to support others who may be in a similar situation:

> If I could get myself in a better frame of mind, I'd like to help some teenagers that are struggling… I'm alright, talking to these kids that are struggling (p023).

Stakeholders should also be mindful of what is asked of volunteers, as there are limitations in what they can and should undertake depending on what they are willing to give. Although there is a role of beneficiaries and volunteers, this needs to be balanced against the question of how amount of time and responsibility which is reasonable to ask of them. A delivery partner from community group two reflected on the challenges of navigating this dilemma:

> Because people that run [community group two] really signed up to running a Monday afternoon weekly which is quite a big ask for people you know by the time, so if it runs from 1 till 3 some of us will arrive around 12 to get it set up and now the group [community group two] are very good at tidying up and putting away but still we would not be away until 3:30. so it's quite a good chunk of time (p016).

This was also reflected in the focus group, research participant p010 reflected on the challenges she experienced when short-listing organisations during the commissioning round. The group were clear they wanted to do a good job, but that the amount of work, plus not working in a space with others did create some anxiety and pressure:

> I was shortlisting all by myself, a vast number of applications… That was difficult to do because just of sheer numbers and the time pressures and the fact that it was a very busy time of year because it was coming up to Christmas. I did feel, although I found anxiety absolutely and diminishing amount of confidence thinking, "I'll be way out" "Will I finish?" and all this because there weren't other people around expressing those same views and knowing we were all half way through or something (p010).

Research participant p024 who is a volunteer and beneficiary from community group one describes their experience of volunteering and how they manage their time and commitment:

> Once you start volunteering, it's a commitment but it works both ways… but you've got to be very careful because you can get overwhelmed (p024).

The issue of safety for volunteers when providing support was also acknowledged by a delivery partner from community group two. They acknowledged the importance of safety for both beneficiaries and volunteers in respect of roles and professional boundaries:

> Very much aware of the need to keep an eye on the helpers to make sure that they are not being drawn into you know, yes anyway, drawn into other people's lives in a way that's not helpful (p016).

Some inherent challenges were also identified in working with older people as volunteers. The challenges in working with older people as the face of the projects were also identified. A volunteer is the face of the programme, the organisation needs to be confident that the volunteer matches the needs of the organisation:

> The challenge is being confident in them being the right face for the programme because what recourse do you have if a volunteer says they're from Time to Shine (p009).

Managing the organisational relationship between the volunteer and organisation is something which needs consideration. The issue of managing volunteers was also raised, particularly if the values of the volunteer or their approach to work was incongruent with the organisation:

> How do you fire a volunteer? how do you manage that relationship? You can give volunteers skills, you can train them, you can see that they've got a real knack for being in front of a camera or policy people or they can bring things alive in a way that you can't as a programme manager quite do so, but it also raises a huge number of questions about appropriateness and management of volunteers (p009).

Although this a valid concern as the overarching goals are about the programme, it also indicated that Lukes (1974) second dimension of power and the sense that equality in co-production is a privilege which can be taken away, rather than investing real power for those who contribute on a voluntary basis. Of course, similar considerations are given to those who are in paid positions, organisations invest time and resources in paid staff and give careful consideration at recruitment to ensure the right person is employed in the right role, but there are certain employment rights which are attached to employment which are not attached to voluntary roles. There is also an issue about the volunteer-organisation relationship, which Boyle, Clark and Burns (2006) recognise, the volunteer-organisation relationship has been undermined in recent generations by over-professionalism and dependency, creating anxiety and distrust between parties.

Paid Stakeholders
The research data point to several paid stakeholders which were important to the Time to Shine programme. The funding body was recognised as an important stakeholder:

> Obviously, National Lottery Community Fund because they fund it and I have to say to a large degree although you have the bureaucratic demands of any large funding body (p006).

Time to Shine staff, the core partnership board and Leeds Older Peoples Forum were also seen as key stakeholders in the Time to Shine programme approach to co-production:

> Trustees of LOPF, the core partnership, the Lottery, local evaluation, national evaluation, the Time to Shine team itself (p003).

This is important as it differentiates co-production from other user-led approaches. Co-production is about all stakeholders working together, which can sometimes be lost when looking to ensure user's voices are authentically present in the process:

> One thing I sometimes forget, thinking about co-production that I have a voice in it as well and that my opinion does count for something (p002).

Some participants commented that the core partnership board may wish to consider extending its membership:

> I think the Partnership Board could be a bit more diverse again from like the care sector there's very little input from private residential care homes or from people for the more health side health professionals could be on the core partnership...they could be a bit more diverse in terms of private corporation private organisations (p008)

Statutory partners were also identified as key stakeholders because of their wider influence:

> The Council certainly is a good stakeholder as far as infrastructurally how to make Leeds more age friendly or how to help people connected (p002).

> Local Authority definitely is a key one and the health services in Leeds and if we don't, if we don't work with them and get the message through to them that's then sustainability is going to be quite a problem at the end of the six years (p006).

> Commissioners in the city, decision makers (p005)

Local Communities

The inclusion of older people in Leeds as stakeholders expanded thinking about the role of people who may use services in the future have not yet been included in co-production. Communities could have input into shaping the Time to Shine programme and community capacity building is a vital part of co-production to support stakeholder engagement:

> It's more about going into the communities and talking to people who are actually going to take advantage of the service and allowing them to design it and consult on it (p002).

Co-production is about working with others and other stakeholders were identified. This included friends and family:

> Age friendly work so kind of not just older citizens in Leeds but family members of older people (p003).

Community connectedness and social capital was identified as a crucial element of co-production across the Time to Shine programme. One of the most important aspects of co-production which was identified by participants was the need for local people to be involved in local projects, as their local knowledge is invaluable:

> Where you're running something in a particular area a particular locality or neighbourhood there has to be, it has to be based on people in the area because they've got the local knowledge and experience of living there and local organisations that look to be involved in that area and that has to be at the essence of it to be able to even start to think of your co-production work (p006).

It was also recognised that it was important to build on existing social capital and by involving local people in projects, it helps the project to approach local people in the right way:

> I'm one of the lay ministers at the church that community group two meet in and I think it's also quite important that I did work for many years as a dentist in the village of XXXX so I'm saying those things because it shows the contacts that I've got within the local community already which were really important in the setting up of community group two (p016).

Using community-based resources was also seen as a key to engaging people and to be more creative in the approach:

> Because our members run our activities, they invest in their community. They've got a reason to invest because it's their community and it belongs to the people (p013).

> Obviously, there are those people who aren't ready to do that or are unable to even manage that. And for those people, I feel that you've got to think a bit more creatively with them and look at what the community resources are (p014).

Influential Others

There were also a few stakeholders identified which were not directly involved, but were still seen as very influential stakeholders:

> I think third sector organisations are really important stakeholders and not necessarily the ones who are aimed at working with older people because, again with that thing about catching people at the right place and time (p002).

> Anybody really that wants to tackle loneliness and social isolation. but the I mean we all stand to benefit we all need to know what's working and what's not working (p007).

> Transport is a huge issue when it comes to social isolation and loneliness, so you'd have to throw bus companies in there (p002).

> You could argue that national government national policy makers. DCMS, the loneliness unit, Cabinet Office, Centre for Ageing Better, Campaign to End Loneliness, the British Red Cross at the national level Time to Shine should be feeding up and into them (p009).

> The other Ageing Better areas (p005).

There are a broad range of potentially powerful stakeholders here who may be involved in co-production. This needs to be given consideration, co-production needs to make sure the balance of stakeholders is right. The underpinning principle of co-production centres on broad and authentic engagement of partners, the challenge appear to be building strong working relationships between the diverse range of stakeholders (as strong relationships are critical for co-production) and as Bown (2013) recognises that it is important to move beyond the 'buzz words' to authentic co-production using dynamic, flexible methods of engagement.

There is a challenge where there is a mismatch between interest and influence; some of the more powerful organisations identified as stakeholders such as funding bodies, national organisations and statutory services may be influential, as Carr and Patel (2016) identify, it is important to work with stakeholders who have the right links, power and influence to enact the decisions and work of the co-producing group. The Government Strategy for Loneliness (HM Government 2018) identifies the need to engage a range of stakeholders to facilitate the social change required to address loneliness and there is clear commitment from a broad range of organisations who have identified their commitment at a national strategic level. The experience in practice; however, identifies challenges in translating this commitment to direct work with organisations and research participants from the Time to Shine programme identifies challenges to increase interest in social isolation and loneliness in later life with

organisations who have the potential to influence significant change. One participant talked about the realities of partnership working and the difficulties when partners don't believe in the work:

> I think that one thing that often happens is that partnership working is usually partner A says 'hey we're doing this thing, do you want to help us' and partner B says 'yes' because either they feel like they just can't say no, because who's going to say no I don't want to help older people, or they think it will be good for them in some way and it'll help them to tick a box. But they don't necessarily actually believe in it…so, I think it works best when both partners are like, you know, truly believe that it's something that is important to do (p002).

The wider political context also had a significant influence on how willing organisations are to engage with the programme:

> A lot of this can come from higher messages that government is giving about what is important and what are the priorities, what are we spending money on and that kind of thing so I think that there are huge potentially influential stakeholders but are maybe not as interested as we might like them to be, despite what they might say during Jo Cox loneliness week (p002).

The necessary relationships may not have developed between stakeholders and although stakeholders may be innovative in its approach to dealing with the work and issues, it can lack the necessary power and influence to make the necessary changes in practice.

What Helps Stakeholders Work Together?

Participants identified several factors which helped the stakeholders work together. Relationship building based on shared understanding was identified as a crucial element to help stakeholders to work together:

> Things can help you know things that are important to have are common agreement and shared understanding, something written down, a Memorandum of Understanding or something like that (p001).

Alongside a shared understanding, a shared motivation for the work also supports and facilitates stakeholders working together:

> I suppose a lot of co-ordination and looking at the purpose of it, why are we doing this in order to look at that motivation as to why these people should put the effort in what are they going to get out of it as well, I think that's an important part of it for people. Its natural, its human (p014).

Regular attendance and commitment were an important factor for engaging stakeholders in co-production.

> I think you've really got to be committed to it and keep doing it, it won't you can't depend on it happening on its own (p006).

> I suppose you will have peaks and troughs…but regular attendance and commitment (p004).

Stakeholders were also perceived to work together more effectively when there is a problem. When things are working well, defined roles seem to be looser and co-production can feel less effective:

> The only time it feels the programme board isn't working together is when its ticking along cos I suppose it's hard then for people to know what their roles are in relation to it (p004).

When a challenge has been identified, it brings clarity to the roles and responsibilities for the group, as Ridley and Jones (2002) identify, co-production brings a sense of ownership to services for stakeholders:

> When people were pulling together doing the project plan, when people were bringing ideas to sort of bring the money in, people were really invested in it, people would sort of, when they would come to meetings it felt sort of like there was that shared ownership…and I suppose having that shared ownership and shared care about the issue or the project is that what brings people together is that people want Time to Shine to work well (p004).

In community group two, it was clear that group members had a sense of ownership beyond attendance to responsibility for running of the group:

> The more fit and able immediately start putting everything away and I think that just says that they've owned this group, they feel that they are a part, they've got a responsibility (p016).

The interpersonal skills of individuals are one of the key facets which helps people to work together. Boyle, Clarke and Burns (2006) acknowledge there is also a need for staff to be skilled in interpersonal communication rather than working with a service delivery focus, as it is this ability to engage with passion which makes a difference as it facilitates reciprocal relationships in the co-production context:

> The less tangible things around building relationships you've just got to be people that team has got to be staffed by a bunch of personable people who are able to get on with people

frankly and are able to hold conversations be engaging show passion things that is hard to define but things that people feed off (p009).

Research participants acknowledged that co-production benefited from the support for a third party or broker to help to facilitate the process. In this scenario, this was usually the staff at Time to Shine.

It tends to be one charismatic person who dynamises the whole thing and you know you might say community group two in wherever are that is that person and maybe that person's personality and influence goes quite deep into the way things run (p016).

The purpose of the third party is not to make decisions but to have an oversight of all the work and to help people to make the right links:

I think it's about staffing because I think you need people who've got a good overview of what's going on and who can actually kind of make links introduced the right people put people in touch with each other. That relies on like a central hub of some sort (p007).

Recognising the importance of setting the scene and that stakeholders need support and help to work together is a critical element of for practice and needs inclusion in a model of co-production.

Diverse Representation in Co-production

One the central questions which has emerged from this research is about how diverse should representation be? The literature around community participation and representation with people from marginalised communities is heavily influenced by Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation in which Arnstein suggests that better participation is linked to activities at the top of the ladder. Activities such as consultation are regarded as tokenistic, whereas activities which move towards partnership work, delegated power and citizen control are regarded as a move towards citizen power. Theoretically, this makes sense; however, in practice it raises some concerns about diversity of representation in co-production. The implementation of activities to move towards activities of partnership, delegated power and citizen control in practice tends towards activities which require representatives from communities to participate and make decision; therefore, the pool of people involved gets smaller and smaller, arguably becoming more and more exclusive.

It's very important to remember that again just because you've met one older person doesn't mean you understand everyone and that's probably the biggest lie that continuing to exist is that we've talked to 10 older people, so we know everything they think or community representatives (p009).

The challenge of engaging people from diverse communities was also raised by research participant p011 in the focus group. She acknowledged that although diversity is important, the approach is also challenging as it is not simply about numbers of people, but requires a more nuanced approach:

> It depends a bit on your definition of diversity…I just think we have to be careful not to suddenly just straight go into a tick box approach…yes the diversity in older people having a disabled person on our group, having a lesbian on our group (p011).

This raises the question, as individuals bring their own experience to co-production, does it accurately reflect or represent the population it seeks to work with? This issue was also reflected at a national level by the National Lottery Community Fund representative:

> The challenge all the programs have had is we've asked for old people representation on boards. If we did it again, we probably wouldn't ask for that because I think that what you have ended up with in some cases is either a group of very well meaning and very competent white ex professionals sitting on boards trying to represent the totality people, the life of an older person on that board (p009).

It is important to recognise here that seeking to engage with a diverse representation of older people who are lonely and isolated is challenging, because of the nature of the condition; as Pettigrew et al. (2014) identify, by definition of their situation, it is more difficult to make contact with those people who are 'out and about' less. More than this, as Perlman (2004) recognises, the experience is culturally bound and not experienced equally by all people. Holme`n et al. (1992) found the experience of loneliness was related to age, sex, marital status, number of social contacts, number of friends, health and cognitive function. There are other factors which influence the experience; ELSA wave 8 (2018) found that socio-economic factors have a direct impact on social and wellbeing outcomes, recognising that there is a north–south divide among older people living in England in 2016–17, particularly in terms of levels of wealth and degree of social and civic engagement, with the highest levels of both evident among southern regions of England and the lowest evident among northern regions, including Leeds. There is also a recognised gender divide, as Apesoa-Varano et al. (2015) identify, women report feeling lonely more often than men; however, it is not clear whether this relates to a difference in experience or whether men feel able to offer an honest response about their feelings. People who are lonely and isolated are also more likely to experience poor physical and mental health, this is a reciprocal experience, as an individual's health deteriorates, they less able to take part in existing relationships or form new networks and friendships and as people become more lonely and isolated, deterioration of their physical and mental health is more likely. O'Luanaigh et al. (2012), Cacioppo and

Cacioppo (2013) and Age UK/Campaign to End Loneliness (2015) found there is increased cognitive decline compared to those who are socially connected. Additionally, Boldy and Grenade (2011) identified that functional mental health issues have also been associated with social isolation and loneliness, including depression and deteriorating abilities for self-care. Victor, Grenade and Boldy (2005) also identified that there is a strong association between loneliness and depression, but because of co-morbid relationship, loneliness can often be masked by the symptoms of depression, making it difficult to unpick the individual experience. Physical health issues are also identified as having a significant impact on the experience, as both Cornwell & Waite (2009) and Nicholson (2012) identify, conditions which reduce mobility, vision and hearing impairment, incontinence, and dementia were also seen as influential causes of social isolation and loneliness. Lynch (1977) also identifies a link between loneliness and social isolation and heart heath, arguing that there is a complex relationship between physical heart health and human relationships; although the heart is a physical mechanical pump, it can be influenced by the subtlest human feelings and social situations.

