

Interactive Summary

# The Value of Co-Production Project

Version 1.0 [31 October 2022]



Co-Production  
Collective

# Welcome to the Value of Co-Production Research Project

Our aim is to make the case for the value of co-production for individuals, organisations and society. We've heard from over 700 people from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences to shape this resource. We hope this project will help you understand and communicate the value of co-production in your work. **Please share this resource widely! We want to make sure as many people as possible can benefit.**

## What is co-production?

Co-production can be defined as an approach to working together in equal partnership and for equal benefit. If you're interested in finding out more about what co-production is, please explore [our approach to co-production](#) and core values further.

## Why we started the project?

We started this project to provide a resource to help you overcome the following barriers when it comes to co-production. We hope this resource helps a wide variety of people to be able to make the case for co-production. We have tried to provide multiple different ways to engage in the content so that you can absorb the information in whatever way works for you.

Advocating for the time to do it and having resources to help

Resistance from people who are used to working in more hierarchical ways

Insufficient evidence of the value of co-production to convince people who are unfamiliar with it that it is worth trying out and investing in

## Who was involved?

The Value of Co-Production Research Project was funded by Research England's participatory research funding allocation and run by Co-Production Collective at University College London (UCL).

We are a co-production community where everyone is welcome. Together we learn, connect, and champion co-production for lasting change.

We worked as a team which included individual co-producers from our community, with a wide range of knowledge and experience, Co-Production Collective staff Co-Production Collective staff members, researchers from the [EPPI Centre at UCL](#) and partner organisations, including [Gobby](#), [People's Voice Media](#) and the [Institute of Community Reporters](#), to bring together this research.

[See a full list of everyone involved](#)

# Our partners



## Who this resource is for?

This resource is for anyone who wants to learn more about the value of co-production. We hope it will help you to showcase the benefits of working in a co-produced way. If you would like support in using it please [contact us](#).

## You might be:

A decision-maker / funder for work involving co-production – maybe you work for a funding body, the NHS, a local authority, or a housing association

Someone with lived experience who is involved in co-production, or would like to be – you might be a patient or service user of the health and care system, or a carer for someone who is

Working in designing or delivering services with people

Interested in making change happen through co-production – maybe you're involved in a grassroots group or a community association

Doing something else altogether!

## You might be interested in:

Making the case for co-production to your team, organisations you're working with, or a potential funder

Understanding why co-production might be worth exploring in your role

Communicating the benefits of co-production that you've done or would like to do

Something else entirely!

If you're looking to learn more about how to get involved in co-production or put co-production into practice, check out the Co-Production Collective events page.

Show me the findings!

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## The key learnings

Please use this section of the document to delve further into the detail of this work in a way that works for you. Alternatively read on for a summary of our findings. We created this resource by bringing together and analysing the findings from this research project which included us speaking to 100 people to gather co-production experiences, reviewing 59 academic studies and the learning from our own pilot projects, and gathering responses from 573 online surveys submitted.



What is this project all about?



The headlines



An overview



Our evidence base:  
the numbers



All the detail!

