

LIVED EXPERIENCE AND CODESIGN

Lived Experience in Service Design and Innovation draws upon Service User Involvement and Co-production approaches by incorporating the views of service users in the research, planning and development of new services.

The Coproduction collective define coproduction as 'an approach to working together in equal partnership and for equal benefit'.

Full co-production approaches align the involvement of people with lived experience not just in the design stages but in delivery of services as well. Where this isn't possible many organisations prefer to adopt a co-design approach which focuses solely on designing services.

Co-design is an approach that is used to involve people with lived experience in exploring and creating new or improved services.

Codesign can be used to:

- Measure the impact of a service and identify how a service could be improved to meet people's needs
- Develop new services
- Gather insights of to update information, challenges and issues that may have a big impact on people that aren't seen or understood by professionals.
- Identify needs of service users and learn about communities in practice to shape decision making and service plans.

The benefits of adopting these techniques include:

- Creates opportunities for service users to give views on service provision and strategy.
- Provides service users opportunity to voice concerns, views and ideas and shape decisions
- Enables service users to develop trust in services that are responsive to their views
- Demonstrates to service users that their views are valued and respected at the highest level
- Offers unique insights into service users' perspectives on good practice.
- Provides first hand information based on actual experiences that previously may not have been heard or understood by practitioners and professionals.
- Involvement of service users and community representatives can lead to more impactful service outcomes when services are designed on actual need.

Practical examples of this include:

- Undertaking Peer Research and training people with experience of being a service user in the research process by gathering information and analysing data, undertaking interviews with other service users, designing questionnaires and surveys as equals in the research process.

- Holding forums and panels with diverse groups of service users to gather insight and consult with users on potential design plans can provide valuable insight in decision-making processes.
- Creating Lived Experience roles on the project development team enables the practice of co-creation as service user representatives are involved in the process from beginning to end.

As with any design project planning and available resources need to be effectively thought-out to meet what you are hoping to achieve such as the required human resource, finances, timescales and deadlines. The same applies when implementing co-design, whilst involving service users has its benefits, successful implementation can also bring challenges, particularly in terms of additional time to facilitate, identifying and removing barriers to participation, managing sustained levels of engagement and recruiting working group members.

Things to consider:

- **Recruiting people with lived experience-** Before recruiting individuals with lived experience on to the design team the level of involvement and role should be carefully considered, giving as much time and resources to recruitment of individuals with lived experience as you would when recruiting for practitioner positions. Like practitioner roles, lived experience roles should be clearly defined and representative of the skills and experience required. Additional consideration should also be given to the type of lived experience, supporting the wellbeing of the individual and the team and organisational ability to engage and manage potentially vulnerable groups.
- **Balance of Power-** Organisations need to be mindful of managing diverse groups and dynamics between ‘professionals’ and service users ensuring individuals with lived experience can participate as and feel like equals. It is important to set out at the beginning whether it is possible for decision-making to be shared equally or at what point you bring in lived experience expertise and its purpose. Setting clear levels of involvement in the process at the start will support the development of collaborative working culture and enable trust to be formed.
- **Remuneration-** Many individuals with lived experience start their engagement with services as a volunteer willingly investing their own time to support other individuals going through similar experiences. It is widely recognised that when actively contributing to improving services or co-designing new services, no-one should do so at a cost to themselves. Building in remuneration packages for volunteers with lived experience is recognised as good practice and supports balanced power dynamics through ensuring peoples lived experience are valued and compensated. Where financial capacity allows it is recommended organisations explore options such as sessional daily rates, covering travel expenses and providing lunch vouchers in recognition of contribution.

However, organisations should note that if individuals are in receipt of state benefits that any remuneration should not leave them at a disadvantage or incur any financial penalties due to their engagement. Guidance around volunteering and remuneration for those in receipt of state benefits can be found at: [Volunteering and claiming benefits - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

- **Training and support-** To actively participate additional training and support may be required for individuals with lived experience who have not previously been involved in co-design, evaluation

of services or service delivery. Providing the right tools, context and skills to actively participate can be crucial to the implementation of co-design by ensuring individuals are adequately prepared for the level of involvement or role required of them. This can include:

- Inducting individuals into the organisation, its strategy, culture and values
- Outlining levels of involvement and expectations and the project purpose and aims
- Developing a skills development package that covers topics such as: behaviours, facilitating and participating in meetings, evaluation and data collection techniques, digital skills, existing service delivery processes

Trauma Informed Approach- Applying trauma informed practice to service design is fundamental when including potentially vulnerable groups in the design process. Recognising and preparing for the impact of trauma at the outset enables suitable resources and processes to be put in place to support individuals with lived experience actively contribute with the aim of: reducing the risk of re-traumatising or retriggering individuals and considering the emotional impact sensitive subjects may have on the individuals wellbeing. For more information on general Trauma Informed Practice visit [Trauma-Informed Wales \(traumaframeworkcymru.com\)](https://traumaframeworkcymru.com) or [Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Co-design

What is co-design- [What is co-design? — Beyond Sticky Notes](#) **Kelly Ann McKercher**, has put together this easy to follow overview of what co-production and co-design.

[Sharing the principles of co-design — Emma Blomkamp](#) a handy overview of the principles of effective co-design.

[Influence and participation toolkit | Mind - Mind Complete](#) Complete with handy templates and practical templates Minds' toolkit can be adapted to services outside of Mental wellbeing and contains some practical advice and tools.

Coproduction

[Co-production: what it is and how to do it - SCIE](#) Social Care Institute for excellence have developed a handy guide that takes you through the principles of coproduction and how to it!

[What is co-production? – Co-production Network for Wales](#) Joining this network will continue your professional development through the outstanding array of training packages, resources and handy practical case studies.

<https://knowledgehub.cymru/app/uploads/2022/06/National-Principles-for-Public-Engagement-in-Wales.pdf>