Findings from this research indicate that experience of these circumstances can prevent lonely and socially isolated people from taking a full role as stakeholders in co-production. One delivery partner identified factors they found had a significant influence:

> I think in terms of co-production, I'm not sure but I think the main sort of challenges I find are when you go and meet someone who is experiencing social isolation and loneliness I might find that there's a really comprehensive sort of support package in place but what I also find is there's loads of gaps in it and there's not quite the service that's picking it up. So it is that opticians going to do a home visit, you can get a new OT assessment to get some more equipment in, it's those really kind of finer points that really, the hospital bed's not working anymore but the district nurse isn't sorting it out, the plugs hanging off the wall but someone's struggling to use a phone (p013).

People who are lonely and socially isolated may be in a position where they leave the house infrequently and becomes disconnected from community information:

> A lot of people obviously aren't housebound they've become unaware of what's going on in their communities, some of them could be involved with. They've been left out of things because they might not be natural join us of things they might, or they might have tried and didn't fancy it again (p006).

When people who are experiencing loneliness and social isolation in the types of circumstances discussed above, it is a significant challenge to address even the most basic of issues. Here, co-production with another stakeholder to address individual circumstances may be very effective but can make it very difficult to take up the opportunity to co-produce with a wider body of stakeholder as the challenges of day to day living are enough to contend with take up individual time, energy and resources. But experience of these circumstances is most important and influential when discussion and decision-making about services is crucial if they are to be effective for people in these circumstances. It was clear that one aspect of co-production was seeking a wide range of views and voices, and it was possible to identify a range of routes for communication used in the Time to Shine programme. One delivery partner reflected on the ways in which opinions and views were sought from all beneficiaries and volunteers in the project. As discussed earlier, Ramsden (2010) advocates the importance of using a creative and broad range of communication to engage stakeholders in co-production and SCIE (2015) reflect on the importance of creative methods to reach people who may not usually be reached through traditional methods of engagement. People in the community can becomes disconnected from activities because of a lack of awareness and also becomes further disempowered as they don't have the information about what might be available to them in terms of services, but also lack access to infrastructure which supports co-production, so are unable to input into strategies which as built on and designed to address their specific situation. For successful co-production, contact needs to be made with people in these situations to find out about what will work for them to address loneliness and social isolation. It is not clear whether strategies around co-production across the Time to Shine programme have successfully addressed this issue.

Without proactively working to seek broader representation there was evidence to suggest that it was recognised that not all communities in Leeds were catered for in the commissioning process. This was discussed in the focus group by older people who had contributed their time and energy in the second round of commissioning:

> You know deprivation in our community. They are overlooked because there are no applications coming from them or because they don't get anywhere early on (p007).

It was acknowledged by participants that there are challenges around engaging older people in groups:

> One of the things that as a member of the core partnership board I was quite concerned about really is lack of representation of older people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and on

the board itself well not necessarily older people, but you know representatives from those communities (p007).

For smaller organisations, it can be difficult to engage representatives because there is a limited pool of staff members and their priority is delivering services, rather than contributing to strategic groups:

> A lot of the organisations that work with BME elders are very small with only one maybe small staff team haven't got the time really to be going to meetings and you know contributing their knowledge and expertise to the wider society when actually they need to be running the services on the ground (p007).

It was also recognised that people with disabilities were under-represented and more could be done by the Time to Shine programme to facilitate representation from under-represented groups:

> I think particularly people with disabilities or people with you know, I don't want to say issues, but you know who don't have representation of say different people from ethnic minority groups or sensory impairment physical disabilities I think there's more we could do across the board (p004).

> We encourage diversity in boards so we encourage broad representation but how do you do that? You know how you do that with older people with cognitive impairments all with learning difficulties now there are a cohort of those people out there now (p009).

This evidence suggests that there is a lack of representation from diverse communities along the lines of existing equality strands such as socio-economic position, race and ethnicity and disability. The Time to Shine programme Board is alert to these issues, but it is not easily resolved and barriers to inclusion continue to require attention:

> We get to a point where we say right ok so we're not as diverse or we don't have beneficiaries here and then we get stuck on but not everybody wants to be part of a Board and we should do things differently and we don't really get further than that. And I think sometimes we're a little limited in our ideas as to what else it could be' (p005).

This issue reflects findings from SCIE (2015) who found the groups who are under-represented or excluded from such work tended to be people from black and minority ethnic communities, people from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities, people who communicate differently, people with dementia, older people who need a high level of support, people who are not affiliated to any organised group or 'community'. It appears to be that structural factors may be present which hinder broad representation from people from a range of backgrounds and communities. This is

evident in the second round of commissioning, even when the invitation was distributed across the range of groups, some of whom are specific for a range of diverse communities in Leeds, and although members of these groups may be involved in steering groups for their organisations, they did not accept the invitation to get involved in the second round of commissioning for the Time to Shine programme. The literature on loneliness and social isolation indicates that structural factors may mean that people are more vulnerable to factors which make people them lonely and isolated; it appears that it also has an impact on involvement in co-production.

Recognising the diverse population of older people in Leeds who experience loneliness and social isolation is critical for the planning and execution of co-production should be central to the approach. As the population is so diverse, the intended benefits of co-production are brought into focus as the approach enables services to gain a greater understanding of the circumstances of individuals, and individuals in those circumstances have power to influence services; however, it appears that more than invitation is required to engage those who are not used to being in this sort of environment or who may find it difficult to help them to overcome the barriers to participation. The factors identified above which are central to the experience of loneliness and social isolation cannot be ignored and any organisation which seeks to initiate co-production must now operate in a way which seeks to overcome the barriers which being lonely and socially isolated can create.

The research data evidenced that at the Time to Shine programme level value was placed on diverse representation and efforts had been made to broaden representation in their second round of commissioning. One of the first steps they took in preparation was to try to recruit people who may not have been involved in this type of thing before. The result was that a wider selection of older people from the core partnership board and delivery partners sat on the commissioning panels:

> We had some older people, some members of the Board, Leeds Older Peoples Board who've got the sort of final responsibility for the project, so we asked the Board and we openly accepted people who were interested and we then approached different organisations and we contacted our delivery partners (p004).

Although this represented an attempt to broaden recruitment processes for co-production in the Time to Shine programme, there wasn't any process in place to try to address the issue of broad representation in any way other than age, i.e.- that the person involved was an older person:

> There wasn't really a vetting process in that way, and we tried to look at diversity in that we tried to sort of approach different organisations, different people we were aware of that might be interested so we did try that (p004).

It was also acknowledged that the impact of this approach to recruitment for representation was the people on the panels, although older people, many of them did not have the experience of being lonely or socially isolated:

> I would say not many of the people who were you know on the panels had experience of being very isolated so in terms of you know really bringing through those experiences no we probably weren't able to do that (p005).

It is essential to avoid a 'tick box' approach to diverse representation appears to be essential as it may not necessarily bring about the diverse representation which is sought, plus may exclude those who are enthusiastic and have skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to the programme. This was outlined by one of the older people who was involved in the second round of commissioning:

> It depends a bit on your definition of diversity because our group had at least one disabled member. I just think we have to be careful not to suddenly just straight go into ticking boxes (p011).

To be able to respond to the potential needs of older people who are lonely and socially isolated an inherent dilemma needs to be resolved to achieve co-production. When initiating co-production, it begins as an open process for anyone who wishes to be involved; however, because of the issues identified above, the playing field is not even from the beginning and this open approach does not take account of the structural issues which may prevent people engaging in the process or seek to level the playing field from the beginning of the process. More needs to be done which recognises that some older people who are lonely and isolated may be harder to reach because of the situation or may find it more difficult to get involvement because of their individual circumstances. The result of this is that is limited diversity of those who engage in the process. This is supported by Ramsden (2010) who identify that traditional approaches to engagement are inflexible and routinely exclude people from under-represented groups.

Barriers to Participation

The research findings illustrated a range of barriers to participation for stakeholders. A key issue which was identified was that traditional business approaches were employed when trying to engage volunteers and beneficiaries in co-production. The arrangements often included formal meetings, held

in offices in the city centre, often with large groups of people. This environment can prove to be intimidating, particularly for some people who are not as experienced in attending these types of meetings, which are more likely to be people who are volunteers and beneficiaries. One of the key issues identified by a member of staff from the Time to Shine programme acknowledged that the way in which meetings operate can reinforce barriers as it puts of people who may have not had that experience in the past:

> From the volunteer side of it obviously people are different with confidence levels and with everything else so the idea of coming to a big meeting for volunteers and members is quite daunting (p008).

The size of the group can be influential, it can be easy to feel lost in a big group:

> Sometimes I think the group's too big so I don't know whether something about size because I think we have up to 20 people so it feels quite, so it's, you could feel lost in that group (p004).

The language used in meetings can create a barrier and more consideration should be given to this to make it more accessible:

> It is about maybe breaking it down a bit using different language making it a bit more accessible for people themselves to maybe think yeah what's that about I want to get involved or I want to talk about that (p008).

The model of using business minutes including a structured agenda and business minutes to support co-production, which was identified as a potential barrier to inclusion as they can be difficult to engage with because of the structure and the nature of the experience:

> The hard thing is that some of the meetings are just really boring… some of them are quite dry (p004).

As Boyle, Clark and Burns (2006) identify, it is important to use creative methods of engagement to facilitate participation, which may mean working outside of traditional business processes.

> I don't know whether if you had never worked or you live in a certain area of Leeds and you haven't gone to university whether you would still think that's for you. We need to work a bit more on that. It's not a criticism of the way we work has been meetings, papers, agendas, so its lent itself to people who have had a professional background who then come. If you'd never

attended a meeting before, having reports, papers and things is really off-putting. And I suppose it's how, we haven't really cracked it yet to break those barriers down, we still need to get the governance side taken care of (p004).

It was evident that certainly at Time to Shine programme level that these ways of working attracted older people who were former professionals who were familiar with these methods of work:

> Certainly, in the evaluation sub-group, the potential new members of the evaluation sub-group they are former professionals (p003).

This is a challenging dilemma to resolve, on one hand, people who are former professionals have a broad range of skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to co-production in the Time to Shine programme; however, there is potential for this to create a barrier to involvement of other older people who perhaps have not been involved in co-production, or this type of work in the past. Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) recognise this issue as they recognise that when people come together to engage in this work, they bring with them institutional rules and cultural norms, administrative and procedural processes which shape the relationship, but these things can undermine the relationship from the beginning. For example, using the traditional business approach (for example, chaired meetings, use of business minutes and agenda) can create a risk to co-production as they undermine the emergent relationships which are created through co-production activity.

Exploration of diverse representation is also underpinned by issues of power. Critiques of Pluralist theory, explored in chapter three offer a useful lens to understand why different social groups can be excluded from representation. Berman (1988) argues that power is not universally accessible for all and that different groups have differing access to power; and Coombs (1993) who argued that Pluralism was simplistic and did not acknowledge that different groups did not have equal access to the system, which affects their access to influence the marketplace of ideas. The fieldwork data here supports this view, as particular stakeholders of Time to Shine (whether they are engaged or not) are excluded from critical routes to power and influence over the organisation and the services commissioned and delivered. It also supports Anderson's (1979) argument, that to have influence, groups need to be well-organised and gain access to resources; however, in this circumstance, as groups of people are excluded from co-production, they are also excluded from resources of power and influence.

In chapter three, a discussion of Elite theory offered a theoretical lens for perspective on power dynamics that influence stakeholders, as C. Wright Mills (1956) conceptualised The Power Elite as those who can command institutions by realising your will even if others resist. This notion was

developed by Hunter (1953) and Form and Miller (1960) in the context of voluntary organisations such as the Time to Shine programme, where those who have been part of the Power Elite in their professional lives replicate this power in voluntary roles. The fieldwork data suggests that this has influenced stakeholders at Time to Shine, as those who are taking up voluntary roles as stakeholders in co-production are those who are experienced professionals, replicating the power dynamics which and reinforcing the barriers to participant through maintenance of the status quo.

The challenges for diverse representation is reflected in the wider research messages, as co-production in and of itself does not appear to be sufficient to address these issues and as SCIE (2015) found similarly it is these groups of under-represented and under-served communities which are less likely to be represented in co-production activity. Ramsden (2010) advocates that planning for co-production should include thinking about accessible processes, including physical access to buildings, accessible documentation and information distributed through a range of information channels; however, these approaches alone may not be sufficient to overcome these structural barriers and maybe more needs to be done to place diverse representation as a strategic priority to influence social policy and social change. If we return to the original conceptualisation of co-production as a renegotiation of the relationship between citizen and state, this has not had the required impact here and further work is required to address the structural issues in this renegotiated relationship.

Values of Co-production

The importance of values in co-production practice from the academic literature were explored in chapter three. Individual and organisational values also characterised co-production practice across the Time to Shine programme, this chapter now discusses each in turn and situates them in the wider body of knowledge.

Equality

Equality between those who take part in co-production was recognised as a central importance which defined how co-production takes place:

> Everybody's, equal say, everyone's got an equal opinion, everybody's experiences are valid to work together to produce something or to solve something or to create something (p004).

The notion of equality is central to the practice of co-production, the renegotiated relationships between citizen and state should be transparent and as Carr and Patel (2016) identify, authentic co-production should be transparent and clear and the renegotiated boundaries between stakeholders should be renegotiated. All those who took part in co-production were perceived as 'peers', which was a positive way of promoting equality:

> I think it's about working together …everybody is on the same level, so everybody is peer to peer (p004).

The perception of stakeholders as peers is important as it reflects the renegotiated relationship between state and citizen and supports the development of stakeholders as critical friends. There was also some recognition that the change in language is not enough on its own and even with the best intentions of the group. As highlighted in chapter six in the discussion of the nature in co-production discussed in chapter six, different stakeholders hold different power and influence in the process and that some stakeholders may require different types of support to help them to take part on an equal footing to their peers in co-production. This also applies between all stakeholders, not only from organisations to individuals. Research participant p011 discussed her experience in the focus group in taking part in the commissioning work and recognised issues of unconscious bias which could be present for her as she navigated the commissioning process:

> So, there could be unconscious bias. An unconscious bias then they're due to that, I'd certainly would feel like if I was a professional, I'd be-- You know if-- I'd have to watch out for that, unconscious bias and that's not a judgment on the individual staff it's just that the role that they are in (p011).

