Co-Production Collective

The Evaluation Exchange

Compost London

Measuring Success in Co-Production: Learning By Doing 2025

UCL Grand Challenges

The Academy of Medical Sciences

UCL

Navigating this report: summary of sections and what is covered

To help work your way around this report, here is a summary of what is included in the Sections. Part of this is repeated In Section 3 to explain how the evaluation questions are covered across Sections 4-7.

Sections with background to programme

Section 1: Report Summary

- This contains a **summary of key information** so you can see quickly **what the programme is about** and what the **main outcomes** are
- See Sections 2-8, and project summaries for more context and detail

Section 2: Introduction and context for this report

- Provides a summary of **what this report hopes to achieve**, **who it is for**, and **who is involved**
- Gives an introduction to the **Aims and Objectives** of the programme

Section 3: Overview of the Measuring Success Programme

- Provides the **rationale** for the programme
- Presents a summary of the **funding approach** taken and the **Sharing and Learning support** provided
- Provides a summary explanation of **how we have measured our objectives**

Sections that detail method and findings

Our evaluation questions

Section 4: Evaluation of the Measuring Success Programme

Responds to Question 1 →

Provides an overview of methods, types of data and findings

1. What have we learned from the project teams. external feedback and independent evaluation about this **grant-giving programme**?

Section 5: Measuring co-production and evaluation processes

- Provides an overview of **methods,** types of data and approaches to Questions 2 and 3

Section 6: What we've learned about the conditions for co-production

- Responds to Question 2 →
- Findings from our, and teams, evaluations of co-production processes
- Summary of conditions and actions that optimise co-production

2. What have we learned collectively from evaluating the process of co-production about **optimising conditions for co-production**?

Section 7: What we've learned about evaluation in co-production

- Responds to Question 3 →
- Summary of findings and learning points around evaluation: from all teams' experiences

3. What have we learned collectively about **co-producing evaluation and evaluating co-production?**

Table of Contents

1. Report Summary

1.1 What is Measuring Success in Co-production: Learning by Doing?

This piece of work follows on from the previous **Co-production Pilot Projects** and the **Value of Co-Production Research Project** published by Co-Production Collective in October 2022 which found that the impact of co-production is often underexplored and evaluation is underreported. From the research, findings suggest that if applied in the right context and given sufficient time and investment, co-production can have many benefits.

Recommendations from the Value of Co-Production Research Project suggested that benefits are enhanced, when co-produced projects:

- Are effectively resourced
- Not only consider outcomes, but also how all team members are affected during their journeys.

This has been our emphasis throughout the development of this programme. With plenty of time to be reflective built in, our Measuring Success Team and the funded project teams have evaluated ourselves and our ways of working in developing, supporting and learning about co-production processes, as well as producing things that are hopefully useful for others.

Aims for the Measuring Success programme and projects

To gain a better understanding of the conditions required for good co-production and evaluation across different mental health, wellbeing and/or climate change contexts and projects.

Our hopes and expectations for this programme

While frameworks, toolkits and checklists are available, it is clear that these are rapidly evolving and therefore perhaps not as useful or meaningful as we may assume.

Our emphasis throughout the development of this programme has been on exploring meaning while measuring co-production processes and impacts of the journey. Our **Measuring Success Team** and project teams that we funded as part of the programme (see page 9 for further information) have evaluated ourselves and our ways of working in developing, supporting and learning about co-production processes. They also generated the outputs as seen in section 7.1, the 'Nine learning points from co-producing evaluations and evaluating'. We chose to focus on the areas of mental health and wellbeing and climate change when advertising our funded project opportunity to align with the priorities of our funders.

From the outset we have been discussing as a co-production team, how we can make this a good funding programme experience. In doing this, we wanted to offer something of benefit to those who generously commit their time to apply for funding i.e. our 8 funded projects. Bringing together the skills of our team, we created what we hope to be an inclusive yet interactive funding programme by applying the principles of co-production. To ensure that this programme has **value** and **brings about change** we wanted it to be a meaningful Sharing and Learning opportunity for individuals, groups and organisations i.e. those applying for funding at any stage in their co-production journey, regardless of funding outcome.

We wanted to encourage a flexible but **supported approach to learning by doing**, rather than imposing a framework or structure. From the start, we were keen to identify the principles of co-production used, and then look at how those principles helped to create the conditions for successful co-production and evaluation.

1.2 Programme summary and timeline

The Measuring Success Team started working on the programme in May 2023 and the funding application process was launched in September 2023. Funded teams were supported through a series of 'Deepening Practice' sessions (tailored evaluation support) and 'Sharing and Learning' sessions (a supportive forum for sharing learning and discussing the principles of co-production). There were also more informal 'catchups' with individual teams and 'Cuppa-style' sessions open to all.

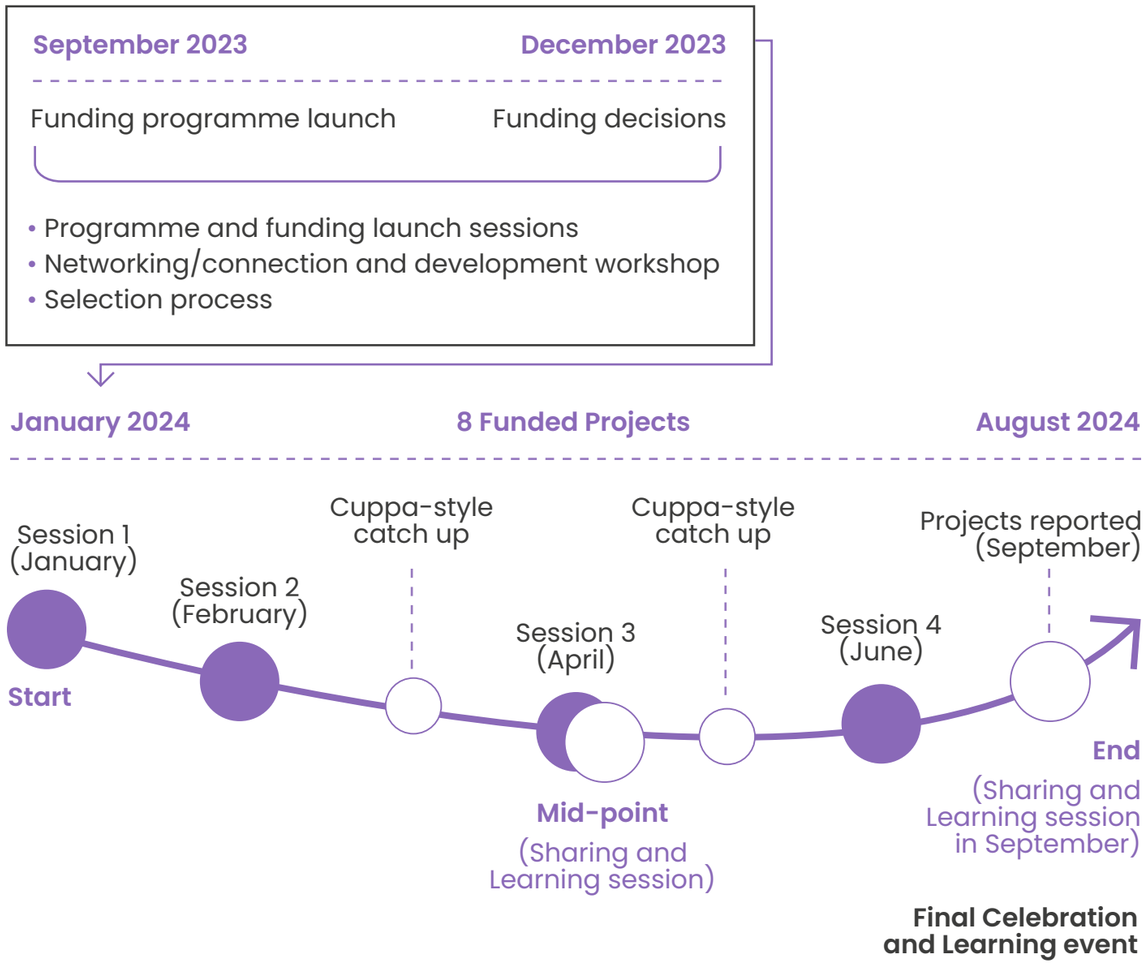


Figure 1. Measuring Success: Learning by Doing programme timeline

Funded Projects

In December 2023, we funded eight projects with the following titles:

1. Co-production From the Inside Out
2. Co-producing an Evaluation of the Aphasia New Music Group
3. Homelessness and Dual Diagnosis: A Co-Production Project
4. Promoting Mental Health Conversations at the University of Warwick
5. Exploring Neurodivergence and Maintaining and Acting on Eco-Hope
6. Closing the Loop Beyond the Loop: Strengthening Partnership Working with Meta-Co-Production
7. Assessing the Impact of Co-production in Fostering Equality and Diversity in Mental Health and Wellbeing Research
8. East of England Psychological Professions Co-production Group

Please see the project summaries for further information about each project.

Over the 9 months following December 2023, we supported and learned with the teams with 4 Deepening Practice sessions, 2 Sharing and Learning sessions, 2 Co-Pro Cuppa style sessions, and catch-ups with the project teams.

1.3 Questions we explored in the evaluation were...

1. What have we, and the project teams, learned throughout this grant-giving programme?
2. What have we learned from evaluating the process of co-production about optimising conditions for co-production?
3. What have we learned about co-producing evaluations and evaluating co-production?

1.4 What are the key findings?

Our key findings related to each of our key questions outlined above are summarised in three Sections of the report (Sections 5, 6 and 7) and below.

We hold an awareness that findings may be specific to teams and individuals involved but present conclusions from evidence collected on key aspects to support the programme aims. In our approach to analysis, we have captured and reported on the diverse and authentic experiences of project teams in developing the findings.

Key learnings from the grant-giving programme (Section 5)

We gathered information to inform our learnings about the programme using feedback forms, Google Jamboards (online whiteboards from online sessions), project meeting notes and the 8 project team reports. From these we found **four main themes**:

1. Support from the programme team was found to be **Formative** (i.e. happened before the 8 funded projects started)
2. A supportive **Community of Practice** developed through the programme (i.e. through the supportive sessions)
3. The collaborative spaces were **Humanising** (i.e. having safe and meaningful qualities)
4. Challenges and **Barriers** were identified

1. Formative

- Launch event and Networking, Connection and Development Workshop, fostered understanding of programme/co-production
- For some this fostered motivation and inspiration to go forward with an application
- It enabled building networks and collaborations and development of plans for some (not all - see point 4, barriers)

2. Humanising

- Accessible, inclusive, safe spaces were created (albeit with room for improvement: see point 4, barriers) where people felt valued and heard
- The Measuring Success team were found to be warm friendly and kind they showed humility
- Team-centred support was available when needed without feeling hassled

3. Community of practice

- Sharing and Learning with others through 'Deepening Practice', 'Sharing and Learning' and informal 'Cuppa' sessions was an important part of the 'Learning by Doing' journey
- Peer support and shared experiences could be validating and encouraging
- Sharing resources was helpful. Some described it akin to a Community of Practice

4. Barriers

- Accessibility was not right for everyone. Some people wanted more support to help them to explore ideas under discussion, whilst others wanted to examine these same concepts in more depth
- Timing of programme support vs project delivery was mismatched for some
- Navigating use of technology and impact on 'connecting' with others could be a challenge

Four main learning themes from the grant-giving programme

The table below is a visual representation of our learnings from the 8 Project Teams and the Measuring Success Team. This summarises the knowledge we have gained about which factors help to support good co-production. Each colour represents data from various sources - please see the key below. This allows us to identify significant conditions and emergent patterns.

Conditions for co-production themes	Different teams/sources of data
Setting up and embedding co-production principles and evaluation practices	**A B C D E F G H I J**
1. Setting and keeping shared direction	
2. EDI principles are prioritised and monitored	
3. Recruitment and role expectations	
4. Clarity and growth of roles	
5. Prepared for people leaving - practical	
6. Trust: openness and confidentiality	
7. Managing uncertainty, emotions and tensions	
8. Planning and timelines	
9. Accessibility and inclusion	
10. Funding and managing budget	
11. Evaluation approach	
12. Monitoring of direction	
Principles of co-production	**Different teams/sources of data**
1. Building and maintaining relationships	**A B C D E F G H I J**
1. Investing time in connection and trust	
2. Psychological safeness	
3. Compassionate environment - tensions and conflict	
4. Different needs in connecting and relationships	
5. Emotional support	
6. More widely connected through the 'journey'	
7. Open mindset and flexibility to consider other perspectives	
8. Accessibility and right conditions/settings to build	
2. Balancing power and decision making	**A B C D E F G H I J**
9. Leadership	
10. Choice in roles and decision making	
11. Addressing uncertainty caused by power imbalance	
12. Noticing and balancing power of voice	
13. Trust in decision making progress	
14. Time and money - control in decision making	
3. Inclusion and respecting and enabling all skills, knowledge and experience	**A B C D E F G H I J**
15. Compassionate facilitation	
16. Impact of identities and experience	
17. Inclusive & equitable practices	
18. Valuing all types of lived and learned knowledge and skills	
4. Multiple impacts - value and benefit for all (journey)	**A B C D E F G H I J**
19. Range of impacts	
20. Financial reward/value	
21. Personal growth	
22. Benefits for staff	
23. Emotional burden	
24. Latency of benefit for individuals	
5. Reflecting/adapating	**A B C D E F G H I J**
25. Monitoring	
26. Safeness to support reflective practice	
27. Freedom and creativity from reflexivity	
28. Creating different, appropriate, opportunities to reflect	
29. Self-reflection	

Figure 2. Optimising the conditions for co-production: data from across project teams

Key for sources of data for Figures 2 and 18-23

- **A** Measuring Success Team independent evaluation
- **B** Measuring Success Team self-report (and reflective) evaluation sources
- **C-J** Project Team reports
- Relates to monitoring evaluation in co-production

Key learnings about optimising the conditions for co-production (Section 6)

1. We identified main themes with underlying conditions **(see Figure 2)** related to:
   - Setting up and embedding co-production principles and evaluation practices (12 conditions).
   - Five core principles of co-production (and reflecting and adapting) used by Co-Production Collective (29 conditions).
2. From team reports and our Measuring Success Team evaluation of our process, we identified **a range of factors and/or actions** that could **help to work towards optimising the conditions.**
3. **We learned that there was a variation** in the patterns of reported conditions (identified from the available data) across the different main themes, for different teams (see Figure 3).
4. The **need to co-produce evaluations was recognised by teams.** While this seemed obvious, there was a more nuanced understanding for some people that this could **guard against bias** in evaluation processes.

Key learnings from co-producing an evaluation and evaluating co-production (Section 7)

Learnings about co-producing an evaluation and also evaluating the process of co-production, highlighted specific challenges. Co-production often exists in a context of uncertainty and this can affect evaluation. Issues of power and ensuring inclusivity were also significant. Examples from teams in the programme include how they tailored evaluation approaches to the needs of their group and tried to capture the emotional and relational aspects of co-production. The challenge of different perceptions of evaluation is explored, as well as the specific implications of appropriate time and resource management in co-produced evaluations. The importance of inspiration from others and support for evaluation is also listed. The report organises the learning into nine key points, as illustrated in the Figure 3.

