

Shropshire Council Co-production Framework 2024

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This document was co-produced with the following representatives of the Shropshire community.

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Word cloud created with the words of the Making it Real Shropshire Board

'What does Co-Production mean to me?'

CONTENTS

FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTON	Page 3
WHAT IS CO-PRODUCTION?	Page 4
CO-PRODUCTION AND THE LAW	Page 5
CO-PRODUCTION 'DOING WITH' AND NOT 'DOING TO'.	Page 6
THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CO-PRODUCTION	Page 8
EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE AND EXPERIENCE LED ORGANISATIONS	Page 9
HOW CAN CO-PRODUCTION MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO EVERYONE?	Page 9
SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL AND CO-PRODUCTION	Page 10
HOW WILL SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL CO-PRODUCE?	Page 10
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS	Page 13

FOREWORD

Co-production is about recognising and listening to the experiences of the communities who use services provided or funded by Shropshire Council, to achieve the best outcomes for both those communities and the Council.

Co-production is recognised as an important tool in legislation, and both the Children and Families Act and the Care Act require co-production to be embedded in the way that local authorities work at all levels. This means that individuals should have a voice in how they are supported to live their lives and that services should be planned and delivered in a way that works for them. Co-producing support plans and services that make a positive difference to individuals and local communities will enable Shropshire Council to work in an effective and efficient way. Co-production reduces conflict and makes better use of resources.

Shropshire Council recognises the value of co-production, and this framework is the next step to embedding it as a daily working practice in the Shropshire local authority. It provides a shared understanding of what co-production means in Shropshire, what it might look like at different levels and how we will know if it is happening. It recognises that co-production isn't always easy and at times can be challenging, but that co-production secures essential relationships with local communities that are key for Shropshire Council to deliver effective services.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FRAMEWORK

I am really proud to be able to present this co-production framework, which will provide a strong and clear foundation that we have agreed to work to. We want to ensure we empower individuals and communities by giving them a voice and role in shaping the services they receive. By involving the community in the planning and delivery of public services, co-production ensures that services are better tailored to local needs and fosters a sense of ownership and accountability. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of services but also promotes a collaborative and inclusive decision-making process, ultimately benefiting both the council and the community.

It is important for Shropshire Council to embed co-production as a core part of their working approach. This will enhance the value of lived expertise in service delivery and ensure people who use services have a voice which is heard and acted upon.

We know we have more to do and more to learn and we want to do this with our Shropshire residents and partners.

Tanya Miles
Executive Director of People
Shropshire Council



What is co-production?

**Co-production can be messy and time consuming.
We want it to be more than a buzz word, we want to make it our
embedded, inclusive, strength-based, effective way of working.**

Co-production was first coined in the 1970's by Elinor Ostrom, an Economist at Indiana University. Elinor Ostrom recognised that crime rates rose when the police changed from walking the beat to patrolling in cars. The relationships that police developed with people and the informal knowledge that they exchanged with the community when they walked the beat were critical in preventing and solving crimes. She argued that the police needed communities as much as communities need the police and used the term co-production to describe this relationship. She used the word co-production to explain how citizens can work in partnership with statutory institutions to deliver services; kerbside refuse collection is one of her examples. Co-production is now used more widely to refer to citizens being involved in planning and designing services too.

'Co-production is not just a word, it is not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find shared solutions. In practice, co-production involves people who use services being consulted, included, and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them. When co-production works best, people who use services and carers are valued by organisations as equal partners, can share power and have influence over decisions made.'

Think Local Act Personal National Co-Production Advisory Group

It has been interesting talking to directly professionals and organisation reps about adult social care and how co-production can work. I've been in LOTS of meetings, edited letters, and leaflets, and thrown in ideas about projects from winter support to reablement coming out of hospital. It's a great feeling when you feel the change from being a potentially interfering busybody to being seen as someone with a different eye, perhaps a good idea, and starting to work together to make things better. The best bit is when you get a phone call or email saying, 'Remember you worked with us on this... are you free to talk through something else?'

'That's co-production.'

Shropshire Expert by Experience

Co-production and the Law

Both the Children and Families Act 2014 and The Care Act 2014 saw co-production and the need to hear community voices embedded in UK legislation for the first time and as a result meant that the concept of co-production was included in the related statutory guidance.

The Care Act's statutory guidance says:

'Local authorities should, where possible, actively promote participation in providing interventions that are co-produced with individuals, families, friends, carers and the community.' (2.20)

Co-production is referred to at a number of points in the statutory guidance, in relation to

- information and advice,
- prevention; assessment,
- market shaping,
- strengths-based approaches,
- developing local strategies and plans

It is also essential to the delivery of personalised care, ensuring that the individual has a voice in how they want to live their life and receive support. It is an important way of achieving the overarching aims of the Care Act including prevention, wellbeing and the focus on outcomes. It should be a consideration in all aspects of implementing the Act.

