



5 Steps to Co-Production

Frequently Asked Questions

Developed by the Common Assessment
Framework for Adults Demonstrator Programme
2010-2012

The experience of including people with individual needs
at all levels of an organisation or project

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The Cabinet Office describes co-production as an approach which:-

“Empowers citizens to contribute their own resources (time, will power, expertise and effort) and have greater control over public resources to achieve a valued outcome”

The CAFA model describes coproduction as:

“Including the people most affected by the project, work or service you are providing, at all levels and in every part, from design to delivery and beyond”

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Introduction

Co-production is a way of working which can be used in any type of project or programme. It involves identifying all the groups of people who will be affected by the activity, service or project, positively and negatively. It then means working with representatives from those groups for the duration of the project, from scoping to completion, in a planned, constructive way.

A 5-Step model of co-production has been produced by the Common Assessment Framework for Adults (CAFA) programme to allow co-production to be replicated easily on any project or service. This document details frequently asked questions about the model.

The 5 Step Model

The model contains the following steps:-

1. Identify every group which will be affected by the project or service
2. Engage with the groups which will be affected by the project or service
3. Empower participants
4. Agree how the project will be governed
5. Deliver

The full CAFA Consortium Model of Co-production is available on the Say it Once website <http://www.sayitonce.info>

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Why should I run my project using the co-production methodology?

It is the most effective and inclusive way to undertake any project. By including all the people who are going to be most affected by the project, the project has a better chance of meeting all its objectives and reaching a sustainable long term conclusion. By running a project using the co-production methodology, and involving the right people at each stage of the project development, the end result will be a positive experience for as many people as possible and will save time and resources in the long term, reducing the need to change or revisit the results in the short term.

Q2. Isn't co-production just another word for consultation?

No - not at all. Consultation is generally a one way exercise where feedback is sought from service users and carers. This input may then be used to scope a project or service, but could equally be dis-regarded. Co-production is a far more interactive process where service users and carers are involved in decision-making and are empowered to shape the project or service. By working together, the eventual solution is often different to that envisaged by either the professionals working on the project or the service users and carers working together. Considering the requirements of all concerned has the potential to produce the best possible solution.

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Q3. I'm working on a project where the budget and main objectives have already been agreed. Is it worth running the rest of the project in co-production?

Yes definitely. Although ideally you should start every project in co-production, this is not always possible. If you bring in service users and carers now to influence and shape your project, the outcomes of your project will almost certainly be significantly enhanced compared to the situation were you to continue to run the project in the traditional way.

Q4. I'm using the co-production methodology, but things seem to have gone off track and I'm feeling like the co-production methodology has failed me.

In any co-production project, there will be times when things seem to escape from the co-production process. This can often be tracked to one of two reasons.

- Firstly, new members of staff, who are either not bought into the methodology, or not trained in the methodology at the start of the project, can start making decisions that they really should not be making. The solution is to ensure they are fully training and understand both the constraints placed on the project because it is running in co-production, and the scale of the benefits that can be obtained by running a project in co-production.
- Secondly, the most common reason for a project going off track is tight timescales. Project staff may feel that they don't have time for the inclusion that is an integral part of the co-production process. The solution here is to plan the project understanding that some parts of the project may take longer because of the co-production methodology, and build this time into the plan from the start.

It is important to remember that by working in co-production, the end result of the project is more likely to meet the needs of everyone involved, so in the long term will save time.

Q5. I'm finding working in co-production very frustrating because everyone in the group has a different opinion and nobody seems willing to compromise. How do I get around this problem?

The answer to this is to agree the rules of engagement at the start of the project and to ensure everyone has shared objectives. So when for example, a group of experts by experience are brought together, some time is spent helping them find their "team" identity, and then getting the group, to produce their own rules of engagement, or rules to help them resolve disputes. There are no set requirements for "rules", they can be as simple or complex as the group decides it needs.

Q6. Running my project in co-production is taking twice as long as it would do if I were running the project conventionally. I'm not sure I have the time or resources to spend this much time on this project.

Running a project in co-production requires a culture shift. Projects run in co-production, are initially slower to get off the ground because there is so much discussion about exactly what is being delivered. However, this time is often made up later in the project, where the project team is not being told to constantly change what they have done. Running a project in co-production makes it much more likely that the project will "get it right first time", and come up with a solution that meets the needs of everyone involved.

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Q7. I have used co-production and found it has worked effectively in several of my projects. I would like to make co-production the default way of working on all projects in my organisation. Is there any easy way to do this?

The first thing you need to do is to ensure you have buy in from your key senior managers, and that they understand both the challenges of running a project in co-production and the benefits that can be gained. Secondly, you need to ensure that staff members have this same understanding, which is easily achieved using a short workshop. An ideal way of keeping the momentum going is to include co-production in the induction training for all new staff.

Q8. Can co-production be used across an organisation for service provision or service re-design?

Yes. NHS or Local Authorities can establish co-production as one of their corporate objectives – as a key way of working across the organisation. Healthcare trusts - hospitals or community services, GP practices, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Strategic Health Authorities, and social services can all use this model to deliver a shared decision model of service provision and ensure that services provided reflect local need.

Q9. Can using the Co-production model help public service organisations to comply with the government must dos?

Yes - it will help NHS and Local Authorities to comply with the Government's personalisation agenda, which requires organisations to include service users and carers in planning care by April 2013.

'Equity and excellence: liberating the NHS', by the Department of Health (July 2010) states that patients 'will be put at the heart of everything the NHS does' and 'shared decision-making will become the norm', using the concept of 'no decisions about me without me'.

Additional Information on Co-production

The following documents are also available on the say it once website www.sayitonce.info

- CAFA Co-production - Review - A review of the CAFA Consortium Project
- CAFA Co-production - Model - A five step model of co-production
- CAFA Co-production - Checklist - A method to test co-production

Feedback

If you have any questions or you would like to offer any feedback about this document please contact:

Carers Together
9 Love Lane
Romsey
Hampshire SO51 8DE

Tel: 01794 519 495
Email: admin@carerstogogether.org.uk