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## Real life examples



Case study #1:  
Voices in Maternity Care



Case study #2:  
Hearing Birdsong



Case study #3  
Authentic

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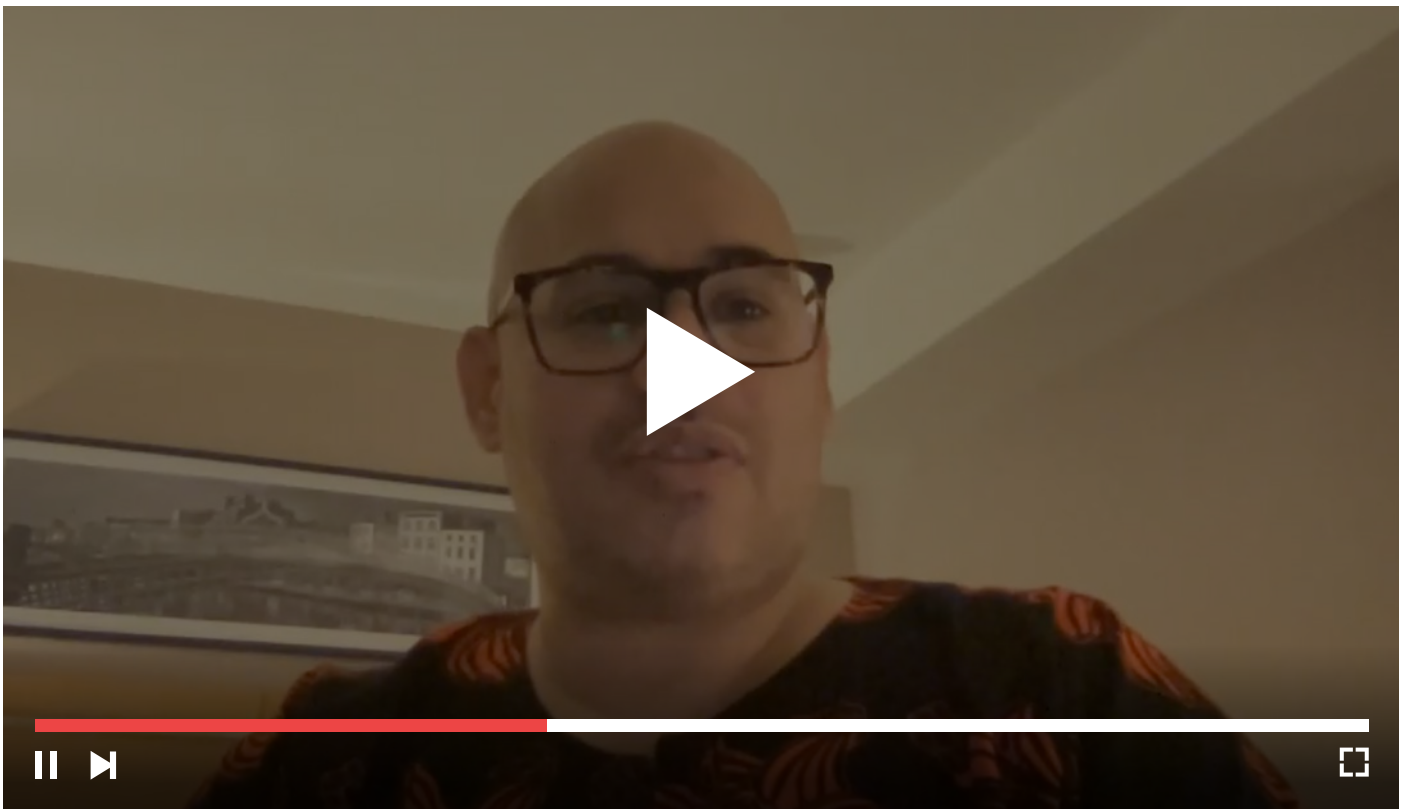
## What is this project all about?

Please watch our summary video!

This video narrated by Niccola and Issac tells you what this project is all about, and provides you with overview of this resource and the Value of Co-production Research Project summary findings.

We are providing this video as an alternative way of engaging with the content in this resource as we know people like to absorb content like this in a variety of different ways.

# Value of Co-Production Project Overview



[Return to key learning contents page](#)

## How can you help?

Please share this resource far and wide! We want to make sure as many people as possible can benefit.

Please read on to find out more about our findings from this work.

# The value of co-production lies in:



Delivering outcomes that actually matter to people



Efficiency, in the long run



Working towards social justice



Empowering people and building capacity\*



Connecting us as humans, working towards shared goals

Our findings show that Co-production can be seen as a valid 'method' a way of doing research, policy or service development. But it can also be an intervention - an act designed to change or influence something - in its own right. This is not necessarily true of other 'methods'. The values at the heart of Co-production - and the changes they bring about for all involved - distinguish it from other 'methods'. In other words, the value of co-production is in both the journey and the destination.

The value of co-production depends on the context in which co-production takes place, however. Co-production is not a fix all. It's not always the most useful, relevant or productive approach for developing a piece of work or research.

\*People told us as part of this research that they felt empowered by co-production



## The value of co-production - beyond the headlines:

If applied in the right context and given sufficient time and investment, co-production can achieve big things. We analysed the findings from our research which showed that the key benefits of working in this way are that it will result in:

### Delivery of outcomes that actually matter to people



- Outcomes of the work will be impactful, relevant and applicable for members of the community and people with lived experience because they have been genuinely involved and heard throughout
- Cultural inclusion and adaptation – results are likely to show more sensitivity to cultural context
- Brings together a depth of information and analysis, based on first hand experiences and up-to-date information, which can generate better informed decision-making

[Hear Lydia's story](#)



## Efficiency, in the long run



- Better decisions are made, enabled by cognitive diversity, which prevents wasted energy and resources
- More uptake and better engagement in services and research produced as a result of co-production
- Enables innovation – more likely to come up with a new / different solutions, as co-production is a more independent, challenging and disruptive process than traditional methods
- Co-production enables a wider group of people to be brought into the work at the outset, which can then help identify further stakeholders / groups who should be involved – less likely to miss key insights or exclude key groups
- Co-producing evaluation can create deeper and more meaningful evaluation measures and understanding

### Hameed's story

## Working towards social justice



- Raises awareness of issues that have a huge impact on people with lived experience but weren't previously heard / understood by others, including researchers and practitioners
- Tackles challenging questions and creates systemic change
- Promotes accessibility and equity – a more flexible and adaptable way of working, can be more inclusive
- Challenges existing power dynamics and hierarchies, enables power-sharing
- Values people's lived experience through remuneration
- Positive outcomes for people with lived experience and those with learnt experience as a result of the process, not just the final outcome
- Challenges and changes the behaviours of the professionals and researchers who take part, which can contribute to wider culture change in their organisations and institutions
- Less agenda-driven – more open to challenge, disruption and exploring changing the status quo

