

HeadStart Wolverhampton - Coproduction

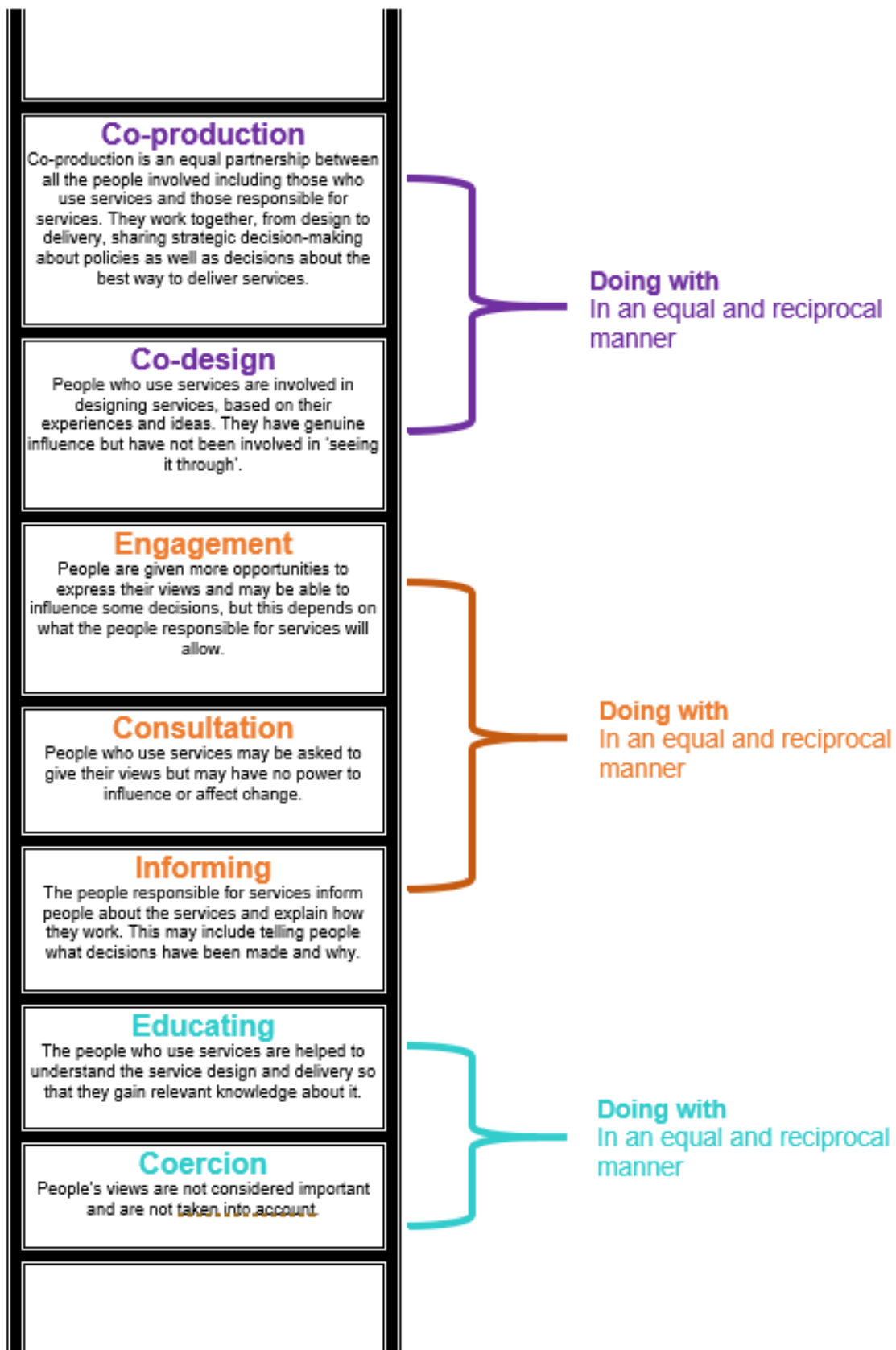
Since 2016 HeadStart Wolverhampton's programme has helped to raise the profile of children and young people's emotional and mental wellbeing and introduced a range of interventions and approaches into existing community organisations and schools, offering an alternative to a traditional medical model offer.

