

Hints and Tips

Effective co-production

Getting a shared understanding of co-production

Co-production is as much about *how* we plan and deliver public services as about what we do.

What services are co-produced?

In terms of the *what*, co-produced services for older people are often community-based activities.

- This is because these are services older people want, and because co-production happens more often when a new service is being planned.
- Co-production can also happen in existing services and in hospital-based services.
- There are lots of community-based services for older people that are developed and delivered by older people themselves. These complement public services rather than being co-produced with them.

Co-production happens in 2 situations.

- Individual people being part of planning and making support for themselves. This is also called Personalisation, or Self-directed support. It is also called Self-Management for people who have long-term health conditions.
- Groups of people working with public services to develop and produce the services that are used by many people.

Tip

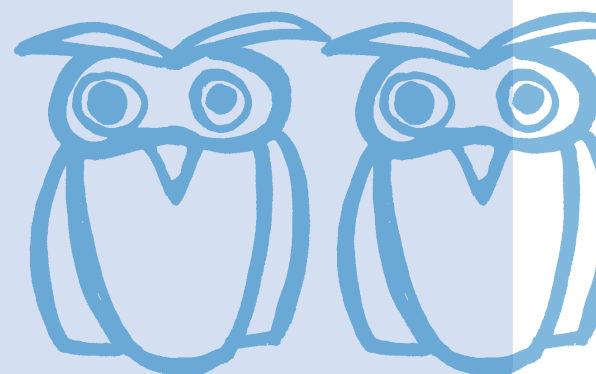
If you are not certain what someone is meaning when they refer to co-production, or if you think they mean something different to you:

- Ask them to explain what they mean.
- Ask for an example.

What co- production is

“Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change.”

Source: New Economics Foundation

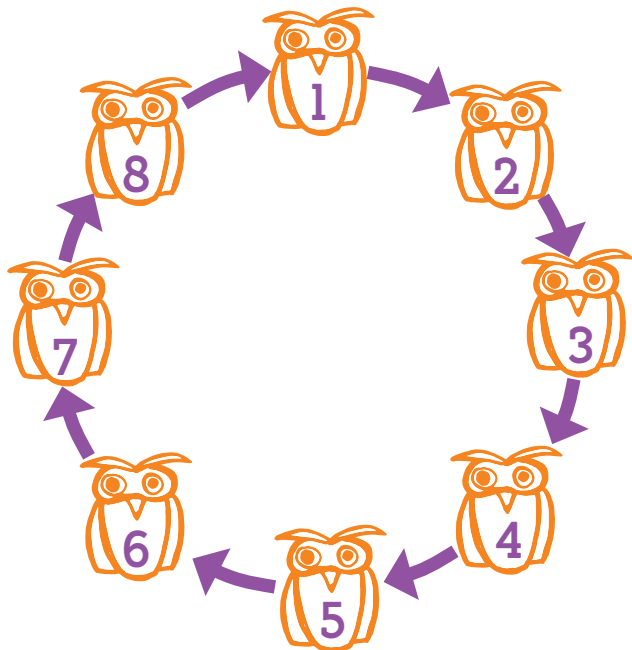


How does co-production happen?

In terms of the how, there are 3 aspects to co-production.

- Co-planning is when people who use services, or in the community, work with staff in public services to design the service. It includes identifying the ways in which people who use services, or people from the community, will be part of designing the service.
- Co-design is when people work together to design the service, including the form of co-delivery.
- Co-delivery is when people work together on the day-to-day delivery.

These are the stages for effective co-production in any context



1. Who needs to be part of this?
2. How will we support each other to do the work?
3. Agree what we need to do.
4. Agree what needs to be different because of the changes we made.
5. What else do we need to do this work well?
6. Agree who will do what, by when – both now and in the future.
7. Do the work.
8. Check to see what has changed because of our work together.

