

Slough's Co-production Guide



Slough's Co-production Network

This resource is for health and adult social care staff to support them when involving Slough residents in shaping services and policies. It has been designed by members of the Slough Co-production Network that have lived experience of using health and social care.



What can we learn from each other?



Work with us not for us

What Co-production means to us?

Co-production is about people using services working together in equal partnership with staff in health and adult social care services. We believe that this approach helps find shared solutions to supporting:

- independence and improve outcomes for local people
- a person and community centred approach in the design and delivery of services
- residents accessing information.

Why this approach?

Health and adult social care staff should use this when they are first thinking about working with people who use services in a meaningful way. Working towards co-production should not be a tick box exercise, so before you start you should consider:

- how do we want to involve people who use services?
- what do we want to learn?
- how can we ensure that people are supported so they can meaningfully contribute?

The barriers

There are often obstacles that prevent professionals from working with people who use services in a meaningful way. These could be:

- tunnel vision - only seeing something from one point of view
- work load and time pressures
- lack of understanding and awareness
- a gap in what the professionals know and what people who use services experience
- the professionals own experiences of trying something before that hasn't worked
- focus on finances instead of people
- professionals assume that they know the answers
- language and use of jargon
- try to fit people who use services into boxes based on need.

Information is everything

Information is the key to successful engagement at every level. The people who use services who are involved, need to access the same information as the professional's, so they are able to contribute and engage in an informed way.

Remember to:

- provide people with all the information they need to make an informed contribution
- provide the information in enough time for it to be absorbed and understood, and offer support to people who may struggle to understand
- make sure the information provided is appropriate:
 - use plain English, no jargon or acronyms
 - consider using EasyRead for people with learning disabilities
 - think about the font size and layout
 - consider if the information should be provided in a different language
 - consider if the information should be provided in a different format (e.g. verbally, summary versions).

Things to consider...

For any type of engagement there are important things to bear in mind.

- Who to involve: have you considered carers, volunteers and other professionals?
- Times and days of meetings: do these suit the residents involved?
- Refreshments: does anyone attending have special dietary requirements?
- Transport and parking: how easy is it for people to get to the meeting?
- Communication: are there any language barriers?

Tip: Consider if the venue, time and day is culturally appropriate for those involved, for example, don't regularly arrange meetings at the same time as Friday prayers.

Tip: Make sure you know if anyone attending needs an interpreter or translator.

- Venue: is this appropriate for the people involved?

Tip: Aim to use 'neutral' locations that everyone will feel comfortable in. Consider access requirements and parking too.

Tip: Make sure you know how everyone wants to be communicated with between meetings - email, text, phone calls, letter etc.

- Format of engagement

Tip: Consider whether the engagement should be in person, online, a hybrid of the two, survey, one-to-one discussions, small workshops.

Tip: Sometimes professionals unintentionally create barriers by the way they present themselves; a suit can be intimidating.

The voices of people involved in Co-production in Slough



People don't fit into services - services should fit around people

Consultation

Consultation is the bare minimum engagement professionals should be aiming for. It is important that consultations are **not** tokenistic and **do affect change**. Consultation shouldn't just rely on surveys; you can learn a lot from a conversation.

Do:

- know who you're talking to
- provide all the information needed
- design a survey **with** some of the people it is aimed at
- use different formats; face to face, online, paper
- **listen** to the answers you are given
- tailor the consultation to what will work best for individuals
- make it engaging and worthwhile
- think about the language you are using (e.g. jargon, tone)
- feedback the outcome and next steps
- explain the constraints of the project, e.g. time and budget
- have an open mind
- allow plenty of time.

Don't:

- focus on negatives or needs
- assume you know the answer
- rely on surveys on their own.

Engagement

Engagement involves people who use services to a greater extent than consultation. It gives people more opportunities to express their views at different stages. This could be through attending meetings, workshops and forums.

Do:

- provide all the information needed
- be transparent about the role of the people involved
- be honest about how decisions will be made
- explain the constraints of the project, e.g. time and budget
- listen to the answers you are given
- feedback the outcome and next steps.

Don't:

- make assumptions
- rely on the same people - the 'usual suspects'.



It's not about my diagnosis or disability, it's about me.

Co-design

Co-design involves people who use services by designing services or projects based on their experiences and ideas. They have an equal role to play in part of the process, but not for the whole project.

Do:

- provide all the information needed
- respect and value what the people involved can offer
- understand that people are experts in their own experiences
- think outside the box
- focus on people, not services
- work at a pace that works for everyone involved
- agree from the beginning how decisions will be made
- feedback the outcome and next steps
- review and evaluate the co-design.

Don't:

- make assumptions about the people involved
- be afraid to ask questions.



