

Why choose co-production?

Co-production is a way of service design and delivery that is based on working alongside people who use services. Service users' ideas, knowledge and personal experiences should be taken into account and can have the following benefits:

Benefits for Beneficiaries:

- Increased confidence and self esteem
- Experience and skills
- Inspiring others
- Increased use of the services they help to design
- Recognising personal experiences as a strength

Benefits for Services:

- Services are more accessible and responsive to the needs of the people who use them
- Relationships, not transactions
- Services are promoted by the beneficiaries

Benefits for workers:

- Develops a wider skill set to help the worker develop and grow
- Willingness to try new approaches
- Better understanding of the client group



“The Participation Standard” outlined in this document is a co-produced piece of work that sets out guidelines for commissioners and services around design and delivery. Service users and staff from Opportunity Nottingham, Framework, SEA and ABBA have put it together.

We hope that commissioning groups and services commit to following these guidelines. The future of commissioning and service delivery is within co-production.

Participation Standard

Guidelines for commissioning and delivering a co-produced service



Participation standard for commissioners

The commissioning process needs to have genuine participation at the start/throughout – dedicate time and funds if thinking about getting groups together. Acknowledge people giving their time.

During consultation groups people should be spoken to with respect, no acronyms and use plain language.

Give preparation time and encouragement to people, and let people know ahead of time what they are participating in.

When services are going for tenders, ask them to demonstrate how they will involve meaningful participation and if they can't do it themselves identify groups that can do it on their behalf. Ask an appropriate range of people.

Be considerate around individual limitations - digital accessibility, mental and physical disability (even invisible conditions), financial barriers, cultural and language barriers.

Consider different methods of consultation, e.g. group, one to one or phone.

Offer incentives for people's time when possible and say thank you.

Have positions available for service users on steering groups around project direction.

Have a certain percentage of funds to focus on participation, or have participation written into workers jobs roles.

All of the above needs to be checked in terms of Contract compliance – ongoing checks.

Participation standard for services

Have a regular service user panel that includes feedback on previous topics discussed and what has happened to people's information.

Lived experience involved in recruitment (e.g. interview panels, shortlisting, job description, setting interview questions).

Aim to offer opportunities to have service user representation on the board and have positions available for service users on steering groups around project direction.

Offer involvement on developing and reviewing policies that affect service delivery.

Offer training or support to help people become involved in all the above points

