



directors of
adass
adult social services
West Midlands

A recipe for co-production



West Midlands
Regional Co-production
Advisory Network

About the Regional Co-production Advisory Network

We are a community of people with lived experience of drawing on care and support from across the West Midlands. We work alongside West Midlands ADASS to help make improvements in adult social care for people who receive personalised care and support.

As a Network, we wanted to collate our own experiences of being involved in co-production, locally and regionally, so that we could develop a suite of tips to help councils in the West Midlands developing their own co-production work.

The purpose of our Network is to:

- Raise awareness of co-production and influence improvement across health and care;
- Help councils to share approaches of co-production and learn from what works;
- Support West Midlands ADASS regional programme to improve adult social care;
- Support each other as a community of people in the West Midlands with lived experience;
- Work in partnership with and support the 14 Directors of Adult Social Care in the region on key issues

It is co-chaired by Keymn Whervin, Expert by Experience and Tanya Miles, Executive Director of People – Shropshire Council.

We developed this resource through the work of our Network. We held two workshops (May and June 2023) to shape its content which is based on our lived experience. We also included input from social care colleagues via WM ADASS Networks.

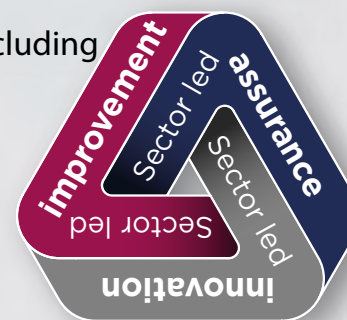
We hope it provides a useful set of prompts to help councils take further their commitment to co-production, both at an individual and organisational level.

We will keep this document updated as our own Network and learning develops.

[You can find out more about us here.](#)

We also share our experiences as a new Network on a podcast recorded by TLAP and SCIE as part of Co-production Week 2023. [Listen here.](#)

Thank you to those who have contributed to the resource including Network members, social care colleagues and TLAP.





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What does co-production mean to us?

We asked ourselves what co-production means to us to help us develop a shared definition of co-production as a regional Network. To do this, we challenged ourselves to each provide a definition in no more than 2-3 sentences.

What we have found is that although we each had slightly different interpretations of what co-production means to us, there was a clear and common set of characteristics underpinning our definitions.

Therefore, rather than agree one common definition, we see everyone's experience of co-production as equal, and instead have pulled out the core features or 'ingredients' of co-production that were present in all of our views.

This is what we said:

A recipe for strategic co-production...

INGREDIENTS

- ✓ I am always at the centre of decision-making about me
- ✓ Power is shared between me and the professional looking after me
- ✓ There is clarity on what I bring to the table – my skills, experiences, ambitions
- ✓ I can build trusted relationships with professionals that support me over time
- ✓ My voice is considered, listened to and respected
- ✓ I can see diversity in people's views and experiences and all parts of my community represented
- ✓ My contribution and experience is valued and remunerated
- ✓ There are accessible ways for me to be involved which are based on my own needs
- ✓ I can see clear and visible leadership for co-production in the authority that supports me
- ✓ My outcomes are improved when we work together





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Having looked at key ingredients, we moved on to look at the method to bring them all together. To do this, we focused on the following questions to help us bring our experiences together:

1. What resources are needed to do co-production well?
2. Who needs to be involved?
3. What skills and behaviours are needed to do co-production?
4. What's the benefit to people with lived experience, to councils and to the system?
5. What support might people with lived experience need to participate fully?

Our feedback is presented as our recipe 'method'. These are intended to be a series of steps / prompts councils can take to do co-production well, using our key ingredients.

We have also included and signposted to examples of good practice from across the region which may be helpful and of interest to other councils or organisations.



A recipe for co-production...

METHODOLOGY

Councils may wish to think about...