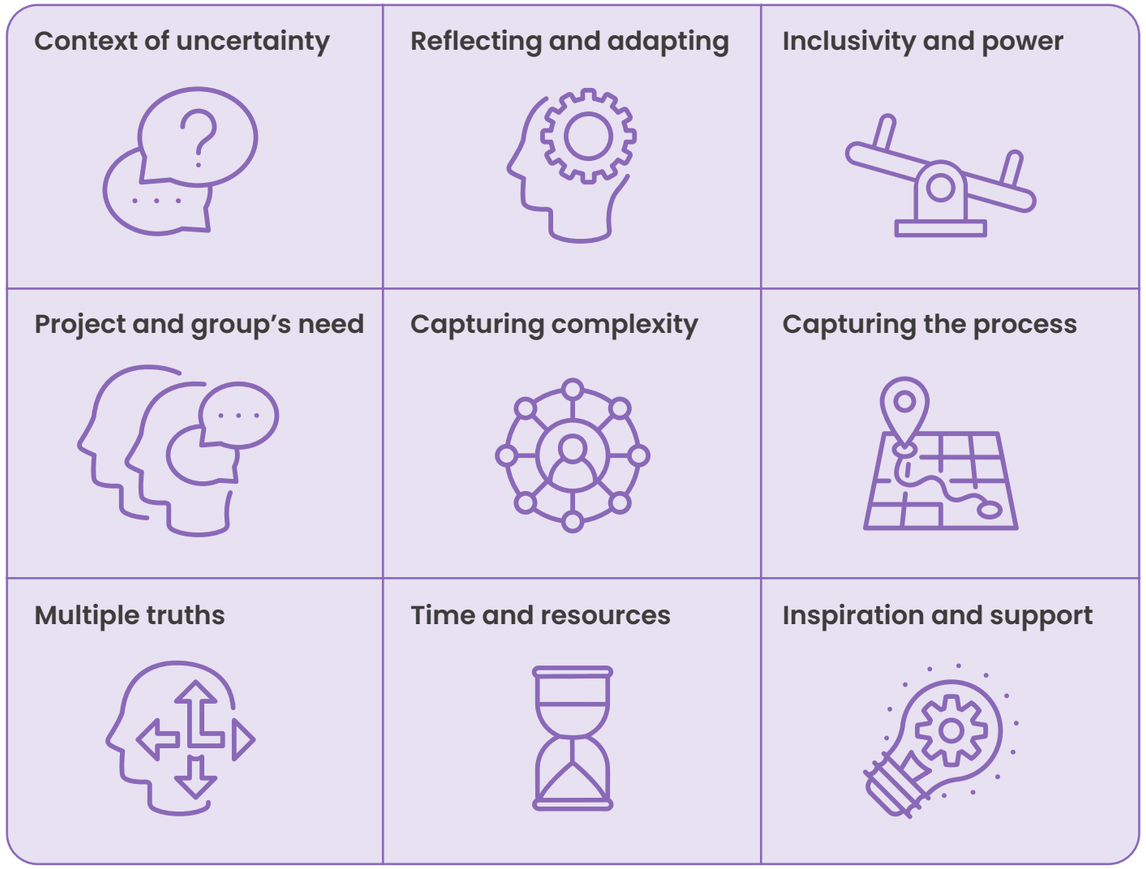


Figure 3: 9 key learnings from the programme about evaluation
(Credit: Evaluation Exchange & Measuring Success in Co-production, 2025)

1.5 Summarising: bringing together co-production and evaluation

This co-produced participatory funding programme brought together co-production and evaluation. Our shared goal was to gain a better understanding of the conditions required for good co-production and evaluation across different mental health, wellbeing and/or climate change contexts and projects. This programme was directly building on the findings from the Value of Co-production work, and specifically the Rapid Critical Review (Co-Production Collective, 2022).

Co-producing this programme has enabled us to share insights, challenges and use our collective knowledge, skills and experience to explore solutions with 9 project teams (including our own). This involved a motivation to enact the principles and values of co-production across a range of contexts, and with diverse individuals with lived and living experience and/or employed in organisations or institutions.

Capturing complexity and tolerating uncertainty

To build on the Value of Co-production (Co-Production Collective, 2022) work, we felt it important that we are able to provide some evidence that illustrates the complexity of co-production using our chosen approach to co-producing the evaluation, pooling data, analysis, interpretation and reporting. Figure 4 and text below serve to illustrate and describe the complex interaction between the principles, conditions and other factors associated with human experience and context.

Setting up and Principles of co-production - these main categories are a helpful starting and ending point but can be very broad and undefined things to enact

Individual conditions - may be practical, emotional or psychological, relational, financial and structural, environmental, etc - and they may overlap across different principles

Underlying factors - human experiences and contexts matter and are dynamic. Some underlying factors may be more or less relevant, important, and can have positive or negative impacts depending on the challenges or strengths relating to individuals, team, environment, setting, structures, existing power dynamics, etc.

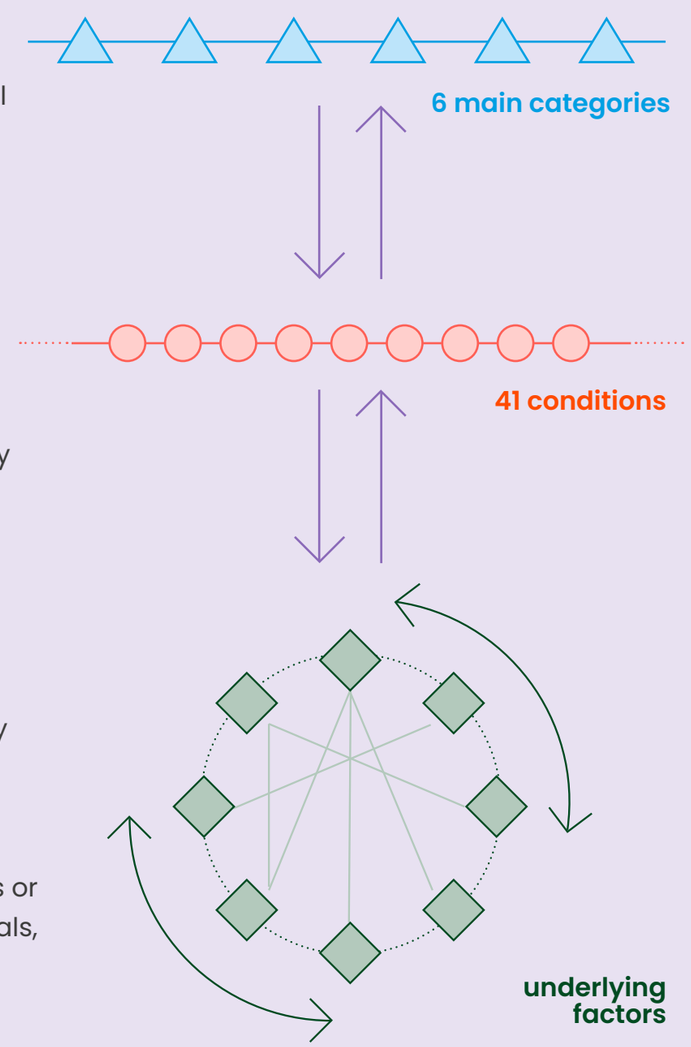


Figure 4: Complexity of layers in co-producing, evaluating and analysis

- Beginning with the 5 core principles of co-production can be a helpful starting point but these are very broad and so can be difficult to enact. When analysing the data, we used principles as our main categories to help organise the information and used reflexivity (conscious consideration of how our own perspectives, biases, and values might influence process and findings). We wanted to understand how the principles of co-production could relate to the conditions identified and how we, and others, might action them. This is explored in more detail in our Reflective Learning Resource (see page 19).

- Several of the different projects demonstrated that for some conditions to be present, a number of principles needed to be enacted. These conditions and underlying factors may be practical, emotional or psychological, relational, financial and structural, cultural, etc., and they may overlap across different principles. e.g. emotional support was identified as a condition that featured in at least 3 principles. Evaluation processes may benefit from considering this.

- Most teams reported that certain conditions were particularly important when setting up co-production and evaluation processes. We created an additional category to allow for this, and this is the first table in Figure 2 on page 12. It shows conditions 1 to 12 that relate specifically to this stage of co-production.

- We know that co-production is complex and the journey is uncertain. We have found that **co-production relies on relationships between people** and is influenced by **their own experiences** as much as it is methodological. Regardless of the specific perspectives (or identities) of most people involved in this programme, they have reported experiencing some form of emotional labour in co-producing that needs to be treated with compassion and kindness.

- **Enacting the principles with integrity** makes agreeing a **sensitive and relevant approach to evaluation** vital to meaningful co-production, ensuring there is an embedded process of reflection and adaptation (a continuous cycle of improvement).

Building capabilities through 'learning by doing'

From our collective experiences, **'Learning by Doing'** is the most effective way to develop capabilities in both co-production and evaluation. Everyone came from different starting points. This practical 'hands-on' learning approach in co-production and evaluation is essential as different people, teams and organisations start or develop their journeys with both. Throughout the programme some people commented that through considering how to measure success and the evaluation process, they were able to broaden their understanding of co-production and see it in a different way, i.e. to improve ways of working. This often helped the team move forward and ensure aims and expectations were being met. Evaluation was not just a method to capture impact and outcomes but a process to continually check against aims and expectations and adapt. In this regard reflective processes were seen as a key ingredient to support enacting the principles of co-production.

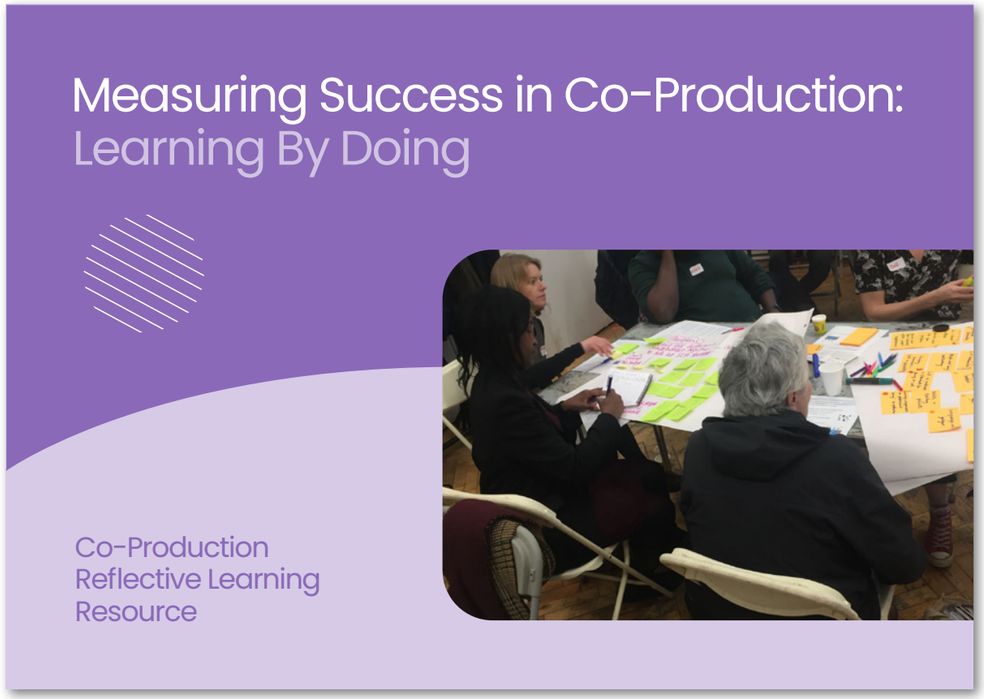
Our findings lend more support to the fact that a rigid framework (i.e. set approach) is unlikely to be as helpful as adopting a 'reflective and adaptive' process to enacting the principles and goals of co-production tailored to the project, people and setting.

1.6. What we hope for the legacy of this programme...

A key goal of this programme was to 'measure success in co-production'. Our response is that all of these terms may translate to different meanings for individuals, organisations or institutions. By evaluating or measuring aspects of the process (not people) – sensitively – our findings support and extend those from the Value of Co-production (Co-Production Collective, 2022).

We asked a wide range of people what a helpful output from this programme could be. We were keen to avoid duplicating existing tools, but in responding to feedback wanted to provide something inclusive, and of practical use, to help co-production journeys, regardless of stage, experience or expertise. With the above in mind, the resources produced provide a template to help you adapt and create a bespoke, co-production and evaluation approach specific to your context or situation. This is not a recipe for success, but we hope a starting point for conversations and planning that you can adapt, prioritise or change as you learn within your team/project.

In our **'Co-production Reflective Learning Resource'** we have shared some key learnings from factors and/or actions that teams identified relating to optimising the conditions for co-production with embedded evaluation. In addition, we have included open questions to support a flexible 'learning by doing' exploration of conditions in setting up and following a successful journey with co-production. We hope these help you in considering and identifying what is most important for people and contexts, to humanise the process of evaluation and to help you navigate the challenges you may face in co-production.

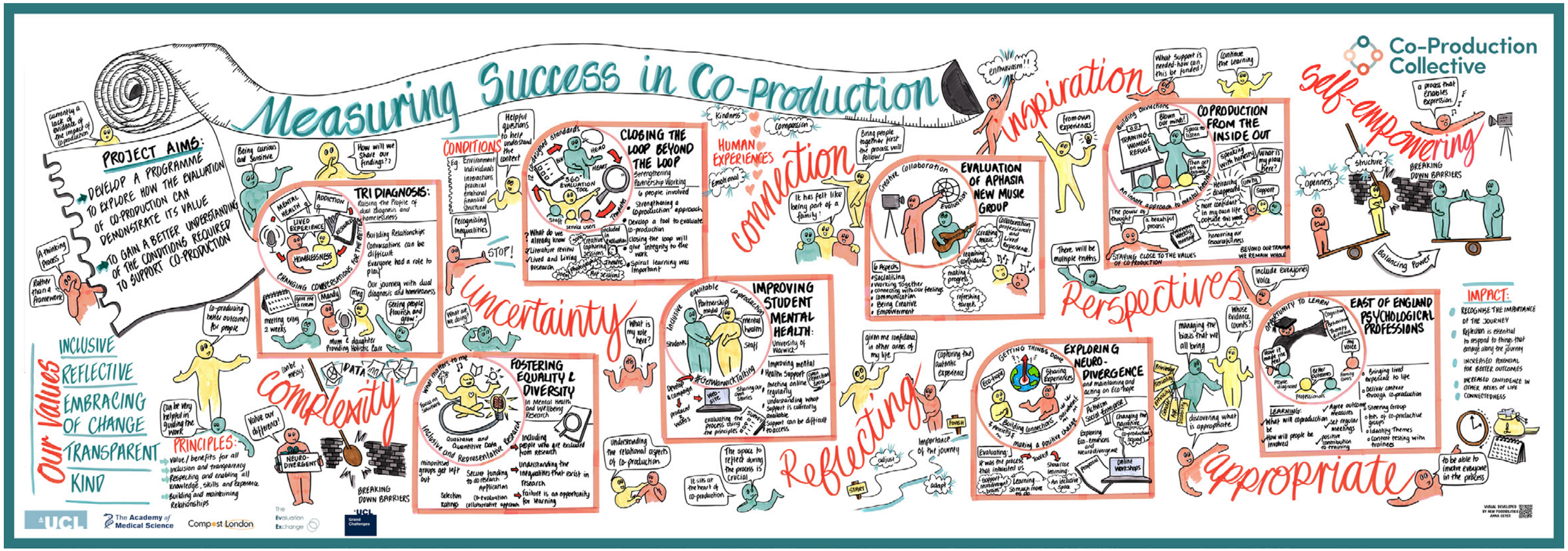


By investing in this programme, the learning approach and people involved, we hope that the Co-production Reflective Learning Resource will support others to explore the conditions for co-production. We hope it will inspire a more reflective approach in co-producing evaluation and in enacting the principles of co-production throughout the journey.

We would like to track the value that the learning has made and ask anyone drawing on this report or the Co-production Reflective Learning Resource to cite it in their work as, Co-production Reflective Learning Resource - Measuring Success in Co-production: Learning by Doing (2025).

1.7. A visual summary of the Measuring Success in Co-production programme journey

At our Celebration and Learning event in December 2024, the eight project teams and our programme team met for the final time. A graphic recording was created during this meeting to share what we had learned together about co-production and evaluation.



Graphic summary of the Measuring Success Celebration and Learning Event by Anna Geyer, New Possibilities

Striving to be accessible...

At Co-Production Collective we value inclusion, and we try to ensure that our work is as accessible as possible. During this programme and throughout our support for the funded project teams we aimed to build capabilities for equitable practices. We acknowledge that some of the concepts used to describe co-production, evaluation (and research more generally) can be complicated and so wherever possible we have aimed to use plain language. Please also see our Glossary on page 126 for further information.

Having trouble reading? View the full version of this page online

2. Introduction and Context for this report

2.1 About this report

This report synthesises learning and sharing from teams using different understandings and approaches to co-production across eight different funded projects and from our own experience co-producing the grant-giving programme. We also wanted to understand and communicate important learnings about how people experienced the way we co-produced and delivered this funding programme, and the support we offered. This may help us and others improve this process in the future to continue developing more inclusive and accessible grant-giving processes.

