A guide to co-production

This guide will explain what co-production is, how it works and why it is important. We encourage everyone to work in a co-productive way and always inspire people to work together.

This guide has been co-produced with the people we support. If you would like this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact marketing@makingspace.co.uk.
At Making Space we encourage everyone to work together in equal partnership. This includes the people we support and professionals that we work with.

What is co-production?

- Co-production is a way of working. It is a meeting of minds coming together to find a shared solution.
- It involves the people who access services working with organisations to create a service or decision that works for everyone.
- Co-production can involve any number of people and is all about sharing power and responsibility.
- It is a move away from a ‘them and us’ culture between organisations and people who access the services.
- Co-production is always encouraged when developing projects or services.

Why do we need co-production?

Working co-productively builds greater trust between people and develops a shared ownership of projects and services.

It improves wellbeing, helps build stronger communities and truly represents people and their wishes.

Taking part is about...

Valuing every person who each has a wealth of knowledge and expertise.

It’s all about discovering what matters to each person, and finding out their interests and what they like and enjoy.

By involving different people with different abilities, it creates an enjoyable experience where people feel comfortable to have their say.

Taking part is all about respecting diversity, people’s views and cultures and acting with honesty, trust and openness.

This gives everyone a fair chance to take part at all stages if they wish.

“Working co-productively builds greater trust between people.”
“I support co-production across all areas of Making Space, and the Making Change Group wish to see everyone taking part.”

Anne Broadhurst, Making Space trustee
Working together is about...

Working co-productively with organisations, services and groups is all about creating a great partnership.

By involving people who use services in the decision making process it makes the outcome relevant and accessible.

Working co-productively allows for different ways of working and new ideas as there is often more than one way to achieve something.

Working together and taking on board different opinions allows for flexible planning. It allows people to come up with creative ways to overcome boundaries, as well as identifying and reducing any barriers that may affect people’s ability to take part in the project or service.

It ensures good communication and sharing of information in ways that are appropriate to everyone involved.

It also encourages positive risk-taking.

By working together, it allows us to be confident in and have good reasons for the decisions being made.

Everyone can agree what is and isn’t acceptable and can review the progress together.

Working co-productively enables us to review what has and hasn’t worked well and suggest improvements.

It’s a great way of being proactive in making changes, understanding the effects of these changes on people and thanking and rewarding people for their contributions.
**Knowledge and learning is about...**

Finding out what is available locally and in your community.

It’s also important to use a number of different sources of information when working co-productively.

Having good access to different sources of information and learning and information helps with professional development for everyone.

By allowing time, having the resources and willingness to do things that are built around people and relevant to the local area is perfect for developing knowledge.

**Good practice example**

Our North Yorkshire dementia support service started a group for people living with dementia.

The group links in with the national dementia engagement and empowerment project (DEEP) programme, enabling people to help bring about changes in local communities and make them dementia friendly.

All group members share power and responsibility.

The group has campaigned for equality in the blue badge scheme, and championed the rights of people living with dementia to get out and about safely in their local area.

Our Lancaster Employment Development Service hold informal peer support groups, sharing ideas and experiences. Volunteers have developed the newsletter “Employ Me”, sharing information on community projects and what is available locally. They also cover topics such as benefits, mental health stigma, and how to start an online blog.

Please share any great work you’re doing with our team (contact details at the back).

**Useful links**

If you would like to find out more about co-production you can visit the below websites:

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) www.scie.org.uk

Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk

This guide has been co-produced with Making Space services and the Making Change group.
This guide has been co-produced by our Making Change group - a group of people who use services, volunteers and staff meeting regularly at Making Space in Warrington to work on central projects. Our group has studied and compiled ideas and suggestions from many people and services to create the guide.