- **Where does local leadership sit for co-production** – is it visible at all levels and across all staff groups? What infrastructure do you have in place to enable co-production. You may have an adult social care co-production lead, like in Telford and Wrekin or Worcestershire County Council
- **What's your adult social care or corporate commitment to co-production and where is it found?** You may have a strategy or charter which is co-produced and public-facing, setting out how and opportunities for people to engage. See Solihull ['Get Involved' Strategy](#) / [Worcestershire Co-production Pledge](#) / Sandwell Co-production Charter (in development). You may also have signed up and made a commitment to TLAP's Making it Real, like Wolverhampton Council or WM ADASS
- **How well is co-production embedded across ASC or your council?** Co-production is everyone's responsibility. Are expectations made clear in job descriptions, staff inductions or conferences, supervisions or 121s? In Telford and Wrekin, people with lived experience share their experiences with all newly qualified social workers as part of their induction
- **How is power shared and joint decisions made between professionals and people with lived experience.** This is about co-leadership. You may have:
 - A Making it Real Board which is chaired or co-chaired by someone with lived experience with senior- officer membership (like in [Telford & Wrekin](#), [Shropshire](#) and [Herefordshire](#))
 - A Board of paid people with lived experience and carers – like Worcestershire's [Building Together](#) Forum
 - An active and diverse pool of people with lived experience in your area who have opportunities to support work in adult social care eg commissioning / procurement / staff recruitment, like in [Birmingham](#) or Sandwell
 - People with lived experience in paid roles to support you with co-production, like Telford and Wrekin



A recipe for co-production...



- **How are people remunerated for their contributions.** You may have a fees and expenses policy for recognizing and remunerating people for their time and input like WM ADASS or Worcestershire County Council. Be clear on the types of activities that will be funded (don't forget prep time that might be needed outside of formal meetings). This should be part of a wider budget allocated to support co-production.
- **How do you follow up on what you are hearing.** How can you let people know that they are being listened to and feedback is being acted upon? This might include contacting individuals to acknowledge their feedback or playing back what you are picking up and what changes are being made. How can you show what difference people accessing services have made by being involved?
- **How do you identify local people to be involved.** You may wish to consider a local recruitment campaign (such as Shropshire's 'We Need You' campaign) and/or use existing council channels (like carer groups) or relationships (like with VCS organisations) to seek expressions of interest. You'll want diversity, representation and you may need to think about targeted approaches for engaging with different community groups. Think about how you can help people with lived experience you already work with to share the benefits and opportunities of being involved to encourage others e.g. through blogs or videos.
- **How do you ensure accessibility?** Have different ways, methods, formats for people to participate that meet people's communication needs (e.g. online, in-person, easy-read). Hold events/opportunities for people to engage as well as go out to local community / activity groups directly. Think about and find creative ways to engage with people that aren't being seen or heard. In developing Worcestershire CC's learning disability strategy, commissioners engaged with a music therapist for feedback from an individual who expressed themselves through music.
- **Being clear about and celebrate the skills, experiences & interests that people involved in your co-production work have and bring to the table.** This will help match people to the right projects or opportunities for them and you. You may wish to use WM ADASS Regional Co-production Advisory Network One-Page Profile to assist – [see slide 10.](#)

A recipe for co-production...



- **Take time to build relationships.** Good co-production can't happen overnight. Take time to build trust with people who draw on care services and build relationships. Build this into business as usual, like your commissioning cycle.
- **When there are opportunities within the council for people to be involved, how are these communicated and made available?** Be clear on time commitment, expectations of being involved and skills you think might be helpful. You may find the WM ADASS Regional Co-production Project Brief a helpful template – [see slide 10](#).
- **When facilitating or leading co-production activities, time and planning is key, as is having an open mind.** It may not always best to start with a blank page – it can sometimes be helpful to have initial ideas or prompts to facilitate the conversation. But be willing to pivot. Be flexible, open to change and led by the group.
- **Remember to start from day 1** (even if you have ideas!). Co-production is harder to implement further down the line.
- **Find out if people who engage in your co-production work have any support or training needs.** There may be support you can provide on e.g. how to influence strategically, use MS Teams/Zoom or how to chair/contribute to a meeting being run by a local authority. You may also wish to think about how staff can be supported to embed co-production as part of their day-to-day roles. This [short video](#) of WM ADASS lived experience coaching programme may be of interest.
- **Meetings don't have to be traditional!** You might also want to think about informal opportunities you can facilitate to bring together people with lived experience to support each other outside of formal meetings or activities. This might include half an hour before or after more formal meetings for people to connect or have 'time to chat'.