Authenticity

The notion of authenticity is linked to the discussion of equality. It is not sufficient to set out on the journey of co-production making statements on values that all stakeholders are equal in the process, indeed it appears it could be counter-productive as making the statement alone is not sufficient, but it is important to recognise that there are difficulties in achieving this equality in the process and there is a responsibility to recognise and take action to address these issues if co-production is to be undertaken genuinely rather than in a way which pays lip service to suggested requirements. As Carr and Patel (2016) state, authentic co-production requires honesty about the scope of action and the extent to which equality is can truly be achieved. One of the key values of co-production identified in the research data was the necessity to commit to authentic co-production:

> There's about 10 different definition of co-production and it doesn't matter really what they are as long as it's, as long as it's done as it's attempted genuinely and not just let's tick the co-production box (p006).

Attempts to co-produce which were tokenistic were easily identified and dismissed. This participant went on to discuss how attempts have been made to co-opt older people from the organisation into

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projects (outside of Time to Shine) under the guise of co-production to bring credibility to the work, without true co-production taking place:

> We don't do any of that now to follow that example if we aren't involved in the policy when it's being set up when it's been written established developed, we're not interested in it because you know we're not going to tick your box just because you've given it to us (p006).

Staff at the Time to Shine programme were conscious of the need for authenticity. There was recognition from a research participation about the shifting language used in services, particularly post-Care Act (2014) which was changing to reflect strengths and asset-based approaches, but there was also recognition that a gap can between the language used in the sector and the reality of practice:

> I think the language and I know I'm guilty of it as well you know like the buzz words and language and not really thinking well exactly 'what does that mean?' and am I living those words? (p005).

It was clear that attempts at co-production which lack the proper value based and short-cut approaches are used to achieve hidden agendas are out of place and easy to identify by those who are put in that position and has the potential to be destructive:

> Co-production at its worst is used to give legitimacy for decisions that people wanted to make but wouldn't have done because of the potential for public outcry (p009).

Here it is clear that Clark's (2015) view of the problems of a lack of refined definition of co-production allows for those who wish to mis-use co-production to hitch their own agenda to co-production and that co-production is co-opted as a tool which reinforces the status quo of power and decision-making, resonating with Arnstein's ladder stage of manipulation, rather than moving up the ladder to true citizen participation.

Although the participants here who shared their understanding of co-production have similar themes running through their definitions, there is no consistent message and expectation for practice shared across the national and local programme, with the result that the groups identified in the case studies of the fieldwork have grown their own approaches to co-production. They strive to be inclusive and facilitative rather than prescriptive, but it appears that this is generated by the group rather than the expectation from Time to Shine. Although the experience of individual is an integral part of co-production, without an explicit discussion about the expectations for co-production from the Ageing Better programme and Time to Shine. As Clark (2015) identifies, this gap leaves spaces for the coupling

of other ideologies and logic to co-production, it opens up a gap where other interpretations are assumed about the expectations for co-production, diluting its capacity for change.

Without a consistent message from Time to Shine about the expectations for co-production, it is hard to see how the organisations involved can be held to account for their co-production practice. By not being explicit about the expectations, how can older people who are or may be involved know what the expectations for co-production are, or challenge others when they feel the organisation has fallen short of those expectations? Here, Lukes' second face of power is important, the mobilisation of bias as defined by Bachrach and Baratz (1970) as it appears the way in which the organisation operates at the moment hides these expectations from those who have the least power, denying them the opportunity to challenge the operation of the organisation. If co-production is a process who is rooted in empowerment, then its processes should empower. As Pigg (2002) argues in the first face of empowerment, personal power increases through action and Kizilos (1990) identifies ways of empowerment through organisations, that information sharing, resource sharing and participative management are central to empowerment. By understanding the importance of sharing definitions and expectations for the conduct of co-production, the second face of power can be addressed to make sure that co-production moves beyond rhetoric towards reality.

Strengths-Based Approach

An example of the impact of these terms on the older people who do get involved in co-production at Time to Shine. Older people took the lead in the second round of commissioning, with support from Time to Shine staff. There was a commitment from all stakeholders that equality was essential to the co-production process; however, there was little guidance or experience from stakeholders about how this had been addressed in practice. It was understood that co-production draws on existing experience, knowledge and expertise of people who have insight into the situation as well as those who can deliver services:

> I think it means people's strengths that they've got and working with them (p014).

> It's about acknowledging the people who are in a situation, what probably actually the experts on that situation. They may not have all the answers, but they're inside it's crucial to developing a solution or an approach to tackling whatever the issue is (p007).

This perspective reflects Bown (2013) who acknowledges that the strengths-based approach in co-production is stakeholders using the skills, knowledge and abilities and as Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) recognise, professionals and citizens should be 'milking' each other's capabilities to achieve the outcomes the desire. Taking a strength-based approach was critical in working with older people who

are lonely and isolated. One delivery partner reflected on their role in working with people in these circumstances and the importance of taking a strengths-based approach:

> I try to be as user-led and strengths-based as possible, you know, what are somebody's strengths, what do they want to do and how can we achieve that together? (p013).

Assisting people to identify and develop their strengths helps to combat loneliness and social isolation, but also encourages and supports participation:

> We have some quite open discussions about what experience people have had, we've tried to then pull out in terms of always being mindful of people who may feel a little bit less confident in the situation and tried to work with them (p004).

Some of the strengths that had been brought to the co-production process were identified. An example of this was the input from older people reflected a new way of thinking about questioning providers in the tendering process:

> Certain questions are asked in a way that particularly around tendering that I think professional practitioner and commissioners wouldn't know the answer to and I think that's been really, really insightful and they brought a breadth of skills (p009).

The unique role of older people in co-production was highlighted by research participant p012 from the focus group. Although initially intimidated as she had not undertaken this type of work before, as she progressed through the process, she recognised the unique contribution she made, the voice and experience older people:

> I felt different because you were talking over one aspect. I felt I was confident to speak on behalf of the old people because that's my experience. Work with them to be active with them, so I felt, yes, I agree with that. Yes. So, that's when I began to understand and be confident that I was in the right place and I was chosen to be there for the right reason. We all served different roles (p012).

Research participant p007 also reflected on the benefits for the process because older people were involved and the influence this has more widely:

> I think the sort of the involvement of old people from quite a lot of different perspectives is also kind of triangulation of the process and therefore strengthens confidence in the decision making and I think it's true that if organizations could see that we are still interested in how they work and how they deliver then that strengthens accountability and also it should be good for morale, encouragement for organisations that it's not just a cold process, but it's a process that comes from a real commitment to seeing good outcomes at the end (p007)

As Boyle and Harris (2009) identify, co-commissioning with people who use services is critical as their input contributes to the co-design and co-delivery of more effective services. The importance of user experience over professional input was also highlighted by other participants, that if someone from for a more similar background understands the experience of the potential participant, they are more likely to connect with them and engage with the opportunity:

> I don't know. I think when I've done stuff for disability issues and talking about, say, having control, I've found it easy to talk to somebody who uses it rather than some of these experts who'll come along and say, "We recommend you have this" (p020).

This supports the view of Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) who argue that although there may be risks associated with co-commissioning with people who are not traditionally thought of as conventional experts, but they have experience of how services work in practice and some ideas of what will might be relevant for other people who use the service. This approach reflects a co-production approach as Boyle, Clark and Burns (2006a) identify, people who use services are experts by experience, signifying a shifting role and recognition of the strengths and assets people can contribute.

Co-production as Meaningful Activity

There was evidence from the research data which indicated that taking part in co-production had a positive impact on self-esteem and confidence for participants. One of the values of co-production is that it is a mutually beneficial process. Cahn and Gray (2012) identify an important reflexive element to the co-production relationship; stakeholders are changed by their participation, as Cahn and Gray (2012) argue, reflexivity in this context can be transformative and that 'producer and product, process and outcome are changed'. It doesn't only support the needs of the organisation or project, but also has a responsibility to meet the needs of all stakeholders including those who are users or future users of the organisation or project; in this case people who are lonely and socially isolated. Evans and Vallely (2007) identify, having the opportunity to get involved in care decisions and service improvement discussions is fundamental to an individuals' sense of wellbeing. The research data also indicated that involvement in co-production has a positive impact on an individual's self-esteem and

confidence. Building confidence was also seen as an important aspect of providing support to engage people who are experiencing loneliness and isolation, again this is something that needs to be considered when supporting people who are lonely and isolated to engage in co-production. It was also indicated that this type of opportunity was meaningful lonely and isolated older people may not have chosen to access a group or work with a befriending scheme, but the chance to do this type of work is something they find appealing and as a consequence, it has helped them to feel less lonely and isolated:

> I have a woman who comes to my steering group who said exactly that, she said getting involved in these things, coming to these meetings and feeling like I can have an influence has really brought me out of my shell a bit… she said feeling like her voice was valued really helped her to get over that (p002).

A participant identified that the opportunity to get involved in this way provided something which traditional services doesn't provide:

> I think actually there's people who I've spoken to who've said they're thankful of the opportunity to use their brains and so yeah I think people have got a lot out of it and I think people value their contribution whether they're in their 80's, 70's and just have to think well I've retired but I can still, all those skills haven't just left me (p004).

The opportunities in themselves are not often enough in themselves to address loneliness and isolation. This is supported by Weiss's (1973) work which suggests that supplementary relationships are most likely to be developed in these types of opportunities which tend to be time-limited and with less investment from the individual because they are separate from their primary networks and relationships. There was recognition that there is hope that these opportunities may be catalysts for long-term change and cement the long-term relationships:

> I think what seems to work for most people is being in an environment where there is an understanding and appreciation of who you are and whether or not that's a shared interest or do you know sort of that that we talked about that brings people together. I think it's having the time to explore who you are in relation to other people again that if you are isolated you've lost that opportunity you don't reflect back from others you don't get that positive affirmation (p005).

One of the most significant issues in addressing loneliness and social isolation as identified by participants was that people find the right type of activity to get involved in to create opportunities to meet others:

> I do think that the opportunity you know creating opportunities whereby people can meet new people but people who are perhaps in a similar situation to them is an opportunity that used to kind of counteract that loneliness and doing things with people you know, going to the cinema, going for a meal, sitting watching something together on TV (p007).

The activity needs to be meaningful to engage people; people need to have a 'role' to fulfil:

> For people to find a role for them, so it's helped having a member of staff to explore either what they used to do and work with them to see how they can get them still involved or I suppose to give them a bit of hope really because it feels a little bit hopeless in that way (p004).

Co-production by its nature fulfils these requirements, as it provides an opportunity to both to build both individual relationships and networks, and to engage with others in a more formal and structured setting, but also means that people have a role and a way to contribute; therefore, providing the right type of opportunity for some people to help to take action to address their feelings of loneliness and social isolation.

A Time to Shine member of staff reflected on the positive experience someone who attended the group had experienced as a result of being involved in co-production activity:

> I think that the very fact of his involvement had a direct impact on his self-confidence, on his, so he was in a forum where his views, he was asked for his views, his views were listened to, his views were valued. And it's not that that had never happened before but because of where he was at that particular time, the mental health issues that he has, it really did have a positive impact on his self-esteem, his self-worth (p001).

These types of relationships do have an impact to address loneliness and social isolation; some of the older people who use services reflected on their work experience and how having connections with colleagues reduced their feelings of loneliness and social isolation throughout their life course.

These types of relationships appear to have had a significant impact on some of the participants to colleagues; this translates to the co-production context and that these types of relationships can have

an impact on addressing feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Here is it possible to identify the way in which co-production can combat these feelings, as it offers a framework for sustained relationships which Peplau and Perlman (1982) identify as critical factors as this sustained involvement may not be available for people in their informal networks and older people may not have other routes to connection to other similar formal network arrangements. The work of Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) is important to recognise here, particularly for some of the most lonely and isolated older people. The relational nature and framework for co-production provides a route out of the 'catch 22' situation Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) identify as it encourages engagement with other people to formalise the other side of the relationship which is needed by people who are lonely and isolated in a way which might not be present when in other situations. Co-production also provides opportunities for different types of needs to be fulfilled, including the needs Ellwardt et al. (2013) and Machielse (2015) identify people obtain from their social networks, including companionship support, emotional support and practical support. Plans for co-production need to recognise that if they are seeking to authentically engage with older people who are lonely and isolated they need to pay attention to how the relationships they seek to develop address the issues people may be experiencing when developing relationships in other aspects of their live and to recognise that it needs to fulfil one of more of these identified needs.

The representative from the National Lottery Community Fund identified the impact of retirement, particularly when people work outside their local community and don't have the established networks and contacts at the point of retirement:

> A lot of people particularly in the older generation some of the generation that this program is targeted at have had a great focus on building you know being very committed to work, their sense of themselves and their conception of themselves as a person is linked to their success at work (p009).

Recognising the importance of promoting these feelings is central to both combating loneliness and social isolation as it helps people to engage in relationships which are satisfying (Rantakokko et al. 2014) and they are engaged with people who can be specific confidents or figures in the life of the person (Dickens et al. 2011) and co-production offers the opportunity to get involved in intellectually stimulating activities and gives people an opportunity to feel they are doing something of value:

> I know that I gain an enormous amount from my involvement in this because it gives me opportunities to first of all to feel that I am doing something of value that uses the skills and expertise and so on that I have got (p007).

> I think the people, with co-production, feel much more part of something. I think if you're lonely, you want connections and you want to be – felt worthwhile and I think by being able to co-produce something, that does reduce some of those feelings that people get, to be feeling like part of something (p014).

With regards to the Time to Shine programme, research participants discussed the difference co-production had made to the direction of work for the programme. The impact of a diverse range of voices and perspectives was acknowledged as important to contribute to the development of Time to Shine programme:

> I think because otherwise Time to Shine would have been develop d by a group of middle-aged to slightly younger professional people who have a quite similar view on things (p005).

Co-production also provides an opportunity to make inter-generational connections, meeting people that individuals may not have had the opportunity to meet in their day-to-day lives. A member of the Time to Shine programme board stated this was one of the benefits they had experienced in their role:

> I think the other lovely thing is of course the staff are relatively young, so you know you have these sorts of nice relationships with people who are younger, and that kind of intergenerational thing is something I really value (p007).

Communication Methods

Communication methods which require face to face communication were identified as more successful. Having the opportunity and space to reflect on the things that work well, or things that may need to be changed is important. A volunteer delivery partner reflected on their experience:

> Of course, we do discuss at the meetings you know, what went down well. It does – it's a chance for us, all the volunteers to get together and pool what we know, what each of us knows and a few – you know, somebody will say this – you know people that didn't reckon much to this or whatever (p015).

One of the important factors for successful co-production was agreeing the scope of action for the remit of the co-production activity, by agreeing rules and boundaries between participants. This is reflected by the participant from the Big Lottery; however, it reflects professionals setting the scope of action. These limitations may be true in the existing system, but they highlight the power structures, giving insight into the second dimension of power:

> That challenge of how do you explain to people in co-production settings that there are wider structures and systems beyond the room that they're in that mean that we can't do everything we want and that there is a limit to our ability to change things you know as a funder we the government tells us what to do you know and we have to do what the government says that doesn't mean we don't want to do things that might conflict with that it means we can't (p009).

These formal communication methods were seen to have some impact; however, informal communication methods were seen to be more effective, particularly by delivery partners to seek information and feedback. The most crucial part of this was for delivery partners to be available, to make sure that beneficiaries and volunteers didn't have to go out of their way or do something different to give their views or to have their voices heard. The delivery partner at community group two described the approach adopted in their group:

> I just go and sit somewhere; somebody will come up and have a chat or if I just you know just lean over somebody doing there crafting and say how are you doing? they say oh yes but. you've got to be known; you've got to have that sort of space for people to speak to you (p016).