The SEND Code of Practice resulting from the Children and Families Act says:

"Local authorities must ensure that children, young people and parents are provided with the information, advice and support necessary to enable them to participate in discussions and decisions about their support. This should include information on their rights and entitlements in accessible formats and time to prepare for discussions and meetings" (1.9)

It also states that:

'Effective participation happens when:

- *it is recognised, valued, planned and resourced (for example, through appropriate remuneration and training)*
- *it is evident at all stages in the planning, delivery and monitoring of services.*
- *there are clearly described roles for children, young people and parents.*
- *there are strong feedback mechanisms to ensure that children, young*
- *people and parents understand the impact their participation is making.'* (1.12)

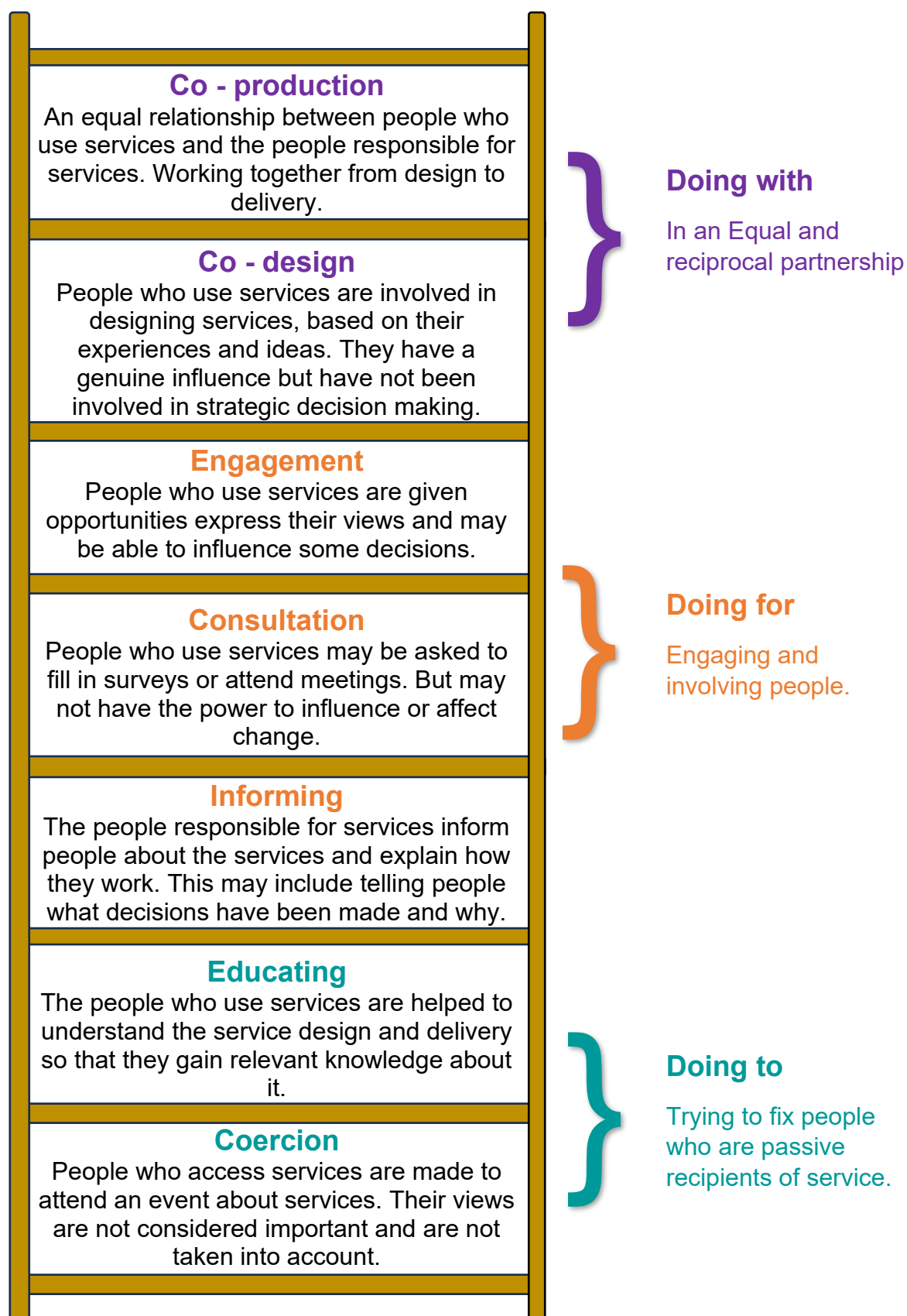
Legislation recognises the need to support not just the individual's role in decision making but the role of communities in identifying what services are needed, what they should look like and how they are delivered.