... which takes you back to stage 1

This is how it looks in practice

	Support for an individual	Services for older people
Co-planning	Each person is part of planning the support they get.	Older people are contributing their ideas on where the gaps are and on ways to meet those gaps.
Co-design	Each person is part of working out how a range of services will work for them, where and when they get support, how it links with being part of their community and so on.	Older people will be contributing to more of the details of how the service will work, where and when it is available, how it feels for the people getting support and for the people working to deliver the service, and whether - or in what ways - older people will be part of delivering the service.
Co-delivery	People are part of managing their health and wellbeing, or their care. Examples are taking more responsibility for their diet or how they exercise to help manage their symptoms.	Examples include older people as volunteer or paid workers, or having a peer support element to the service.
Notes	The examples of these approaches are growing.	There are lots of examples of co-planning and a growing number of examples of co-design. Co-delivery happens less often, especially for older people with higher support needs, but this is also growing.

Why co-production is important

Recently there is more focus on co-production and it is now highlighted in many policies and strategies for public services across Scotland and in many local NHS board and local authority areas.

- It brings in more people's ideas, skills and experiences, so the services that are co-produced are often more creative and use resources and approaches that people in public services may not have thought of.
- Co-produced services are more likely to reflect what people want and work in ways that are effective for the people using the services.

"Our first experience was when the Outreach Team asked us to help them plan their new service. We thought it might just be window dressing, but it wasn't. We helped make it a different type of service that is based around real life for older people."

"There is talk of services being led by older people but it can be very difficult to hand back to people when they are so used to things being done for them. It doesn't happen overnight."

"Services are given to people, but we have no say."

"Nurses need some help and time to learn to step back, talk to patients and work things out together, instead of telling people what to do. It's hard when staff have been taught that they - or the NHS - know what is best for people and have all the responsibility which goes with that."

Co-production of support for individual people

Tips for older people

Think about what you want to achieve first – such as keeping in touch with friends, seeing your family, continuing to enjoy hobbies, being independent as possible at home.

Then think about what type of support will help you and about what you can do to help keep yourself well [or independent, or active, and so on].

Talk to friends and family, as they may have good ideas. Find out about what other people in your circumstances have found helpful.

Be open to suggestions and advice from the staff. Ask them what they have found useful in enabling people to be as independent, etc. as they can be.

Tips for groups of older people

Find out about sources of advice and information to help people say what they want and be involved in their own support. The Local Help pages in Over the Fence have this for every Council area in Scotland.

Think about ways to help members or older people you know to get support and encouragement from other people. Ask people what they would find helpful.

Tips for staff working with older people

Go at the pace that is right for each older person.

Think about your role as facilitating and supporting someone to make changes in how they see and manage their situation or condition, instead of - or alongside - delivering services to them.

It helps when a whole team or service takes a co-production approach. That way staff can talk over things with colleagues if they are ever unsure about something, such as how they share managing risks with an older person and their family.

Remember that ideas about taking responsibility for our own wellbeing are new to many people who use health and care services. People who get support may need time to build up their confidence in this approach and in their own abilities and contribution.

Remember that older people, including people who need quite a lot of extra support, will have some things where they want to take as much control as they can, while there may be other things where they are content to let other people give more advice or have the larger part of decisions.

Co-production of services used by older people

Tips for older people's groups

Think about what the priorities are for the older people you know. Co-production includes older people taking the initiative and suggesting topics where you and the public services can work together.

You may be asked to send one or 2 people to join a working group or similar process.

- Say if you think this is not going to work well – for example, if you would prefer to have more people there to spread the effort, or to stop it being 2 older people and many more professionals.
- Work out who is going to be involved in the working group or whatever the process is. This is about working alongside other people and contributing and considering ideas. The person who feels most passionately about the topic may not be the best person, or at least not on their own.
- Part of co-production is keeping the process – how you work together – under review, and changing it as needed. Remember it is ok to say part-way through the process if you think there may be another way to work together that is better.

Have ways to keep checking back and asking older people what they think throughout the process.

Be open to the ideas and experiences that other people bring.

- If you are not sure why something is suggested, ask for more background.
- Asking for an example often helps.

Remember it is ok to say you want to take a bit of time to reflect on an idea or information.