A similar approach was also used in community group two, where it was used by research participant p017, a volunteer to seek views of group members about activities for the upcoming year:

> What I generally do at the beginning of the year, I hand some paper round and I say write down suggestions of where you'd like to go and then we'll see, whatever comes up I try to fit them in if we can (p017).

The person who is undertaking this informal approach to communication requires a good set of interpersonal skills to facilitate the approach:

> You've got to be seen to be approachable, you've got to be seen to be non-directional, all those things and then we don't have a formal system at best you could call that an informal system and that does seem to work really well (p016).

One of the ways in which co-production approaches can facilitate the dissemination of information is with older people is through word of mouth with trusted people is also effective in reaching people. Word of mouth through trusted people was also a key method of communication identified by SCIE (2015) because of its ability to reach people beyond traditional community engagement methods. A

delivery partner who is also a representative of the Time to Shine Core Partnership Board identified the impact of using this approach:

> What we have found is word of mouth is quite good we might mention without breaking confidentiality that people in your street or in your area have tried this group and are going to come along to this group will come on this trip there is probably people that you will know but also there is the chance of you making new friends (p008).

Timing for individuals is also important, the opportunity needed to be available at a time and in a space where the individual is ready to try something:

> I met someone who had come to an activity that one of our partners was putting on and she said something that always stuck with me, she said 'I just heard about this in the right place at the right time' and she said if I'd have heard about it a month ago, before I wouldn't have been ready to go and then a month later maybe I would not have been interested anymore. I just saw the flyer at the right time and thought I'm ready to give that a try' (p002).

This is then followed up by the delivery partner to those who are interested with a newsletter and courtesy telephone call. This helps people who may not yet have decided to contact the group or use its services, but the pathways to engagement are in place to facilitate this for when they may decide they wish to take part. The delivery partner described the channels for communication for this work:

> We do the courtesy phone call every month or so the volunteers do, and some people say I love receiving the newsletter I love reading it I don't want to come to anything, but it makes me feel part of something (p008).

Using a range of communication methods was identified as important approach to working within the groups to help people who may not feel confident to express their views or provide feedback face to face:

> Perhaps we to need to have a comments box you know, might be a way to go and just ask people if they've got any comments because again, going back to people with low self-esteem or low confidence, then they might not want to say 'Oh well you know, I'd like to do this' or 'I really didn't like doing that'(p015).

The range of activities needed to support engagement in co-production is important, not everyone is able to attend meetings to give feedback (and given the range of people who could be involved, this needs to be creative). An example of this is provided by a participant who is a staff member at Time to Shine, who reflected on their experience engaging with older people to develop a significant piece of work:

> The Age Friendly Charter is a really good example of that. It came out of me doing a lot of focus groups and some written surveys as well, just talking to, I think it was nearly 200 people at the end about what they would think would make Leeds more age friendly city, talking about the different areas and examples and taking all that and writing a draft and taking the draft back to some of the groups and getting feedback on the draft and then coming up with a final product (p002).

The research evidence suggests that having a range of channels and approaches to communication with older people is a critical element of co-production. Using Arnstein's ladder as a benchmark, these approaches may have been consultation and at the tokenistic level of participation. Using the example of the Age Friendly charter described above to explore this issue, in the context of Arnstein's (1969) ladder, this activity would be considered as consultation rather than involvement or co-production as an activity in isolation this could be justified. It can; however, be argued that it is wider ranging than traditional methods of co-production where a group of people who are available are asked to represent the wider population. In this example, around 200 people were consulted meaningfully. Although the member of staff took responsibility for the co-ordination of the project and wrote the documentation, older people were consulted and things changes, the direction of the project changed as a result of input from them. The difference was the values behind the project, it wasn't paying lip service to co-production, but it was truly a method to broaden participation and influence. It is right to be wary of this type of consultation exercise, all too often it is used as a camouflage for organisations to influence others and implement their vision of what is best for the organisation, using the guise of consultation to shape the ideas of those who may use the service, using Lukes (1974) third dimension of power, where desires of the group are shaped to service the interests of those in power.

One of the successful approaches to engagement identified was people seeing themselves reflected in the service was also identified by research participants, both staff and board members, and volunteers and beneficiaries. It was also identified as having potential to create further stigma and cause a barrier to engagement. Being mindful of this in the marketing material was an issue raised by

a member of the Time to Shine as they reflected on how Time to Shine services were marketed to older people who may be lonely or socially isolated:

> On the website, the Time to Shine website, there's lots of pictures of people laughing like they're having the best time of their life, they're dancing, grinning from ear to ear, it looks like the happiest, most lovely place…that is potentially a barrier, because if you feel rubbish and you're at home, thinking that you could possibly ever do something which will get you to that level of happiness is, it's too big a leap, so the tendency is for people to think 'I couldn't fit into something like that, I'm not in any frame of mind to be dealing with these happy people' and that could potentially be a barrier to engagement (p003).

The findings indicate that co-produced services have an impact in reaching older people not currently engaged in the service. One participant, a delivery partner reflects on the impact where older people contact other older people in their communities:

> We got a lot of word of mouth referrals from they themselves about people they had been worried about in their community or friends who have said oh that might be a person that benefits from that. so that person wasn't an older volunteer, but it might be somebody else an older member who is actually saying to us actually I think that Mrs so and or Mr so and so is socially isolated (p008).

An example from community group two illustrated of how this work more specific example was given by a delivery partner at community group two, who demonstrated how co-production with group members helped to reach out to a local community member who would not have been reached otherwise:

> Yes, I mean one really good example would be one lady who I know that I met through a Church contact, she has a husband has mobility problems she's got a son with mental health problems and I just said you know why don't you come in one day and just have a bit of space to yourself? So, she came but she said she doesn't really need to come she said I think I'm alright without it but the guy across the road who we'll call Jack, said I think Jack would really benefit from coming. so now this lady brings Jack every Monday. So, it was sort of one removed but this lady a good friend of Jack, so he will come because she does and now he comes on his own if she is not able to bring him you see (p016).

Conclusion

Co-production as praxis builds on the paradigm posited in chapter six and translates the renegotiated relationship into action. From the outset of co-production, its values should be made explicit. Beresford's (2012) critique of the user involvement movement outlined in chapter three identified a lack of explicit values for practice; co-production builds on this knowledge and its foundations for practice are drawn from these values.

The fieldwork findings identified that there was a need for the parameters of co-production to be more clearly defined and communicated across the Time to Shine programme. There were significant differences in understanding of co-production across the stakeholders who took part in the research. Co-production was used interchangeably with other terms such as community development and user involvement. This issue echoes concerns raised by Clark (2015) that without a clear definition, the logic and philosophy of co-production can become muddled for stakeholders, who then engage with differing ideals and expectations. One of the problems identified in the co-production chapter was why has not co-production achieved the transformative potential envisaged by Cahn (2000). The findings from the fieldwork that this potential may have been hampered by a lack of definitional clarity, as Needham and Carr (2009) recognise, when the definition of co-production there is a risk that the potential of co-production is diluted.

Without a consistent message from Time to Shine about the expectations for co-production, it was difficult to see how organisations could be held to account for their co-production practice. Without explicit expectations, it is difficult for others to know what the expectations for co-production are and challenge others when stakeholders and organisations fall short of those expectations? Here, Lukes' second face of power is important, the mobilisation of bias as defined by Bachrach and Baratz (1970) as it appears the way in which the organisation operates at the moment hides these expectations from those who have the least power, denying them the opportunity to challenge the operation of the organisation.

Empowerment is one of the central values of co-production. This is drawn from both the paradigm outlined above and the way in which co-production is conducted in practice. There was evidence from the research data that participants understood this as one of the central elements of co-production, it is a process which is done with, not to, or at people. Pigg (2002) identifies the importance of self and mutual empowerment alongside institutional empowerment and the core values of co-production identified from the fieldwork support this approach as there is recognition that power dynamics exist, and that work needs to take place to help people to be on an equal footing.

This is not without challenges. Co-production challenges the view that older people are passive recipients of services, as there is a view of them as active stakeholders; and as Fox (2012) indicates, it promotes a stronger sense of responsible citizenship. An issue which requires further debate is how many people want to be 'active stakeholders' and whether there should be a requirement for people who use services to be 'active stakeholders' if they choose not to be so, and whether this requirement may result in a barrier to services.

Another significant issue raised in the fieldwork findings was the dilemmas surrounding older people as volunteers in co-production. Staff members from the Time to Shine programme reported that it felt exploitative to ask volunteers to take on additional work, particularly when they were not paid. Alongside this, staff recognised that where staff were paid, when working with volunteer stakeholders, there was also a disparity of power. There are some challenges to this position. Firstly, older people did not say they felt exploited because they were unpaid; in fact, the 'pay off' for their inclusion was linked to reciprocity, the opportunity to 'give something back'. Secondly, the theories of power and empowerment identified earlier in this chapter link disempowerment to distance from decision-making and without the opportunity to do some of the work held by paid staff, this disparity may continue to remain in the co-production relationship. The values of the researcher are that people should be paid for their involvement, and the existing literature on this matter suggests that it is other than financial matters which influence volunteer's decision to is conflicting, with Voorberg et al. (2018) indicating that financial recompense only has a small impact on willingness to co-produce and Van Eijk and Steen (2016) argue that it is issues such as perception of competence to take part which are more influential on decisions to take part in co-production. It could be concluded that some form of payment for volunteers would be appropriate, more to assuage the feelings of exploitation from the paid staff members than to encourage participation from volunteer stakeholders.

The notion of equality is central to the practice of co-production and the process recognises equal relationships between stakeholders as an ideal state. As discussed earlier in chapter five and echoed in this, total equality is unlikely to be achieved because of the nature of the relationships of stakeholders involved, and it is incumbent on those who hold people to reflect and make explicit the nature of this. This thesis has used the term 'stakeholder' throughout as Ledger and Slade (2015) detail, it is the language which represents a more equal relationship between all parties. Despite the best intentions, different stakeholders hold different power and influence in the process and that some stakeholders may require different types of support to help them to take part on an equal footing to their peers in co-production. The findings from the fieldwork also indicated that power was held in processes, as people who are more experienced working in business environments; for

example, attending structured meetings or recording minutes of meetings. Conversely, people who may not be used to these types of business meeting environments may not find these structured elements to be a barrier to participation.

Co-production is a strengths-based approach which draws on existing experience, knowledge, and expertise to those who have insight into the experience. As Saleeby (1996) identifies in strengths-based approaches, individuals, families, and communities are seen in the light of their capacities, talents, competencies, possibilities, visions, values, and hopes. Here, there is the intersection of co-production, and loneliness and social isolation. Co-production offers a strengths-based approach with the potential to combat loneliness and social isolation, and challenge perceptions of people in that situation as the approach demands that people are seen in the light of their strengths, not their 'deficits'. It also encourages support and participation, taking part in co-production has a positive impact on self-esteem and confidence. Co-production offers intellectually stimulating activities and gives people the opportunity to feel they are doing something of value and be part of something valuable and brings potential to help people feel less lonely and isolated.

It was clear, both from the findings from the fieldwork and from the experience of the researcher in determining the research methods for the thesis that for authentic co-production, it is imperative that all partners are engaged right from the beginning of any piece of work. It is at this point significant work takes place to shape to scope and relationships for the future work. Co-production values and principles should be embedded into the thinking of communities and organisations and underpin how work is conducted.

There is potential for co-production to be co-opted, that work can take place under the guise of co-production without the necessary paradigm and praxis model. These approaches often lack the proper value based and short-cut approaches are used to achieve hidden agendas and have the potential to be destructive. The misuse of co-production can be used to manipulate, and participants should remain cautious and critical about approaches to practice.

The research indicated that co-produced services were valued because of the way in which they had been approached, that co-produced work had more credibility than service-driven approaches. Participants said that this was because they were influenced by a diverse range of voices. Services were perceived as more credible when they are co-produced and conversely where services are not co-produced, they lack credibility. These findings support previous views expressed by Bovaird (2007) who argues co-produced services are the 'hallmark of quality services.'

Co-production should also help those involved to develop their strengths, skills and assets, that empowerment should be include self-development, and as Barnes and Walker (1996) argue in chapter three, power exists in personal growth. To this end, co-production should acknowledge that its journey and process is equally as essential as the outcomes it achieves, as Carr (2003) recognises, the involvement in the process empowers as much as the outcome of the work. Co-production has potential to encourage people to feel more confident and capable to do things they have not done before, and more likely and able to get involved in other future activities. This research showed that this was particularly important for older people who experience loneliness and social isolation and that by participating in co-production, they learnt transferable skills that helped them to solve other problems in their lives.

The role of volunteers was addressed in some detail in the fieldwork. There is ongoing debate about payment and power of volunteers, which partially reflected the work of Voorberg et al. (2018), that willingness to volunteer was not inspired by financial recompense, but the fieldwork raised the issue that paying for participation was linked to power for stakeholders. Paid stakeholders tended to hold more power than unpaid stakeholders; this adds weight to the argument for paid participation, but it is not conclusive evidence.

Concerns about volunteer management were also identified in the fieldwork. A delivery partner from community group two explained the importance of keeping volunteers inside safe role boundaries, given the nature of their work. The representative from the National Lottery Community Fund also raised issues about the behaviour of volunteers and the levers which can be used to deal with them should they not be suited to the work of the organisation. This again raises issues of power, specifically Lukes (1974) second face of power; who determines what an 'appropriate' volunteer looks like? In this scenario, there is a risk that power divested to co-production is not authentic and is something which has the feel of privilege which can be taken away if decisions are made which the most powerful stakeholder disagrees with. This has the potential to undermine the volunteer relationship, as identified by Boyle, Clark and Burns (2006). This is not to say that the issue does not warrant further consideration; there may be times when a volunteer may not be suited to continue to input for a range of good reasons. It should be acknowledged that this same issue may also occur with paid members of staff; however, in that circumstance, there is a mechanism through their organisation to manage that individual. This suggests that part of co-production requires explicit acknowledgement of the issue and mechanisms which are transparent to invoke should this situation arise, including a way of dealing with disagreements, a complaint procedure and a process for ending involvement in co-production.

Co-production was identified as an important meaningful activity for lonely and isolated older people. This has a two-fold importance. Firstly, it is an alternative opportunity for involvement; some people who were not interested in other types of activity, but co-production was something that offered an activity they were happy to be involved with, which resulted in increased self-esteem and confidence. Secondly, the types of activity for co-production provides the opportunity for people to develop the types of relationships that can impact on feelings of loneliness and social isolation, whether they are the meaningful relationships identified by Ellwardt et. al. (2013) and Machielse (2015), or those supplementary, less consequential relationships identified by Weiss (1973). One of the motivating factors the researcher found with beneficiary and volunteer participants was the need to 'give something back', which motivated their participation more than financial recompense, as it appeared to fulfil an emotional need. Co-production could offer a type of opportunity which is not available in other arenas and with those people who they may not meet in their day to day lives, for example, inter-generational contacts. The findings from the thesis indicate that co-production specifically offers an approach with value and impact when working with older people who are lonely and isolated; however, there should be a word of caution. These opportunities may need to be handled carefully as there is a risk that they may prompt feelings of loneliness and a recognition of individual circumstance as the gap of realisation between the relationships people have and the relationships they want may be widened.