The programme's central values of community and co-production have been putting children and young people at the centre of engagement in the city and established approaches that have subsequently influenced Wolverhampton's [Youth Engagement Strategy](#) (#YES), calling for cross-city collaboration to promote the wellbeing and needs of all young people in the city with an emphasis on co-production.

Developing a co-production approach

With co-production at the core, the HeadStart Wolverhampton programme was designed and implemented alongside young people and parents. In January 2019 HeadStart Wolverhampton led the development of the [Co-Production Charter](#) which has been adopted by the Children and Families Together Board which represents all statutory and voluntary sectors that support children and young people and their families in the City. This charter is a set of principles and promises of working together with young people and families to ensure they remain at the heart of decision making. The Children and Families Together Board believe that young people and their families are best placed to shape the services and support they receive.

This charter was co-produced with children and families and sets out promises and a commitment of co-production. The promises laid out in the charter include 'to support each other in developing our knowledge and skills', 'to seek regular feedback from families' and 'to embed these promises in everything we do' and Wolverhampton have committed to delivering this promise using the principles of trust, shared understanding, equal partnership, creative thinking and communication.



Examples of co-production approaches developed and supported by HeadStart Wolverhampton have included:

- HeadStart Ambassadors (age 16 to 25) facilitate groups of young people as part of the HeadStart programme delivery, whilst helping to promote the views of young people amongst professionals. This group form the HeadStart Shadow Board that works closely with HeadStart leadership around key issues impacting young people.
- HeadStart supported the development of the B-Safe Team (Wolverhampton's Junior Safeguarding Children Board) includes young people who are engaged in safeguarding approaches and decisions. Young people have a voice in the city around these key issues and their input empowers them, as well as helps to increase awareness amongst families and professionals. Co-production is embedded via youth groups such as the Youth Council, Children in Care and Care Leavers Forum.
- Co-production at an organisational level, including influencing the co-production charter as part of #YES, as well as being involved in the refresh of Children and Young People's Participation and Co-Production Strategy 2019/21.
- Co-Production Charter then led to a joint commissioning process with children and young people. This was to design a service specification for a new emotional health and well-being service for the children and young people in the city. Young People then evaluated and judged the applications and ultimately choosing the winning service provider.

Embedding co-production approaches

The City of Wolverhampton wants to ensure that every child and young person has the self-esteem, resilience and social skills they need to succeed in life' – City of Wolverhampton Youth Engagement Strategy

In considering how to embed the work of HeadStart Wolverhampton once funding for the programme ceases, recommendations were made for co-production to come under one team within the local authority.

Through the development of a new Youth Engagement Strategy, consultation was undertaken and a range of co-production approaches that had been established by HeadStart Wolverhampton were used, keeping young people and families central to the strategy-forming process.

'Adopting the coproduction ethos, we worked with young people in developing in developing the questions for the surveys. 1800 hundred surveys were completed, 9801 young people were involved in Make your Mark survey, Group work and 121 work with views of 300 young people 30 different locations and Stakeholder events.'¹ –

