



5 Steps to Co-Production

A model of co-production for public services

Developed by the Common Assessment
Framework for Adults Demonstrator Programme
in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton
2010/2012

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

5 Steps to Co-Production - Model

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 word that is often misquoted and misunderstood. It can be confused with both consultation and involvement, but in fact, co-production is greater and more powerful than either.

Co-production

- provides the methodology to deliver solutions which robustly meet the needs of the intended recipients and can change the ethos of the organisation working in co-production; putting the service recipient at the heart of everything they do.
- 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 initiation to completion, in a planned, constructive way.
- means the people who receive the service should be involved in designing the service. This ensures the delivered service meets their real needs, not their perceived needs.

Co-production is particularly important at a time of major change to public services and at a time when it is imperative that budgets are used effectively. Getting it right first time is not only an effective use of resources, but can have a big impact on the lives of service recipients and their carers. Getting it right the first time is one of the benefits of running projects in co-production.

The Common Assessment Framework for Adults demonstrator programmes in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton were commissioned to look at and improve the way health and social care information is stored and shared. They were set up with the co-production methodology at their core. However, as large complex projects, multiple interpretations of co-production emerged, some more successful than others.

The way co-production was used in the CAFA development programme was examined and the most successful methods documented as this 5 step model.

The Co-production Model

In this model, co-production has been identified as a method to ensure public services meet the needs of the people who benefit from those services.

The model was then tested against the programme. Limitations and problems were exposed and the 5 step model amended to ensure that 'best practice co-production' could be replicated easily on any project or service.

This document details the 5 step model of co-production produced by the CAFA project.

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The 5 Step Model

The model contains the following steps:-

1. Identify (page 5)
2. Engage (page 6)
3. Empower (page 7)
4. Govern (page 8)
5. Deliver (page 9)



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Step 1: Identify

Step one is identifying all the groups of people who will be affected by the project or service. This is not a trivial task and does not simply involve looking at the recipients or potential recipients of the product or service. The requirement is that all groups that may be affected, positively and negatively, directly and indirectly, are identified.

The following should be considered:-

- Recipients of service/project outcomes
- Groups positively affected
- Groups negatively affected
- Secondary affected groups, such as carers
- Staff who will use the service/project outcome
- Staff who will maintain the service/project outcome
- Project team who will implement the service/project



Correctly identifying the groups of people affected by a project being run in co-production is fundamental to the success of the methodology.

A project impact and/or IG impact assessment would assist in identifying those affected by the introduction of a project.

Once all groups have been identified it is important that a verification exercise is carried out to ensure that all groups have been identified.



It is good practice to use local service user and carer led organisations, or specialist disability/minority groups, to find representatives for the project and ensure there is good two way communication with the wider network (green flag).

Everyone is an individual with their own knowledge and experience.

It is important to identify some individuals, experts by experience, who can talk with confidence and take a broader view because of their knowledge.

Some individuals may represent one or more of the groups identified as being affected by the project.

It is equally important to include those with less experience who have current individual needs.

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Step 2: Engage

Engaging representatives from each of the groups affected by the project is fundamental to running a truly co-production project.

Engaging isn't the same as informing. So, an email or letter to a single representative of a group affected by the project isn't engaging with that group.

Engaging representatives, for each group, involves the following steps:-

- Ideally all members of the group would be informed about the initiative, but practically, as long as a significant number of individuals from the group are contacted and informed about the project, this is co-production.
- All members of the group should be given an opportunity to be involved with the project
- Participation must be flexible and a number of different routes must allow contribution.

As examples:-

- Initial input then no further involvement
- Individuals may wish to be kept informed about the progress of the project and offer input when they feel an area coincides with their own area of expertise or interest
- Input and involvement by telephone/letter/email
- Attendance at meetings
- Barriers to involvement must be removed. This could include:-
 - Paying expenses so that financial considerations do not stop an individual contributing
 - Providing signers to allow deaf individuals to participate
 - Choosing accessible locations so wheelchair users can attend
 - Scheduling meetings at appropriate times, so for example, avoiding 9 a.m. meetings which would disadvantage people who would like to attend but who have school age children or are carers
 - Using an independent facilitator who can ensure everyone has an equal voice



It is important that there is a mechanism to keep open communication channels between the project and the affected groups. This ensures that anyone affected by the project is able to contribute at any time. This could be someone affected positively or negatively, whether their involvement is primary or they are affected via another person such as a carer.



To indisputably run in co-production, an initiative must have engaged, active representatives from each of the affected groups, contributing effectively at every stage of the project (green flag).

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Step 3 - Empower

Participating in a project, attending meetings and communicating with professionals can be a daunting experience. This is especially so when an individual has suffered a loss of confidence because of an illness, has been out of the workplace for a significant amount of time, or who, because of their disability has never experienced the workplace. This must be recognised, and individuals attending as representatives of affected groups must be encouraged and empowered.

The first and most important step to empowering representatives is to recognise their value as experts by experience. This gives them a unique understanding of their situation which can then be used to inform professionals and influence deliverables. Valuing this knowledge is crucial to empowering the person.

Secondly, it needs to be recognised that experts by experience, although they have a wealth of valuable knowledge, may have gaps in their skills which will need to be filled before they can be an effective team member. Training and/or coaching should be considered to allow the expert by experience to:-

- Participate effectively in meetings
- Advocate for the group they are representing, not just use their position to highlight their own issues
- Expand their personal skills, giving them, as an example, an opportunity to take on the role of chairperson or other specific roles
- Work effectively with other team members, perhaps by attending assertiveness training
- Effectively use IT equipment, be that receiving information by email or more advanced skills.