If you feel that the people from the public services see the older people who are part of the co-production process as representatives of all older people in your area, remind them that you are contributing an older people's perspective and that they still have to check out the plans with more people.

Tips for staff in public services

Remember that co-production is about sharing the identification of the topic and the ideas about what a service aims to do, as well as the way public services operate.

Allow enough time for the process to work well.

- Remember that the other people involved – older people and others – may need more time to get ready to take part, prepare for discussions and talk to other people.
- If there is a limit on how much time you have, be open about this from the start.
- Ask everyone involved in the co-production process to help find ways to do as good a job as you can.

If there are features of the service you are co-producing that must be there – for example, to meet safety or good quality standards, or to keep within a budget – explain this to the other people involved. You can often agree that the outcome must be realised and at the same time be open to looking at other ways of achieving this outcome.

Think about how you pass on ideas and suggestions to people in other parts of the public sector. One of the strengths of co-production is that it throws up good ideas that do not always fit neatly into the way public services are currently organised. Some of the ideas can be followed up by people in other services or teams.

Remember that co-production sits alongside good participation by older people. You still have to check out with the wider community and other interested groups for services that are co-produced in the same way as you would for services developed by public services on their own.

“You need to have the time to talk to people. In practice there are compromises because people don't think they have enough time. But it often takes almost as long to do it badly as to do it well.”

“Our experience is that it's good to be honest about the financial context. We do need to make the available money go further and we need new ways of providing services and support.”

“It is unfortunate when people think the only reason we are moving to more co-production is to save money. Some of us have been trying to achieve this for a long time because it is a better way to do things.”

“Our message for Commissioners, Strategy Planning groups and the like is: Be more chilled. Relax. Spend time on topics such as community initiatives and small projects that the voluntary sector are working on as you do for the big projects that affect the NHS and local authority and have lots of money involved.”

“Our suggestion is to try reversing the agenda every so often. Literally. Start with tea and the chat that happens at the end of meetings. Then take Any Other Business - anything that people want to raise. Then take the agenda items that always get left to the end and get missed or rushed when people run out of time.”

More information

For older people getting more involved in planning their own support

Over the Fence is a website that gives information and advice to people who are starting to look for care and support for themselves or for someone they care about. www.overthefence.org.uk

Making Choices is developing resources for older people who want to have more choice and say in the support they get. There is also a set of resources for workers, to help them encourage and support older people in making and achieving their choices. www.otbds.org/makingchoices

Both these projects are funded by the Scottish Government as part of introducing the Self-directed support arrangements.

There are voluntary organisations that give advice and support to people affected by many long-term health conditions. Many are members of the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland. There is a list of such groups at: www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/who-we-are/our-members/

The Alliance also has information about self-management: www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/what-we-do/self-management/

For older people being involved in designing and delivering services

The Scottish Co-production Network brings together people from many settings who are interested in co-production. It has a lot of useful resources and contacts. www.coproductionscotland.org.uk

Wisdom in Practice has published 2 reports about making co-production work well for older people. www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/co-production

The Wisdom in Practice Hints and Tips include notes on Effective Partnerships and on Participation. www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/hints-and-tips-resources

About Wisdom in Practice

Wisdom in Practice is a project which supports and promotes the development of services and other activities led by older people. It is funded by the Scottish Government through the Equalities Programme and is run by Outside the Box. There is a range of resources for groups, including publications, how to guides, events and development support for individual groups and projects.

This is one of a series of Hints and Tips on topics which groups led by older people have said help them in starting their groups and keeping going.

Wisdom in Practice has its own website
www.wisdominpractice.org.uk



Outside the Box
Unit 23, 150 Brand Street, Glasgow, G51 1DH
T. 0141 419 0451
E. admin@otbds.org
www.otbds.org

“You can’t have co-production unless there are already ways for people to participate and have their say. But participation and co-production are not the same thing. Co-production opens up so many more opportunities and benefits.”

“Be prepared to be surprised about what communities can do and the lives and experiences older people have, and continue to live.”

“Small changes are good, we don’t just need to have big changes. A lot of small impacts can add up to a more significant shift.”

