

John Nawrockyki interview transcript

My name is John Nawrockyki. I'm the Statutory Director of Adult Social Services for the London Borough of Greenwich. I also manage Supported Housing Services and we have a small health and equalities team. Within the next five to ten years I'd like to see a significant increase in the number of user led organisations and in the influence that service users have on our major commissioning process. Because, we have to have a total commitment to commissioning for improved outcomes for people, whether that's improved health and wellbeing, improved personal independence, an improved contribution to the social life of the community, our commissioning has to be to improve those outcomes. I believe that the way you can maximise that is by maximising the influence of service users and service carers in shaping commissioning as well as service provision so user led organisations don't just have to be service providers, they can be the providers of information, advice, guidance and support. They can be the advocates for people who want to challenge the way that we're delivering our service. Or they can actually assist us in our commissioning. It's not impossible that we would want to commission a user led organisation to help us develop a service specification for newly emerging need. I think my vision is the maximisation of commissioning for outcomes and the maximisation of the viable user led contribution within that process.

We could give them a very simple form of business planning: here's your income, here's your expenditure, these are the future needs, what's your five year projection? So, we have things off the shelf, as quite large public sector commissioners, which we can share with voluntary organisations and help them develop their approach so that they're fit for purpose in terms of developing a contractual relationship. I think we can also help them understand how our policies are emerging around the role of service users, the voice of carers. Again, it's this issue about communication and clarity and a shared purpose because, at the end of the day you want any relationship to be a win-win relationship.

Any council must have a local strategy for its people, that must have a vision of where things are going to be in five years or ten years, that vision needs to encapsulate current government policies and priorities. I think that needs to be published and communicated quite widely, but great clarity about the priorities that the council has. I think we need to work to encourage user led organisations and voluntary sector organisations and give the sector confidence that the council has confidence in them as potential service providers. That could be for existing or future user led organisations. I think there's the potential for existing voluntary organisations to move towards being more user led and actually I think the council can demonstrate some leadership itself in encouraging that process. So I think there are quite a few things as a major public sector commissioner, that you can do to shape the potential ULO response.

We've actually published quite widely the councils priorities, whether it's in social care or young people's services, leisure and culture services, we've actually published the councils priorities, so all people who are potential service providers have got full understanding of what the council wishes to achieve. We've then got very clear processes and we're trying to make them proportionate in terms of, perhaps, the value the services because traditionally, you might have had quite complicated commissioning processes for relatively low amounts of money. We're trying to bring the bureaucracy in line with the value of the contract. We've also tried to offer advice and information to potential providers about the councils own commissioning and procurement processes so they know what we have to do to meet our standing orders for example and to contract properly and legally as a public sector body.

It's about offering support, support for infrastructure, support for methods, even support with seedcorn funding. You might want to spend some money on facilitating an infrastructure organisation. So, for example, we have Greenwich Action for Voluntary Services and they help out with things like specifications, model contracts, employment law. Because a lot of this can be quite daunting, particularly for user led organisations. So I think the council funding an infrastructure organisation is a vital way of supporting the development of vol-orgs and ULOs.