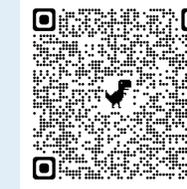




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Background

BeeZee Bodies (BZB) provide weight management and prevention services in England for adults and children, young people and families. In 2021, BZB were commissioned to expand their services in a range of new areas.

Research questions:

- How can BZB best engage diverse communities?
- How can evidence and insights be considered from a range of professional perspectives and utilised to shape and influence service development?
- If and how can BZB work towards the co-production of services?



Methodology

The project used an 'embedded ethnography' approach which involved:

- Participant observation of internal BZB meetings
- Primary data collection (focus groups & interviews with BZB staff, service users, commissioners and external partners)
- Qualitative research training for BZB staff
- Participation of the research team in a 'strategic oversight group' (SOG) with other external partners

This project was commissioned by BeeZee Bodies (www.beezeebodies.com).

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Findings

Service delivery

Adults and children who used BZB services (and parents) had an overall positive experience with BZB services and reported making positive changes (e.g., to portion sizes, shopping and cooking habits).

'I really enjoyed the course... I found it really helpful with reading labels, I didn't have a clue about going into the supermarket and...I just found it really helpful and everyone really encouraging'
Adult service user.

For BZB, delivering the commissioned services in new places, in a limited amount of time, posed challenges for community engagement. They made ongoing adaptations to services to ensure they were inclusive of diverse people and communities.

Working with people and communities

BZB are interested in co-producing services in the future, as well as using asset-based community development approaches. But there were challenges in defining what co-production might look like in practice, and how commissioning processes can support or create barriers to developing and delivering services with people and communities.

Evidence and Insights

BZB engagement and insights officers, recruited from local communities, carried out focus groups and interviews with service users and community members, exploring experiences of health, diet and weight management, and how this related to culture and lifestyle.

Establishing trust was more difficult in areas where BZB were previously unknown, and where short-term funding created uncertainty around longer-term benefits for individuals and communities.

'...maybe people in the future...they're not going to trust you again... You have been delivering this service and when you tell them that [it's] going to stop... it's going to affect [trust]'

BZB staff member

The learning from this work has informed changes to current services as well as longer-term plans for service development with communities.



Recommendations

1. Active recruitment of staff from local communities to establish and develop relationships and trust.
2. Adequate training & support for staff in data collection, safeguarding, and equality, diversity, and inclusion.
3. Involve service users and community groups in service planning, delivery, and organisational planning.
4. Develop a flexible approach to working with people and communities, taking into account interest and availability.
5. Ensure planning for insights data collection considers capacity to process, analyse and utilise data to effectively.
6. Allow time to build and maintain relationships and trust.
7. Further research exploring the commissioning of co-produced services would be beneficial for future practice development.