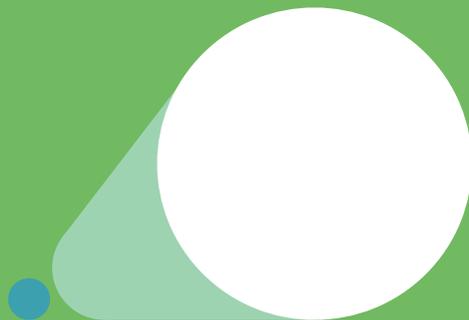




**Stronger Together**  
**A co-production toolkit**  
**from Ageing Better**

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# **Co-production in research**



# Welcome to our learning guide on co-production in research.

## This guide is for anyone wanting to use a co-production approach within research or evaluation activities.\*

It will be particularly useful for providers of community-based projects and/or services, or researchers from academic institutions who are interested in becoming involved in, or learning from, a co-research and co-evaluation approach, working with citizen-led and community-based peer researchers and evaluators.

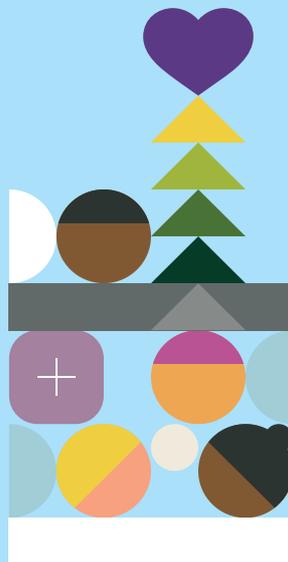
\*While the Ageing Better programme focuses on reducing isolation and loneliness among people aged 50 and over, all of the co-production learning and resources featured in the learning guides and toolkit are transferable across all community groups and areas of working.



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.

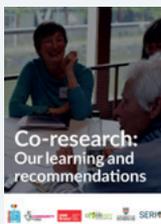
For an overview of co-production and the benefits of this approach, take a look at our [\*\*What is co-production? learning guide\*\*](#)

## Co-research toolkit: Our learning and recommendations – Bristol Ageing Better and Ageing Well Torbay

Collective learning and recommendations from Bristol Ageing Better, UWE Bristol, Ageing Well Torbay and the University of Plymouth.

### Key recommendations when co-producing research include:

- Carefully consider whether the role of researcher will be voluntary or paid.
- It is vital that co-produced research involves a package of support.
- Be mindful of diversity when recruiting volunteer researchers and throughout the research process. The diversity of the volunteer researcher team will affect the perspectives considered during the research and analysis.
- Plan in advance how the volunteer researchers will be involved from the moment they are recruited – how will you keep them engaged and maintain momentum?
- Find out the interests, motivations, skills and support needs of each volunteer researcher so that you can adapt the role around them and be as inclusive as possible.
- Be clear and transparent with the volunteer researchers throughout the research process, including about which decisions are open to influence by the volunteer researchers, the purpose of each task, the methods used and how the findings will make a difference.
- Establish the key outcomes and purpose for the co-research early on in the project, along with the audience that any research findings will be directed towards.
- Communication methods should be established which work for the individuals involved. This communication should involve effective 'feedback loops'.



**Co-research toolkit: Our learning and recommendations** can be found in the Theme 2 Resources folder of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.



## The value of small community-led equalities research projects – Ambition for Ageing Greater Manchester

Ambition for Ageing present learning from five short research projects led by community-based organisations.

### Key learning:

- Ambition for Ageing found that community organisations have specialist knowledge about their community, understand cultural sensitivities and may also be more trusted within their communities than other types of organisations. This enables them to engage well with people from marginalised communities.
- The reports they produced used a writing style that may be more in tune with their communities.
- They are able to disseminate findings widely through community networks and they often put their findings into practice straight away in their work.
- However, some community organisations may not have enough experience or skills in doing research. Some may need practical help and guidance with technical aspects of research, such as help with the planning stage, writing research questionnaires, analysing data, and writing recommendations.
- Community organisations may also need more time and flexibility so they can take risks and try new methods, or try to reach more marginalised people in their community. They may also need extra time and funding for interpreting or translation if community members do not speak English.
- Although they can disseminate findings widely in the community, some may need support from funders and commissioners to share research findings at more strategic levels.



**The value of small community-led equalities research projects** can be found in the Theme 2 Resources folder of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.

## **Knowledge That Matters: Realising the Potential of Co-Production – N8 and ESRC Research Partnership**

This report presents the main findings from a collaborative research programme of eight universities working with community, public and private-sector partners. The research programme seeks to explore how far closer and better working between academics and non-academics – the co-production of knowledge – can bring about greater academic insight and public benefit.



**Knowledge That Matters: Realising the Potential of Co-Production** can be found in the Theme 7 Resources folder of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.

## **Volunteer Listeners Report – Time to Shine Leeds**

The Time to Shine programme involved Volunteer Listeners as a way to add a very human angle to sometimes impersonal evaluation data gathered through questionnaires. It aims to look beyond the numbers and hear from the people involved, in their own words.

This is a different way of capturing people's opinions, feedback and experience in a more person-centred approach, where volunteers hold conversations with older people to allow their stories to emerge.

The report details the Volunteer Listeners approach as an idea, its development, pilot testing and full implementation during 2019.



The **Volunteer Listeners Report** can be found in the Theme 2 Resources folder of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.



## **A map of resources for co-producing research in health and social care – National Institute for Health Research**

A map of practical resources that can help when co-producing research in health and social care. It was produced as part of a project thinking about the challenges of doing co-production in health and social care research.

It provides a selection of resources, toolkits and guidance to help you through the process of thinking about what co-production means in your project.



**A map of resources for co-producing research in health and social care** can be found in the Theme 7 Tools folder of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.

**All of the resources highlighted within this guide may be useful for providers of community-based projects and/or services, or researchers from academic institutions, who are interested in becoming involved in, or learning from, a co-research and co-evaluation approach.**

## 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](mailto:customercollaboration@syha.co.uk)

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



[1 Toolkit user guide](#)



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



[3 Principles and values of co-production](#)



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



[5 Asset-based community development](#)



[6 How to grow sustainable groups](#)



[7 Increasing diversity of inclusion](#)



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