We will tell you something about our **conclusion** and **purpose** of this report, and how we plan to move forward up front!

Our **finding** is not to provide a framework or a checklist, nor strict guidance or recommendations. Instead, we will provide a **synthesis of learnings, collection of co-production experiences** and **open questions** to help when thinking through planning co-production and support helpful and ethical conversations throughout the journey, to adapt to the context you/we work in.

Our **purpose** has always been about being open to understanding and thinking differently about how people across **different contexts** start, plan and apply values and principles (or frameworks!) to co-production. Once started, we wanted to know about **what 'conditions' are helpful** to adopt this way of working, and how this thinking can help us to **collectively measure and reveal the different impacts and value of co-production**, and how that 'value' comes into being in this way of working – for individuals during the journey as well as the outputs.

Starting with a shared approach to co-production is important. The Measuring Success in Co-Production team adopted that of Co-Production Collective: **to aspire to working in a values-based way in equal partnership for equal benefit**. This is enacted by thinking together about how we can apply the Co-Production Collective Core Values and the principles of co-production (as per NIHR 2024) to develop ways of working together that bring about lasting change.

2.2 What we hope the impact will be

Our hope is that this **synthesis and reflective learning approach**, will equip people involved in co-production with insights to bring about **questioning**, a **motivation to do things a little differently, courage to balance power and navigate the uncertainty** of the co-production journey and challenges. By being open to a new collective understanding and working in more equitable partnerships with a values-based approach, we believe we can all co-produce better outcomes that matter to people.

Credit: New Possibilities

2.3 Who is this report for?

This report is for anyone with an interest in learning about co-production and the evaluation of it, whether they have had prior experience of co-production, or have never co-produced before - it is hoped this will support and encourage others through reading about others' experiences of **'Learning by Doing'**. For this programme, we have adopted the principles of co-production shown below alongside Co-Production Collective core values.

We have taken on board feedback from our project teams, reviewers, researchers and funders as far as possible in developing this report. Therefore, this programme and this report has been about striving for accessibility, inclusion and equity by bringing together and supporting people at different stages of their co-production journey. However, it is always challenging to find the perfect solution for everyone, so please contact us for advice.

Our Values and Principles

Inclusive | **Reflective** | **Embracing of Change** | **Transparent** | **Kind**

- Value/benefits for all
- Inclusion and transparency
- Shared decision making and balance of power
- Respecting and enabling all knowledge, skills and experience
- Building and maintaining relationships

Figure 5: Values and principles of co-production adopted in this programme

2.4 Rationale: how the programme evolved

Measuring Success in Co-production: Learning by Doing stemmed from previous work in 2022 by Co-Production Collective that explored the value of this way of working: Value of Co-production.

Community Reporting

100

stories of co-production experiences through our Community Reporting project

Survey

573

stories of co-production experiences through our Community Reporting project

Pilot projects

9

pilot projects putting co-production into action reviewed

Survey

59

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

Previous rounds of Co-Production Collective pilots

5 pilot projects over 4 months for up to £5,000 (2018)

4 pilot projects over 7 months for up to £15,000 (2019-2020)

Figure 6: Strong evidence base from the Value of Co-Production work including a range of different evidence sources (Credit: Value of Co-production, 2022)

From the research, findings suggest that if applied in the right context and given sufficient time and investment, co-production can have many benefits. Across the evidence base, consistent themes demonstrated the value of co-production lies in:

Figure 7: Themes related to the value of co-production
(further information on each theme is available in the interactive version)
(Credit: Value of Co-production, 2022)

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** (how we work together and what we ultimately achieve). Measuring Success in Co-Production: Learning by Doing was designed to explore some of these findings.

Why Measuring Success in Co-Production: Learning by Doing?

As part of the Value of Co-production work, 59 academic studies were examined in the Rapid Critical Review (Co-Production Collective, 2022). The team explored how to make the case as to the value of co-production for individuals, organisations and society. One specific finding that Co-Production Collective wanted to dive deeper into was that '**formal evaluation**' was a gap in evidence in the 'value' (or impact) work.

'The low level of formal evaluation of the impacts of co-production (as opposed to the impacts of the research products) suggests a need to start measuring and evaluating the claims that are being made.' Co-Production Collective (2022)

Evaluation appeared to be enhanced when co-produced projects are effectively resourced, and when they not only consider outcomes but also how team members are affected during their journeys. Co-produced initiatives are rarely formally evaluated, and very rarely are those evaluations co-produced: meaning that the impacts of co-production are often underexplored.

Challenges in measuring the process and journey

We know that co-production's benefits are not easily measurable by some existing methods often used for carrying out evaluations of projects. Many methods are unable to easily and fully capture the complexity, relational and emotional aspects and therefore we are missing the full impact of co-production on the people involved in the project. When we think about measuring the various layers and processes that happen in co-production, or how the principles are applied, we need to consider an approach based on values and how to make this sensitive and human with lived and living experiences at its heart. Organisations and individuals will have their own values base, whether formalised or not, and these should be collectively agreed alongside the driving principles or theoretical basis for any co-production approach.

The 'gaps' between selecting principles, putting them into practice, and measurement pose further issues. Farr et al (2021) reported that capturing the learning from negative experiences is often avoided (for personal and power reasons), and striking a 'balance between benefits and challenges' in trying to implement principles is frequently missed. By pooling the data from this programme, involving a learning by doing approach with 8 project teams (and our own Measuring Success Team), we hope we can reveal a better understanding of how people enact the principles.

Further reasons to find better measures in the UK

An additional driver to better understand how to measure co-production comes from funding requirements. Funders, regulatory authorities and public bodies are gradually becoming more focussed on the rights, benefits and need to support better and more meaningful co-production and involvement. New approaches, checklists, guidance, frameworks and toolkits are constantly being developed to facilitate 'better' or less tokenistic co-production and involvement approaches, reporting and understand impacts. However, with the growing 'Toolkit Mountain', with prescriptive approaches developed by different project teams, whether these are useful or meaningful impacts

are achieved (throughout the journey) are less well evidenced (Greenhalgh et al. 2019; Patient Experience Library 2023; Co-Production Collective, 2020).

Finally, when not co-produced or used to assess performance, such tools and frameworks can promote greater tokenism. For many people with lived experience there can be an injustice in 'having' to justify and evaluate their lived and learned experience as a valid form of knowledge (Crocker et al. 2016; Russell et al. 2020; Knowles et al. 2021). Power dynamics, positionality (or identity) and the way in which co-production is practiced and evaluated can play a significant role in how these manifest and are perceived (Oliver et al 2020; Williams et al. 2020; Russell et al. 2020).

Credit: New Possibilities

2.5 Working with partners to co-produce the programme

To respond to these gaps, with funding from Research England, The Academy of Medical Sciences and UCL Grand Challenges, a partnership was formed to co-produce the programme of work with lived experience co-producers, Co-Production Collective, The Evaluation Exchange, Compost London CIC and representatives from some of our co-funders.

Our ethos has been to deliver a more supportive funding programme than is usually offered by funders. This programme was ambitious and intense, and there were plenty of challenges. We hope this helps start to unravel some of the complexity in the process of co-producing and this report shares useful knowledge and learning!

Different partners led on designing and delivering on different elements of the programme, with key decisions co-produced and delivery supported by others. Partners were broadly involved in co-production of the programme as follows:

- **Co-Production Collective staff** and **Co-Production Collective community members** were involved in co-ordinating and delivering the co-production of the funding and programme, Sharing and Learning sessions (a supportive forum for sharing learning and discussing the principles of co-production), Cuppa-style sessions, support for the 8 project teams, and evaluation of ourselves.

- **The Evaluation Exchange**, a partnership between **UCL** and **Compost London CIC**, coordinated the design of and led on the delivery of the Deepening Practice sessions. They provided tailored evaluation support for the 8 project teams in the Measuring Success in Co-Production programme. **Compost London CIC** was also the community partner facilitating the distribution of funds to each of the 8 teams. The Evaluation Exchange authored Section 7 of this report, with inputs from other partners.

- A representative from each of **The Academy of Medical Sciences** and **UCL Grand Challenges** were involved at various stages of the funding and application process, programme delivery to support and learn from project teams.

All partners were involved in developing and reviewing this report.
For contact details of partners, see our Contact us page.

2.6 Aims and objectives of the Measuring Success programme

The aims of the programme and projects were to gain a better understanding of the conditions required for good co-production and evaluation across different mental health, wellbeing and/or climate change contexts and project.

Programme

- Supportive funding offer and process, tailored to small co-produced projects
- Build capabilities by supporting project teams throughout their co-production and evaluation journeys
- Explore optimal conditions for good co-production, and how to evaluate them

Co-produce a collective output to share knowledge and learning

Projects*
(8 teams + Measuring Success team)

- Develop knowledge and experience of co-producing a project
- Deepening understanding of co-producing evaluations
- Learn about evaluating co-production processes and outputs
- Learn about optimal conditions needed for effective co-production

Figure 8: Objectives for delivering and evaluating the programme and funded projects and Measuring Success Team

3. Overview of the Measuring Success programme

The programme started in spring 2023, when we recruited our co-producers. Although some team members had worked together before, we hadn't previously all worked together as a team.

The programme consisted of an initial core team of 14 people evaluating the process, a funding call to establish projects and a series of launch, connection and network events prior to the Measuring Success Team making decisions about funding. We met regularly online and formed working groups to co-produce the application process, events and later to plan and deliver the 'Sharing and Learning' part of the programme (see Section 3.5).

Measuring Success in Co-Production: Learning by Doing Programme and Funding Opportunity

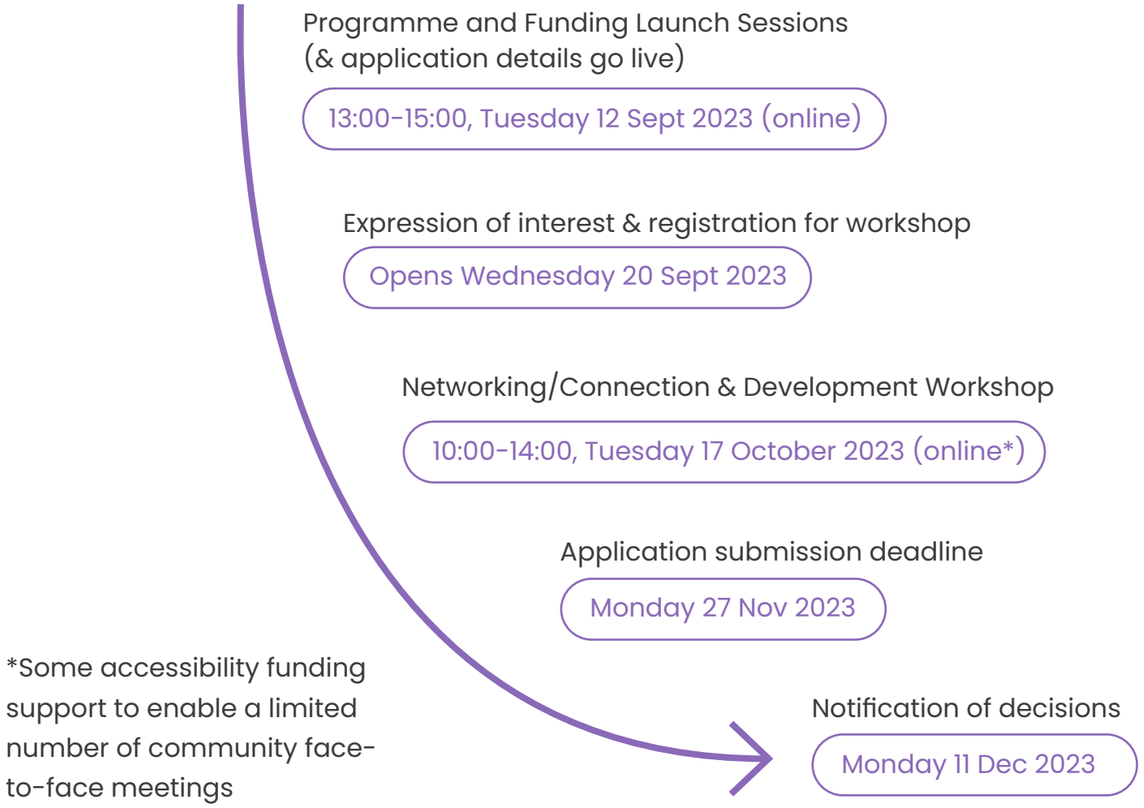


Figure 9: Timings of initial part of the funding programme call, events and application process

3.1 Scope of the funding

The funding was available for co-produced mental health, wellbeing and/or climate change projects. Applicants may have had prior experience of co-production, or may never have co-produced before. They were asked to demonstrate:

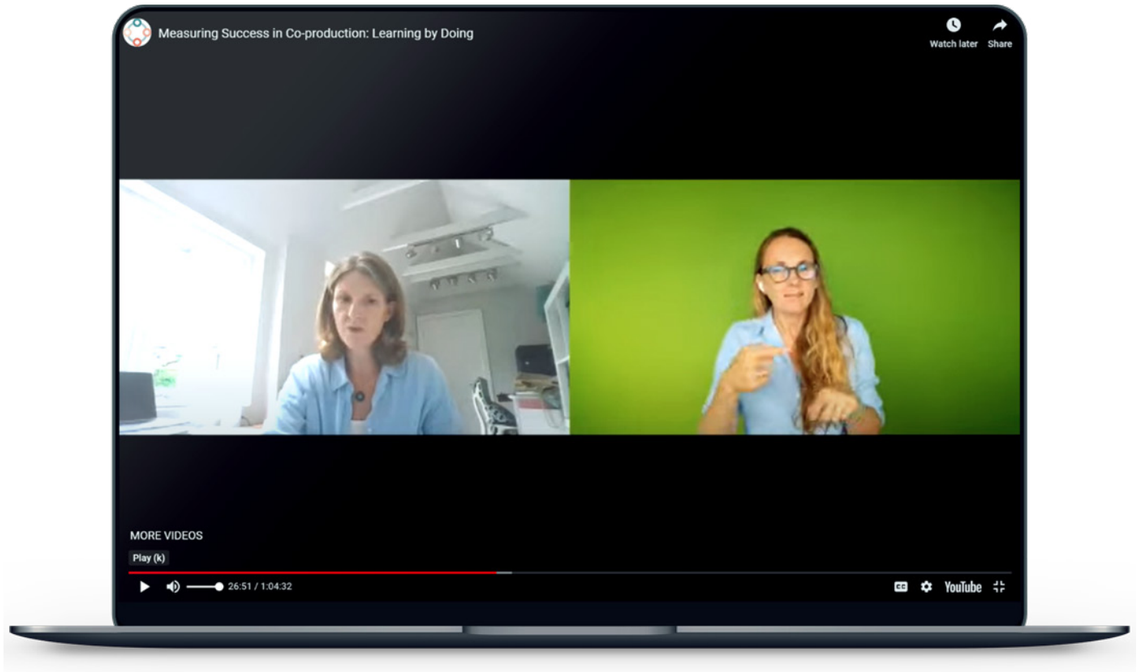
- Collaborative, accessible and equitable approaches to their work
- A focus on evaluating their work
- A commitment to active participation in the supportive learning events by a range of their team members
- Willingness to share the progress of their work with the programme team and the other projects in the programme.

To attempt to deliver a **supportive funding programme** we co-produced with our programme team two pre-application support sessions. We also wrote documents to help support applications and we planned a programme of support to begin after the projects commenced in January 2024.

More detail about the support sessions and how we evaluated whether the programme was experienced as supportive, will follow below.

3.2 Pre-application events

After several months of planning, the application phase of the programme was **launched with an online event** in September 2023. Following feedback received from our initial expression of interest form, we delivered this event with support from British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters.



Screenshot from the launch event recording: Vanessa Bennett (Measuring Success Team) with Karen Newby, RSLI (BSL/English interpreter)

Of the 198 people attending, 66 told us they were happy for us to share their contact details with others working in similar areas, to promote networking and generate collaborative connections.

A **networking/connection and development workshop** followed in October 2023, and this allowed us to further help applicants to find potential collaborators. In total, 70 people attended this event which was hosted on the networking platform 'Remo'.

The application pack comprised general funding information, the application form and the FAQ page on our webpage. This document was regularly expanded to include the questions that were asked at our events and sent to us by email. We also shared the assessment and scoring criteria and talked through these in the online session in October.