Examples of good practice



Sandwell Council is working with 'Changing Our Lives' to co-produce a series of promises and commitments to inform a new co-production Charter



Recipients of Direct Payments in Dudley have helped develop the Direct Payment Café and a [suite of films](#) storytelling how people have used Direct payments to help them to live a great life in Dudley



[WM ADASS ADASS Regional Co-production Advisory Network](#) is [working with Principal Social Workers to improve social work practice and understand more about people's experiences of receiving care and support](#)



Worcestershire County Council has launched a new '[Building Together Forum](#)' to support more co-production in adult social care and has signed the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership Co-production Pledge



[Co-production is embedded across the development of services in Birmingham, including its Preparing for Adulthood Service](#)



[West Midlands ADASS is working with National Voices for the second year to run a Lived Experience Coaching Programme with senior adult social care leaders](#)

Making it Real

Shropshire Adult Social Care

Local Account 2021/22

Issue ten

Our story continues...

Shropshire Council is expanding its successful campaign called 'We need you!' which was co-produced with the Making it Real Board. Initially inviting adults over 65 to get involved with Making it Real, the new campaign is being expanded and launched to the whole of Shropshire so more residents have the opportunity to be involved in the work of Making it Real.


Where stories are
tears are shed

...a perfect storm

Reigniting Making it Real Shropshire

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/adult-social-care/>

First Point of Contact 0345 678 9044

 Shropshire
Council



Telford and Wrekin's [Co-production Framework](#) was developed by their Making it Real Board and the council has signed up to using the framework to support co-production in adult social care. It is currently being reviewed for 23/24

Telford & Wrekin Council
**Co-production
Framework in
Adult Social Care**
Working in Partnership to Make It Real
2021-2022



Protect
Care and invest
to create a
better borough



 Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL

Helpful templates

WM ADASS Regional Co-production Network

MY ONE PAGE PROFILE

[insert picture]

Name:

What's important to me

The experience I bring to this group and/or the networks I connect with

How you can best help me to contribute to this group

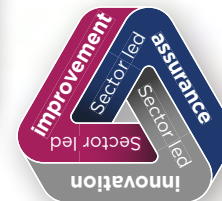
The best way to contact me

One page profile template.

We use this to invite new members to the Network and to understand each other's strengths and interests.

Project Opportunity template.

We use this template to share regional project opportunities with the Network and invite people to get involved.



WM ADASS Regional Co-production Network

Project Opportunity Brief

What is the opportunity / project?

What experience or skills do I need to participate?

What is the time commitment?

When will it take place?

How do I get involved?



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Appendix 1: What does co-production mean to us – our definitions



"When power is **shared equally** better solutions are created for the challenges we face for the future of health and care! We can do the doing by **taking action together, sharing responsibility and risks**. This is when we deliver a kind health and care service which makes sense to communities, families, and individuals"

"A way of working together **in partnership** on an **equal basis** to create or develop a service"

"Co-production to me means an **equal partnership** between individual who draw on services as well as professionals. Including people who use the service supports a **person centred approach**, which should be the centre of all decisions"

"Co-production means being **equal partners** to any project. It means being **listened** to and not just paying lip-service to what you say. Your voice is **heard and acted upon**"

"People working together at the **same level**, despite job title or personal situation, towards the **best outcome** possible.

"Co-production means working together as **equals**, bringing 'to the table' something that no education can provide - an understanding of which interventions work and what doesn't. Its about bring an awareness of **how unique every person is** and how this needs to be factored in to care for it to be meaningful"

Pulling on each other's **experience and knowledge**. We all have different fabulous skill and experiences and we should use these to make life more comfortable for all involved.

Co-production isn't easy and can be messy and frustrating, but the long terms **outcomes can be amazing and very beneficial to all parties**, well worth the struggles for such wonderful outcomes!"

"**Partnership working** between social care professionals and people who have lived experience, to offer high-quality, person-driven, social care opportunities. Whereby everyone's experience and voice is **considered, respected** and forms part of the **planning, delivery and evaluation** of the service. Co-production is **exciting, inspirational, and enjoyable** for all, with everyone feeling that they are contributing and gaining from the experience"

*Provided by people who draw on care and support and adult social care staff working in councils across the WM.

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