The fieldwork findings indicated that people who use the services are intrinsic to the co-production process and without their inclusion, it can be argued that co-production loses its authenticity and credibility. In the context of the Time to Shine programme, this was identified as a challenge as lonely and isolated older people may have been intrinsic to the development of some organisations, but may not have identified themselves as stakeholders, or perceived as such by organisations. This thesis has taken the stance from the beginning that all participants in co-production will be identified as stakeholders, taking the perspective of Ledger and Slade (2015) who nominated that language change works helps to minimise the impact of power dynamics between individuals involved. This change is language is important as it contributes to the paradigm of co-production and its renegotiated relationship; however, as already identified there are difficulties, dilemmas and reality of practice.

There are a range of factors which had an impact on peoples' abilities to make and sustain connections and networks, which are relevant to combating or preventing loneliness and social isolation, but also creates barriers for co-production. The research indicated that the participants who were beneficiaries and volunteers in the thesis experienced a range of physical and mental health conditions, including cancer, Parkinson's disease, ischemic heart disease, anxiety and depression, social anxiety. Some

participants have had enduring physical conditions including cerebral palsy and physical disability through amputation. Alongside experiencing these conditions, participants who also had caring responsibilities also impacted on availability. The prevalence of these factors needs to be included in planning for co-production, developing a flexible framework which can help to sustain participation even during difficult periods of ill health and in co-production because of these personal issues. The result of conditions is a lack of confidence and the worries which go along with managing such conditions and people become disempowered because of the lack of information but also the lack of access to infrastructure so are unable to input into strategies designed to address their specific situation. Inclusivity in co-production should acknowledge difficulties these factors present in taking part and acknowledge the difficulties people experience and take action to overcome these barriers.

Co-production is intended to understand the circumstances of individuals and those in that situation have power and influence to change that, but it appears that more than invitation is required to engage people who are not used to being in this type of environment or may need help to overcome barriers which hamper their participation. There is an inherent dilemma in how co-production takes place. On one hand, it is an open process for anyone who wants to be involved; however, by conducting this as an open process, it does not take account of the structural issues which may prevent people taking part related to equality strands and because of this, it replicates the status quo, which as SCIE (2015) indicated, there are groups of under-represented and under-served communities less likely to be represented in co-production activity. One dilemma centred around ensuring broad representation from older people to reflect the diverse population of Leeds. It was acknowledged that it was very often older people who are former professionals and very experienced in the area to contribute. However, existing structural factors may hinder broad representation from a range of backgrounds and communities, which could an impact on their participation in co-production. There was acknowledgement from participants of under-representation from people with experience of a range of equality strands, such as disability, socio-economic grouping, race, and ethnicity. This was also reflected in this thesis; the researcher found it was not possible to recruit participants from across a broad range of equality strands in the sample of participants. This is not an easy dilemma to resolve and as participants indicated, it is essential to avoid a tick box approach.

The thesis identified a range of elements which support good stakeholder engagement. Co-production centres on the relationships of the stakeholders, which include work to have relationships built on trust and shared understanding. Interpersonal skills of those involved was a very significant factor for success, and the community groups indicated that they had a member of the team who acted as the 'glue' to support and facilitate the engagement of everyone where possible. Clarity of roles was

indicated as particularly significant; participants from the Time to Shine staff team indicated that when there were issues to deal with and clear roles, co-production seem to work well, but during quiet periods, roles became blurred and unclear, which can have an impact on motivation and participation.

There should also be a shared motivation for the work, the fieldwork indicated it is challenging to sustain the involvement of stakeholders if they do not see its importance, as Ridley and Jones (2002) indicate, ownership of the work is a key element of co-production. This was an experience shared by the researcher, as indicated in chapter four, ownership of the work is a central element to sustaining participation, something the researcher lacked in the fieldwork when the PAR approach was undertaken.

Regular attendance and commitment were also identified as a key element for co-production; however, this also has potential to create barriers. An example of this, the participants in this thesis indicated a significant number of ongoing health issues and caring responsibilities; and as indicated in chapter two, they also increase the risk of experience of loneliness and social isolation. Ramsden (2010) found that traditional approaches to engagement are routinely inflexible; co-production needs to be the antithesis of this, employing creativity and flexiblity to accommodate and overcome the potential barriers to participation for all its stakeholders.

Communication is a central issue for co-production; however, it is not always straightforward. Participants from the fieldwork found that questionnaires and surveys were very disengaging and disliked as methods of communication. Focus groups were an improvement; however, it was informal communication methods which were the most effective, particularly in the Community Group Two (both sites). Both groups had an individual who facilitated communication with all members, as not everyone felt confident to speak out and share their views. They acted as 'glue' making sure they talked to everyone at the group, then fed this into the overarching mechanisms, such as the types of activities available, or the day trips the groups wished to organise. Both individuals were clear that their role was not as gatekeeper, but as facilitator or advocate. This worked well for participants, as p018 and p019 talked about research participant p017's role, and the delivery partner from community group two site two outlined about their approach in chapter seven. Other methods of communication which can be useful in a group setting is the formalisation of 'voting with your feet', although this tends to be informal feedback, for co-production it could be a valuable and authentic methods of communication, brough under the auspices of co-production. The other approach was the use of suggestion boxes, to support people who may struggle to share their views in a public forum.

The fieldwork also indicated successful approaches to communicating with older people in the community who are not already connected to services. A member of the core partnership board, who is also a delivery partner indicated success providing information via regular, community-based newsletters and telephone calls. Word of mouth through trusted individuals was also critical for communication, older people contacting older people in the community was regularly successful for community group contact. These methods of communication can be made available regularly and can offer the necessary flexibility for people in these circumstances.

The other dilemma highlighted in the fieldwork was about communication and power in co-production, link to Arnstein's (1969) ladder as discussed in chapter three. A number of these methods of communication may be considered as consultation and tokenistic, sitting low on Arnstein's ladder. This issue was also raised earlier in chapter seven of this thesis around the execution of the Age Friendly charter. By using a broad range of communication methods to reach a wider audience who are then able to influence services is not necessarily tokenistic engagement, as Arnstein (1969) argues. The challenge this thesis offers to Arnstein's (1969) perspective is that the activities towards the top of the ladder to enable citizen control and power tend to take place with representatives from the community in ways (such as business meetings) which, as evidenced earlier in this chapter, creates barriers to inclusion. Using a broader range of communication approaches can ensure that a wider range of voices contribute to co-production, but it is critical that there is evidence that these voices influence the co-production process. It is right to be wary about this approach as it could be used to camouflage organisational influence and indifference, using these communication approaches as consultation and illusion of co-production. The difference is working within the co-production paradigm, that behind these activities sit the values and understanding of the renegotiated relationship of co-production.

This chapter explored the elements required for co-production. It opened with an exploration of interpretations of co-production across the Time to Shine programme and situated them in the context of the academic literature. It then explored the range of stakeholders connected to the programme and the issues connected to those roles, including the interconnections of the role such as the dynamics of the paid and volunteer relationship, and the factors which support stakeholders to work together more effectively. The chapter then summarised the central practice values and identified that co-production was meaningful activity, which is of particularly importance in the context of services for older people who may be lonely or isolated. Finally, the chapter concluded with a discussion about the range of communication methods used across the programme with identification of methods which were more successful for co-production. This following chapter builds

on the learning from the academic literature and fieldwork and addresses research question four, with recommendations that include a model for practice for co-production with older people who are lonely and isolated.

CHAPTER 8: TOWARDS A MODEL FOR CO-PRODUCTION PRACTICE

Introduction

This final chapter concludes this thesis. It begins with a summary of the thesis chapters to provide an overarching perspective to the conclusions and recommendations. The chapter then moves on to draw together the learning from the academic literature, the researcher's experience of conducting the research and empirical data gathered and analysed from the fieldwork to make recommendations for practice. The previous findings chapters (chapters five, six and seven) have answered research questions one: What are the lived experiences of loneliness and social isolation of older people?; two: How do people's lived experiences contribute to strategies and services to address loneliness and social isolation?; and three: What are the important elements necessary for co-production? This chapter builds on these findings and answers research question four: Can a model of co-production be developed to inform future work with older people who are socially isolated and lonely? with a proposal of a model for co-production which is developed specifically for older people who are lonely and isolated, but could be useful to work with other groups of people in a range of settings. The chapter ends with some reflections on the thesis process from the researcher, including recognition of limitations and suggestions for future research.

Thesis Summary

The introductory chapter of this thesis began by introducing the context of the thesis and rationale for a specific model of co-production with older people who are lonely and socially isolated. The focus of this thesis has been the role of co-production in combating loneliness and social isolation in later life. It has been a collaborative thesis with the Leeds Time to Shine programme, which is part of the wider Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund and is one of fourteen overall schemes involved in the national programme. The fieldwork for the thesis was conducted within the scope of the Time to Shine programme in Leeds and included representatives from across the range of stakeholders of the programme.

Four research questions were developed to refine the research aims to establish tangible research outcomes and were referenced throughout the thesis:

1. What are the lived experiences of loneliness and social isolation of older people?
2. How do people's lived experiences contribute to strategies and services to address loneliness and social isolation?
3. What are the important elements necessary for co-production?

4. Can a model of co-production be developed to inform future work with older people who are socially isolated and lonely?

The thesis then moved onto examine the existing body of literature, taking place over two chapters. Chapter two explored the existing work on loneliness and social isolation. It began by taking a historic view of how understanding of the concepts of loneliness and social isolation emerged then used this to situate these concepts in modern thinking and practice. The chapter then refined its focus to examine the experience in later life, including prevalence, the intersection of experience of other issues, the impact it has in later life and current interventions approaches in the field and their relative success.

Chapter three explored the literature on co-production. It began by elucidating the emergence of co-production from the user involvement movement and highlighting the relevant elements as the concept grew from this background. The chapter then moved on to outline the central idea of this the thesis, that the definition of co-production is linked to both paradigm and praxis. The paradigm of co-production is then discussed in some detail, reflecting on the work of Edgar Cahn (2000) amongst others to identify that authentic co-production requires a changing paradigm in which the relationship between state and individual is renegotiated to a more equal partnership. The thesis then drew on well-established theories of power to understand where power exists and how it operates. The thesis made an original contribution to knowledge as it brought together these areas of knowledge and shifted discourse about co-production to recognise the duality of the concept as both paradigm and praxis. This literature chapter then elucidated theories of empowerment, indicating their relevance for co-production and their use for co-production in practice. The chapter then concluded by with identification of the relevant elements about how co-production is currently understood, using both academic and grey literature and identified the co-production cycle and values essential for practice.

Chapter four detailed the thesis methodology and research methods. It began by revisiting the research questions then moved on to outline the ontological, epistemological, and methodological stance and the connections to the selection of the research methods. The chapter then moved on to explore the researcher's approach to entering the field and the rationale for the combination of the Participatory Action Research and Grounded Theory. The researcher reflected on the challenges and learning from the PAR process. The next section of the chapter detailed the qualitative research methods used: literature review; qualitative semi-structured interviews with the Time to Shine programme staff, board members and National Lottery Community Fund representative; sensory and mapping interviews with volunteers and beneficiaries; and a focus group with representatives from a

Time to Shine commissioning exercise where older people took the lead. There were three specific findings from this chapter which make wider contributions to knowledge; the first one was the recommendation that where it could be anticipated that co-production will feature in the research, the principles of co-production should be initiation from inception. Secondly, the PAR group experience for the researcher contributed to wider knowledge about the challenges of sustaining groups in activities, which was relevant to the practice of co-production. Finally, the use of sensory interviews with volunteers and beneficiaries who are lonely and isolated revealed a depth of knowledge about their lived experience, which in turn illuminates approaches to move beyond traditional interventions.

The next three chapters of the thesis detailed the findings from the fieldwork, using the literature in chapters two and three to support its analysis, as per the interpretation of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) outlined in chapter four. The first findings chapter addressed research question one: What are the lived experiences of loneliness and social isolation of older people? and research question two: How do people's lived experiences contribute to strategies and services to address loneliness and social isolation? as it dealt with findings around loneliness and social isolation and began with a discussion of the difference between academic focus and practice regarding conceptual clarity, stigma attached to the terminology and the need to move to more strengths-based terms. From this, the chapter delved more deeply into the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation of the research participants. It challenged traditionally held notions about the role of close relationships having an impact on the experience of loneliness and social isolation for older people and revealed a more complex picture about the nature of those relationships. It also highlighted the importance of the individual experience in childhood and its link to perceptions of circumstances in later life and made the argument for taking a life course approach. The other contributing factors to the experience were health and wellbeing, bereavement, environment, and the time of the week. The chapter then moved on to identify the important sensory factors which contribute to the experience, including the positive and negative impact of noise (use of local radio was particularly indicated as a way people combated feeling lonely and isolated when at home alone) and the challenges of coping alone. The data also indicated significant sensory factors associated with the groups and services, such as sounds, smells and quality of conversation which could be harnessed in planning for such interventions. The chapter closed with reflection on the focus of interventions on services and 'going out' of the home and the impact this has on the rest of the time for the person, as they experience a sense of 'waiting' for the next intervention. The chapter concluded by highlighting how some delivery partners used psycho-social interventions such as Motivational Interviewing as developed by Miller and Rollnick (1995) in some instances to complement existing provision.

Chapter six addressed research question three: What are the important elements necessary for co-production? as it reinforced the duality of co-production with findings about the paradigm and the importance of its relationship with power and empowerment as first introduced in chapter two. This chapter drew heavily on theories of power and empowerment to analyse the findings to consolidate understanding about its nature and context. The first finding was that there is an appetite for this paradigm shift and the role this plays in co-production. The findings indicated that there was recognition of the role power plays in co-production and commitment to understand its nature and influence in practice. It then explored the dynamics of relationships considered in the model of co-production. The chapter ended with reflection of power across the co-production cycle of co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery, and co-evaluation.

Chapter seven also addressed research question three as it focused on the practice of co-production. It consolidated a new definition of co-production from findings, which expands beyond current definitions in the literature to include the concept of paradigm and practice, with a focus on power. From the findings, it also solidified the importance of enshrining into the definition the requirement for the beneficiary of the service to be a stakeholder. The chapter then identified the range of stakeholders for co-production at the Time to Shine programme and identifies the factors that help them to work together successfully. It then moves on to discussion about the importance of diverse representation in co-production and recognises that there are some under-served communities in Leeds are not represented in the Time to Shine programme. This section unpicked the barriers to inclusion with recognition that overcoming them should be part of the model of co-production. The chapter then moved on to outline the principles for co-production and finally, made the links between co-production is meaningful activity which can engage older people who are lonely and socially isolated.

Chapter eight then drew analyses the findings and integrated them with the literature from chapters two and three. This chapter addressed research question four: Can a model of co-production be developed to inform future work with older people who are socially isolated and lonely? as it presented a recommended model for practice. It also addressed all four research questions in its summary of recommendations from across the thesis.

Research Methods Recommendations

The first set of recommendations are from the research methods, as the experience of the researcher executing the fieldwork provided a good opportunity for learning and reflection.

The first recommendation from the research methods is for the commissioning of research. The researcher recognised early in the process that co-producing the fieldwork for this thesis would be problematic and contradict some of the central ideas about power and influence in decision-making as all stakeholders were not included from the inception of the thesis. The researcher felt that it would be disingenuous to present that approach as co-production and would have contributed to confusion rather than clarity in both theory and practice. In light of this, the thesis recommends that future organisations and funding bodies recognise that if there is potential for research to be co-produced, then co-production should begin at the inception stage and the co-production principles should be initiated from the outset.