Listen - forget what you think you know

Co-production

Co-production is what professionals should be aiming for. Professionals and people who use services work together in equal partnership to design, deliver and review services.

Do:

- involve people who use services from the very beginning
- be transparent about the limits of the project e.g. time, budget
- share responsibility
- agree how you will make decisions together
- agree what everyone's role will be
- agree how you will solve problems
- respect each other as equals, regardless of profession, experience or support needs
- provide training if necessary
- allow enough time to become a team
- make sure co-production is part of the reviewing process too
- work at a pace that suits everyone.

Don't:

- say its co-production when its not.



*Work with people in
equal partnership*

Involving people who find it hard to speak for themselves

There are many reasons why it may be more challenging to involve some people. Complex physical disabilities, dementia, mental health conditions and communication difficulties can make it hard for some people to communicate verbally, or to understand more complex issues.

Do:

- spend some time talking to individuals so you can try and understand their experiences
- work with those who know the individual best - both paid and unpaid support networks
- use technology and other communication aids
- think about what you are asking. Open ended questions can be more challenging so provide options.

Don't:

- make assumptions
- miss the opportunity to involve people who communicate differently.





What is listening?

"When you are listening it is natural to have your own thoughts. Try to turn this off and focus on what I am saying."

"When you really listen to people's stories, who knows what you could learn!"

"You can check that you've understood what I've said by asking me, that's okay."



We need to work with the people living with the issues we are trying to solve

Evaluation and feedback

It is important to always review and feedback about the outcome of your project. You should also evaluate how successfully you involved people who use services. This will enable you to learn and improve for next time.

It is important to tailor your evaluation for the people who were involved, using the same tips and ideas from this guide.

Resources

South East ADASS have worked with Oxford Brookes to develop a guide to Co-production in Adult Social Care. It can be found at ipc.brookes.ac.uk/files/publications/ADASS-SE-Co-production-Guide-Feb-2023-for-website.pdf

- SCIE Co-production Guide **Co-production: what it is and how to do it - SCIE**
- Co-Production Collective **Welcome to the Co-Production Collective!** (coproductioncollective.co.uk)
- TLAP ladder of participation **Ladder-of-coproduction.pdf** (thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk)

Contact

If you want more information about the Co-production Network please email: BelInvolved@slough.gov.uk or visit **Co-production - Slough Borough Council**

Case study:

Involving experts by experience in the recruitment of senior positions within Adult Social Care

"I was really pleased to be part of a stakeholder panel with other volunteer members of the Co-production Network to help select the right candidate for a senior position within Adult Social Care. We developed questions together relating to the job description and I felt my opinions were valued."

Gaye



The Co-production Network is a team!

We worked well with officers as equal partners and other volunteers to make sure the project was successful

We work well together - we don't judge each other even when we are not in agreement

We were part of a team, I am able to be honest about how I feel being a volunteer for the network

We had enough time to prepare what to say and work well together as a team



Change is challenging for everyone

Case study:

Involving a parent of an adult son with autism in helping promote Direct Payments

"When my son began to receive his support through Direct Payments his life improved dramatically. Due to his autism he lacked social skills making socialising difficult and preventing him from making friends. As a young man he was embarrassed to be 'tagging along' with his parents to social events. He was a lonely and unhappy young man. Once the Direct Payments were in place he was able to employ two Personal Assistants (carers) of his own age. They accompanied him to social events and encouraged him to mix with others and form friendships.

He is also able to talk to them about issues he finds difficult to discuss with us, his parents - and that we would find difficult to discuss with him! He is much happier now he has a social life, albeit with people on the autistic spectrum, and a small group of friends. His confidence in social situations generally has improved.

The Co-production Network were asked to be involved in promoting Direct Payments, as part of the wider ASC transformation programme. As a user of the service I was very pleased to be involved in the updating of the Direct Payments Brochure. I was able to use my experience to help review current information and make suggestions for improvement."

Sue



We have a mutual appreciation and understanding of each other's experiences of autism. We have a shared vision.

Case study:

Involving an expert by experience of Adult Social Care in commissioning the advocacy service

"I live in a supported living service in Slough and have experience of social care services.

As a member of the Co-production Network, I had a say in what the new advocacy service for the people of Slough should look like.

I was really pleased to be asked to get involved as I have personal experiences of using advocacy services.

What I did to help was hold meetings with other people in Slough that were also interested in advocacy.

I was part of the project group that was involved in choosing a new provider for the advocacy services. During the meeting, we shared ideas of what a good advocacy service should be. These were included in developing the new service.

I also helped interview the interested providers about what they could bring to Slough. I gave my opinions to those on the tender panel and was part of the decision about who the new provider should be for the advocacy service.

I have really enjoyed being part of this work and having a say! I feel excited about being part of the Co-production Network as it makes me feel like an important person."

Karen



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