Both of these events are available to watch on the Measuring Success webpage.

3.3 How applications were assessed

We were pleased to receive 52 applications for funding. As this was more than we had expected, we expanded our team temporarily by inviting two external reviewers from the Co-Production Collective community to contribute to the application review process.

All the applications were screened to see if they fit within the scope of the programme (Stage 1: Triage). In total, 51 applications were then reviewed against the funding criteria we had co-produced with our team and supplied to potential applicants in the funding pack.

- **A** A clear plan describing how you will carry out the project and meet overall scope and priorities for the programme
- **B** Addressing the principles of co-production
- **C** Commitment to evaluation, sharing knowledge and learning
- **D** A plan to make a difference from this project
- **E** Project costs and resource allocation

Figure 10: Scoring criteria covering five areas in the application

The first step in the application review process was the triage stage. This involved at least two reviewers scoring against the criteria, the answers to the first two questions in the application form. This led to 23 applications progressing to the full review stage.

Points were awarded for the answers to each question with further consideration given to two 'cross-cutting' questions relating to the applications' adherence to the principles of equity (addressing potential power imbalances) and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Ten applications were submitted to the shortlist, and these were discussed in a panel meeting before eight successful projects were chosen.

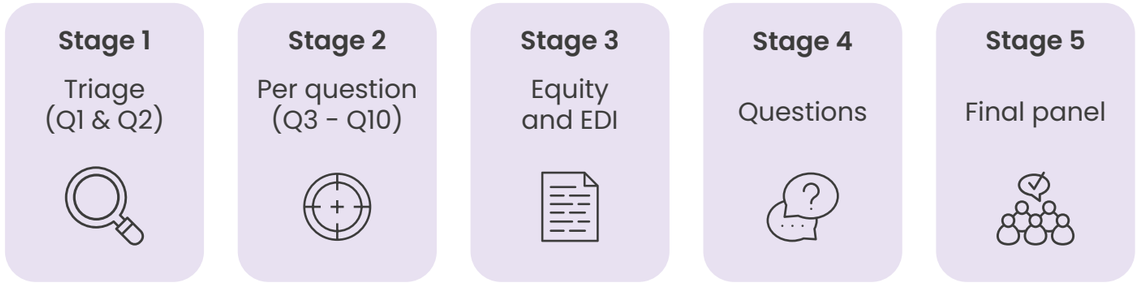


Figure 11: Different stages in the application review process

Credit: New Possibilities

3.4 Introducing the funded projects

In December 2023, eight project teams were selected for funding. We want to openly acknowledge the diversity of lived and learned experiences within and across these different contexts, and thank them for their dedicated sharing of insights and challenges along the way to make this synthesis possible and enriched.

More details can be found in the Project Summaries.

The projects involved were:

Co-production From the Inside Out
A collaboration between two social enterprises and a group of experts by experience. Their work focused on supporting the wellbeing of people in difficult life circumstances

Co-producing an Evaluation of the Aphasia New Music Group
An existing partnership between people with aphasia, their family members, musicians and research speech and language therapists aimed to co-produce a method to evaluate their creative collaborations.

Homelessness and Dual Diagnosis: A Co-Production Project
People with lived experience of homelessness and two charities, raised awareness to support people experiencing addiction and mental health conditions.

Promoting Mental Health Conversations at the University of Warwick
Staff and students at the University joined a service design agency to create a new partnership model to improve the wellbeing and mental health of students.

Exploring Neurodivergence and Maintaining and Acting on Eco-Hope
An organisation supporting eco and social sustainability, recruited a team of co-producers to explore how neurodivergence interacts with taking climate action.

Closing the Loop Beyond the Loop: Strengthening Partnership Working with Meta-Co-Production
A collaboration between London NHS trusts and an existing Lived Experience Advisory Group examined co-production in mental health settings.

Assessing the Impact of Co-production in Fostering Equality and Diversity in Mental Health and Wellbeing Research
A collective of UCL researchers and clinicians joined people from minority and marginalised communities with lived experience of mental health issues and neurodiversity, to guide the newly founded Centre for Equality Research in Brain Sciences.

The East of England Psychological Professions Co-production Group
Psychological Professionals, the University of East Anglia and people with lived experience worked together to develop new content for the teaching of a postgraduate diploma in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and to introduce trainees to the concept of co-production.

3.5 The 'Sharing and Learning' programme

Funded teams were notified of their successful applications in December 2023 and all eight project teams began their work in January following 'kick-off' meetings with the Measuring Success in Co-production programme team.

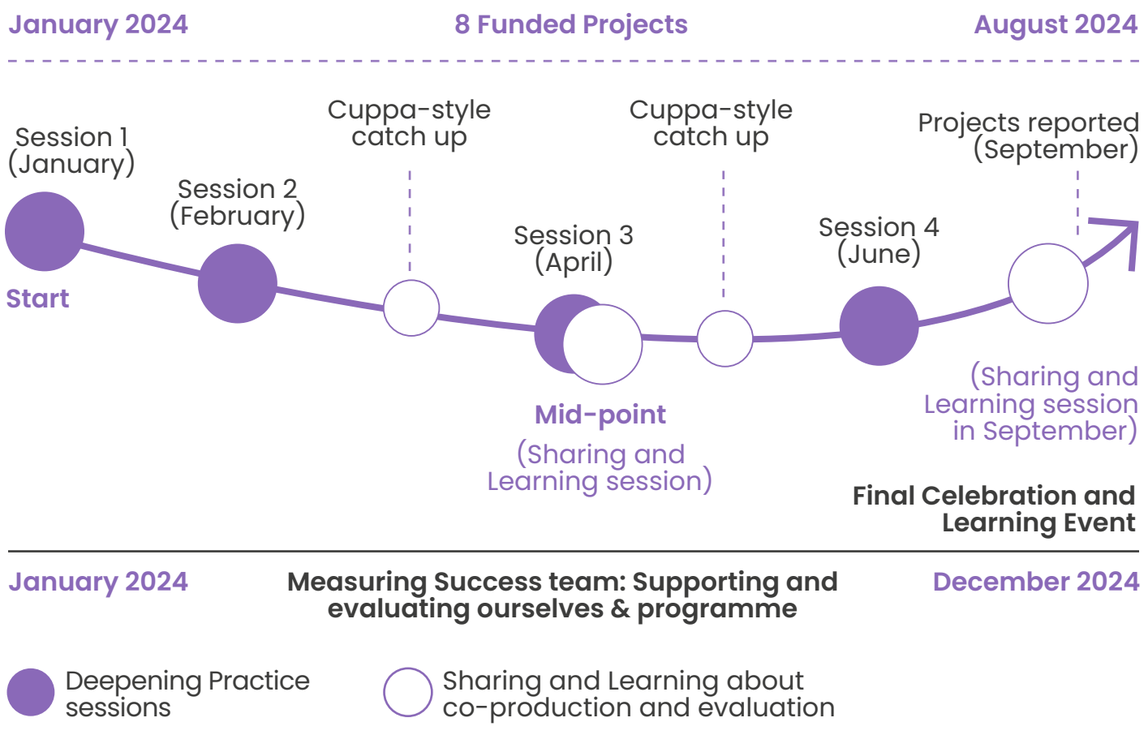


Figure 12: Timeline showing different support and learning activities throughout the programme for funded projects

Four Deepening Practice support sessions were scheduled to support teams' evaluation activities and two Sharing and Learning sessions focused on sharing experiences, understanding the principles of co-production and providing a supportive forum for sharing. We received feedback during the sessions that teams wanted to learn more about each other's work, so we hosted 2 additional 'cuppa'-style events (informal 90-minute online meetings) for teams to share their experiences of their work.

Each of the formal sessions were attended by between 23 and 28 team members across the projects. The structure and focus of the Deepening Practice sessions are shown in Figure 14 below.

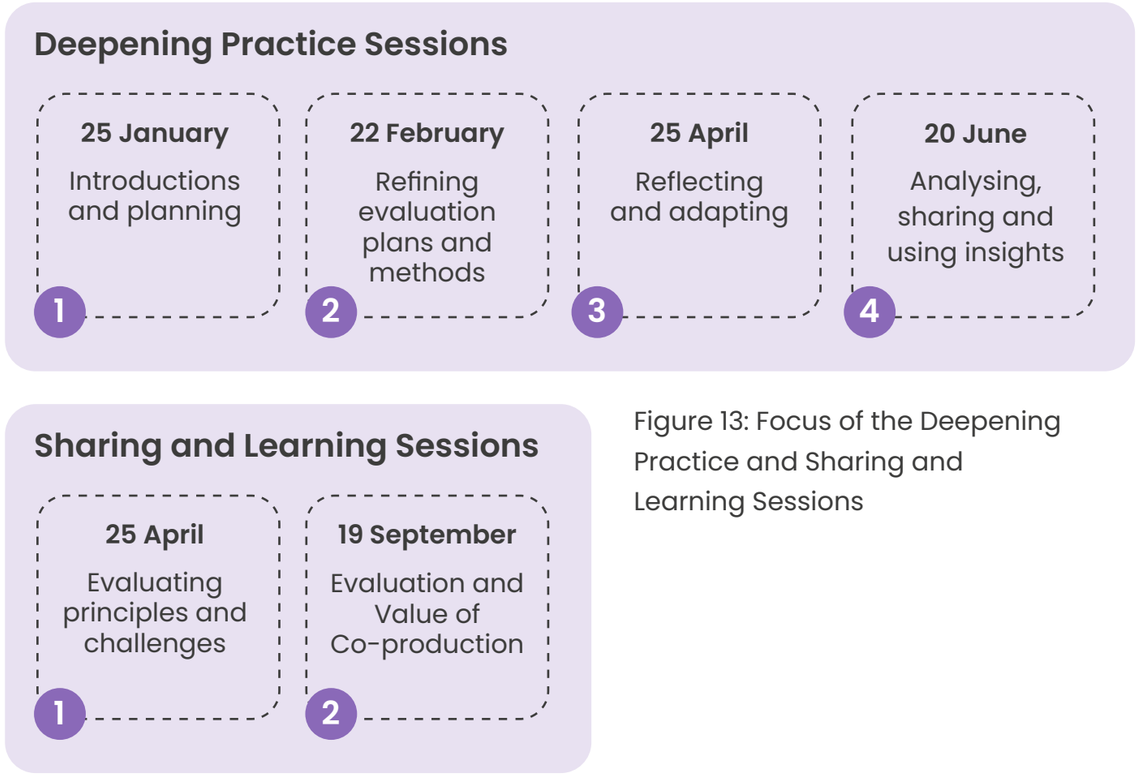


Figure 13: Focus of the Deepening Practice and Sharing and Learning Sessions

Throughout the programme, we encouraged questioning and thinking around how the principles of co-production could be applied in projects by seeking to identify, question and understand these principles using the table below as an example. However, teams were also free to explore and share other frameworks, definitions and approaches to co-production.

Principles	Identifying and understanding	What you will do
Building and maintaining relationships	What challenges could arise in building and maintaining relationships?	What can you do to prepare for and/or respond to these challenges?
Inclusion and transparency	Who needs to be included for this to be meaningful? Who will coordinate the group/project?	How will you: include them?" Make this accessible? Sustain involvement? How will the group be supported/ coordinated?
Respecting and enabling ALL knowledge, skills and experience	What types of skills, knowledge and experience are needed/ available in the group? What/ who is missing?	How can you ensure everyone is 'enabled' and valued? What roles and responsibilities do people want?
Shared decision making & balance of power	What power differences may be present? What resources are available and who 'controls' them?	How will you address power imbalances and ensure decision making is shared equally?
Value/ benefits for all	Who will it make a difference to? How will it make a difference?	How will you know - what will you do to assess this? How will you record and measure?

Figure 14: Example questions used in the programme to illustrate how we can think about applying the principles of co-production with open questions

The teams conducted their work from January to August 2024 before submitting their reports to us in September 2024. The final event in the programme was the Celebration and Learning event in December 2024.

Need a reminder of terminology? See glossary.

3.6 How we have arranged this report

From the earliest stages of the programme, it was important to us to consider how to measure the different elements of our objectives for:

1. **Programme delivery**
2. **Co-production and evaluation processes**

Based on these **two strands**, we developed our evaluation questions and collected a vast amount of feedback and evidence documenting different parts of the process, and including different perspectives.

Our approach took us on a journey through online and offline group (large and small) sessions to explore, consolidate and review the different forms of information. Together we tried to understand what could help us respond to the evaluation questions with the most confidence and how we could tackle the complexity!

In the following sections of the report, we will summarise the methods and findings to respond to our three key evaluation questions as outlined below.

Sections that detail method and findings	Our evaluation questions
Section 4: Evaluation of the Measuring Success Programme Responds to Question 1 → Provides an overview of methods, types of data and findings	1. What have we learned from the project teams. external feedback and independent evaluation about this **grant-giving programme**?
Section 5: Measuring co-production and evaluation processes • Provides an overview of **methods,** types of data and approaches to Questions 2 and 3	
Section 6: What we've learned about the conditions for co-production • Responds to Question 2 → • Findings from our, and teams, evaluations of co-production processes • Summary of conditions and actions that optimise co-production	2. What have we learned collectively from evaluating the process of co-production about **optimising conditions for co-production**?
Section 7: What we've learned about evaluation in co-production • Responds to Question 3 → • Summary of findings and learning points around evaluation: from all teams' experiences	3. What have we learned collectively about **co-producing evaluation and evaluating co-production?**

4. Evaluation of the Measuring Success programme

4.1 Our approach to evaluating the programme

Q1. What have we, and the project teams, learned throughout this participatory funding programme?

To respond to this evaluation question and link to the objectives of the programme, we have focussed on the following questions to guide this strand of evaluation:

1. **To what extent have teams perceived the funding offer and associated processes supportive?**
2. **To what extent have the processes and support been proportionate for teams co-producing small scale projects?**

4.2 Data sources

We have sought answers to these questions through reviewing the different sources we collected at different stages in the programme. These are summarised in Figure 17. For the feedback forms and Jamboards (online whiteboards) these were anonymised (therefore it was not possible to identify comments from professionals/academics from community group members/public contributors). For this reason, when reporting findings from these sources, the quotes are all anonymised."

Data

Feedback forms

Feedback forms were shared after the Launch Event, Networking, Connection and Development Workshop and following Deepening Practice and Sharing and Learning sessions.

Google Jamboards

Rapid feedback was captured at the end of the Deepening Practice and Sharing and Learning sessions.

Project meeting notes

Some notes were made during meetings between the Measuring Success team and individual project teams.

Project reports

All projects submitted end of project reports. Feedback about the programme was reviewed from these.

Figure 15: Data sources for evaluating the programme

4.3 Making sense of the programme data

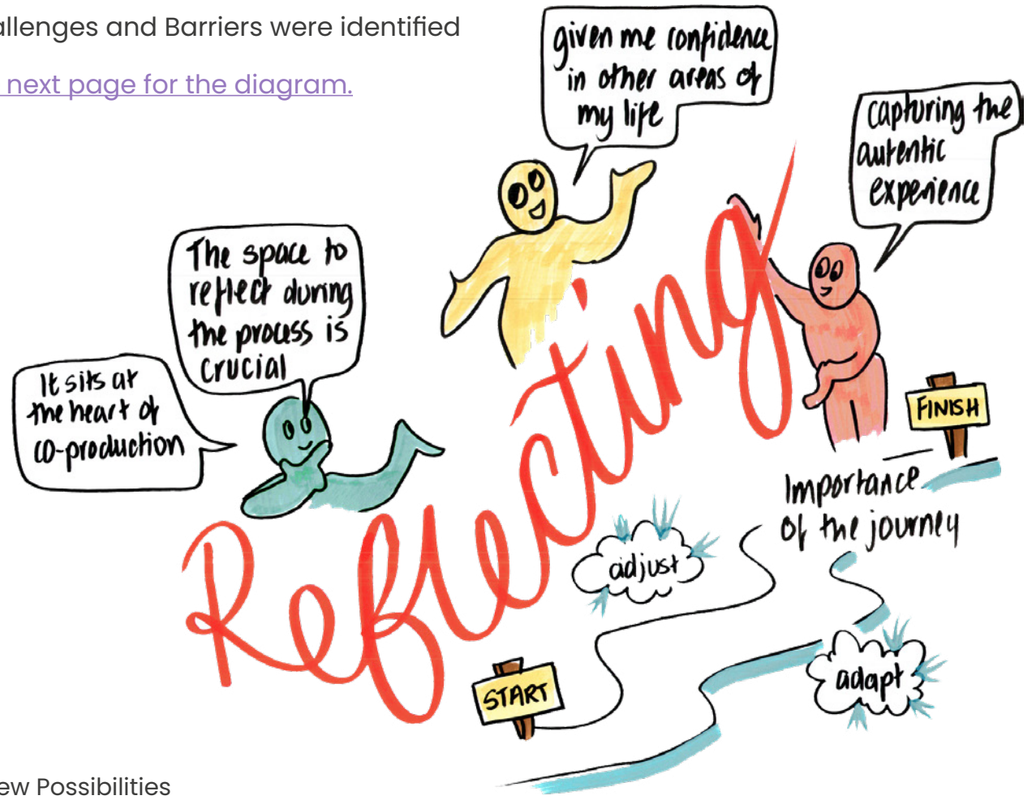
Two Measuring Success team members extracted and themed information from the above sources according to the evaluation questions. These were then shared with the wider team during an online meeting, in order to sense check these. Project team reports were also reviewed for feedback about the programme. As there were eight reports, pairs of reviewers from the Measuring Success team looked at 2-3 reports each and extracted, summarised and fedback key themes during an in-person meeting in October 2024.

