

BeeZee Bodies Research Project: Summary Report

February 2023

What was this project about?

[BeeZee Bodies](#) (BZB) provide **weight management services** (see Jargon Explainer at the end of the document) to adults, children, and families in England. In 2021 BZB were given funding to develop new services in London, Birmingham, and Bristol.

BZB asked researchers from the [University of Hertfordshire](#) (UH) to do research to understand how the new services were working, how future services could be developed, and how local people and communities could be involved. This document is a summary of the project report. The full report is available here: [Link to full report](#)

What did the researchers do?

During December 2021 and July 2022 we:

- Spoke to 23 people who were using a BZB service (children, parents/carers, and adults) in London, Birmingham, and Bristol. We also spoke to 33 BZB staff, 4 other professionals working with BZB and 4 **commissioners** (see Jargon Explainer).
- Went to 38 BZB staff meetings and made notes about what happened.
- Helped train staff who worked in BZB services to do their own interviews and focus groups with people who use BZB services.
- Were part of an advisory group with people who work for BZB and other people who are experts in **asset-based community development, ethical marketing, and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)** (see Jargon Explainer). This advisory group met weekly and helped BZB to think about how they could work best with people and communities.

We then analysed all this information. Our main findings are summarised below.

What did we find out?

Experience of BZB services

Users of BZB adult and child and family services:

- Were generally happy with BZB services. They said that they had changed things like portion sizes at mealtimes and how they shopped and cooked.
- Particularly enjoyed the interactive parts of BZB sessions, which they found useful and said they would like to do more. For example, individual conversations with staff, and tasks where they could put into practice what they had learned, were particularly useful for children.

BZB staff said that:

- Starting services in new places was sometimes difficult as they did not always have enough time to get to know people and places.
- It was important to be able to adapt services so that they worked for different people, for example including more food suggestions from different countries and cultures.
- Delivering services in new areas has created opportunities for BZB to develop their services in partnership with local people and communities.

Finding out what works and why

- BZB recruited new staff who were from the areas in which they were working. This helped to involve local people and communities and learn what would work best for them in the future.
- BZB collected information to help them understand which groups of people were (or were not) using their services, and what would help them to do so. Staff need training and support with research skills and to work with people and communities.
- BZB staff spoke to people who used BZB services, and other people living in areas where they provided services, about their experiences of health, diet and weight management, and how this related to their culture, lifestyle and community life.
- Sometimes it was hard to involve local people and communities in areas where BZB had not worked before. BZB needed more time to get to know these communities and find out how best to involve and work with them.
- BZB have used what they have learned to make changes to their current services and ways of working with local people and communities. This learning will also help them create longer-term plans for how to develop their services with people and communities.

Working with people and communities

BZB are interested in developing future services with, and by, the people who might use them. This may include **co-production** or **asset-based community development** (see Jargon Explainer).

- BZB staff explored what co-production of their services would look like, and how this could be done. People working with BZB agreed that they should involve people and communities when designing and developing future services. But it is not easy to know what co-production might look like in practice, and how it might work best for the people and communities BZB works with, or may work with in the future.
- The way services like BZB are funded can make it difficult to develop services *with* and *by* people and communities, rather than delivering services *to* them.
- Services like BZB need time and resources to get to know local people and communities better. They also need to involve people and communities more in the design and development of their services.

Recommendations

- Recruit staff from local communities to establish and develop relationships and trust.
- Ongoing training and support for staff in research skills, safeguarding, and equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Involve local people and community groups in planning, delivering, and evaluating services, and in how BZB works as an organisation.
- Work with people and communities in ways and at times that work for them and allow enough time to build and maintain relationships and trust.
- When planning to collect information about how well services are working, think about the time and people needed to use this data well and how service users could be involved in this.
- More research is needed on how services like BZB can be commissioned (funded) so that they can be developed and delivered with and by people and communities (e.g. **co-production**).

Jargon explainer

Asset-based community development: a way of working with people and communities that helps them to realise and develop their strengths. It involves using what is already in the community and then working together to build on the resources and skills that are already there:

<https://www.nurtureddevelopment.org/about-abcd/>

Commissioners: people who decide how government or other money should be spent, for example people working in local authorities (councils) or NHS Trusts who give money to organisations like BZB to deliver services, and look at impact (what difference those services make) and outcomes (who services help and how).

Co-production: a service or organisation working together in equal partnership with the people and communities who use the services, sharing power and responsibility for designing, delivering and evaluating a service. E.g., <https://www.coproductioncollective.co.uk/>

Ethical marketing: BZB are working with an organisation called Franses (<https://franses.co/>) to look at how promote what they do ways that match their values, and are transparent, open, and honest.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI): working in ways that ensure fair treatment and opportunity for all and avoid prejudice and discrimination.

Weight management services: services that help people to make long term, sustainable changes towards a healthier lifestyle.