'At a strategic level, partners must engage children and young people with SEN and disabilities and children's parents in commissioning decisions, to give useful insights into how to improve services and outcomes. Local authorities, CCGs and NHS England must develop effective ways of harnessing the views of their local communities so that commissioning decisions on services for those with SEN and disabilities are shaped by users' experiences, ambitions and expectations.' (3.18)
SEND Code of Practice

Co-production has increasingly been put into practice across the public and voluntary sectors in the United Kingdom. Shropshire Council believes that people who access services are best placed to make change. Co-production develops ideas and ways of working in equal partnerships with statutory systems, making these systems more effective in the long run.

Co-production 'Doing with' and not 'Doing to'.

Co-production includes a range of activities such as consultation, engagement, and co-design. Any one of these activities by itself cannot deliver co-production, as is illustrated by the co-production ladder.



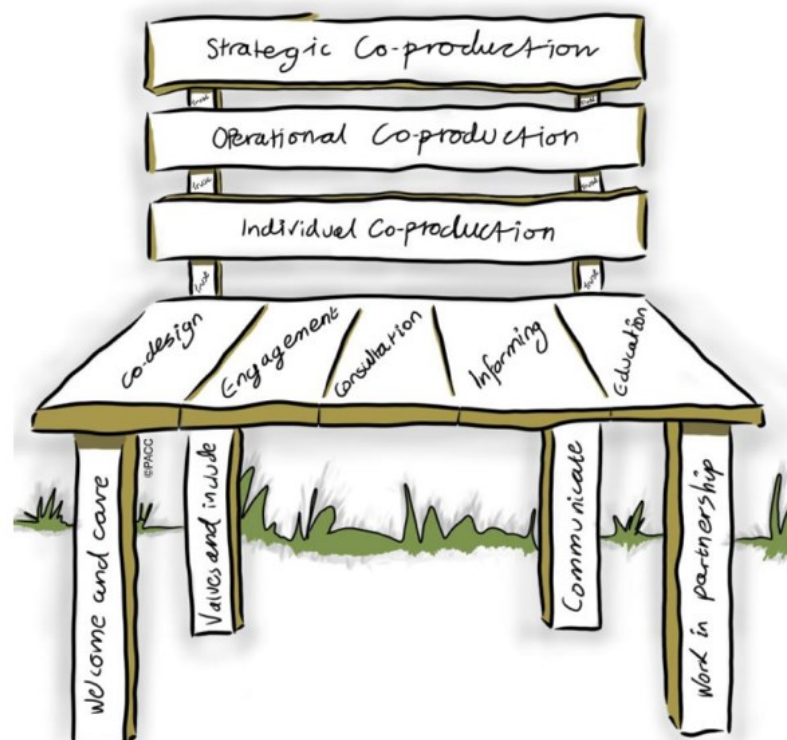
There is no single formula for co-production but if it is not clearly defined, there is a danger that its meaning will be diluted and its potential to transform services will be reduced. At the same time, a definition that is too narrow can stifle creativity and innovation. An important part of the process of co-production is to come to an agreement on what we understand the principles of co-production to be.

In Shropshire the **Parent Carer Council (PACC)** developed 'The Co-production Bench'. The Shropshire Bench recognises that co-production involves a number of different activities, which combine to enable co-production to happen. These are co-design, engagement, informing, educating and consulting, all of which should be done in partnership with local communities and their representatives.

It identifies four cornerstones of co-production:

- Welcome and Care
- Value and Include
- Communicate
- Working in Partnership

Finally, 'the Bench' illustrates that co-production should happen at all levels, ensuring that it is embedded in individual, operational and strategic decision making.



PACC's Bench model of co-production

Different levels of co-production

Individual Co-production

At an individual level, co-production ensures that support is co-produced with individuals, families, friends, carers, the community and statutory services. It uses a person-centred approach and recognises people's strengths and values.

Co-producing residents care plans with them, to ensure their care and support is exactly what they want and need.

Operational Co-production

This involves a service or a team working with those who use their services, to design, develop and monitor processes and delivery. The service needs to hear from more than one voice, and it is important that information is shared with the wider community. This might include group participation activities and capturing individual experiences.

'I helped design a way for carers to send their feedback direct to the Carers Support Team. Information from carers is vital in enabling the Team to make sure they meet carers' needs.

Expert by Experience

Experts by Experience worked with Customer Services to rewrite their letters to make them easier to understand for residents.

Strategic Co-production

Strategic co-production is about a system working with a community that relies on the services it delivers or funds. It can mean working with multiple organisations who together make a system. At a strategic level hearing from the wider community is key to ensuring the community voice influences and informs system wide planning, including agreeing priorities and budgetary management.

