



Impact Report 2022-23



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INTRODUCTION

Much of our work in the 2022-23 year has been about relationships. Old clients have popped up to highlight new opportunities. New projects have highlighted different ways of thinking about what “family” means. Trial workshops showed just how much people value 1:1 time, even just ten minutes that are a chance to take a breath from the day-to-day. And we welcomed a new member of the Telescope family - co-founder Sarah’s son Oscar!

Relationships are really the bedrock of the work we do as Telescope. As we’ve always said, “all systems are built on relationships - relationships between people”. Going forward, our simplest and greatest hope is that the examples and stories we tell here, and the tools and thought pieces we will continue to share online, can serve as inspiration to you all. Put relationships at the heart of your life. Think about your work as a series of relationships - how can you nurture them, improve them, bolster them, to make your work more effective?

Keep your eyes peeled for more tools and guidelines appearing on our website or via our newsletter - we’re looking at ways to open-source more of our work in the coming months, to help enable a wider ripple effect. If you have ideas for how we can go about that process effectively to foster empathetic relationships that build a better world, we would love to hear from you.

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Unless our communities have people with the right relationships, unless our staff have the right skills and capabilities, unless we have the right ways of working, the right policies and incentives, the right assets and resources, no amount of technology and data is likely to make much difference.

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Eddie Copeland, LOTI, 26th July 2023



Our key reflections

Co-design is a buzzword used a lot in our area of work. The most well-understood version of it involves designing processes and services in partnership with residents, rather than engaging them in the more traditional consultation processes. In our work we've tried to do the same, also bringing in the voices of frontline workers who interact with service users on a daily basis. We know that co-design is still hard to do - we've not been able to do nearly as much in-person workshoping with Post-Its and real-life people as we'd like to! But we have seen some examples of great practice, whether through [innovation projects for policy development](#) or [scientific research](#). The beauty of co-design, we think, is that it can look different in many different scenarios and still be highly effective.

Earlier in the year [we reflected on](#) our approaches and practice in comparison to the Democracy Network's principles for collaborative change. We've also been reflecting, as we launch three new projects for the 2023-24 year, on the kinds of projects we want to focus on. Our original, and still core, approach is simple: connecting frontline workers with policymakers to design policy that is both realistic and ambitious in its target outcomes. Over the years, we've run pair-based programmes, group trainings, and mentoring to connect frontline and policy. We have also, though, run programmes on more of a consultancy model, brought in by a government department or local Council team to engage wider stakeholders in a co-design project. Both involve frontline workers and government representatives, but in different ways. In our experience, we've seen the real "aha" moments for civil servants in more intimate groups, allowing those individuals to really see clearly how they can make their work more connected to the frontline. That "aha" moment is perhaps more diluted in the larger programmes, where civil servants interact with a much wider range of stakeholders - but those projects often lend themselves much more to change in the short-term, because of the buy-in (and often direct project funding) that comes along with them. Read on for more details on the different kinds of projects we've completed this year.

Grand Avenues: strategy workshops

Participants: Senior Ministry of Justice Policy Official

We know that the current probation system is not delivering effectively on its aims to protect the public and reduce reoffending, with 3 recent reports from the inspectorate of London delivery units judged as 'inadequate'. Our society urgently needs more innovative, community-centred and asset based approaches to demonstrating reduced harm and reoffending, that can improve outcomes for a whole area.

The Ely + Caerau area of Cardiff is known as an area of high deprivation, with high rates of intergenerational offending and reoffending among adult males in particular. However, the area also has a strong sense of community spirit and shared identity, with an active third sector working locally. So there was a great opportunity to showcase an asset-based community development approach in Ely + Caerau. We joined the Grand Avenues project in August 2021, working with multiple stakeholders from probation officers and people on probation through to restorative justice charities and MoJ team members. Read more on this project [here](#).

The Ely + Caerau example was seen as a great opportunity to change probation practices on the ground and to gain direct feedback on what works to inform policy decisions, for the probation system as well as the wider design and deployment of wider public services for communities. Given our broad understanding of the project, and our ability to take a holistic perspective, we were asked to put together a comprehensive evaluation of the project, including best practices and recommendations for how to roll this kind of work out more broadly across Wales, before facilitating two strategy workshops to support applications for further funding and backing from the Ministry of Justice.

“

The evaluation from a strategy perspective was exactly what we were looking for, what we needed...the good news is that [it showed] there is good evidence to indicate that this is working.

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Policy Profession

Participants: 8 participants from Policy and Operational Delivery Professions

Policy Profession is the body that oversees all those making public policy in the civil service. They asked us to design a mentoring programme that would connect policymakers with the Operational Delivery Profession. Of course, we jumped at the opportunity. The core purpose of Telescope is to bridge policy and practice, and we were delighted to see this idea being driven from within the civil service.

We delivered a seven-session mutual mentoring programme designed as a combination of group sessions and individual pair work. We took our mentors on a journey to experience how strong and effective policy-frontline relationships can work, encouraging them to pioneer a new way of working. They practised core skills in:

- Active listening - to build human connection and discover each others' shared values, and hold each other accountable on their personal and team goals;
- Journey mapping - to share insights about the experience of a service user and challenges in frontline delivery;
- Unpacking the "black box of policymaking" - to build a collective understanding about how public policy is made;
- Prototyping solutions - to enable bold visions with respect to the shared challenges they face.



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This programme has boosted my confidence hugely, I feel much more driven. It's made me think about my career not from the perspective of 'what gaps do I need to fill' but 'what skills do I already have that I could be using better.'