4.4 What we have learned about the participatory funding programme

Across the data we looked at, we found four main themes:

1. Support from the programme team was found to be **Formative** (i.e. happened before the 8 funded projects started)
2. A supportive **Community of Practice** developed through the programme
3. The collaborative spaces were **Humanising** (i.e. having safe and meaningful qualities)
4. Challenges and Barriers were identified

See next page for the diagram.



Credit: New Possibilities

1. Formative

- Launch event and Networking, Connection and Development Workshop, fostered understanding of programme/co-production
- For some this fostered motivation and inspiration to go forward with an application
- It enabled building networks and collaborations and development of plans for some (not all - see barriers)

2. Humanising

- Accessible, inclusive, safe spaces were created (albeit with room for improvement: see barriers) where people felt valued and heard
- The Measuring Success team were found to be warm friendly and kind they showed humility
- Team-centred support was available when needed without feeling hassled

3. Community of practice

- Sharing and Learning with others through 'Deepening Practice', 'Sharing and Learning' and informal 'Cuppa' sessions was an important part of the 'Learning by Doing' journey
- Peer support and shared experiences could be validating and encouraging
- Sharing resources was helpful. Some described it akin to a Community of Practice

4. Barriers

- Accessibility was not right for everyone. Some people wanted more support to help them to explore ideas under discussion, whilst others wanted to examine these same concepts in more depth
- Timing of programme support vs project delivery was mismatched for some
- Navigating use of technology and impact on 'connecting' with others could be a challenge

Four main learning themes from the grant-giving programme

The following feedback illustrates some of the identified themes. These are taken from a range of data sources collected across the breadth of the programme.

Formative	Humanising
"More interested than ever in understanding and participating in evaluation" – Comment from launch event attendee	*"What you are doing with this project feels kind"* – Funded team member programme feedback
"The fact that it was possible to move from 'table to table' follow useful discussions and engage with others was super helpful" - Comment from networking event delegate about the format of the REMO connecting event	*"'The love kindness commitment and vision of the [programme team] felt throughout the whole journey"* – Funded team member programme feedback
"I met new people for potential collaborations and formulated a proposal idea" – Comment from networking event delegate	*"Love the emphasis on everyone's needs and comfort, e.g. Reminding people to turn their camera off and take a break during the session if they need to"* – Funded team member programme feedback
"I have a greater understanding of what you are looking for in terms of the application and what we would like to offer. It has also been good to link up with others and to discuss the possibility of collaboration with them" – Comment from networking event delegate	*"We really felt seen and invested in by you as a funder!"* – Funded team member programme feedback

Community of Practice	Barriers
"Loved coming together and learning from other teams [balancing power]" – Funded team member programme feedback	*"I'm not sure these 'deepening practice' sessions were deep enough… this is hard to do when you are 'training' both new people and experienced people they're just different audiences"* – Funded team member programme feedback
"'The value of hearing about the challenges that other groups are facing; as well as what they're trying to do to overcome" – Funded team member programme feedback	*"… a structured way to prioritise voices of non-academics who are not as vocal or assertive"* – Funded team member programme feedback
"Reconsider how we can work in our group, particularly around intentionality of check-ins, reflections and opportunities for questions" – Funded team member reflecting on something they will do differently following a Sharing and Learning session	*"The pressure to maintain project momentum hindered the full realisation of this principle [balancing power]"* – Funded teams report
"Useful connection made, opportunity to contribute to another project, grateful for this!" – Funded team member programme feedback	*"Members were unable to agree on Co-production principles and/or approach. It is felt that this was primarily due to the 'perceived' and reality of time pressure to deliver"* – Funded team's report
"Learned about (new to me) online resources and websites very useful!" – Funded team member programme feedback	*"We could have gone into more detail with the case study and spent more time discussing the practicalities of exploring the evaluation questions"* – Funded team's report

Community of Practice	Barriers
"… allow more time for teams and enter team engagement as we would learn more and reflect more within group discussions" – Funded team member	*"I sometimes feel like my team are working in a vacuum and it is great to be able to speak with other groups to be able to dispel that slightly detached feeling (I realise working exclusively on zoom adds to this)"* – Funded team feedback during the programme
"Deepening practice sessions very helpful!… Time to reflect on progress, hear about and learn from other teams and their experiences of Co production and evaluation. Felt like a lovely supportive community" - Funded team member programme feedback	

4.5 Challenges and limitations in evaluating the programme

We gathered lots of data during the delivery of the funding and support programme. Some of this was rich and useful for our own evaluation activities, whilst some was more exploratory as it was not intended to address evaluation questions.

It was not usually possible to delineate data across specific demographics. For example, we could not connect data with a group of individuals such as researchers or lived experience participants and so this may have limited the depth of our analysis. In addition, there was a range of knowledge and experience of co-production and working in this way; however we did not formally collect or analyse data according to this.

Feedback about support sessions usually involved project team members who attended Deepening Practice and Sharing and Learning sessions, so other project team members may be less represented. We noted that session feedback yielded better engagement with 'Jamboards' (online whiteboards) than the more formal post-event forms, yet these Jamboard insights were briefer in nature.

Our team took notes when meeting project teams, but we did not clearly establish prior to meetings what was noteworthy during these meetings with teams. Guidance to aid consistency may have been helpful here. Additionally, it wasn't always clear what roles project team member's inhabited.

4.6 Key learnings about this approach to participatory funding programmes

The independent evaluation of the programme conducted by People's Voice Media added to the programme team's evaluation activities. The learnings from this independent review were important to capture, as the grant-giving programme itself (which included all the events, application processes and support sessions) were co-produced.

Findings from the independent evaluation resonated with the knowledge gained from the 8 project teams - it was important to commit the necessary time and resources to building an effective team. This required finding ways to build trust, clarifying roles and ensuring the values guiding the co-production were shared.

Yet plans needed to be flexible enough to accommodate the need for change. This was demonstrated in November 2023 when more applications than expected were received, requiring the programme team to undertake continual co-production of the process and supports, whilst meeting tight timelines. Similarly, reflective practice was important throughout delivery of the programme but the ways in which this was done were modified to ensure it was both pragmatic and that different perspectives continued to be captured.

Finally, the very nature of delivering a participatory funding programme brought us to ask many deep reaching questions about co-production and evaluating co-production and co-producing evaluations. There was a strong sense amongst the team members that this often required a spirit of generosity towards all teams (including our own), recognising that everyone is on a different path to learning and enacting co-production and evaluation. The journey and the learning that came from this was just an important outcome to the Measuring Success team as what project teams produced or delivered.

Credit: New Possibilities

4.7 Key questions for participatory funding programmes

Given our learning from co-producing a participatory funding scheme we felt it would be important to share some key questions that teams delivering participatory funding schemes can reflect on to aid the co-production of their own schemes.

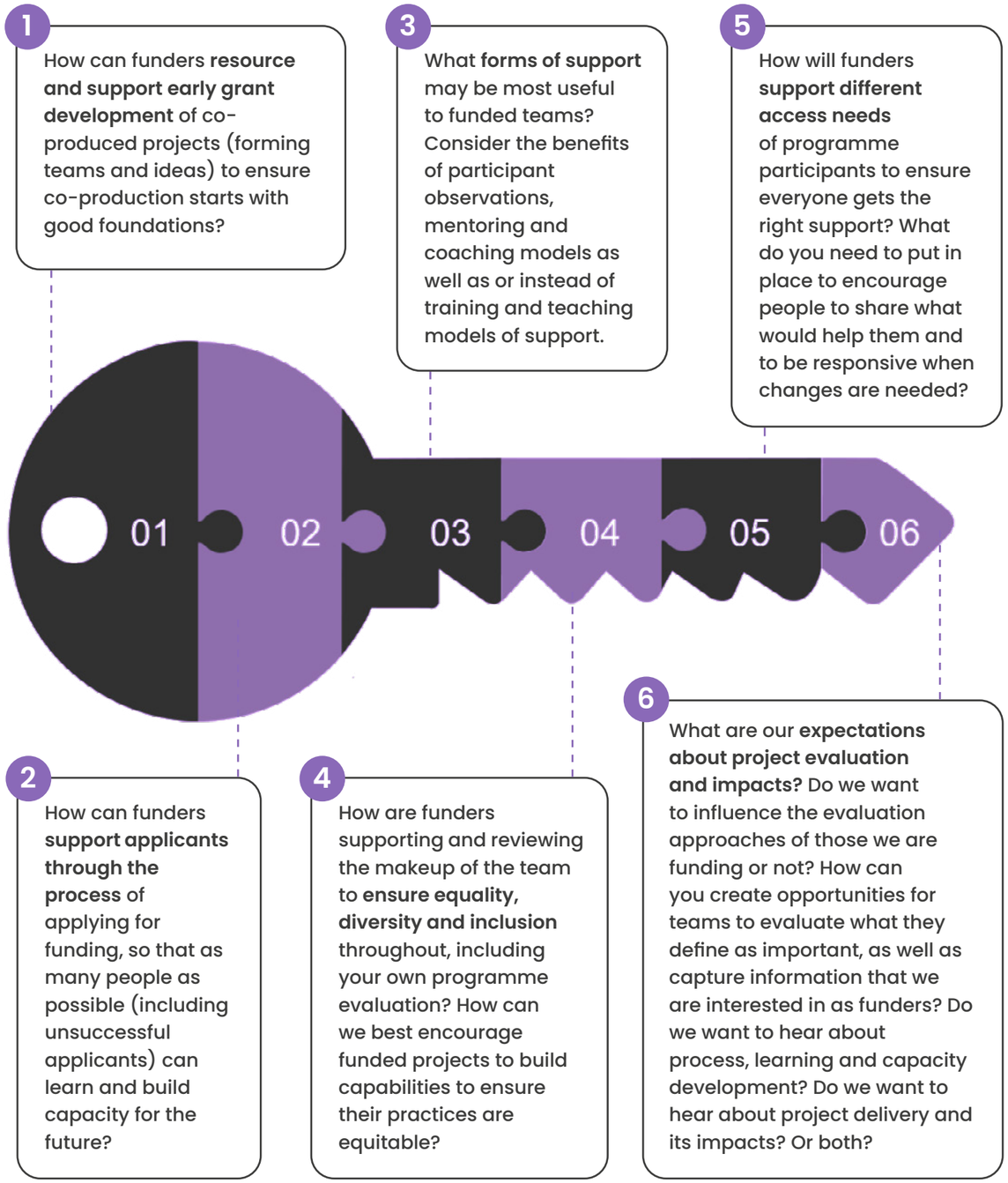


Figure 16: Key questions for funding programmes

5. Measuring co-production and evaluation processes: methods

In exploring the co-production and evaluation processes, we aim to bring together experiences and learning about co-production and evaluation from the eight project teams and from our own team. This part of the report outlines the approaches to evaluation and the different sources of data we have drawn from, as well as how we sought to bring the rich and complex picture together before explaining the learnings in **Sections 6 and 7**.

One of the aims of our programme was to understand what 'conditions' may help us when co-producing, and question how we can work towards optimising these to enhance impacts of co-production. Our starting point for the way we framed our evaluation has been based on the principles of co-production and core values used in Co-Production Collective.

Quick link: definitions of conditions, evaluation, measuring, impact and value

5.1 Our approach

The questions guiding this part of our evaluation of co-production and evaluation processes were:

Q2: What have we (the Measuring Success team and funded teams) learnt about optimising conditions for co-production?
Q3: What have we learnt about co-producing evaluations and evaluating co-production?

This was a challenging, reiterative learning process to determine the best methodology to respond to the questions, consolidate the data to something manageable to retain the authentic experiences (and nuance) already captured in the data from ourselves, external participants and the project teams. Our aim was to balance the volume and complexity of information without being too reductive or adding layers of interpretation.

Our first step was deciding what data to use for the analysis based on what were most informative, robust and realistic, while considering the principles of co-production. This involved:

1) **Collating a spreadsheet cataloguing all evidence sources that could be analysed to respond to the evaluation questions**. This included: type of data, timing/duration of collection, volume of data, whose perspectives were included (or "missing"), how the data could respond to the aims, questions or principles of co-production, and if/ how the data captured change.

2) **Meeting online several times to agree on what data should be analysed, how it could be analysed and the best way to consolidate and share these with the group.**

3) **Assigning tasks between team members working in small groups (3-4), online and offline, on programme and co-production elements to synthesis data relating to the two key questions outlined above.**

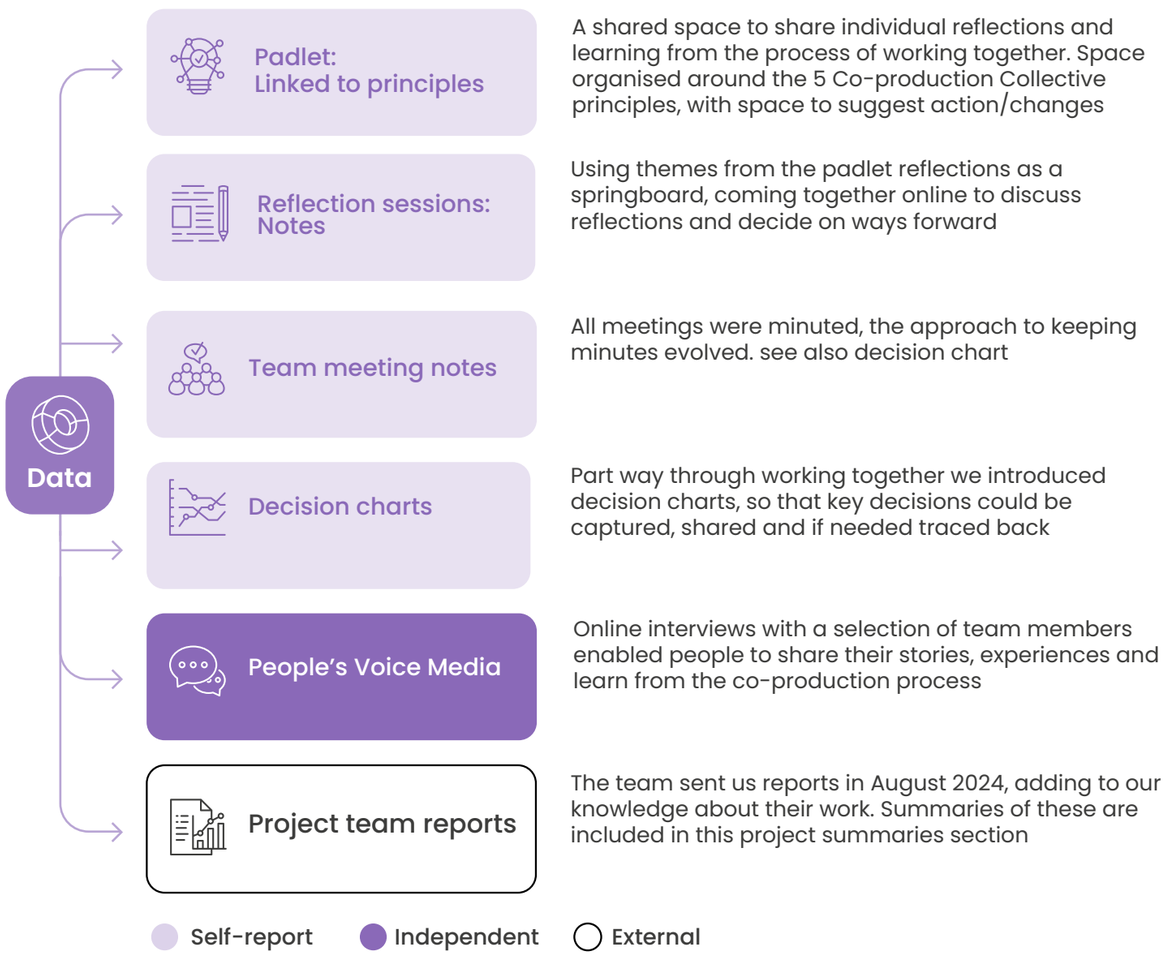


Figure 17: Final data sources reviewed in detail to understand the conditions for co-production

Data sources from the *Measuring Success* team

Our own evaluation of our co-production processes included the following approaches labelled as **Self-report** and **Independent** data in Figure 21.

