



Nothing Without Us Co-produced by family carers

A guide to co-production at the CBF: Meaningful, Collaborative, Focused & Personal

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‘Co-production as an approach can only succeed when all parties involved feel valued, and most importantly, that the person with the disability is truly at the centre and heart of designing outcomes.’

- CBF Family Carer

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**The statutory guidance
from The Care Act (2014)
states that co-
production is:**

‘When an individual influences the support and services received, or when groups of people get together to influence the way that services are designed, commissioned and delivered.’

**The Co-production
Network explains co-
production as:**

‘An approach where people, family members, carers, organisations and commissioners work together in an equal way, sharing influence, skills and experience to design, deliver and monitor services and projects.

Co-production acknowledges that people who use social care and health services (and their families) have knowledge and experience that can be used to help make services better, not only for themselves but for other people who need them, which could be any one of us at some time in our lives.

Real co-production means that people are truly involved in planning and designing services from the very beginning. It needs investment in people and to be resourced accordingly.’

Co-Production in Practice

The term co-production refers to a way of working, whereby everybody works together on an equal basis to agree on what the issue is, what is needed to address it and to create a solution or come to a decision which works for them all. It has clear links and is grounded in person-centred approaches. Co-production means professionals and citizens sharing power in designing, planning and delivering support together. It is about recognising that everyone has an important contribution to make to improve quality of life for people and communities.

There are many principles and approaches that underpin co-production, and how to do co-production well. In this resource, we show how we put this into practice at the CBF, and the top tips we have found to be important from the family carers we work in co-production with.

CULTURE

(the beliefs and values that define the organisation and the way that it works)

- Embedding co-production throughout the organisation, ensuring it informs all practice and values, and takes a risk-aware, not a risk-averse approach.
- Ensuring everyone is a part of co-production. It is made accessible to all, and no one is excluded.

STRUCTURE

(the way the organisation is arranged and the systems it has set up to conduct its work)

- Providing support, training and tools available for everyone to develop co-production values and practices.

PRACTICE

(how the organisation and the people who work for it conduct their work)

- Ensuring and prioritising sufficient resources are available to make co-production meaningful.
- Having a robust strategy and supporting policies that underpin co-production.

REVIEW

(monitoring how the work is conducted and the outcomes or impacts that result from the work)

- Reviewing our practice regularly and in a co-productive way, to ensure the processes are meaningful and effective.
- Recording and measuring the impact of co-production.

Why is Co-Production Important?

Mark Mulholland, CBF family carer, shares the importance of co-production, and the impact it can have on families and their relatives when done well:

*'Successful co-production must be based on two fundamentals: **trust and knowledge**.*

*Professionals working together need to be **open and transparent** in terms of communication, and honesty is crucial in building positive relationships. When decisions or information is kept from us, it can cause strains in the relationship and ultimately, it is often the person needing the support who suffers.*

When co-production works well, it provides a massive sense of relief. In being a parent of a severely disabled child with complex needs, it can often feel that you are in a constant battle and others do not understand.

*When we work constructively together with staff, the co-produced approach leads to a widening of activities and experiences which promotes **a positive quality of life**. Co-production done well creates a sense of trust, which in turn brings peace of mind in knowing that your loved one is being cared for by people that you can trust.*

When professionals lack the background experience and fundamental knowledge of severe learning disabilities and complex needs, their input is often based on generic assumptions or interpretations, which can often take away from the specific understanding of the individual. When this occurs, it can dismantle any sense of trust.

When co-production fails it has an extremely damaging and negative impact on both the individual and family/loved ones. It can be extremely disheartening and compound feelings of guilt and isolation.'





How to do Co-Production: The CBF way!

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“Nothing is ever done without us’ – This is key to the CBF’s mission statement, and above all with a restorative, ‘How can we help’ ethos. When systems are broken, people get broken, the CBF and their members help each other to mend, heal and thrive.’