The second recommendation from the research methods is from the researcher's experience of attempting to use a Participatory Action Research approach in the fieldwork. The learning from the researcher, as reflected in chapter four, was that it was difficult to sustain interest from participants in this type of activity. The researcher concluded that the participants lacked a sense of ownership about the research and it did not connect to their sense of values or importance; therefore, did not sustain their involvement. This recommendation links to the first recommendations from the research methods, that it imperative to initiate co-production principles from the inceptions to develop a sense of ownership from participants from the outset to support success co-production and without this, it is very difficult to sustain interest from all stakeholders.

The final recommendation from the research methods is to use the sensory and mapping approach to explore the experience of loneliness and social isolation with research participants in activities such as service evaluation and future research. The research began their fieldwork with some trepidation about these methods, the researcher found that using the combination of types of interviews gave the participants the opportunity and language that contributed rich information that added to the texture and weave of the person's lived experience of loneliness and social isolation. Using them in combination also helped to contextualise the current situation of the person in their life experiences and more clearly identify how the person perceives their situation which can help services to provide support which is more person-centred, strengths-based and nuanced.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Recommendations

The second set of recommendations are developed from the fieldwork about working with older people who are lonely and socially isolated. Although this was not the key focus of the thesis, the researcher identified some recommendations for practice.

The research indicated that there is an inherent contradiction in practice because of the use of the terms 'loneliness' and 'social isolation'. On one hand, services and funding bodies are attuned to the needs of people in these circumstances because national awareness has been raised about these issues; however, it appears that there is also stigma attached to these terms and older people who may experience loneliness and social isolation may be unwilling to openly use services which are branded as such. The terms are also defining people by deficit, which is contrary to the Care Act (2014). This thesis recommends that services should consider using alternate terms which are strengths-based such as connected or fulfilled as a way of overcoming this stigma.

Findings from the fieldwork indicated that lots of older people who were beneficiaries and volunteers across the Time to Shine programme listened to and valued local radio particularly Radio Leeds, and especially gardening programmes and late-night talk radio. A recommendation from the research is that local radio appears to be a route to give information, independently from projects and services. As discussed in chapter seven, information from trusted sources is a vital way to contact older people who are not already connected to services and local radio could provide a route to the most lonely and isolated people.

The researcher also found that there was extensive use of slow cookers. This became apparent when speaking to participants in community group two who all agreed that research participant p017 had inspired them to use their slow cookers. Following this, conversation took place with other beneficiaries and volunteers who agreed that they often used a slow cooker to prepare meals. The researcher had presumed that as people lived alone, they would rely heavily on ready meals, but participants were taking the time to prepare meats and vegetables to cook using the slow cooker, despite cooking for one person. This suggests that people are taking the time to cook healthy and nutritious meals, which in turn have the potential to promote good health and wellbeing. The researcher recommends that services recognise the important role slow cookers and cooking are playing in the lives of people who use their services and to promote and built this into their services; for example, providing opportunities to share slow cooker recipes. There is also potential to develop this into a cross-service project, perhaps sharing recipes across groups via the Time to Shine programme or even nationally through the Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better Programme.

The issue of transport was also identified in the fieldwork. Transport availability is a well-established issue, identified in by Age UK/Campaign to End Loneliness (2015) in their model for practice, the fieldwork indicated that transport in its current form can compromise the dignity and wellbeing of the individual. The fieldwork also indicates that transport in its current form is also a missed opportunity, it could provide a chance for connection and engagement, as the member of the core partnership board described when they talked about their bus journey into Leeds. This thesis recommends that transport should be considered an opportunity for connection, rather than a connecting service and should be provided in a manner which secures dignity and wellbeing for all who use it.

The research data indicated the importance of understanding the history of the person who is lonely and isolated and should use this to contextualise their current situation. The findings discussed in chapter five indicated that experience in childhood could influence subjective perceptions of current situation which as the literature in chapter two shows is a key element of loneliness. Tools that explore feelings of loneliness should take a life course approach which takes account of the history and experience of the individual. Public Health England (2019) advocate a life course approach considers how physical and mental health and wellbeing is affected by experiences throughout life, considering the impact of critical life transitions. Taking this approach can help to find out more about what informs their subjective understanding of their circumstances and helps them to address their current feelings of loneliness more effectively.

The thesis also recommends that approaches to dealing with loneliness and social isolation should be expended to include a menu of psycho-social interventions alongside groups and befriending services to support people to cope with the time they spend alone alongside opportunities to develop relationships and networks. Findings from Kall et al. (2020a and 2020b) demonstrate clear benefits from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and findings from the empirical fieldwork indicate that some delivery partners are using the Motivational Interviewing approach developed by Miller and Rollnick (1995) to support older people who are entrenched in their experience to achieve change towards a less lonely and isolated life.

This thesis also recommends that groups to support older people who are lonely and isolated should pay attention to the sensory elements of their groups such as the sights, smells, sounds and spaces and think about how they can use those to contribute to a welcoming atmosphere for existing and potential participants.

Model of co-production

This thesis now moves on to recommended model of practice for co-production in the context of working with older people who are lonely and socially isolated. Although some elements of model are specific to this context, the learning can also be extrapolated to other situations.

Preparation for Co-production

Preparation for co-production is critical to its success and this begins with the recognition that at co-production is both paradigm and praxis which is based on a renegotiated relationship between stakeholders.

One of the first preparation tasks should be to consider how and where to make people aware of the opportunities to get involved. Any group of stakeholders committed to co-production should recognise that structural issues related to equality strands may prevent people from being aware of the opportunities in usual advertising channels and that inclusivity is important from the outset of the work. Findings from the empirical fieldwork indicate that using local radio, word of mouth and community newsletters have the most impact making contact with older people in Leeds and should be used as part of a menu of methods to connect with people not connected to services.

In conjunction with the method of communication, it is important that it is accessible from the outset; if people feel excluded right from the beginning, the sense of ownership is lost, and people disengage from the process. It is imperative that this information is available over a sustained period, people are not always ready for the information and needs to be available for people at the right place and time for them, which might not be when a recruitment drive is taking place.

Location and accessibility are important environmental factors for co-production with people who are lonely and socially isolated. As Rantakokko et al. (2013) identified statistically significant relationships between barriers in the environment and loneliness, it is critical that co-production with older people who are lonely and socially isolated should place importance on accessible environments. Accessibility should also include consideration of the sensory elements, such as what will people see, hear, smell, touch, and taste when they arrive at the venue. The empirical research indicated the importance of sounds and smells such as the clinking of cups, the smell of refreshments and the sound of chatter make the venue feel welcoming. Paying attention to these details can support stakeholders to feel more comfortable and confident which in turn can support building relationships between stakeholders.

It is also important to recognise some of the personal circumstances of stakeholders who are unpaid. Those who become involved as part of a paid job have time to focus on the work; however, those who are unpaid may be more likely to experience periods of ill health or may have caring responsibilities

which can impact on their capacity to participate. It is vital that approaches to co-production utilise flexible processes for attendance which take account of things like health challenges or caring responsibilities for the stakeholders.

In chapter five, several stakeholders who took part in the empirical research identified that weekends (and particularly Sundays) were times when older people often felt lonelier and more isolated. Co-production has the potential to have a direct impact, it would be beneficial for co-production with older people in these circumstances to take place at weekends.

To prepare for co-production, agreement needs to be reached about how to deal with the discussion and information capture. Meetings can often use a business approach, which, as discussed in chapter seven, can be intimidating and exclusionary for those who are not used to working within these structures, accentuating existing power imbalances. In light of this, less formal approaches to information recording and capture co-production may be more appropriate for co-production.

One of the key issues for older people who are lonely and socially isolated is transport and can be a significant barrier to inclusion make sure people know how to be reimbursed for things like travel. If people need to access travel which might be more expensive such as accessible taxies or additional types of support, make sure these funds are available in advance of the meetings and that all stakeholders know that these funds are available and how to access them.

Values

One of the most important elements of co-production is the recognition that it is a values-driven process and is at the heart of the renegotiated paradigm of co-production which drives change. The roadmap for the work may not always be clear; however, the values of the stakeholders should drive work which is unexpected or challenging in a way that is aligned to the stakeholders preferred goals and outcomes. This thesis has identified some values important for co-production empowerment; equality; strengths-based approach; authenticity; credibility; and reciprocity; however, it is important for stakeholders in co-production to explore their shared values which can underpin their approach.

Clarity on Terminology

To achieve successful co-production, work needs to take place with the group of stakeholders to clarify and cement their shared understanding of the term co-production. If this does not happen, it will be led by those who have already heard the term (more than likely stakeholders who are paid and work for organisations). If this is not clear, then stakeholders do not know what to expect, or what co-production should look like, making it more difficult to challenge others if things start to go wrong. The definition developed in this thesis may be a useful starting point:

Co-production is both a paradigm and method. The paradigm is based in a renegotiated, more equal relationship between services and those who use them which takes account of power relationships. The method of co-production centres around co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery, and co-evaluation with a range of stakeholders, one of whom should be those who use the services. It uses creative methods of engagement to harness the skills, knowledge, experience, and strengths of those involved with benefits for individuals, groups, organisations, and the wider community.

Stakeholders also need to develop an approach to use to deal with challenge and conflict from the outset which can be applied to any stakeholder. This could include information on how to deal with challenges, dealing with complaints and how to end involvement in co-production.

Needs of the Stakeholders

Co-production is situated in relationships, any process should seek to develop relationships which are based on trust and understanding. This also provides the types of opportunity which can help people to feel less lonely and isolated. Stakeholders need shared motivation and a sense of ownership for the work to keep them engaged and it is important not to assume that because a stakeholder may have been to one or two events that motivation and ownership exists.

The fieldwork data for this thesis indicated that stakeholders work together more effectively when there is a problem, issue, or well-defined piece of work, so make sure every is clear about their role and responsibilities. One of the issues identified in the empirical research was that there can be a reluctance to ask unpaid stakeholders to take on tasks because it can feel exploitative; however, when unpaid stakeholders do not take on these tasks, they are not afforded the opportunity for personal and mutual developed, which Pigg (2002) identified as key for empowerment for individuals and groups. It is important to engage with stakeholders who are taking on tasks and roles to make sure they feel happy and confident to undertake the work (particularly if this involves unfamiliar work such as p010, p011 and p012 and their work as part of the Time to Shine second round of commissioning as discussed in the focus group).

Communication

Communication is central to approach to co-production and stakeholders should consider using creative approaches to communication. It was clear from the fieldwork data that some stakeholders did not like questionnaires and surveys, preferring communication methods they perceived as less formal such as focus groups. The importance of leaflets was also highlighted by (p008) as they can provide the right information at the right time, something which (p002) identified as a key approach when working with older people who are lonely and socially isolated.

Some stakeholders who took part in the fieldwork identified the importance a nominated person can play to support co-production. Someone acting as facilitator or advocate for individual group members can support the group dynamics and ensure that there is a balance of views and perspective shared across all stakeholders. This role takes skill, as although this individual provides support, they do in increase their power. It is not their role to be 'gatekeeper' for ideas or views, but to make sure everyone has had a chance to express their ideas.

Arnstein's (1969) ladder has been used to shape co-production approaches, findings from this research indicated that activities towards the top of the ladder can exclude people as in practice they tend to happen in smaller forums with less representatives. Equally, co-production should not adopt approaches such as consultation wholesale, as there is potential for this to be used in a way which marginalises people. Stakeholders should always be cautious about any suggested approach and reflect on how it sits with the paradigm of co-production and co-production values.

Clarity and Transparency about Power and Empowerment

This thesis has emphasised the role that power plays in co-production. It has drawn on the existing body of literature and used this to examine the nature of power in the context of the empirical research. The findings indicated that power dynamics exist in a range of situations and forums, including in decision-making forums, access to funding, in skills, talents, knowledge, and organisational role. Transparency about the nature of these power imbalances is key to co-production and honest conversations about types of power held can create a more honest discussion and effective work can take place to minimise the impact of these power imbalances.

One of the most important functions of co-production is that it can be a vehicle for empowerment as it provides opportunities for self-development and mutual development for stakeholders as well as empower people in the context of organisations.

Endings

The journey is as important as the outcome for co-production, the learning from involvement contributes to empowerment for individual's involvement, preparing them for the next iteration of co-production.

This recommended model for co-production has drawn together the findings from the academic literature and empirical research and the thesis recommends that these elements are addressed to support successful co-production with older people who lonely and socially isolated. This model should be implemented in conjunction with learning outlined in chapter six; without significant change in the paradigm of co-production where power relationships are renegotiated to a more equal footing between services and those who use them, authentic co-production could be at risk. This requires

honesty and transparency from all parties, along with a commitment to develop insight into these relationships along the co-production journey. Learning from co-production is both from the outcomes of the work, but also from taking part in the process and both should inform the development of practice.

Limitations

There are limitations which were identified for this thesis. In the chapter four, there is discussion about the benefits and challenges of the collaborative approach and the Time to Shine programme as the research site. Although the programme provided access to participants for the researcher, there were limitations in this. The researcher was limited to who they could approach to take part. The researcher identified that a reasonably good mix of participants had been sought, it was clear that people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds were missing from the sample. There were good reasons for this, groups for people specifically in this situation in Leeds had declined to take part. As stated, the Time to Shine programme is part of a national programme and groups are regularly evaluated by both the local and national evaluation team, so there was a sense they were over-researched and reluctant to take part. From the groups who did agree to take part, the population of people who used those groups did not come from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, nor did people from the staff team, the core partnership board, or the National Lottery Community Fund. It is difficult to tell if this is a fluctuation issue and that if the research took place at a different time, the sample would have had a different composition. Also, if the researcher had been free to move outside the boundaries of the Time to Shine programme, they would have sought a more diverse sample.

The limitation of this is that the thesis can only draw conclusions from the absence of people in the sample and highlight and reflect this issue as part of the analysis. Future research on co-production should seek to gain a more diverse sample to gain a better understanding of from the perspective of people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

Generalising from the Findings

This thesis used small-scale, case study research, which was appropriate for the topic and exploration of the concepts of loneliness, social isolation, and co-production. This was appropriate, and enabled the researcher, as highlighted by Yin (1984) to generate rich data from a range of sources. The researcher also used a grounded theory approach, based on the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (2008) to analyse the research data, building and validating theory from the case study as discussed on pp 106-108 of this thesis.

Traditional thinking has suggested that data from small-scale qualitative data cannot be generalised to large populations. Flyvbjerg (2006) identifies this perspective as one of five misunderstandings of

case-study research, but that current thinking about small-scale research suggests that this is possible. Eisenhart and Graebner (2007) identify that inductive reasoning can be used to build theory from a case-study. They argue that the process begins as case study research is rooted in the existing literature; therefore, from the outset of the case study, the researcher can demonstrate is not adequately addressed before commencing the research, tightly scoped within this context of the research question. The subsequent research data can then be used to develop theory. In the context of this thesis, the researcher used the approach recommended by Eisenhart and Graebner (2007). This began by scoping the body of literature and from this was assured that there was no existing theory for co-production with older people who are lonely and socially isolated. The researcher then used the combination of knowledge from literature and the fieldwork to develop the model of co-production which can be generalised to develop theory on co-production.

Recommendations for Future Research

This thesis makes four recommendations for future research. Firstly, the researcher suggests that sensory interviewing techniques could be explored in greater detail to develop approaches which can be used in research, service evaluation and practice with people who are lonely and socially isolated of all ages. The thesis concluded that there is significant potential in this approach to gain insight into the lived experience of loneliness and social isolation to inform service development and the wider body of academic knowledge.