Self-report approaches included using the on-line tool, Padlet, to record the challenges and positive impacts we experienced. The online space was structured around the principles of co-production. We used regular reflection sessions to meet and reflect on our experiences together. We also had informal drop-in meetings that served the purpose of getting to know one another and could often be reflective (but these were not recorded or captured for the evaluation or reporting). We were also able to draw on learning that was captured through **routine processes**, such as meeting minutes and decision logs.

Screen shot of the Padlet tool developed to support reflection

Finally, there was an independent evaluation at the start and near the end of the programme carried out by People's Voice Media. In total, this included 15 conversations with 11 people (not all team members). Some members contributed to both Part 1 and Part 2. Discussions were summarised and a final report provided.

Data sources from project teams

Funded teams were asked to co-produce their own evaluation of their co-production processes as well as evaluating their projects more broadly. We provided them a basic reporting structure to respond to our questions and share their learnings but offered the flexibility to provide their report in a way that enabled all team members to be involved in the process. The **Project Summaries** provide a flavour of their project, context and key learnings as well as links to any resources they wish to share for their projects.

5.2 Making sense of the data to evaluate co-production

The above data sources provided a complex set of data to make sense of. We present a synthesis or collation of data describing different experiences and how they could relate to optimising conditions for co-production. Aiming to avoid being too reductive or adding more layers of interpretation, we have **reported and 'organised'** experiences from different people and contexts as they were provided in the project teams' final reports.

Our team approached this using the following steps:

- Measuring Success Team members extracted information relating to Question 2 around conditions and Question 3 around evaluation, and related challenges **from the individual Project Reports**: at least two people looked at each report. Two team members reviewed all reports.
- Three members of the Measuring Success Team summarised data relating to conditions for co-production (Question 2) and evaluation (Question 3) **from our own evaluation data sources**.
- Ten members of the Measuring Success Team met in-person (October 2024) to discuss that data synthesis from steps 1 & 2 and identified challenges and conditions for co-production raised by all teams. Using co-production principles as our starting structure (as we did with our own team's Padlet data), we explored how well the evidence fit or whether additional high-level themes were required.

- We created a system in an Excel spreadsheet to organise data into **themes (conditions needed for co-production), key learnings and supporting extracts/quotes**, by project (4 Team members) to respond to **Question 2 – Section 6**.
- **Themes and key learnings** from our **self-report data**, along with those extracted from external **Project Team reports** and the **independent report** (from People's Voice Media conversations) were identified using a process of checking and re-checking various sources of data (5 Team members). A 'reflexive thematic analysis' approach (involving several rounds of reflection and considering own influenced in developing themes) was used. This aimed to avoid over-interpretation and retain the authenticity and nuance of experiences of the different teams/team members as much as possible - without reducing the number and content of themes too far that we are unable to capture important differences. This enabled us to develop a final set of proposed 'conditions for co-production'.
- Members of the Measuring Success Team reviewed final themes, learnings and quotes. Project Teams have been anonymised in the data.
- In parallel with the previous step, some Measuring Success Team members (5 Team members) reviewed the data to draw out themes relating to co-producing evaluation and evaluation co-production to respond to **Question 3 – Section 7**.
- You will notice there are overlapping themes that cut across Questions 2 and 3 (evaluating co-production). We have identified and highlighted these using the link symbol in **Section 6**.
- During steps 5 & 6, we also created **key open questions** that were generated during our analysis process to support thinking around conditions and evaluation. These are included in the final **Resource**.

Some project teams used different ways to develop their co-production approach using existing frameworks and reports. These included: Co-Production Collective values, adopted principles and reports; NIHR Principles of Co-Production 2024; RQ+4 Research Co-Production (McLean et al. 2023); and some used a combination of approaches combined with lived experience expertise and knowledge from previous projects.

5.3 Limitations

There are several point to consider here when thinking about how we have collected and analysed the evidence, and how we can explain and apply our findings

First, our evidence is only as good as the methods of capture: though we have looked across lots of different data sources from nine teams evaluating 'ourselves' and an independent evaluation with our team.

The conditions that arose may depend on reporting and evaluation methods, tools, size of group, anonymity (whether this helps or not), and continued engagement with the various processes, etc. These may also affect how challenges and more negative aspects are captured, and often reported. The next section on evaluation will dig a little deeper into some of this and reflect on what we have learned here about co-producing an evaluation and evaluating co-production.

A major challenge approaching this evaluation to explore the conditions and multiple layers was in the complexity of the data collected, and trying to synthesise without re-interpreting. Reflection often leads to more data. But also, in trying to organise, synthesise and analyse we have tried to avoid making the process too reductive and 'tidy'. In keeping some of the nuance, and perhaps overlap, this could reflect the strength and particular challenges more relevant to certain individuals, teams, contexts - want to capture variation as much as commonality.

In the next two sections/ chapters we will share what we found about the **conditions for optimising co-production (Section 6)** and **evaluation in co-production (Section 7)** from these approaches.

6. Learning about optimising conditions for co-production

The following provides a summary of the learnings about ***optimal conditions for co-production*** and **related learning points** drawn from the evidence from the 8 Project Teams and the Measuring Success Team (from self-report and independent evaluation) to respond to the following question.

Q2. What have we, and the project teams, learnt about optimising conditions for co-production?

As evaluation is embedded in the aims, programme and process, we have indicated where there is a link between co-production conditions and monitoring and evaluation themes (identified in Section 7) using this link icon throughout the findings.

6.1 Structure of evidence relating to conditions

In this section we will share a summary of evidence relating to optimising conditions for co-production i.e. what things need to be in place to support good co-production. We identified main themes with underlying conditions (see Figure 3) related to:

- Setting up and embedding co-production principles and evaluation practices (12 conditions)
- Five core principles of co-production (and reflecting and adapting) used by Co-Production Collective (29 conditions)

From team reports and our Measuring Success Team evaluation of our process, we identified a range of factors and/or actions that could help to work towards optimising the conditions. The number of conditions that have been identified under each theme are shown here and described in more detail in **6.2**, and in the separate **Reflective Learning Resource**. These include processes of monitoring and evaluation.

How the conditions for effective co-production are organised

Getting started and keeping focussed

- **Setting up and embedding principles of co-production**
  12 conditions

↓

Applying principles and evaluating the process

- **Building and maintaining relationships**
  8 conditions
- **Balancing power and decision making**
  6 conditions
- **Inclusion and respecting and enabling all skills, knowledge and exprience**
  4 conditions
- **Multiple impacts: value and benefits for all**
  6 conditions
- **Reflecting and adapting**
  5 conditions

↓

Link to evaluation themes — 9 learning points (Section 7)

How to look at the visuals and explanation of key

The **conditions** we have shown in the summary tables below are drawn from data reported by project teams, and our team, as being important to them, or possibly what they noticed most. These are coloured in the tables if they were considered by our team to be associated with a condition. This does not mean that other conditions may not have been observed.

In general, the conditions are developed from the learnings related to challenges or things that worked well as reported. Contrary to what is often reported, many challenging experiences have been shared throughout this programme – across all teams and methods of collection – we have handled these sensitively but tried to include them. We have pooled the data and shared anonymously to facilitate this. While this approach may hold advantages in gathering information about tensions that are often undisclosed, please also see our **limitations section below**.

Key for sources of data for Figures 2 and 18-23

- **A** Measuring Success Team independent evaluation
- **B** Measuring Success Team self-report (and reflective) evaluation sources
- **C-J** Project Team reports
- Relates to monitoring evaluation in co-production

6.2 Detail of themes, conditions and variation

Setting up and embedding co-production principles and practices

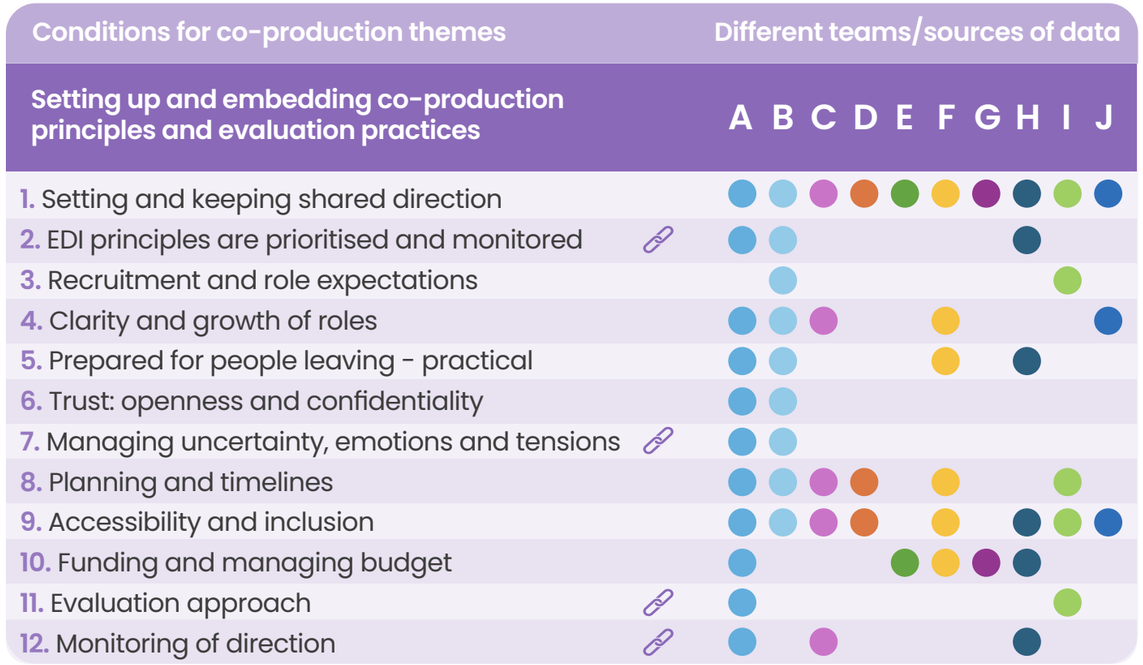


Figure 18: Setting up and embedding co-production principles and evaluation practices

When analysing the data, we used principles as our initial starting point for organising the themes. But for some conditions to be enacted it required some foundational work and so we have clustered these together into this additional theme 'Setting up and embedding co-production and evaluation practices'.

For example: most teams reported that a critical element throughout the project was ensuring that there was a: 'Clear and inclusive direction for group and project relevant to context at outset through clarity of purpose, shared goals and team values, and agreed approach to co-production'. Creating realistic goals that are specific and not too broad, having a balance between enough structure, but freedom to be creative. **(Condition 1)**.

Furthermore, although elements of equity, and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are threaded throughout all principles, we propose this thinking is prioritised and monitoring established in this overarching theme at the start of the project. (Conditions 2 and 9).

Many other practicalities are also important to consider at the start of the project, particularly relating to communicating (which can be part of accessibility and inclusion). Practicalities such as whether to meet online or in person was also a conundrum for projects, some opting for the latter to support relationship building and create better connections as a team. However, for others this could challenge resources if rooms were not easy to come by (or funds available to support logistics). Communication systems outside of a meeting was another practicality that teams found challenging, sharing too much information (e.g. in minutes of meetings) could be overwhelming for some people, but there was a need to keep everyone informed of what was happening.

Recruiting and understanding (and misunderstanding) around roles, and perspectives on these, was a point of difference for some individuals and teams. Allocation of roles may be based on existing skills, knowledge or experience, or it may be through the creation of non-traditional roles (e.g. where people want to develop skills in other aspects of the work). In any case, clarity in expectations for the starting roles and time commitment is helpful. Additionally, some people welcome flexibility in roles, and opportunity for growth, whereas others preferred to maintain roles consistent with their own expertise and/or identity for various reasons. As part of getting to know people, it is good to explore each other's skills, experiences and interests, this can help inform development of roles and responsibilities.

The team's reports suggested that at times managing the practicalities for co-production could be one of the biggest challenges. This included having enough time to decide together, to take a different approach or direction whilst delivering a project within a fixed timeframe (Conditions 7 and 8). Challenges with time and resources also meant being able to understand people's capacity/ availability to complete tasks and to be prepared for team members leaving and potentially needing to bring in new team members (Condition 5). Leaving should always be an option for team members, and may need to be managed practically, as well as emotionally (Conditions 3 to 6; and see those involving emotional burden and support). The level of flexibility required may impact managing the budget **(Condition 10)**.

Change in direction is to be expected in co-production when this aligns with shared decision making. However, managing uncertainty and tensions in co-production and the emotions that come with that were included in many of the principles, but it was felt that planning supportive practices, monitoring and adjusting were important to prioritise in this overarching level **(Condition 7, 11 and 12**; also see Section 7 in the context of evaluation).

Finally, co-producing monitoring or Reflective and Adaptive (also see Principle 5) practices and evaluation planning are important in working towards noticing what needs to change, what has changed as well as adapting and creating the best conditions possible with what capability and resource is available **(Conditions 11 and 12)**. This is important to ensure flexibility of approach and to make things accessible, so trying things out and adjusting or changing approaches if something agreed on in the planning phase is not working. These challenges led one team to conclude that co-production requires you to go slowly and compared this to the 'slow science' movement (Stengers
& Meucke, 2017).

Building and maintaining relationships

Principles of co-production	Different teams/sources of data									
1. Building and maintaining relationships	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**	**I**	**J**
1. Investing time in connection and trust	●	●		●		●			●	●
2. Psychological safeness	●	●	●			●			●	
3. Compassionate environment - tensions and conflict	●	●							●	●
4. Different needs in connecting and relationships			●	●	●					●
5. Emotional support	●					●			●	
6. More widely connected through the 'journey'	●	●			●					
7. Open mindset and flexibility to consider other perspectives	●				●					
8. Accessibility and right conditions/settings to build	●	●	●	●						

Figure 19: Principle 1 – Building and maintaining relationships

There was a strong sense from teams that they had learnt that forming a team and building relationships was a foundation for co-production, most teams reflected that more time is needed at the start of projects and that it should not be rushed. Even where people knew each other well there was still a need to try to connect over the shared values for working in co-production and identifying goals that would be motivating to all and sustain enthusiasm and commitment to the process **(Condition 1).**

Teams developed their capacity for building and maintaining relationships through trying things out together. There was a sense that sustained effort was needed to maintain relationships throughout the project.

Factors that teams mentioned that facilitated relationship building were (mentioned across Conditions):

- Developing psychological safeness
- Open communications and being transparent
- Systems of 1:1 support and buddying up
- Wellness plans
- Check-ins at the start and end of meetings (prioritising this, e.g. through extending meeting time)
- Adjusting to people's needs (changes in work patterns, access needs)
- Encouragement for open sharing about self to find common ground, connection and shared vulnerability
- Some groups found external facilitation helpful at different points, including for relationship building and sharing personal experiences on sensitive topics (as a means to overcoming self-censorship).