[Hear Ashleigh's story](#)

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## Empowering the people involved and building capacity for informed decision making



- Builds capacity and helps those taking part to make more informed decisions, which is particularly impactful if people from marginalised communities are involved and have opportunities for mutual learning
- A reflexive and reflective process, encouraging learning and improving as you go
- Personal growth, learning, professional development and empowerment for those taking part
- Development of new skills and a sense of purpose and meaning for people taking part in co-production
- Encourages participants to recognise their own capacity to create and drive change

[Hear Noreen's story](#)

## Connecting us as humans, working towards shared goals



- Builds relationships between researchers, practitioners and people with lived experience
- Improves trust between the people and organisations involved
- Gives people a sense of ownership in the work
- As co-production is inclusive, it is more likely to make those taking part feel enthusiastic about and engaged in the process – more enjoyable and more likely to stay committed
- Wellbeing benefits for participants from social connections and from the satisfaction of making a difference
- Encourages hope for the future

[Hear Shahid's story](#)

Our findings are supported by a rigorous evidence base. Analysis across the board demonstrated consistent themes around the value of co-production, which been drawn out into our headline findings.

**We have analysed findings from:**

**59**

**academic studies**

- We synthesised the results of 31 theoretically-focused papers to distil the values that underpin co-production.
- We also reviewed 28 unique studies that reported primary research and focused on co-producing research in relevant contexts.
- Our rapid review\* found a general consensus that co-production is a positive approach for improving research projects and meeting their goals, plus outcomes for co-producers such as satisfaction and self-esteem.

**100**

**community storytellers**

- We spoke to 100 people to gather co-production experiences through [community reporting](#). Our storytellers were a balanced mix of people with lived / living experience (55%), co-production facilitators (62%), and people involved in co-production as part of their job (55%). Our storytellers were also evenly split across research, policy and services.
- Two-thirds of storytellers were female.
- Nine identified as LGBTQIA+.
- A quarter described themselves as having a disability.
- The majority of respondents were white British. Storytellers also identified as British Pakistani, Black, Bangladeshi, mixed race and minority ethnic.
- The age of storytellers ranged from 20-85.
- Aside from the lived experiences covered by the categories above, people also described themselves as having lived experience of: addiction (5); homelessness (4); poverty (3); adverse childhood experiences (2); prison (2); adoption (1); care (1); psychiatric hospital (1) and sexual exploitation (1).
- Many of the stories were full of enthusiasm and joy. Almost every storyteller had something good to say about co-production, even if they had also had negative experiences to share.

\*A form of evidence synthesis that may provide more timely information for decision making compared with standard systematic reviews.

# 573

## online surveys

- 573 online surveys were submitted, from people with an even spread of roles associated with co-production activities. 39% had more than one role in supporting co-production activities, 49% contributed to co-production in a professional context only, and 47% contributed their lived experience to projects, with 29% of this group also supporting the process as a professional group.
- An open survey link was distributed via UK target audiences including email distribution lists, research networks and social media groups.
- There were high levels of engagement from the co-production community with a total of 9691 responses to the survey. This is a combination of all unique responses (comments) and vote counts (validation) of existing responses.
- Questions had a range of up to 94 unique comments.
- The themes drawn from this survey therefore have a strong grounding in the views and experiences of the co-production community.

# 9

## pilot projects

- In Phase 1 (2018) we funded 5 pilot projects over 4 months for up to £5,000. In Phase 2 (2019 – 2020) we then funded 4 projects over 7 months for up to £15,000.
- Projects that had co-production built in to the design and delivery
- The evaluation of these pilot activities has informed our overall findings.

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### What did we learn about co-production whilst doing this work?

We worked reflectively throughout this project and implemented learning as we went along. We are sharing this learning as we felt you might find it useful. You can find out more in our Value of Co-Production Research Project Learnings Report – coming soon.

[Return to key learning contents page](#)

## All the detail!

**100**

stories of co-production experiences through our Community Reporting project

**573**

online surveys were submitted on the value of co-production

**59**

academic studies reviewed as part of a rapid critical review of the research evidence of the value of co-production

**9**

pilot projects putting co-production into action reviewed

View our findings in detail for each of these research methods here:

### Survey

Overview video

Overview report

Full report

### Rapid critical review

Overview video

Overview report

Full report

### Community Reporting

Overview video

Overview report

Full report

All stories

### Pilot projects

Overview video

Full report

[Return to key learning contents page](#)

## In partnership with:



Co-Production  
Collective