HeadStart Wolverhampton, Youth Engagement Strategy

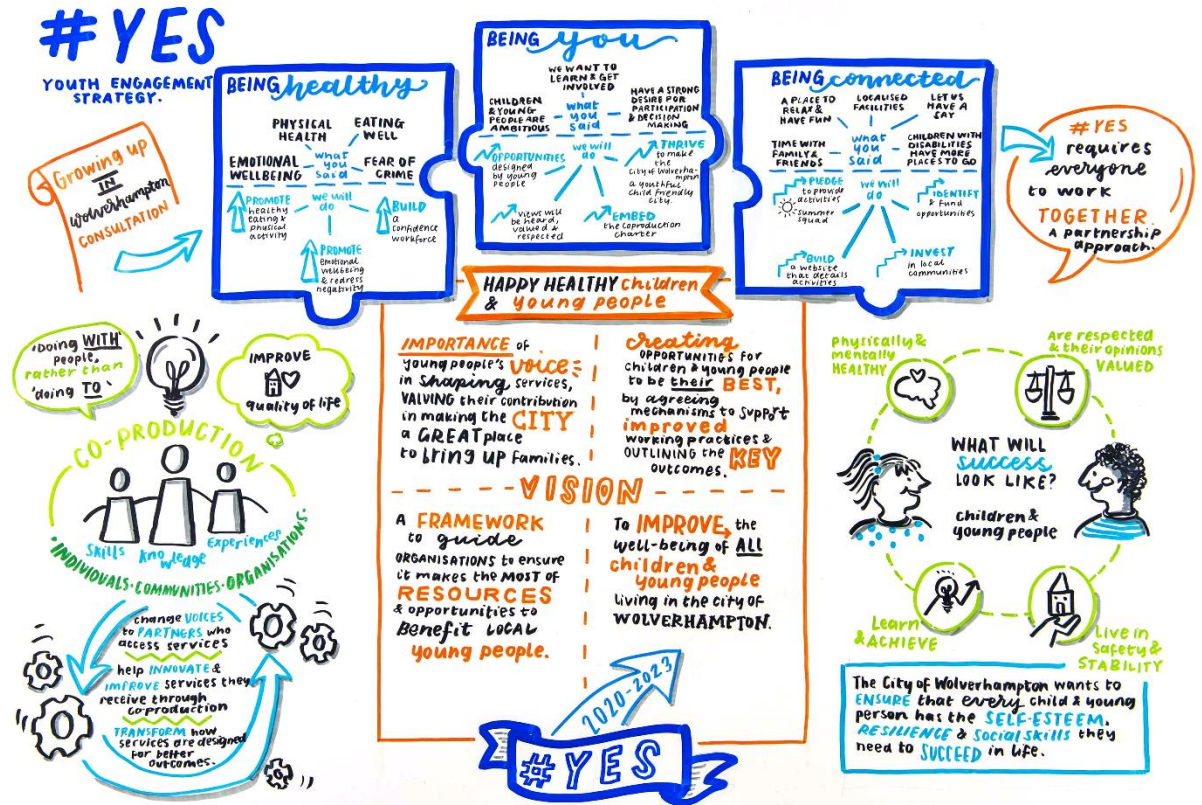
In addition to the co-production approaches used at development stage of the Youth Engagement Strategy, HeadStart provided the foundation for #YES as programme learning was embedded within the overall strategy and the three key #YES themes identified following consultation: Being Healthy, Being Connected and Being You.

HeadStart learning transferred to #YES:

- Developed emotional and mental health well-being toolkits for use in school that will be part of a city-wide roll out under 'Being Healthy' objective
- Established community links and relationships through the delivery of HeadStart's community offer, which will continue through work to establish community group consortiums as part of 'Being Connected' objective
- Supported workforce development of staff working with young people, ranging from promotion and awareness raising of emotional wellbeing through to supporting young people's mental health. There is a training programme currently being put together that will be led by young people and parents
- HeadStart's Well-being Measurement Framework to be integrated within Health-Related Behaviours survey for longitudinal understanding of emotional wellbeing

¹ [#YES Youth Engagement Strategy, City of Wolverhampton Council](#)

in Wolverhampton.



Other co-production approaches embedded within #YES include:

- A Youth Partnership Board to oversee implementation of the strategy. This gives young people a strategic position to drive forward the strategy's ambitions.
- Development of a Co-Production hub; a physical space for the young people and co-location of existing of staff, demonstrating a serious approach to co-production acknowledging young people need a fixed space to develop, hold meetings and thrive. HeadStart staff are already embedded within the City of Wolverhampton's Participation team.