The second recommendation for future research is to explore co-production with people from diverse communities. As identified in the limitations for this thesis, the researcher was unable to gain direct experience of people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities because of the participants who were willing to take part. Future research should consider exploring this experience in more detail to contribute to the theoretical underpinning and model of co-production recommended by this thesis.

Another area of further research is to gain insight and understanding about the power dynamics in co-production relationship between services and those who use them. This thesis has emphasised the importance of being explicit about power dynamics, and future research should explore the success of strategies to rebalance these relationships. This would incorporate exploration of how to reach diverse communities and secure their engagement in co-production.

Finally, this thesis recommends that future research could consider how to implement creative approaches to co-production. The empirical data reflected the dilemma and challenges of using creative, inclusive methods but retaining accountability, particularly when dealing with large sums of money and high levels of responsibility.

Personal reflections

The researcher has found this experience to be both rewarding and challenging. She was drawn to this topic because of her background in this strengths-based approach to working with older people and that passion for this has grown over the life of the thesis. The researcher has reflected that some of her initial naivety about how to execute such approaches to work, such as using the PAR approach, and although it was not as successful as she had hoped, it did provide a good opportunity for learning. The chance to be involved with the Time to Shine programme has been invaluable and everyone who has taken part has been welcoming and a pleasure to work with. In particular, the chance to work with the community groups has been a highlight and it was a real privilege to interview the people from the groups who consented to take part. The researcher has always sought to strike a balance between the theory and practice of co-production in the sector and she hopes that the findings are useful and make a real difference for those who take part.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of Research Participants

Reference in document	Participant
P001	Time to Shine staff member A
P002	Time to Shine staff member B
P003	Time to Shine staff member C
P004	Time to Shine staff member D
P005	Time to Shine staff member E
P006	Core partnership board member A
P007	Core partnership board member B/focus group member
P008	Core partnership board member C
P009	Funding body representative
P010	Focus group member
P011	Focus group member
P012	Focus group member
P013	Delivery Partner Community Group One
P014	Delivery Partner Community Group Two
P015	Volunteer Community Group Two
P016	Volunteer Community Group Two
P017	Volunteer / Beneficiary Community Group Two
P018	Beneficiary Community Group Two
P019	Beneficiary Community Group Two
P020	Beneficiary Community Group Two
P021	Beneficiary Community Group Two
P022	Beneficiary Community Group One
P023	Beneficiary Community Group One
P024	Volunteer/ Beneficiary Community Group One

Appendix 2: Background Data Community Groups: Breakdown by Area

	Community Group One (Stanningley Ward)	Community Group Two (Garforth and Swillington Ward)	Community Group Two (Harewood Ward)
Population	234000	19700	19300
Households	10700	9100	8100
Average age	37	43.7	44.6
Life expectancy	80.6	82.1	86
Average house prices	£127,209	£174,049	£381,974
% of population over 50	30.6%	43.8%	46.5%

Appendix 3: Characteristics of Community Groups

Gender

	(Gender) Men	(Gender) Women
Community Group One	3	11
Community Group Two	20	41

Age

	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+	Blank
Community Group One	-	2	-	3	2	7	-
Community Group Two	5	9	14	13	11	8	1

Ethnicity

	White	Mixed Ethnic Background	Asian/Asian UK	Black/African/Caribbean UK	Other Ethnic Group
Community Group One	14	-	-	-	-
Community Group Two	61	-	-	-	-

Sexuality

	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Prefer not to say

Community Group One	**14**	-	-	-
Community Group Two	**56**	**1**	**1**	**3**

Appendix Four: Participant Information Sheet – Volunteers and Beneficiaries (v1)

Participant Information Sheet

Volunteers and Beneficiaries

Research project: 'The role of co-production in combating social isolation and loneliness in later life: a case study of the Time to Shine programme'

Thank you for taking the time to consider taking part in this research project. This participant information sheet sets out why the research is taking place, what taking part involves, what happens to the information I provide when the study ends Please take the time to read the following information carefully and ask questions about anything that is not clear to you.

Why is this research taking place?

The research is taking place to find out more about social isolation and loneliness and about how people involved with Time to Shine services have a say in the way in which these services are developed and delivered.

If you choose to take part in this research, you can change your mind at any time. If in the future you no longer wish to take part, the information you have contributed will be taken out of the project.

If you agree to take part in this research project, you will be asked to sign a consent form and you will be given a copy of both the participant information sheet and the signed consent form to keep.

Why have you been asked to take part in this research?

You have been asked to take part in this research because you are involved with one of the services funded by the BIG Lottery 'Ageing Better' programme via the Time to Shine programme in Leeds.

What can you expect when you take part?

You will be invited to take part in two interviews, which take place on separate occasions. The first interview will involve talking about your relationships and contacts which may include family, friends, services, professionals or any other important contacts you may have in your life. The second interview will focus on social isolation and loneliness, using photographs and objects to help think about these issues. You will also be asked to bring any objects or photographs to the interview that may help you to talk about talk about your experience.

You will also be asked if you would like to take part in a Participatory Action Research group. This is a consultation group made up of everyone involved in the research. The role of this group is to advise on the progress of the research and the research methods used. Participation in this group is entirely voluntary, if you participate in the interviews you do not have to participate in this group.

You may also be asked to take part in an observation, which will involve the PhD researcher observing events such as meetings and activity sessions and making notes to contribute to the research. You will be informed of each observation separately, in advance of the observation taking place. Again, involvement in the observation session is entirely voluntary and will only take place if everyone consents to the observation.

What will happen to the information I provide when the research ends?

With your permission, the interviews, observations and participatory action group meetings will be recorded so they can allow the conversations to be listened to again. Before the recording starts, you will be asked again for your permission to record the conversations and you will be told when the recording has started.

All information about the research is confidential and your information will be collected, handled, processed and stored in a way which keeps it secure and is consistent with the Data Protection Act (1998). Your real names and the names of the project you attend will not be used in the final written version of this PhD research thesis. Direct quotations from interviews will be used in a way which that means they cannot be connected to an individual person.

Although everything will be done to try to make sure no one can be identified from the information which they provide, there is a small possibility that another person who attends the same group may be able to identify you from what you say. There is also a limit to confidentiality, is anything is discussed during the interviews that raises concerns that a child or adult may be at risk of abuse or neglect, then this information will be forwarded to the relevant safeguarding team.

 Thank you for considering taking part and I hope that you decide to take part in this research.

What if there is a problem?

If you are concerned about any part of this research, please contact me:

Louise Whitehead

University of Sheffield, Department of Sociological Studies, Elmfield, Sheffield. S10 2TU

Ljwhitehead1@sheffield.ac.uk

Tel: 07869 215036

Alternatively, If you would like to speak to someone else about your concerns please contact either Dr Andrea Wigfield (PhD research supervisor) or Rachel Koivunen (Programme Manager) at the Time to Shine project.

Andrea Wigfield

a.wigfield@sheffield.ac.uk

Tel: 0114 222 6484

Rachel Koivunen

rachelk@opforum.org.uk

Tel: 0113 244 1697

a.wigfield@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 5: Participant Consent Form (v1)

Participant Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. If you have any questions please refer to the information sheet provided or ask either Louise Whitehead as the lead researcher, or a member of the Time to Shine programme. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep and refer to at any time .

	YES	NO
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.		
I understand that, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.		
I agree to the audio recording of the interview.		
I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential and accessible only to Louise Whitehead.		
I understand that the data collected from me will be anonymised in the reports that result from this research.		
I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research.		
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform Louise Whitehead if my contact details change.		

_____   _____   _____

(Name of participant)   (Date)   (Signature)

_____   _____   _____

(Lead researcher)   (Date)   (Signature)

Copies: Once this has been signed by all parties, the participant should receive a signed and dated copy of this form . A copy will also be kept with the main documents in a secure location.

Appendix 6 – What's in a Picture PAR Group Activity

WHERE WERE YOU AND WHAT WERE YOU DOING ON THIS DAY?

22 November 1963

WHERE WERE YOU AND WHAT WERE YOU DOING ON THIS DAY?
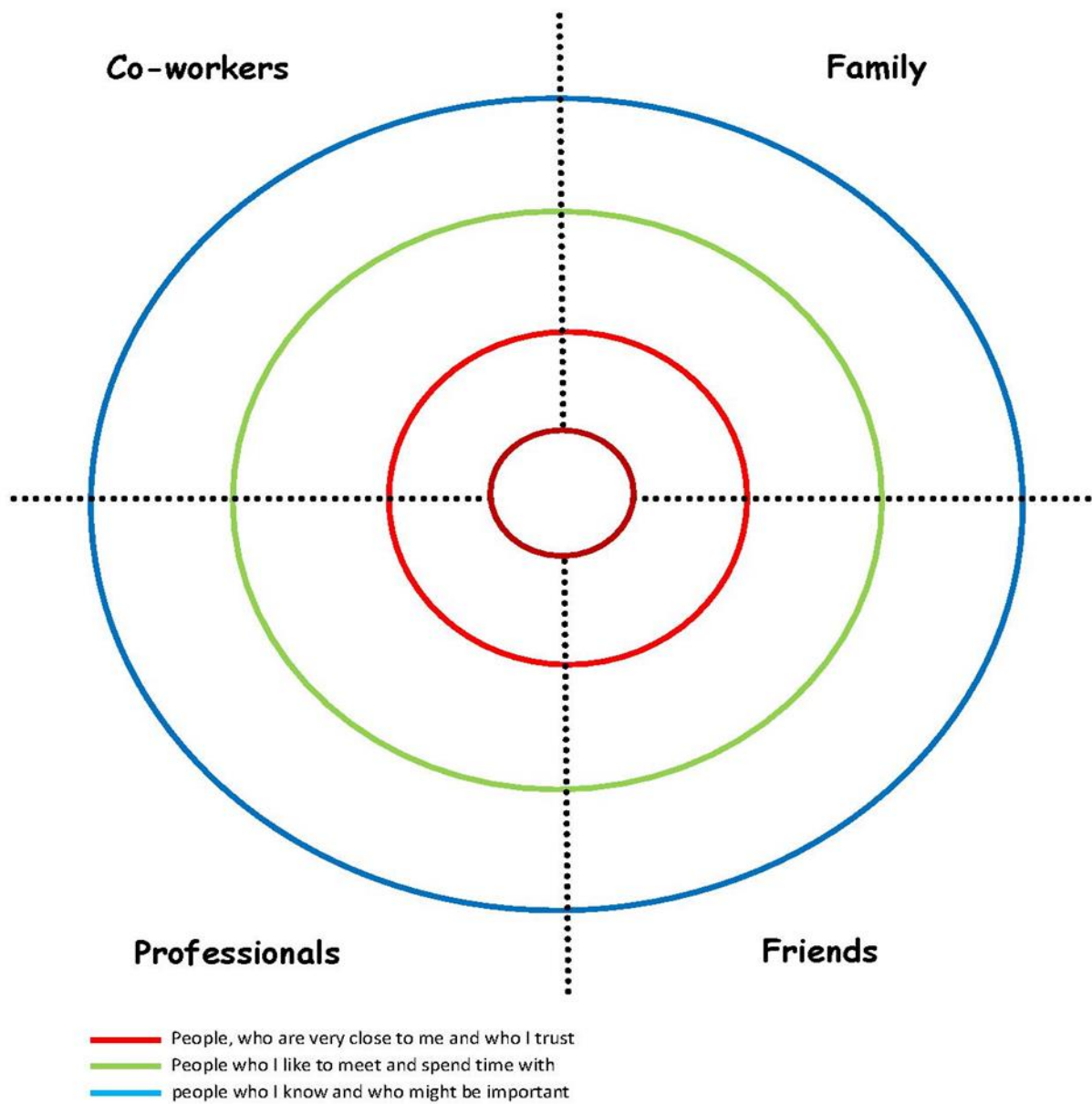
29 July 1981

WHAT'S THE TASTIEST PART OF THIS MEAL?

WHAT DOES THIS SMELL LIKE WHEN ITS COOKING?

Appendix 7 – Helen Sanderson Associates Relationship Circle

Important people in my life

Co-workers   Family

Professionals   Friends

People, who are very close to me and who I trust
People who I like to meet and spend time with
people who I know and who might be important

Appendix 8: Interview Schedule – Delivery Partners, BIG lottery, Time to Shine Staff and Core Partnership Board members

Interview schedule

BIG Lottery representative, Time to Shine staff, Delivery Partners and Core Partnership Board members

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in an interview. This interview is taking place as part of the PhD research 'The role of co-production in combatting social isolation and loneliness in later life: a case study of the Time to Shine programme'.

I just want to check that you have received the information sheet about the project and the consent form? Just to confirm this interview is confidential, and can be ended at any time.

With your permission, I would like to record the discussion. This will allow the conversation to be listened to again if needed. Is it all right with you to record the interview? Once the interview has been transcribed the recording will be deleted.

Are there any questions you have before we begin?

Background information

1. Could you start by saying your name and telling me a little bit about your current role?
   (Prompt - How long have you worked in this role)

2. Did you have any personal and/or professional experience in this area before you started this role? (Prompt – personal experience which prompted the person get involved, previous work role, experience of a family members, friend, neighbour etc).

<u>Knowledge/experience of social isolation and loneliness in later life</u>

3. To begin, can you share with me what you understand by the terms 'social isolation' and 'loneliness'? (Prompt – differences between the concepts, characteristics of each concept, examples).

4. A) From your knowledge and experience, what are some of the issues for people who experience social isolation in later life? (Prompts – specific reasons why it happens in later life, specific impact for older people) a

5. B) What do think particularly works when people are socially isolated – anything that specifically works for social isolation? (Prompt – services/specific interventions/)

6. A) From your knowledge and experience, what are some of the issues for people who experience loneliness in later life? (Prompts – specific reasons why it happens in later life, specific impact for older people)

7.

B) what do think particularly works when people are lonely – anything that specifically works for loneliness? (Prompt – services/specific interventions/)?

<u>Knowledge/experience of co-production</u>

8.   There are lots of different definitions of this, but what do you understand by the term co-production? (Prompt–can it be defined? What information or guidance are you aware of that has shaped your knowledge? How is it defined by Time to Shine/the project)

9. Can you give any examples where you are aware of or have been involved in co-production?

10. Who are the main stakeholders at Time to Shine/the project?

11. A) Can you give me an example of how stakeholders work together in all aspects of Time to Shine/the project? (Prompt – to include commission, design, deliver and evaluate stages). B) What works well?

C) Is there anything that could be improved?

(prompts- effectiveness, resources, public confidence and reputation, achieving outcomes, building social networks, developing sustainable ways of working, demonstrating that diversity is valued, is accessibility an issue? Is reciprocity evident? Are the boundaries between stakeholders blurred?)

12. Could any more be done to involve volunteers and beneficiaries as stakeholders in co-production?

13. Where stakeholders are working together, is there anything important which needs to be in place to help this to happen successfully? (Prompts – Ways and methods of working? Are issues of power and rights addressed? Which groups are represented? Is there a balance of voices? Do all stakeholders have an equal power to negotiate and decide? Are paid staff members delivering services or are the agents of change?

14. Have you seen or heard about any changes (big or small) which have happened because people worked using co-production approach? (Prompt – providing examples of co-production).