There was an explicit recognition from one team member, that human connections created by building personal relationships within their team, was a way to overcome imbalances of different levels of "professionalism." **(Condition 1 and 6).**

Positive experiences of relationship building can bring about different impacts for the people involved. One team reported the sense of belonging that was created. Another team reflected that for members of their team, working in a co-produced way had brought a sense of routine into their lives, and team working had engendered structured support (also see conditions in Principle 4 – Multiple impacts).

Balancing power and decision making

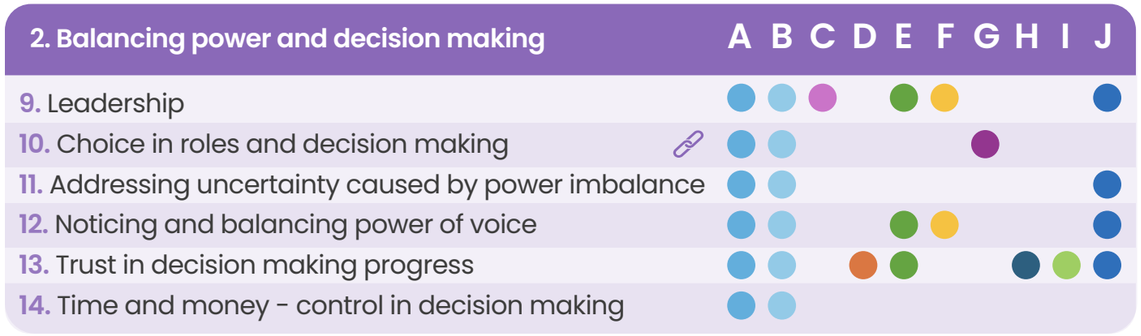


Figure 20: Principle 2 – Balancing power and decision making

All teams reflected to a greater or lesser extent around issues of power, decision making and team roles. Factors that were seen to affect power relations included where some voices dominated in meetings, where teams had been formed following funding success, where some members of the team have pre-existing relationships and who was perceived to hold or be a gatekeeper of access to resources **(Condition 9, 12, 14)**.

The team's experiences brought insights around the role of leadership and/or facilitation in co-production **(Condition 9)**. Leadership or facilitation is largely under-explored in co-production. This role most often involved ensuring practicalities were taken care of, such as arranging meetings, setting agendas, or hosting. Someone may need to be responsible and accountable to ensuring the experience is inclusive and accessible (making adjustments and being a conduit for processing feedback when systems or ways of working were not working for someone). This was seen as important to ensure the principles of co-production were embodied, through ensuring team members felt they had agency to take decisions and ownership of certain tasks. However, leadership roles and expectations in the context of co-production are necessarily different from traditional leadership roles and is more about collective leadership and coordination ensuring no hierarchies are present. This is a critical area for setting the right conditions for co-production. Furthermore, leadership roles need not be fixed and could change at different points in a project (with training and support to fulfil such a role to bring equity).

It was considered important that leadership was compassionate and flexible and that whoever took on leadership roles had a good understanding of the skills and interests within the team. It was also acknowledged that some people may want support and mentoring to take on leadership roles and that on occasion outside facilitation may be needed. For example, to explore topics/issues where power imbalances may arise.

Teams reflected that maintaining a commitment to shared values and checking in with one another about how the ways of working are aligning with these through continuous evaluation and reflection is vital to addressing issues of power (see conditions in Setting up and embedding co-production principles and practices theme). Evaluation and reflection are necessary, but not sufficient; the shared learning and insights from these processes should lead to adjustments, action and change where indicated. Decision-making is something that can be easily and helpful to capture and monitor to adapt processes **(Conditions 10 and 11)**.

Teams suggested that as part of getting to know people, it is good to explore their skills, experiences and interests, this can help inform development of roles and responsibilities. Where some people feel less skilled (or there may have been a 'natural' candidate for a role) it can be beneficial to actively looking for opportunities to share responsibility. Allocation of roles may be based on existing skills, knowledge or experience, or it may be through the creation of non-traditional roles (e.g. where people want to develop skills in other aspects of the work).

Power is not static and it may not be realistic to expect this is equal at all stages, it may be necessary to negotiate sharing power continuously, for example giving autonomy to smaller groups or individuals to make decisions (though it is noted relationships and trust is a prerequisite to this). Some teams found it hard to know whether they could make decisions if not everyone was present, but were not always able to wait for a time where everyone had availability. Good communication and trust is even more important in devolved decision making, to keep everyone in the loop and to avoid role confusion **(Conditions 10, 11, 13)**. Importantly, different points of view can be true at the same time and for different people (see Multiple truths in Section 7). This can lead to areas of disagreement which may require compromises in decision making. Humility and appreciating the value of different forms of knowledge is important to breaking down hierarchies. There is a need to be alert to unintended consequences, trying to address power sharing in one direction, may create an imbalance elsewhere in the team. Including people in decisions may require reasonable adjustments and creating accessible systems for deciding together – identifying key voices that may be missing from the team/decision making **(Condition 11 and 12)**.

Finally, time and financial resource can shift decisions by influencing who is involved and by what process decisions are made. Therefore, trust and transparency around budgeting allocations and decisions is essential (**Condition 14**; see Time and resources theme in Chapter 7).

Valuing and supporting inclusion of diverse skills, knowledge and experience

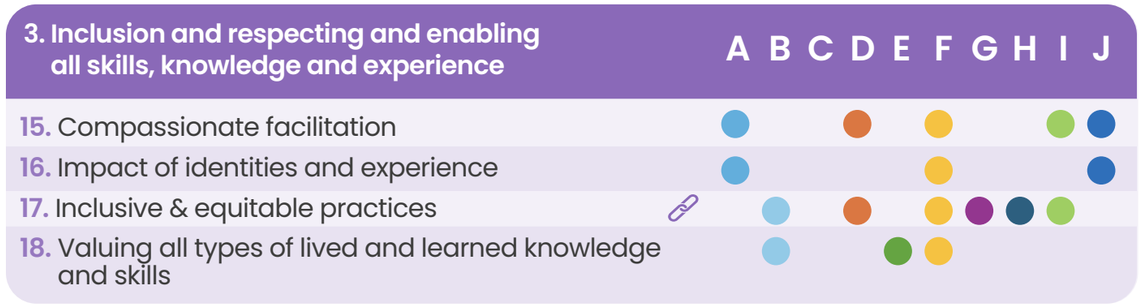


Figure 21: Principle 3 – Inclusion and respecting and enabling all skills, knowledge and experience (note: two principles combined from those included in NIHR, 2024)

Ensuring that collaboration within teams and a balance of voices being heard was compassionately facilitated at times by some individuals with more privileges taking a step back and resisting the urge to speak up out of a sense of responsibility (needing to have the answers; **Condition 15**). Integrating different personal experiences was seen as important to developing a collective understanding of issues related to the project.

There were challenges that the teams had to navigate in ensuring there was sufficient understanding so that all could feel able to contribute meaningfully and voices could be heard and everyone meaningfully involved. For example, being able to understand abstract concepts and language used to describe co-production processes and principles. It was also challenging to meet access needs when there was a strong desire/expectation around progress.

Negotiating such preferences and needs could take time or trying different things out or having a variety of ways people could interact or contribute to discussions (e.g. interactive boards online, chat function, breakout groups as well as verbal discussions). Some teams acknowledged that this was an area where training and support may be needed for different people at different times. Where some people feel less skilled (or there may have been a 'natural' candidate for a role) it can be beneficial to actively looking for opportunities to share responsibility **(Condition 17)**.

Other reflections were around the weight of responsibility some public or community members could feel around representing a particular group, especially where some voices were felt to be missing from the team/project. Equally some academics experienced challenges with their own overlapping lived experience. Understanding and empathetic towards challenges associated with overlapping identities (lived experience and other expertise): questioning how these may impact on self, others and project is important **(Condition 16)**.

Knowing that everyone feels their different skills, knowledge and experience are valued equally and perspectives communicated are actioned. Payment was also an important factor in helping people feel valued more equally, such that where there were different contributions there was recognition and equal value given to these contributions **(Condition 18)**.

Multiple impacts – value and benefits for all

Figure 22: Principle 4 - Multiple impacts: value and benefits for all (considering the journey)

Team reports mentioned a range of impacts (beyond the learning gained through being part of the programme), however this was not consistently reported upon and may reflect the fact that some impact from being part of co-produced projects may only be realised over time **(Condition 19)**.

Some teams highlighted the importance of fair compensation to everyone in the team, particularly where public or community partners may often work on a voluntary basis. Whilst everyone's contributions should be valued within fair compensation, it was acknowledged that other funding programmes did not always support this **(Condition 20)**. This was not without its tensions, as one team noted some people employed by an organisation or academic institution needed to give time 'in kind', leading them to 'fit in' the project work where they could. This should also be caveated with the fact that it was not clear from the individual reports whether members of the public or community members felt enough of their time had been compensated overall, or how much this had been discussed.

Other teams talked about areas of personal growth and development and the fact that engaging in the co-production has brought support in what was an otherwise challenging time **(Condition 21).**

Some teams felt they had produced useful outputs, that co-producing meant these were made accessible and that their experiences were shaping other projects they are part of. Some mentioned that completion of their projects had opened up new prospects in terms of follow-on projects, research or funding opportunities or that the experience left them feeling like they would want to co-produce again in the future **(Condition 24)**. One project referenced their work with us as catalysing a new, successful grant application. Two teams presented their work at conferences in different sectors and two teams asked to be put in touch with each other for ongoing peer support.

Many teams experienced an emotional burden in co-producing as has been reported elsewhere in academic publications. Identification, empathy and support for emotional impacts: addressing emotional burden and factors affecting feeling valued are important to address **(Condition 23)**. This may include strategies to prevent people from feeling an overwhelming weight of responsibility 'or pressures of 'representing a group' (see also **Conditions 2, 5 and 26**).

Finally, one team acknowledged that even with the intention of equal benefits for all, there may be disparities for staff versus those with lived/living experience **(Condition 22)**, another alluded to unexpected outcomes. Therefore, this may be another area that is important to consider early on in projects and regularly revisit, to ensure the impacts desired are being realised and that unanticipated impacts are being noticed and acknowledged for all.

It is important to note that many of the areas in this principle are important to monitor and so the process of evaluation is likely to be important. Key areas are indicated with the link and considerations discussed further in Chapter 7.

Reflecting and adapting

5. Reflecting/adaapting	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
25. Monitoring		●							●	
26. Safeness to support reflective practice		●								
27. Freedom and creativity from reflexivity	●				●	●		●		
28. Creating different, appropriate, opportunities to reflect	●	●			●					
29. Self-reflection		●			●					

Figure 23: Principle 5 – Reflecting and adapting

We found five themes that related to this principle (one of Co-Production Collective values). Since monitoring **(Condition 25)**, as well as ways of reflecting and adapting are critical to evaluating ourselves and projects, these link to evaluation practices across the co-production themes/principles. This is also expanded in Section 7 on Evaluation in Co-production; particularly within the corresponding theme of 'Reflecting and adapting'.

Many of the teams reported conditions relating to developing supportive practices and safeness **(Condition 26)** which also feature here but within this context of reflecting and adapting. This approach to monitoring and evaluation was felt to be particularly important to Principle 1 – Building and Maintaining Relationships **(Conditions 2 and 5)**. This is also a thread overlapping with learning points and actions presenting in other principles such as Multiple Impacts and using reflecting practices to ease the emotional burden if the environment and support offers psychological safety; allowing people to express themselves without fear of negative consequences. **(Condition 23)**.

One team named 'freedom' as a condition which was echoed by other teams in a desire to reflect, be creative, adapt and be open to change of direction **(Condition 27)**. Valuing and creating appropriate opportunities to listen and reflect on lived experiences and others experiences during the project was also seen as important **(Condition 28)**.

Some teams, and individuals, reported that reflection at an individual level can lead to learning and growth, and balance 'voices' within a team. Everyone taking responsibility to reflect and support learning can keep the team moving forwards **(Condition 29)**.

6.3 Key learning points to consider in dealing with complexity

From the reports we received, and through analysing our own self-report and independent data, every team seemed to have their own pattern of conditions. So how can this be a useful learning to us?

A summary visual of all conditions is shown in **Figure 30** to help illustrate this. With the caveats presented earlier, some conditions are more common across teams, while others may be more unique. Some may also have had a bigger impact than others on the overall journey – this level of detail is in the more experiential aspects of the reporting (and see Resource). Overall, this may suggest that conditions may either seem more relevant, pressing or perhaps noticeable (in a positive or negative way) depending on the individuals, teams, context or setting. This doesn't mean that the other conditions may not be present or important but maybe haven't explicitly surfaced for them/us. Since this was a main focus for the Measuring Success Team in evaluating ourselves and in observing learnings from all teams along their journeys, it is not a surprise that we highlighted aspects related to the majority of conditions.

Credit: New Possibilities

Key for sources of data for Figures 2 and 18-23

- **A** Measuring Success Team independent evaluation
- **B** Measuring Success Team self-report (and reflective) evaluation sources
- **C-J** Project Team reports
- 🔗 Relates to monitoring and evaluation in co-production

Conditions for co-production themes	Different teams/sources of data									
Setting up and embedding co-production principles and evaluation practices	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**	**I**	**J**
1. Setting and keeping shared direction	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2. EDI principles are prioritised and monitored	🔗 ●	●						●		
3. Recruitment and role expectations		●							●	
4. Clarity and growth of roles	●	●	●			●				●
5. Prepared for people leaving - practical	●	●				●		●		
6. Trust: openness and confidentiality	●	●								
7. Managing uncertainty, emotions and tensions	🔗 ●	●								
8. Planning and timelines	●	●	●	●		●			●	
9. Accessibility and inclusion	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●
10. Funding and managing budget	●				●	●	●	●		
11. Evaluation approach	🔗 ●								●	
12. Monitoring of direction	🔗 ●		●					●		

Principles of co-production	Different teams/sources of data									
1. Building and maintaining relationships										
1. Investing time in connection and trust	●	●		●		●			●	●
2. Psychological safeness	🔗 ●	●	●			●			●	
3. Compassionate environment - tensions and conflict	●	●							●	●
4. Different needs in connecting and relationships			●	●	●					●
5. Emotional support	●					●			●	
6. More widely connected through the 'journey'	●	●			●					
7. Open mindset and flexibility to consider other perspectives	🔗 ●				●					
8. Accessibility and right conditions/settings to build	●	●	●	●						

2. Balancing power and decision making	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
9. Leadership	●	●	●		●	●				●
10. Choice in roles and decision making	🔗 ●	●					●			
11. Addressing uncertainty caused by power imbalance	●	●								●
12. Noticing and balancing power of voice	●	●			●	●				●
13. Trust in decision making progress	●	●		●	●			●	●	●
14. Time and money - control in decision making	●	●								

3. Inclusion and respecting and enabling all skills, knowledge and experience	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
15. Compassionate facilitation	●			●		●			●	●
16. Impact of identities and experience	●					●				●
17. Inclusive & equitable practices	🔗	●		●		●	●	●	●	
18. Valuing all types of lived and learned knowledge and skills		●			●	●				

4. Multiple impacts - value and benefit for all (journey)	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
19. Range of impacts	🔗	●				●	●			●
20. Financial reward/value			●		●	●	●			
21. Personal growth	🔗			●	●	●	●			●
22. Benefits for staff	●	●		●	●	●				●
23. Emotional burden	🔗	●	●					●	●	●
24. Latency of benefit for individuals	🔗	●	●							

5. Reflecting/adapating	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
25. Monitoring	🔗	●							●	
26. Safeness to support reflective practice	🔗	●								
27. Freedom and creativity from reflexivity	🔗	●			●	●		●		
28. Creating different, appropriate, opportunities to reflect	🔗	●	●		●					
29. Self-reflection	🔗	●			●					

Figure 2: Summary illustration to demonstrate the overall variability in patterns of 'condition themes' across project teams

6.4 Building capabilities in co-production (through evaluating the process)

An aim of the Measuring Success in Co-production: Learning by Doing programme was to support **learning by doing**, and so to support funded teams to develop their experience and capabilities for undertaking co-produced projects and related evaluation activities.

Capabilities in co-producing

The experiential nature of the programme and diversity of project teams and their aims led to a range of reflections from teams about what they were learning. Their learnings related to those acquired throughout their projects and the programme delivery, and from reflecting at the end of their projects about how they developed their thinking and capabilities to co-produce, and identify what is needed (often to create many of the conditions reported and described).