– Quoted from a Family Carer

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Our approach is based on four principles of Equality, Diversity, Accessibility and Reciprocity. To make sure co-production is meaningful, it is vital to use a flexibly structured approach. When working in this way, it is beneficial to identify an individual to co-ordinate the activities and be accountable to the group. This co-ordinator will be responsible for tasks including:

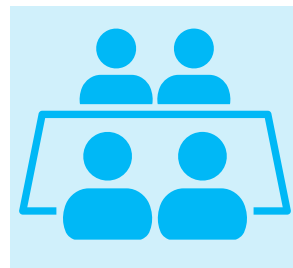
CBF Top Tips for Co-Production

Co-Designing:

- Establishing the budget for the work and its aim(s), timeline, and milestones.
- Ensuring the budget includes payment for family carers time, travel, and replacement care costs, if appropriate.
- Carrying out the initial reach out to possible co-producers, with a clear brief (*including what the commitment is and what support is available*) to identify and encourage people who would like to be involved.
- Provide family carers with an accessible short summary of the work, to ensure focus and relevance to the work being carried out.
- Carry out screening processes, if working online with groups, to ensure you are confident that those participating are genuine family carers in the interest of safeguarding other family carers from sharing potential sensitive information.
- Consider and explore all contributions, even if they may be different to what was initially expected and may challenge the usual process. Champion true co-production, not just when it's something you want to hear!

Co-Decision-making:

- Ensure where possible, a fully representative group, with planned and diarised meetings to maximise co-production opportunities and ensure these meetings are fully accessible. All people involved in the co-production work should be involved in the planning for meetings, to ensure it is accessible for everyone.
- Find ways to include the views and input of people who cannot commit to attending regular meetings. Find flexible ways for people to provide input in ways that work for them.
- Ensure everyone has opportunities to explore the principles of co-production – take the time to embed this in the group.
- Ensure everyone understands and supports the need to contribute and the impact it will have.
- Ensure everyone is clear whether contributions will be anonymous/ identifiable and understands that they can request for information to remain confidential.
- Once the group is established, work together to identify what people want as outcomes, based on the scope of the work.
- The co-ordinator needs to be confident in managing potentially diverse views, ensuring all views are heard and coming to a consensus that everyone is agreeable to.



Co-Delivering:

- Acknowledge that family carers may share experiences that requires them to re-live difficult situations/share difficult issues. Offer and provide pre-brief and de-brief support.
- Provide alternative opportunities for families to feed in to make sure it is as accessible as possible, offer ways that work for them – e.g. if you are holding a focus group which they are unable to attend, offer a phone/video call at another time, written contributions, meetings/visits where appropriate.
- Carry out post-meeting reach outs a few days after each meeting so that people have time to reflect. This provides further opportunity to contribute thoughts and ideas that drop out of the discussions.

Co-Evaluating:

- Provide an open-door approach for family carers to feedback throughout the process on ways the co-production could be improved, if changes need to be made, be flexible in adapting ways of working throughout the process.
- Implement a structured and accessible 'You Said, We Did' process so that the people involved can see the impact of their activity and the outcomes, and can comment on this as part of the evaluation process.
- At the conclusion of the work, carry out a full and thorough review that collects and identifies the outcomes and recommendations.
- Cascade the information.

Case Study Examples – Co-Produced Trauma Awareness Workshop

Our recently launched workshop on Trauma awareness, was co-produced by CBF family carers. The feedback from those who have attended the workshop has been overwhelmingly positive and the messages and learning from the training have been powerful and impactful. We believe this is a real example of how true co-production, when done well can deliver such positive results. We have documented the development of the workshop into a case study to highlight the challenges, practicalities, processes and successes of this piece of work as a good example case study, which professionals can learn and take inspiration from.

Co-Production and Trauma Workshop Case Study -

<https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Co-Production-Example-1.pdf>

For more details on our co-produced Trauma Awareness workshop click here -

<https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/workshops/workshops-what-we-offer-2/>

CBF Guidance on Family Carer Payments

At the CBF, co-production underpins our practice and is ingrained in the organisations culture. We recognise and value the way we work with our family carers, and an instrumental part of our co-production planning, is ensuring we have resources to offer payment for family carers time and commitments.

The CBF have adapted the way we offer payments to family carers by providing a range of options, the objective being to remove barriers and make the process as easy for family carers as possible.

Read our best practice guidance on how we offer payments to the families we work in co-production with here: <https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CBF-Guidance-on-Family-Carer-Payments-1.pdf>