This could take the form of a project induction offered to all stakeholders.



Meetings where service users and cares are present but are not allowed to verbalise their views, or their views are not seriously considered, are not being run in co-production. This is tokenism and contributes little to the success of a project. More seriously, it actively discourages experts by experience from becoming involved in projects in the future, so can inadvertently damage the co-production methodology permanently (red flag).

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Step 4 – Govern

The project or initiative should have both a defined management structure and an agreed Terms of Reference document.



Management Structure

The management structure needs to be well defined with clear roles and responsibilities.

The structure may consist of several groups, but it is important to understand:-

- Who is responsible for the successful completion of the project
- Who has financial accountability
- Where is the reporting line for project staff
- How are experts by experience involved in the project
- What is the role of the experts by experience, e.g. decision makers or influencers
- If the management structure involves multiple groups
 - What is the hierarchy of the structure
 - How do the groups communicate/interact
- How is the co-production methodology maintained

The CAFA project was set up with a Project Board which was responsible for the successful delivery of the project, both in terms of deliverables and finance. Input from experts by experience was achieved in number of ways including setting up overview groups for each specific sub-project area. Each overview group consisted mainly of experts by experience representing the groups affected by the project, with a small contingent from the project team or other professionals. Much of the work for the CAFA project was carried out by project teams reporting to the Project Board.

Terms of Reference

Each separate group within the structure needs Terms of Reference agreed by members of that group and by the group or person with overall responsibility for the project.

The terms of reference should include:-

- Aims and responsibilities for the group
- Role description for all group members
- Agreement documenting meetings principles. For example, an overview group might state that everyone has a right to be heard and their views are important. It might also emphasize that everyone's views should be given equal weight - no one person in the group is either more or less important.
- Process for resolution of disputes and conflicts. This could be that issues are decided on a majority basis or may involve a more complex mechanism.
 - Empowering service users and carers in a project should be ensured by mandating their decision-making authority and by making them core attendees at key meetings such as Project Steering Groups.



There is a danger when you have a number of people in a room all with distinct opinions and needs, unless there is a clear mechanism in place to help them reach agreement, either the most vocal person gets their way or the group fails to reach agreement (red flag).

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Step 5 – Deliver

The experts by experience need to be able to influence all aspects of the project that affect project deliverables. This includes:-

Project Initiation

For all projects which require funding, there will be restrictions on how the funding can be used. However, co-production requires that when funding is allocated the deliverable is outcomes based. So for example, the deliverable could be to improve the support available for carers. It would then be up to the experts by experience, which in this case would be mainly carers and the cared for, to agree what would improve the support they receive. For example, if funding was available to run a carers café on the third Monday of each month, and the experts by experience did not believe this would provide them with the support they needed, the solution should be challenged and a more appropriate solution agreed.



Co-production is not about giving people predetermined solutions to their perceived problems and then asking them to confirm small details (red flag).

Project Running including Key Project Checkpoints

Co-production means that for the duration of the project, the experts by experience must have a significant impact on all aspects of the project deliverables. This does not mean the experts by experience always get what they first ask for, but all requests are investigated and deliberated. Often by working together, a solution can be found which is acceptable to everyone.



An initiative is not being run in co-production if the project team are making decisions about the project separately or any decision from the experts by experience are overturned without appropriate consideration (red flag).

Project Completion

At the end of the project or initiative a review needs to be carried out by management and the experts by experience which looks at the co-production compliance (Project Closeout and Lessons Learned). It could be decided that the project:-

- Has been run using the co-production methodology throughout
- Has been run with the intention of the project being co-production but that there have been some areas where this has not happened
- contains some elements which have been run in co-production
- has not been run in co-production



It is good practice at the end of any project to identify all areas which performed well, all areas which performed less well, and suggestions as to how the compliance with co-production could be improved if a similar project or initiative were to be run in the future (green flag).

Running a project in co-production can be challenging to everybody involved. It is important that where the project falls short of co-production, this is identified and lessons learnt, but co-production continues within the project and it is not abandoned as a concept.

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Conclusion

The model has been created as a result of experience with CAFA and CAFA2. It has been tested in a number of areas and has been adjusted to make it more robust.

Co-production involves a change in working practices and culture change in statutory organisations. It will not work if decisions are made by the project team without the involvement of the experts by experience or if the involvement is tokenistic.

Experience has shown that full involvement takes time and may initially slow down the process but it ensures full commitment and buy-in which means once agreed there is a smoother and more effective implementation.

Outcomes from the process are more positive - could mean that a cheaper alternative may be adopted, may mean that compromise is achieved much earlier and is workable, can mean that implementation is more effective because the decision is promoted by the people most affected.

The change in working practices for some staff is difficult to achieve. There may be a need to undertake some training in co-production to support the changing practice.

Co-production goes hand in hand with personalisation and self-directed support and could help the processes to develop.

Involvement is not sufficient as this can be tokenistic.

Consultation is not sufficient as this by its very nature is a one way, not a two way dialogue.

The theme of working together in mutual respect to achieve agreed outcomes will need some retraining of staff, service users and carers. However the results have a long term positive effect and achieve positive and enduring outcomes.

Additional Information on Co-production

The following documents will shortly be available on the website www.sayitonce.info

CAFA Co-production - Review - A review of the CAFA Consortium Project

CAFA Co-production - Checklist

CAFA Co-production - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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@carerstogether.org.uk