

Co-Production Collective Allies Group

Meeting notes: Tuesday 25 January 2022

Members

Present: Niccola Hutchinson-Pascal, Lizzie Cain, Graham Hart (chair), Mandy Rudczenko, Cristina Serrao, Laura Crane, Laura Cream, Sarah Welsher

Apologies: Ian Needleman, Simon Denegri, Rob Horne

Actions

Agreed approach	Person taking this on	Deadline
1. Team to share strategy response blog when published.	Lizzie	25 Jan – complete
2. Allies to share quotes to include in submission.	Co-ordinated by Nicc/Lizzie	13 Feb
3. Mandy to share ideas for possible associate model to support Co-Production Collective project delivery.	Nicc/Mandy	March
4. Laura Cream and Graham to share list of organisations wanting to fund/work with Co-Production Collective with UCL Senior Leaders.	Laura Cream	Ongoing
5. Sarah and Graham to connect Co-Production Collective with prospective internal contacts.	Sarah/ Graham	Complete
6. Sarah and Graham to advocate for Co-Production Collective being part of a future Health of the Public podcast.	Sarah/ Graham	March
7. Future Allies meetings to always include an item with a 'spotlight' on one of our projects	Nicc/Lizzie	Ongoing
8. Open invitation for all Allies to continue these conversations outside of meetings.	All	Ongoing
9. Update USP based on conversations from meeting	Lizzie	March

Updates

Nicc and Lizzie provided updates on recent Co-Production Collective activity, including:

- NHS England and NHS Improvement project work is ongoing, with 13/18 events delivered in 5/7 NHS England regions and plans developing for pilot projects in each region.
- CEPHI project (with [UCL EPPI Centre](#), part of Social Science Research Unit) is near completion, with 3 advisory groups and 4 workshops delivered. Recently applied for additional funding from NIHR for follow-on activity.
- [National Voices](#) learning partnership is ongoing, co-delivering a webinar on 9 February with just under 500 registered attendees.

Funding

Niccola shared an update on our current funding position, which included:

- 82% of Wellcome Trust ISSF grant has been spent, with the remaining funding (which covers salaries) to be spent by 30 September 2022. There is a small proportion which can be spent by February 2023.
- Additional income to be spent by 31 Jul 2022.
- This is linked to a wider conversation about Co-Production Collective's ongoing sustainability and capacity to deliver new work without core funding to underpin staffing (see below).

UCL strategic plan consultation response

Laura Cream shared an update on our approach to involving the Co-Production Collective community in [UCL's strategy consultation](#):

- We have produced a summary version of the Grand Challenges paper and a set of associated questions, which will publish and encourage community members to contribute to.
- This will align with a similar approach across wider UCL Engagement stakeholders.
- The very tight timeline (deadline for feedback 4 Feb) means that running a session for the community is not possible at this stage, but we will plan to do this at a later point during the UCL consultation work. The forthcoming 'Enablers' paper may be of particular relevance to our work.
- *NB – since the meeting, the response timelines have changed. Our consultation response is open until 13 Feb and we will now be looking to run a session for the community in early March.*

Laura Crane asked if there was also scope to consider showcasing Co-Production Collective's offer as part of the strategy response, particularly in relation to the substantial financial investment UCL will be making from 2022/23 – can we be positioning ourselves as a key potential delivery partner?

- Laura Crane responded that this was a key strand of our work, but we also wanted to make sure we give the community the chance to have their say too.
 - There is little substance about partnership in the Grand Challenges paper.
 - There is more scope to be directive and internally focused in the UCL Engagement response, which gives space for the voices of the community to be heard in Co-Production Collective's response.
 - Graham noted that the 'living well' theme is a potential area for Co-Production Collective's activities.
-

- Graham also noted the value in including external voices in our response, demonstrating to UCL the real-world impact our work has. He also recommended keeping those involved in the strategic plan's development informed about our response.

Co-Production Collective's sustainability

The strategic consultation is a key aspect of ongoing efforts to secure UCL funding for Co-Production Collective's staffing. The new funding associated with the strategic plan's implementation will not be awarded until 2022/23, and Co-Production Collective's core staff funding will currently end 30 September 2022.

Graham and Laura Cream have been meeting senior leaders internally and will continue this approach.

Capacity

Nicc reported that interest in our work is very high – in the last 24 hours she received 3 different offers of funding for significant projects across research, policy and practice. However, we are very conscious of the balance between the valuable opportunities of projects like these, and the risk in terms of delivery capacity, our longer-term sustainability and the quality of our work.

Mandy asked whether it would be possible to bring in people from our community to deliver this work?

- It was agreed that this is the ultimate aim for Co-Production Collective.
 - However, there are questions about whether it is appropriate or ethical to bring people in on a short-term and insecure basis.
 - Nicc also noted that the infrastructure required to support new staff members – the induction and processes required to be able to deliver the
-

work as needed, maintaining our values, reputation and approach – are not yet in place, and the current team are struggling to find the time to create them.

- Laura Cream highlighted that the team's priority now is the 'survival strand' of our work, which takes time away from other aspects and is making workloads challenging. This is particularly the case because the internal UCL funding has such a tight deadline to be spent.
- Mandy asked if we could 'challenge how we look at this'? She felt that many would welcome a more freelance-style approach to working with us, as she has done in other organisations.
- Graham agreed that there would be interest in short term and part time roles, but that core funding was needed to underpin this – hopefully we will be able to do both.
- He noted that the uncertainty for staff was unacceptable but the uncertainty of UCL's current position, in terms of the strategy, couldn't be helped.
- Mandy's challenge was welcomed by Nicc and Laura, who agreed to continue the conversation after the meeting.

Graham noted how impressive it was that demand outstrips supply for Co-Production Collective, and we are clearly benefiting from the culture change which has been building for the past few years. We need to use that strategically. Sarah suggested potential avenues for further internal interest.

Laura Crane noted that this success speaks to all the engagement work the team have put in to make Co-Production Collective the go-to organisation for co-production. However, there is so much internal collaboration we could do to help share the capacity and build in research expertise – we could maintain the oversight and quality assurance, but the work itself could be delivered by others.

There is a reputational risk, but it makes sense to collaborate and draw on the wider community.

Next steps

Graham noted that, by the March meeting, we may need to be having tough conversations about long-term sustainability, but there are a lot of juggling balls right now and hopefully one of them will land.

He acknowledged that we would all much rather be getting on with the co-production work itself! It was agreed that future Allies meeting agenda should be updated to include a regular slot with a 'spotlight' on one of our projects.

Our USP

Lizzie introduced a draft 'USP' (unique selling point/proposition) for Co-Production Collective – what makes us stand out in comparison to others operating in the same space. This has been drawn from research carried out by a consultant from [PPL](#), who provided support free of charge and developed by the team based on our wider activity.

Lizzie noted that this was very much a draft version, with a general audience in mind, and attempting to be as succinct as possible! She presented a one sentence, three sentence and five sentence version.

Discussion

General feedback included:

- Making it clear that we are 'one team' with co-producers, internally and externally.
-

- Explaining more about the changes we help to bring about – based on living and lived experience, co-production as becoming business-as-usual.
- Trying to use as much plain English as possible.
- Keeping sentences short.
- Blowing our own trumpet more!
- Removing examples from the wording and including them elsewhere, e.g. in pull out boxes or as case studies on the website. They can be there, but not as part of the main body of text, regularly updated and refreshed. This would also give scope to explain our role and ‘what changed?’ more clearly.
- A list of partner logos, somewhere very prominent, would also be valuable.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 27 April 2022, 14:00–16:00