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Policy Profession

This was a fascinating experience for us as it was our first time delivering a programme in partnership with a central government training body, seeing a different part of the “black box”. It also challenged us to think critically about how we pair our participants. More than 50 people applied for 10 spots, with a strong skew in favour of policy participants. We ended up with 4 pairs, matching not only policy / frontline pairs in the same department, but also civil servants from different departments who had comparable experience and could learn from each other in other ways (e.g. gaining skills of operational management, learning about the DWP’s relationship with apprenticeships). Read more in our blog [here](#).



“ This really helped me “relate to the reality” of policy roles and how we’re both grappling with the same rules. ”

Southwark Community Power workshop

Participants: 11 members of the Southwark Towards Community Power Working Group

In January 2024 we were invited to share our approach and best practices with the Towards Community Power working group in Southwark Council - a network set up to enable better engagement with residents and stop people falling through the net.

Our workshop, “Innovating with design methods in the public service”, was designed as a “crash course” in empathy-based innovation. We reiterated active listening principles and had the group practise them, before discussing how to better connect the different silos in the council. We were very inspired by the great work these teams are doing on the frontline to support and empower our communities, in lots of ways big and small.

“ When we talked about challenges, although we expressed ourselves differently, we were talking about the same challenges, and our own sense of the power we have to make a difference. ”

Crisis workshop - Crisis as a housing provider

Participants: 15 participants including Crisis staff and people with lived experience of homelessness

The Venture Studio at Crisis is an innovative initiative investing in social startups that create housing-related solutions, all to help make ending homelessness a reality. Much of Crisis' work is informed by their lived experience panel, and they wondered how best to bring that panel into the assessment process for new projects. The Crisis team wanted to improve the way they co-designed and co-produced their work, by practising it in a workshop generating ideas for how Crisis could play a role as a housing provider.

Our ideation workshop brought together frontline workers, Crisis staff from the Venture Studio, and their lived experience panel, using prototyping templates to support the generation of ideas with impact and real life experience at their core. This workshop helped Crisis prototype how co-design can work to generate, design and deliver new ideas around housing.



“

There was generally a very open, relaxed environment so credit to you for facilitating that

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OUR IMPACT

WHAT DO OUR PARTICIPANTS SAY?

The data below is taken from our workshop evaluations, to July 2023.

4.13

average sense of empowerment among participants (/5) *

84%

made new connections

79%

gained new insights

88%

gained new skills

98%

enjoyed it

86%

would recommend to a colleague/friend

36%

of participants are frontline workers

29%

of participants are policy workers

4%

of participants are experts by experience

327

participants to date

*How empowered do you feel now vs. when you started the training

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Greenwich Community Resource Strategy

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has commissioned a new Community Resource Strategy, as a successor to their previous VCS strategy. Voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations often form the supportive membrane within otherwise increasingly isolated communities, and the Council wants to better understand how to efficiently and effectively support them. The strategy will focus specifically on the assets (libraries, community centres, parks, leisure centres) that also play a part in creating a community, exploring how they are used, and how they support the vibrant voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Greenwich.

Our work will aim to help the Council better understand how the needs of residents relate to the Council's provision/support of community resources, allowing this provision to be better targeted to reflect the needs of residents and the wider VCS sector in Greenwich. Read our [first blog](#) on the project and look out for our final Strategy in early 2024.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Young Carers

The Carers Trust, as part of the wider Young Carers Alliance group, are planning to develop a Covenant for Young Carers to be published in time for the Young Carers Action Day 2024. This document will constitute a promise from the nation that young carers and young adult carers will be treated fairly, to which employers and local authorities may pledge their commitment.

In order to develop this draft document, the Young Carers Alliance is engaging relevant policy and other stakeholders from an early stage to ensure buy-in, as well as involving young carers themselves in its co-design. Our role as Telescope here is to bring together all these different perspectives and help draft the Covenant for Young Carers, informed by the concerns and priorities of young carers and young adult carers.

Over summer 2023, a series of consultations were held with young carers and organisations that work with them to gather their insights on the covenant. We will be running a series of stakeholder engagement activities and co-design workshops which will build on these insights gathered over the summer. We will engage policymakers and other relevant stakeholders in this discussion, and to seek their input and ideas for a future draft Covenant.

Family Connect

As a society, we know that family ties are important - those ties to people who support you (relatives, carers, friends, etc) can act as an anchor in your life. In the justice system these ties are particularly important, contributing strongly to the wellbeing of people on probation or in custody, as well as improving outcomes in terms of onward progression and rehabilitation.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

In order to encourage a family-centred approach to justice, Family Connect brings together stakeholders from across the whole justice system in Wales (including G4S, the police, HMPPS, and other). This work is about creating a forum for sharing best practice about family-centred approaches and bringing people together to support in this work.

Telescope will be running a series of workshops in the 2023-24 period aiming to support Family Connect group members and wider stakeholders. We will seek to ensure that:

- Family Connect group members feel motivated and re-energised about the project.
- Members experience a feeling of confident optimism that participation in this work will improve the outcomes of people we are connected to – they feel they have the right approach/priorities/membership to transform how the justice system in Wales supports families and significant others.
- Participants fully understand the value of the expertise they share within their work together and can identify our shared goals, opportunities and challenges.
- Participants understand the pain points and barriers within the system, and how they can overcome them including what immediate steps could be taken.
- Participants learn about what is working in different parts of Wales in terms of family-centred work, to inspire them to be ambassadors and spread the word – and are inspired to champion, embody and share that innovation in their respective organisations.

We will be building on our experience with Grand Avenues to create safe spaces for open conversation and realistic action planning, not always an easy task within the complexities of the justice system.

Thank you

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Contact



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