



Example of work: Bradford City Council Older People's Service

"It's a privilege to work with older people." (Practitioner, Bradford)

Bradford asked for input to enable the older people's service to grow a practice approach that reflects the skilled and unique nature of work with older people. This work was commissioned because there is a growing and increasingly diverse population of older people in Bradford. Bradford also wanted to build understanding of how to develop co-production with older people.

The aims were to:

- Recognise and value this area of practice
- Build confidence, capabilities and support for practitioners
- Improve the experiences and outcomes of older people, carers and families.

Firstly, I scoped best practice nationally and identified good practice principles, evidence, examples and resources, including messages from lived experience. Then, I met with managers and practitioners online and in-person to share learning and ideas, discuss strengths and aspirations, and identify development and support needs.

From this, I created a Practice, Development and Support resource. This resource builds on Bradford's existing practice approach in adult social care. However, it also sets out the specific considerations of working with people in later life. It then provides ideas about how to develop and support practice with older people. This includes opportunities for co-production with older people and learning from other places about how to develop this. The resource covers evidence and experience about:

- Why practice with older people is unique and what matters to older people
- What good practice looks like and capabilities to support this
- What professional development is helpful and how to increase support for staff.

This project was a pleasure to lead. It highlighted evident strengths in existing practice and led to clear messages about how practice, professional development and support could be enhanced. Managers and practitioners valued the opportunity to reflect and discuss issues. They appreciated being heard and the chance to share good practice and to learn from each other.

When asked to sum up what it's like working with older people, practitioners in Bradford used the words *privilege* and *challenge* the most. They highlighted the great practice that occurs, their commitment to empowerment and the expertise that practitioners bring. **This resource aims to help sustain that expertise by actions that recognise, celebrate, strengthen and support good practice.**

Bradford has already acted to gather examples of practice that can support learning. The report is being used for student and newly qualified social worker development, and is informing specific training courses. It is also helping with initial actions to increase older people's voice.

"Thanks to our brilliant friend Geraldine Nosowska for undertaking this work with us. We have been exceptionally fortunate to work with someone who is widely considered to be the 'go to' expert across older people's social work. She continued to inspire us."

(Rob Mitchell, Principal Social Worker)