All Age Carers Strategy

'It's written for the care team and the carers as a joint plan, not just to be a standalone, impressive document.'

Expert by Experience

The Council's Practice Framework was co-produced with Shropshire council staff and Experts by Experience

PACC co-produced a SEND Baseline Survey with Shropshire Local Authority and NHS Integrated Care Board



Experts by Experience and Experience Led Organisations

Hearing about the experiences of people who use services and their carers provided by statutory organisations such as Shropshire Council, is at the heart of co-production. People with lived experience of receiving support are often called 'Experts by Experience' and they play an important role in co-production through sharing their experiences of how services have or haven't worked for them.

In operational or strategic co-production, it is important that decisions are informed and influenced by a wide range of people and experiences which reflects the diversity amongst those who use services. In these situations, Experience Led Organisations are key. These organisations are led by Experts by Experience and work to support the voice of specific communities to be heard.

The role of both Experts by Experience and Experience Led Organisations should be recognised and valued.

How can co-production make a difference to everyone?

Here are a few benefits of co-production:

For individuals and communities

- Breaks down the barriers between individuals who access services and practitioners.
- Builds peer networks and supports community actions.
- Creates services that respond to needs.
- People feel valued and listened to.
- Recognises and builds on people's existing capabilities and strengths.
- Creates a focus on solutions and reduces conflict.

For the council

- Opportunity to think differently and challenge established ways of working.
- Reduces the number of complaints.
- Improves relationships, offering increased job satisfaction.
- Opportunities to engage Shropshire communities in the delivery of services.
- Supports the development of a resilient and health community.
- More efficient use of resources.

Shropshire Council and Co-production

**It starts with you.
You first, you know yourself best.**

People and communities rightly want a bigger say in the services they receive and in shaping the places where they live. Co-production is a great way of allowing this to happen because it is about delivering a person-centred approach and involving people in the planning and delivery of public services, helping to change the way they are organised to better suit the needs of the local community.

Sometimes part of a process or elements of a project can't be co-produced, this may be because of legislation requirements. Shropshire Council will be honest and open about this and explore blended approaches, which enables co-production wherever possible and is transparent about where co-production isn't happening.

How will Shropshire Council Co-produce?

From the Start

We will co-produce and collaborate with people with lived experience from the very beginning of an idea and in the design, development and review of services and improvements. We will co-produce all individual support plans with the individual.

Be honest and open

We will be open to new ideas and learning. We will acknowledge that we get things wrong, but we will work together with Shropshire residents and communities to find the best way to address the situation and achieve positive solutions.

Communication

We will provide regular communications about any co-production opportunities and follow up with information about any actions taken. Responding to feedback and checking, with the people using the service, that the action taken has actually resulted in improvements. We will work to engage the wider community, supporting the creation of an ongoing dialogue, to which as many people as possible can contribute.

Innovation and flexibility

We will be open to new ideas and prepared to try something new.

Feedback loop

We will actively seek feedback from the community. We will notify people of what we've done in response to their feedback. We will 'close the loop' by checking that our actions have resulted in an improvement in their lived experience.

Listening

We will actively listen to everyone we are co-producing with. Everyone's experience will be valued, and no one person's experience and ideas will be considered any more important than another's.

Allowing time

Co-production takes more time, and the availability of Experts by Experience or representatives from Experience Led Organisations might be restricted. We will work with individuals and community representatives to ensure that meetings and engagement activities are held at times when they are able to participate.

Language

We will not use jargon and will instead use plain, simple English as much as possible. We will provide explanations of technical terms and abbreviations, even if they are commonly used to help to make documents accessible to all. Information will be offered in different formats, such as Easy Reads.

Investment

We will invest in training all staff on the value of co-production and how co-production happens in Shropshire. The contribution of individuals participating in co-production activity will be recognised and rewarded as per our Experts by Experience payment plan.

Quality Assurance

We will develop guidance for services and teams on how to do co-production at all levels identified in this framework. This will include a co-production audit and regular reviews and revision to reflect learning and ensure monitoring and quality assurance of co-production with people who use the services. We will support our managers, practitioners, and teams to build and embed co-production in their work.

Removing Barriers

We will actively seek ways to overcome the barriers to working with us in collaboration and co-production, providing a range of ways to engage and provide feedback.

Thank you to all the staff members, Experts by Experience and PACC that gave up their time, offered their skills and experiences to help co-produce the Co-production Framework.

‘People will forget what you said or what you did, but they never forget how you made them feel’.

If you have any feedback or would like further information about co-production or details of any of Shropshire Council’s Partnership boards, please email:

co-production@shropshire.gov.uk