Connection between social isolation, loneliness and co-production

15. In your view, has being involved, other than as a participant, made a difference to the social isolation and/or loneliness of older people who are beneficiaries and/or volunteers? Can you give any examples of this? (prompt- increase or decrease in experience of social isolation and/or loneliness)

16. In your view, do you think older people being involved, other than as a participant, has influenced/s how Time to Shine/your project has developed? (Prompt – what differences can be identified? To what degree and nature have they been influenced).

17. In your experience, where older people have contributed to Time to Shine/your project, what if any difference has this made to older people who experience social isolation and loneliness? (Prompt – If yes - is the service more reflective of the needs of older people who experience social isolation and loneliness. If no – why not?)

18. That is the end of my questions – is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for taking part in this interview. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Appendix 9: Participant Information Sheet – Delivery Partners, BIG Lottery and Time to Shine Staff

Participant Information Sheet: Delivery partners, BIG Lottery and Time to Shine programme staff

Research project: 'The role of co-production in combating social isolation and loneliness in later life: a case study of the Time to Shine programme'

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview or observation as part of this research project. This participant information sheet sets out why the research is taking place, what your participation involves and what happens after the study ends. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and ask questions about anything that is not clear to you.

What is the purpose of the research?

The research is taking place to find out more about how co-production can be used to address social isolation and loneliness for older people.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you at any stage decide you no longer wish to be part of the research project you can withdraw at any time and have any information you have contributed taken out of the project.

If you agree to take part in this research project, you will be asked to sign the consent form and you will be given a copy of both the participant information sheet and the signed consent form to keep.

Why have you been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a delivery partner with one of the groups funded by the BIG Lottery 'Ageing Better' programme, or you are a member of staff from BIG Lottery or the Time to Shine programme.

What can you expect from the interview?

You will be asked to participate in a face-to-face individual interview to discussion both your experience of working with older people who experience social isolation and loneliness and working in partnership with older people to develop and deliver services.

You will also be asked to take part in a Participatory Action Research group. This is a consultation group made up of everyone involved in the research. The role of this group is to advise on the progress of the research and the research methods used. Participation in this groups is entirely voluntary, if you participate in the interviews you do not have to participate in this group.

You may also be asked to participate in an observation, which will involve the PhD researcher observing events such as meetings and activity sessions and making notes to contribute to the research. You will be informed of each observation separately, in advance of the observation taking place. Again, involvement in the observation session is entirely voluntary and will only take place if all participants consent to the observation.

What will happen to your information?

With your permission, the interviews, observations and participatory action group meetings will be recorded so they can allow the conversations to be listened to again. Before the recording starts, you will be asked again for your permission to record the conversations and you will be told when the recording has started.

All information about the research is confidential and your information will be collected, handled, processed and stored in a way which is consistent with the Data Protection Act (1998). Your real names and the names of the project you attend will not be used in the final written version of this research project. You will be asked to select a pseudonym to use for this final write up. Direct quotations from interviews will be used but they will be reported in a way which will be anonymised. Although every effort will be made to main anonymity, you should be aware that there may be a possibility that another member of the project may be able to identify you from your responses.

Although the Data Protection Act (1998) will be followed to maintain confidentiality, you should note that that confidentiality has a limitation and if anything arises during the interviews that indicates that a child or adult with care and support needs is at risk of abuse or neglect, then this information will be reported to the appropriate safeguarding team.

What if there is a problem?
If you are concerned about any part of this research project, please contact me:

Louise Whitehead

University of Sheffield, Department of Sociological Studies, Elmfield, Sheffield. S10 2TU

Ljwhitehead1@sheffield.ac.uk

Tel: 07869 215036

If you would like to speak to someone else about your concerns please contact either Andrea Wigfield (PhD research supervisor) or Rachel Koivunen (programme manager) at the Time to Shine project.

Andrea Wigfield

a.wigfield@sheffield.ac.uk

Tel: 0114 222 6484

Rachel Koivunen

rachelk@opforum.org.uk

Tel: 0113 244 1697

Thank you for your help with this study and I hope that you will enjoy being part of this research.

Appendix 10: Photographs
Objects from Sensory Interviews

Family Photograph and
Mining Lamp

(p017)

Handbag

(p022)

Family
Photograph

(p018)

Appendix 11: Interview Schedule Beneficiaries and Volunteers – Sensory Interviews

Interview schedule

Beneficiaries and Volunteers

Interview 1: Sensory Interview

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in an interview. This interview is taking place as part of the PhD research 'The role of co-production in combatting social isolation and loneliness in later life: a case study of the Time to Shine programme'.

I just want to check that you have received the information sheet about the project and the consent form?

With your permission, I would like to record the discussion. This will allow the conversation to be listened to again if needed. Is it all right with you to record the interview?

Are there any questions you have before we begin?

Sensory Interview

This chat is very informal and will be guided by you and the objects you have brought to talk about in the interview.

1. So, can you tell me about yourself?

2. Do you think you have every been lonely or isolated? What was that like? (sound, taste, smell, feel, see)

3. How long have you been involved with the group?

4. What made you decide to get involved?

5. What sounds, smells, tastes, sights, feel do you associate with the group?

Interview prompts – when talking about the participant's experience, expand the discussion to think about the sensory experiences – what is the smell, taste, sound, feel, what can they see. Trying to capture a sense of the lived experience of social isolation and loneliness and the lived experience of social connectedness and inclusion.

Appendix 12: Interview Schedule Beneficiaries and Volunteers – Mapping Interview

Interview schedule

Beneficiaries and Volunteers

Interview 2: Mapping Interview

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in an interview. This interview is taking place as part of the PhD research 'The role of co-production in combatting social isolation and loneliness in later life: a case study of the Time to Shine programme'.

I just want to check that you have received the information sheet about the project and the consent form?

With your permission, I would like to record the discussion. This will allow the conversation to be listened to again if needed. Is it all right with you to record the interview?

Are there any questions you have before we begin?

1. How can co-production, social isolation and loneliness be conceptualised to inform programme and practice interventions in later life?

2. What are the key features of co-production and how are they shared and practiced by the social actors in the context of the case study?

3. What are the lived experiences of social isolation and loneliness of older people in the case study and how does this contribute to strategies and services designed to address these issues?

4. *What impact does co-production have for older people who are socially isolated and lonely?*

Background Information

1. Firstly, could you please tell me your name and a little bit about yourself?

2. Could you tell me about how you heard about (the project) and why you wanted to get involved?

3. Do you think you have ever felt lonely? (if no – what do you think it means to be lonely, how can it be characterised?)

4. Do you think you have ever been isolated? (If no – what do you think it means to be isolated and how can it be characterised?)

Mapping exercise

5. Let's have a look at this (mapping tool) and complete it. Think about friends, family, anyone who helps you, or you have a relationship with. Where would you place them on this relationship map?

6. Are there any people here who do more than one job (e.g. – is anyone a family member who also helps out at home)?

7. Question about quality of relationships

Co-production

8. Thinking about the project, how do you get involved?

9. Do the (delivery partners) actively involve you and others in all aspects? How does (the project) decide on what it should be doing?

10. Do you feel included?

11. Is information about (the project) easily available and easy to understand?

12. Do you think (the project) really understands what it is like to be lonely or isolated?


13. If so, what are the right things they need to do more of? If not, what are the wrong things they do and what could they do to do more of the right thing?

14. That is the end of my questions, is there anything else that we haven't talked about that we should talk about?

Ending

Thank you very much for taking the time to take part in this interview. It is very much appreciated. Please let me know if you have any other questions.

Appendix 13: Participant information sheet – volunteers and beneficiaries (v2)
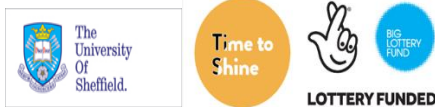
Participant Information Sheet : Volunteers and Beneficiaries

Research project: 'The role of co-production in combating social isolation and loneliness in later life: a case study of the Time to Shine programme'

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

1.   What is the project's purpose?

The research is taking place to find out more about social isolation and loneliness and about how people involved with Time to Shine services have a say in the way in which these services are developed and delivered.

It is anticipated that the project will last until September 2019 and will be submitted to the University of Sheffield for consideration for PhD for Louise Whitehead.

2.   Why have I been chosen?

You have been asked to take part in this research because you are involved with one of the services funded by the BIG Lottery 'Ageing Better' programme via the Time to Shine programme in Leeds. Around 25 participants have been asked to take part in this study.

3.   Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. You do not have to give a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please contact Louise Whitehead.

4.   What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

You will be invited to take part in two interviews, which take place on separate occasions. The first interview will involve talking about your relationships and contacts which may include family, friends, services, professionals or any other important contacts you may have in your life. The second interview will focus on social isolation and loneliness, using photographs and objects to help

think about these issues. You will also be asked to bring any objects or photographs to the interview that may help you to talk about talk about your experience. Each interview will last around 1 hour.

You will also be asked if you would like to take part in a Participatory Action Research group. This is a consultation group made up of everyone involved in the research. The role of this group is to advise on the progress of the research and the research methods used. Participation in this group is entirely voluntary, if you participate in the interviews you do not have to participate in this group. Each Participatory Action Research group meeting will last around 2 hours.

You may also be asked to take part in an observation, which will involve the PhD researcher observing events such as meetings and activity sessions and making notes to contribute to the research. You will be informed of each observation separately, in advance of the observation taking place. Involvement in the observation session is entirely voluntary and will only take place if everyone consents to the observation.

You may also be invited to take part in a focus group, made up of other volunteers and beneficiaries to ask you about your experiences working with Time to Shine staff. Your participation in this is entirely voluntary and it does not matter if you haven't been involved in other aspects of the research. Each focus group will last around 2 hours.

With your permission, the interviews, observations, Focus Group and Participatory Action Research group meetings will be recorded so they can allow the conversations to be listened to again. Before the recording starts, you will be asked again for your permission to record the conversations and you will be told when the recording has started.

Travel expenses will be reimbursed. If you need assistance with transport, please contact Louise Whitehead to discuss your requirements.

It is anticipated that the information gathered during the research will help to find out whether co-production can assist with combating social isolation and loneliness in later life.

5.   What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participating in the research is not anticipated to cause you any disadvantages or discomfort. The potential physical and/or psychological harm or distress will be the same as any experienced in everyday life.

6.   What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will contribute to the understanding of the experience of social isolation and loneliness in later life and be used to help make decisions about future support for people in these circumstances.

7.   Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team. If you agree to us sharing the information you provide with other researchers (e.g. by making it available in a data archive) then your personal details will not be included unless you explicitly request this.

Your real names and the names of the project you attend will not be used and you will be asked to provide a pseudonym for use in the in the final written version of this PhD research. Direct quotations from interviews will be used in a way which that means they cannot be connected to an individual person.

Although everything will be done to try to make sure no one can be identified from the information which they provide, there is a small possibility that you could be identified by others in the quotes drawn from your interviews or contributions to the Focus Group and Participatory Action Research group.

There is also a limit to confidentiality, is anything is discussed during the interviews that raises concerns that a child or adult may be at risk of abuse or neglect, then this information will be forwarded to the relevant safeguarding team.

8.   What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general.

9.   What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

All information about the research is confidential and your information will be collected, handled, processed and stored in a way which keeps it secure and is consistent with the Data Protection Act (1998).

All interviews, Focus Groups and Participatory Action Research groups will be recorded for transcription purposes only. The audio recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis. Once the information has been recorded, it will be transcribed. Louise Whitehead will be the only person who has access to this information. At this point the pseudonym you have selected will be used in the written transcription of the research, breaking the connection with your real name and any other personal details. The recording will then be deleted, and the written version of the interview, Focus Group, observation or Participatory Action Research group will be used for analysis.

The results of this research project will be shared with you by providing a summary sheet at the end of the project. If you wish to see a full copy of the research report, this will be made available on request. It is also anticipated that an event will be held for all those who are connected to Time to Shine to share information about the results.

This written version of your information will be stored until completion of the project, which is anticipated to be September 2019. It will then be archived with the Economic and Social Research Council repository. Due to the nature of this research it is very likely that other researchers may find the data collected to be useful in answering future research questions. We will ask for your explicit consent for your data to be shared in this way.

10.   Who is organising and funding the research?

The Economic and Social Research Council is providing funding for this research. It has been jointly organised by the University of Sheffield and Time to Shine.

11.   Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

12.   Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Department of Sociological Studies. The University of Sheffield's Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

13.   What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research?

If you have any complaints about your treatment during this project by Louise Whitehead, in the first instance you can contact either Andrea Wigfield from the University of Sheffield. If something serious happens which causes you harm during or following your particiPation in the project, please contact Rachel Koivunen from the Time to Shine programme. Please see contact details below. If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the Head of Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield University. If your complaint related to how your personal data has been handled, you can contact either Anne Cutler who is the Data Protection Officer at the University of Sheffield or the Supervisory Authority

If you do decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep, along with a copy of the signed consent form.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research project.

14.   Contact Details for further information

Principal Researcher

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Data Protection Officer

 Anne Cutler

The University of Sheffield, Western Bank, Sheffield S10

The Information Commissioner – Supervisory Body

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745

Appendix 14: Participant Consent Form (v2)

Research project: 'The role of co-production in combating social isolation and loneliness in later life: a case study of the Time to Shine programme'

Participant Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. If you have any questions please refer to the information sheet provided or ask either Louise Whitehead as the lead researcher, or a member of the Time to Shine programme. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep and refer to at any time.

	YES	NO
Taking Part in the Project		
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 05/07/2018 or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.)		
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.		
I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include taking part in a focus group or interview.		
I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time; I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw.		
How my information will be used during and after the project		
I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.		
I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.		
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.		
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.		

I give permission for the focus group and/or interview information that I provide to be deposited in Economic and Social Research Council so it can be used for future research and learning.		
So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.		

Name of participant)   **(Date)**   **(Signature)**

(Lead researcher)   **(Date)**   **(Signature)**

Copies: Once this has been signed by all parties, the participant should receive a signed and dated copy of this form . A copy will also be kept with the main documents in a secure location.

Appendix 15: Focus Group Schedule

Focus Group Schedule

Thank you for agreeing to take part in a focus group. This is taking place as part of the PhD research 'The role of co-production in combating social isolation and loneliness in later life: a case study of the Time to Shine programme'.

I just want to check that you have received the information sheet about the project and the consent form?

With your permission, I would like to record the discussion. This will allow the conversation to be listened to again if needed. Is it all right with you to record the interview?

Are there any questions you have before we begin?

1. Can we please begin by introducing ourselves?

Before you got involved

2. How did first find out about the opportunity to get involved in this commissioning process?

3. What attracted you to it / what was it that made you think it was for you?

4. What information did Time to Shine provide once you had expressed an interest?

5. What support did Time to Shine (or others) provide to help you to prepare for this task?

6. In you opinion, was this the right amount of support?

7. In your opinion, is there anything that could have been done differently?

During the process

8. Was the process clear? Did you know what you were trying to achieve?

9. In your view, were the right people involved?

10. How did you feel the process worked?

11. In your opinion, were all peoples' voices heard equally, or was there an imbalance? (If there was an imbalance, how was this managed?)

12. In your opinion, Were there any barriers to participation for you or others?

13. In your opinion, how successful was the process?

Following the process

14. On reflection, how did you feel about the process?

15. How much independent decision-making did your commissioning group have?

16. In your opinion, what created the right conditions for this to work well?

17. Finally, what suggestions would you make for next time?

18. That is the end of my questions, is there anything else you would like to add or think is important to talk about?

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this focus group. If you have any further questions please contact me.