



CONSORTIUM
for stronger lgbt+ communities

**EMBEDDING THE LGBT+
OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK**

MindOut Case Study

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This Case Study has been produced by Traverse, who worked with MindOut during 2020 as part of a Connect Fund project.

Consortium extends huge thanks for their hard work and efforts as part of this project.

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The Connect Fund has been set up to strengthen the social investment market in England to better meet the needs of charities and social enterprises. Known as the 'Social Investment Infrastructure Fund', it is a £6 million fund for grants and investments that Barrow Cadbury Trust manages in partnership with Access—the Foundation for Social Investment.

www.connectfund.org.uk



Barrow Cadbury Trust charity number 1115476

MindOut: Using the Framework to fulfil the potential of co-production

Organisation background

MindOut is a mental health service run by and for lesbians, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people with experience of mental health issues. Based in Brighton, they work to improve the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQ communities and to make mental health a community concern.

MindOut has been running for 21 years offering a range of services including: advocacy, advice & information, peer support group work, low-cost counselling, peer mentoring, befriending, online support and suicide prevention. The organisation also campaigns to end stigma about mental health and to reduce health inequality and provides training for health service providers in order to raise the standard of mainstream services.

Key drivers of change

MindOut have embedded co-production and client participation within a wide range of their services. Based on anecdotal feedback from the people they support, they were confident in co-production as a good practice and that they were doing it 'well'. However, the organisation had never systematically explored what benefits co-production had for the people they support, their staff, or their organisation. In addition, they found little other evidence produced by other organisations.

Use of the Common Outcomes Framework

The Framework inspired MindOut to develop their understanding of their co-production activities, the impact they have, and start to build the LGBTQ specific evidence base around co-production.

MindOut first developed a theory of change that mapped out the anticipated short- to long-term benefits of co-production for their users of services, their staff and their organisation. They then asked users of services who had regularly participated in co-production activities to sense-check the anticipated outcomes.

MindOut are now developing:

- An evaluation framework that outlines the anticipated co-production outcomes that they will measure.
- A set of quantitative questions to measure the benefits of co-production, which they will build into existing data collection methods with staff and users of services.
- A set of semi-structured interview questions to use with staff to explore their interpretation of co-production, what benefits it holds for them and how MindOut could develop co-production activities.

Impact of the Common Outcomes Framework

MindOut's exploration of co-production has already helped some staff feel more confident when inviting users of services to be part of their co-production activities. Staff are more confident in how co-production can help bring about significant changes in people's lives, rather than just short-term benefits or organisational benefits.

They are still developing their framework and data collection tools, but anticipate that these (and the data from them) will help them:

- Adopt a more structured and nuanced approach to co-production practices, through better understanding when and where it works best (rather than using it as a 'blanket' approach)
- Help staff to better understand all the benefits of co-production activities which, in turn, will help them support people to participate in them
- More clearly demonstrate the benefits of co-production (and its importance) to some funders

In addition to this, reviewing Consortium's Framework helped staff feel like they are part of a bigger picture, working towards a common set of outcomes similar to other LGBTQ organisations across the country.

Key reflections

MindOut reflected that staff were worried at the beginning that this work could quickly become a complicated process and not produce anything of real use.

However, staff have since found it to be a fascinating process and discovered all sorts of potential benefits of co-production that they had not thought of before. For example, the different benefits co-production might hold for staff such as increased understanding of people's needs, increased empathy for different lived experiences and improved job satisfaction.

MindOut recommend that, when exploring ways of working, organisations:

- Ensure that staff have a basic understanding of outcomes and theories of change when embarking on this type of exploratory work (where there is limited information available to support you).
- Convert draft outputs such as theory of change diagrams into simpler, more accessible diagrams for users of services to sense-check and adequately support people when engaging in discussion of outcomes.

Continuing on the journey

MindOut will implement their new evaluation framework and data collection approaches over the next year and revisit how well they are working later this year.