



Stronger Together

**A co-production toolkit
from Ageing Better**

Principles and values of co-production



Welcome to our learning guide exploring the key principles of co-production.

This guide is for anyone looking to move beyond the definition of co-production and dig deeper into the principles and values that underpin this approach.*

This guide will be particularly useful if you are:

- A strategic leader or change maker
- Working for an organisation in a service delivery or development role
- Part of your local community, a person with lived experience

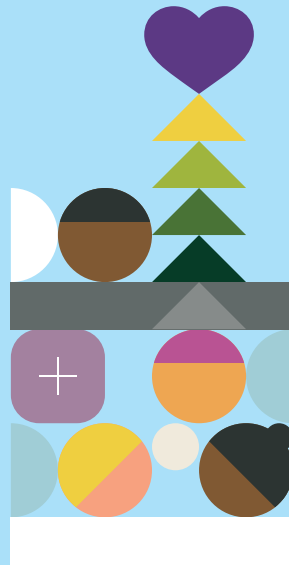
*While the Ageing Better programme focuses on reducing isolation and loneliness among people aged 50 and over, all of the co-production learning and resources featured in the learning guides and toolkit are transferable across all community groups and areas of working.



Our comprehensive co-production toolkit, **Stronger Together**, contains the information mentioned in this guide, plus many more resources.



In our **webinar recordings**, topics and themes surrounding co-production are discussed in more detail.



Recap: what is co-production?

Co-production is people working together to design and deliver services with meaningful and sustainable impact. It is a meeting of minds and hearts to reach a shared solution.

For an overview of co-production and the benefits of this approach, take a look at our [**What is co-production? learning guide**](#)

The core principles of co-production:

1

Collaboration

At its heart, co-production is about working together. Relationship-building is key for inspiring trust and creating powerful partnerships based on sharing skills and knowledge.



2

Diversity

Co-production is an inclusive approach. It is therefore essential that a diverse range of voices are heard and lived experiences valued when co-producing.



3

Respect

Safe, inclusive and accessible spaces are vital for enabling all participants to feel a sense of belonging and for their perspectives to be respected.



4

Empowerment

Every individual is empowered by and valued for the unique knowledge and experience they bring. Hierarchies are neutralised and replaced with equal and balanced relationships.



5

Involvement

All co-production participants are involved at all stages of the process and get to influence the design, delivery, governance and evaluation of services.



Co-production from the heart – Ageing Better

Partners involved in the Ageing Better programme came together to break down the jargon associated with co-production and outline what this approach means to them in practice:

Recognising people as assets (a strengths-based approach) means...

Older people have so much to show and tell us, they are the experts, so let's make that happen.

Developing two-way reciprocal relationships (being collaborative) means...

Let's all work together as one community towards a joint aim, we can achieve so much more this way.

Encouraging a peer-led approach means...

Enabling our people and communities to take the lead.

Facilitating rather than delivering means...

Stop telling people what needs to happen, take people on a journey to find that out instead!



Co-production from the heart can be found in the About Co-production folder of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.

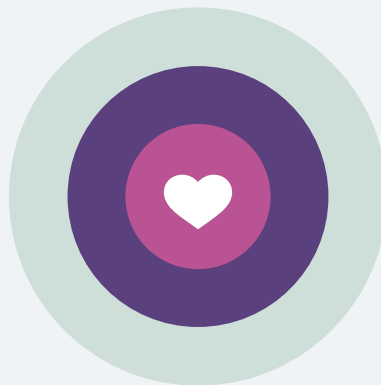
A resource for service deliverers and community grassroots audiences

You may find this resource helpful as a community development worker, a member of a delivery team, a leader of, or an individual within a community group, or as a community activist.



The four core co-production values – Co-Production Collective

Co-Production Collective is a community that supports co-production in research, policy, and practice. They have developed four core values which guide all of their co-production:



Human

Relationship-building forms a huge part of the work of co-production, and it is through this that trust is created. Building trust is key to helping people to get through the messiness of co-production and helping to navigate the journey together.

Inclusive

Diversity of voices is very important. Co-production is not just about working as a team, it's about building a team out of people who wouldn't normally work together. This means that co-producers should be proactive in terms of inclusion and accessibility so that everyone can participate fully.

Transparent

Being transparent means addressing the power imbalances and hierarchies that exist, not simply trying to disguise them. It is not involving people as a tick-box exercise. Co-production should not be about confirming pre-existing ideas but instead be a blank canvas.

Challenging

Co-production is challenging because it is more a practice than a process, and due to this ongoing learning is needed. It involves continually questioning both the status quo and yourself, even when that's a hard thing to do.



The four core co-production values can be found in the About Co-production folder of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.



Five key principles – National Institute for Health Research

The National Institute for Health Research fund and deliver health and social care research. They have set out five key principles of co-production which can be applied to both research and non-research contexts:

1. Sharing of power – the activity is jointly owned and people work together to achieve a joint understanding.



2. Including all perspectives and skills – make sure the team includes all those who can make a contribution.



3. Respecting and valuing the knowledge of all those working together on the activity – everyone is of equal importance.



4. Reciprocity – everybody benefits from working together.



5. Building and maintaining relationships – an emphasis on relationships is key to sharing power. There needs to be joint understanding and consensus and clarity over roles and responsibilities. It is also important to value people and unlock potential.





Contact information

If you have further questions about co-production or the Stronger Together toolkit, feel free to get in touch with customercollaboration@syha.co.uk

Take a look at our other learning guides in this Stronger Together co-production series:



[1 Toolkit user guide](#)



[2 What is co-production?](#)



[4 Creating a co-production culture](#)



[5 Asset-based community development](#)



[6 How to grow sustainable groups](#)



[7 Increasing diversity of inclusion](#)



[8 Co-production in research](#)



[9 Developing a co-commissioning model](#)