Capabilities in evaluating co-production

The need to co-produce evaluations was recognised by teams. While this seemed obvious, there was a more nuanced understanding for some people that co-production could guard against bias in evaluation processes.

Some people commented that they were able to broaden their understanding of co-production and see it in a different way, i.e. to improve of ways of working (helping the team move forward and ensure aims and expectations were being met). Not just as a method to capture impact and outcomes (but a check against aims/expectations). In this regard reflective processes were seen as a key ingredient to support enacting the principles of co-production.

Many people mentioned practical things they had learned, like the need to consider evaluation early on in a process and to start with collaboratively identifying why you wanted to evaluate. There was a real appreciation for the different ideas and resources that were shared through the programme, including creative approaches

and more informal methods. There is considerable overlap between what the teams reported (or learned) and what we experienced. We've spent time with teams, and reviewing teams' feedback and reports which will have impacted our learning and could explain why we noticed more of the conditions in the tables above.

Value in independent evaluation

To explore the co-production process for the Measuring Success Team, we included an independent evaluation (with People's Voice Media who were not otherwise involved in the programme). This can help with building your own capabilities in reflecting, as well as provide a more neutral place to develop reflective practices.

Although there were only a few differences in the conditions and underlying factors identified, these have provided additional evidence and nuance included in the learning points. This approach did offer an alternative option and different reflective 'space' that some people may have found valuable in talking through things that were more challenging or conflicting with team members. Although there is a degree of anonymity in process, with a small group and overlapping conversations in reflective spaces held in the team, some of this is lost or not possible to maintain true anonymity. In addition, not all people wanted to be involved in this interview-style approach, or respond well to this so we need to find a range of ways that feel comfortable and sensitive to capture and include all perspectives in evaluations.

Finally, while feedback can be helpful, often these independent approaches are implemented at the end of projects to assess 'final' impact. To be useful, these may need to be an integral part of the feedback and monitoring loop – otherwise tensions may not be aired and addressed, practices adapted, and conditions adjusted. Maintaining anonymity and confidentialities may be a challenge (or barrier) to addressing some aspects raised and enacting change, regardless of feedback approach.

6.5 A proposed 'reflective and adaptive' process

In looking at the evidence, we have extracted the insights that may be most helpful and practical to use to develop your co-production practice and build capabilities.

- Our findings lend more support to the fact that a **rigid framework (or structured approach) is unlikely to be as helpful as adopting a 'reflective and adaptive' process** to enacting the principles and goals of co-production tailored to the project, people and setting.

- In our **Co-production Reflective Learning Resource**, we have shared some key learnings from factors and/or actions that teams identified relating to the conditions. In addition, we have included open questions to support a flexible 'learning by doing' exploration of conditions in setting up and following a journey of co-production. We hope these help you in considering and prioritising what is most important for people and contexts to humanise the process of co-production.

How to use this resource

There are **two parts** to this Resource:

Part 1

These are the expanded versions of the conditions for co-production explained in Section 6 of the **Measuring Success in Co-Production: Learning by Doing Report (2025)**. Additional learning points are taken from the information provided by all project teams and questions that arose from these. These are listed in the tables presented in this resource (pages 7-26) to help you reflect, adapt and learn along the co-production journey.

Part 2

This is a starting point to develop an approach of your own. You can adapt these two templates to stimulate discussion and produce something that works for you and the conditions that you choose to prioritise.

Images by Anna Geyer from New Possibilities

Part 2: Planning and acting. Co-producing a co-production plan with embedded evaluation — Template 1

A. Please populate this template when setting up a project, working to embed co-production principles and when developing your evaluation practices.
Key elements to discuss are:

Our shared goals for this co-production project are: See Part 1A. 'Setting up and embedding co-production principles and evaluation practices' on pages 7-12 for ideas	Our co-production approach is based on (our shared definition) [Discuss and add what co-production approach you are using]
What do we want to learn about the project and outcomes at the end (a clear purpose)?	**Learning by Doing and Monitoring Impacts**
What do we want to learn about the process during (monitoring) and at the end of (evaluation) the co-production journey?	When (and how often) will you look at this plan? Who will look at it? [Some benefits will become clearer or take time to develop. See Part 1B 'Multiple Impacts - what is the value and benefits for all?' on pages 21-23 for ideas
Value: what do we want/think the benefits (impacts) of the project will be and when?	What do we think the benefits are now (insert time point here)? See Part 1B 'Reflecting and adapting - what helps us to check our process is working for all' on pages 24-26 for ideas
For individuals: See Part 1A. 'Setting up and embedding co-production principles and evaluation practices' on pages 7-12 for ideas	How do you need to adjust? [Consider what is working/not working, what things do you need to keep doing, anything that needs to change]
For organisations:	
For wider impacts or society:	

7. Learning about evaluation in co-production

The following chapter summarises learning from the Measuring Success in Co-production programme related to the co-production of evaluation in co-produced projects. Due to the focus of the programme – on the journey as well as the destination – a lot of teams were focussed on evaluating co-production processes rather than outcomes of their project. This process of evaluation development and learning was supported by The Evaluation Exchange team.

The learning is from both our experience of co-producing an evaluation of the programme, and the experience as reported by the teams throughout the programme and in their final reports. The findings are listed as **9 learning points**. This is the question we sought to answer:

Q3. What have we learnt about co-producing evaluations and evaluating co-production?

Recap: Evaluation is a continuous process which allows you to

- Collect information to measure the difference your project or way of working is making
- Learn about what difference it makes, and what does and doesn't work
- Report on these findings.

Adapted from 'Why bother involving people in evaluation' by Evaluation Support Scotland, 2020.

Co-producing evaluation is the process of designing and conducting these activities with those involved and affected by the work. It is an approach that is different to traditional models of evaluation where an 'evaluator' who is independent, or outside, a project or programme, assesses the project, often at fixed points (e.g. at the middle and end of a project). Co-producing an evaluation ensures that decisions about the process are shaped by a range of voices and perspectives enabling a learning process that reflects the experiences and needs of the diversity of people involved in or affected by a project.

7.1 Nine learning points from co-producing evaluations and evaluating co-production

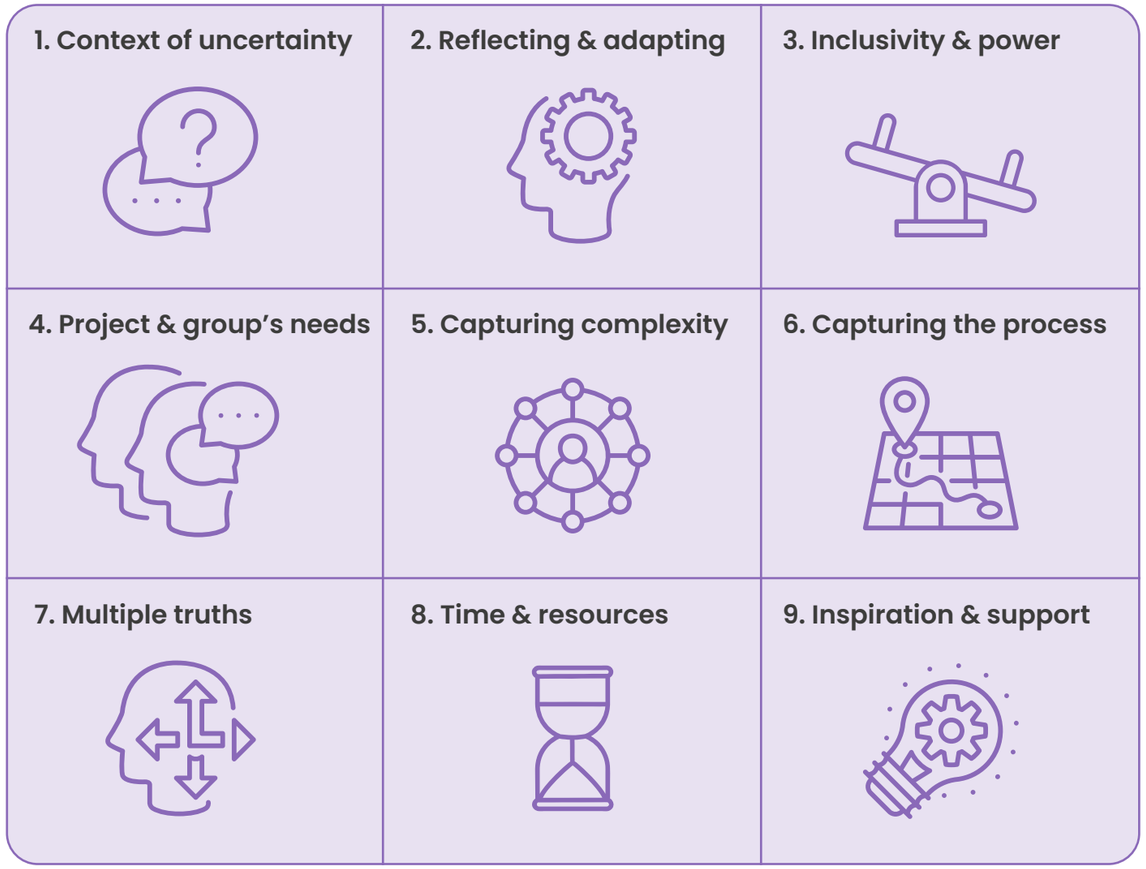


Figure 3: 9 key learnings from the programme about evaluation
(Credit: Evaluation Exchange & Measuring Success in Co-production, 2025)

1. Planning evaluations in a context of uncertainty

In co-produced projects there can be uncertainty around what the project will do, and how it will develop. This can make it feel difficult or inappropriate to plan evaluation activities, as you are not sure how things will evolve. Uncertainty can relate to all

aspects of the project, including but not limited to what the outputs of a project may be, as well as who is involved and how all elements of the co-production process work.

One team reflected on how developing a structure helped individuals in their group when their initial discussions felt broad:

> **"We did, however, keep it a bit too broad at the start and quickly realised we needed more of a structure in order for the group to really feel safe." They said that they would advise others to "try and work out with the group how much structure is needed and how much can be co-produced as you go along".**

This suggests that a lack of certainty does not mean there needs to be a lack of a plan to help you build a shared understanding and help people feel safe. A desire for structure and planning can differ between individuals and is something that can be determined by working together and learning from each other.

Although it can feel uncomfortable to think about evaluation before you know what your project is going to do, it is never too early to start conversations about it and begin to develop a shared understanding that you continue to up-date as you go. To aid the teams' planning for their co-produced evaluations, the Deepening Practice sessions encouraged teams to think about the different stages that might be involved in the evaluation process ahead of them, including:

- Creating a shared understanding of why you want to evaluate
- Deciding how you will collect information and who should be involved
- Agreeing who will look at the information you collect and how you will do it
- Documenting your findings if you want to
- Sharing the learning with others

The Deepening Practice sessions also encouraged individuals in teams to ask each other the questions:

- What do you want to learn and why?
- How could we collect the information in a way that is meaningful and respectful?
- Who will be involved at each stage?
- How do we make sure different perspectives are included at each stage?
- How do you want to be involved?

Additionally, teams were asked to reflect on:

- **Who is being asked these questions and who is missing?**
- **How can you make sure different perspectives are heard, incorporated and respected at each stage?**

Asking this range of questions, outlined above, aimed to help teams unearth differences and begin to build a shared understanding, manage expectations and consider in advance some of the time and resources that could be required for each activity and to help plan accordingly.

Co-produced projects are prone to change as new understandings emerge and the project adapts in response. Building in time for on-going reflection (as part of the co-production process) is important and can help up-date plans when the project adapts in response.

2. On-going reflecting and adapting

All teams reported the importance of incorporating on-going reflection as part of their evaluation approach. This allowed them to learn along the way about the co-production process, but also to adjust and change their evaluation approaches as they learnt what worked and did not work in their context.

Practical examples of how on-going reflection was incorporated by different project teams, and the Measuring Success Team included:

- Using on-line platforms such as Miro, Padlet and 'Jamboards' or online whiteboards for individual team members to log reflections in their own time, and then using these as a basis for collective conversations.
- Regularly incorporating time at the beginning and end of meetings to check-in with each other and share reflections.
- Scheduling in time after meetings for team members to digitally record themselves speaking their thoughts in response to a pre-agreed list of questions.
- Scheduled one-to-one time between team members to ensure everyone had an opportunity to share their reflections in a safe space.
- Scheduled times that were blocked in all team members' calendars as 'optional' allowing people with something on their mind or a desire to connect with others, to attend a 'drop-in' with other team members if needed.
- Surveys that asked for team members' reflections on the team's ways of working; and opportunities to feed back on the effectiveness of those surveys.

For each team, the process of on-going reflection allowed them to try out evaluation approaches, to test them and develop ways of working that were appropriate for their project and those involved. It also allowed teams to notice that some methods were working for some people but not others and to adjust accordingly.

In the Measuring Success in Co-production team, we learnt that for a range of reasons, sharing reflections via an on-line platform like a 'Padlet' was suitable for some in our team, but not everyone. There were different reasons as to why this was the case and realising this allowed us to add in reflective meetings where we could discuss our observations about our co-production processes. We learnt that it is helpful to review processes for reflection, establish why there is engagement or not, and adapt how you ask for and collect information in response to an improved understanding of people's needs and the evolving group and project.

There were examples from the teams of how they adapted in response to what they learnt through on-going reflection. For example, one project team initially created an online snapshot evaluation tool but found low levels of engagement with it. They considered together why this was, decided the team preferred to reflect through conversations, and organised regular verbal on-line face-to-face reflection activities as a team and through one-to-one feedback sessions. Additionally, another team created an evaluation and learning tool which they both used and also evaluated. Discussions around the usefulness of the tool led the team to incorporate in-person reflection sessions as part of their evaluation process. Evidence in the independent evaluation with the Measuring Success team indicated that frustration or disillusionment grew when adaptations were not made in response to feedback or suggestions for change.

When co-producing evaluations, it is crucial to include time for reflection and to create a culture and environment that recognises that it is OK for things to change. This allows you to acknowledge what is working or not working so it can be addressed, and you can adapt as you learn.

3. Issues of power and ensuring inclusivity

As teams co-produced evaluations of their work, they highlighted a need to acknowledge and address differences in power and perceptions of power between those involved in co-producing the evaluation.

One team developed a survey that asked team members to reflect on their approach to co-production. They used a pre-defined list of principles of co-production to 'measure' themselves against. Their findings unearthed potential power imbalances that they then aimed to address.

This particular team recommended the importance of openly discussing power dynamics and ensuring everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves freely. Despite an awareness of the importance of recognising issues of power in the co-production process, other teams found it difficult to tackle the issues and found it uncomfortable to bring up the need to address power imbalances that they were experiencing. One team fed back that having someone external to their group

observing them could have helped to challenge them. Others commented on the value of someone external to them providing the one-to-one support.

Issues of power and exclusion can exist for different reasons. In the context of evaluation, these issues can be exacerbated by the fact that the term 'evaluation' can feel abstract or complex, and amplified by the technical language and jargon that is associated with commonly held perceptions of evaluation. Different people can have strong feelings about how an evaluation should be conducted for it to be 'valid'. The strength of those feelings can make it difficult to resolve differences. This highlights the importance of reflection and reflexivity amongst those involved in the process of co-producing the evaluation together.

Addressing issues of power and ensuring inclusivity needs to be incorporated at each stage of evaluation including who decides what is evaluated and why, who collects information, who analyses it and who is involved in sharing the findings. Recognising the value of the knowledge or experience of all involved is important. When co-producing evaluations, different people can feel more or less confident or comfortable with different tasks. The implications of this and how each group responds will be different depending on the context.

Another team kept language simple and accessible to create a shared understanding and ownership of a 'bulls-eye tool' that they designed to collect feedback. To ensure the voices of all participants were heard in their reporting, they produced a video featuring different members' reflections on their evaluation.

> **"Co-producing our evaluation led to rich ideas for our evaluation themes which were agreed on by the whole group. This resulted in our evaluation tool using language everyone understood, thus making it accessible. [One team member] reflected that compared to other creative projects he has been involved in which just have one leader, it was useful to use co-production as everyone was included in the decisions."**

4. Tailoring an evaluation approach to the needs of your project and group

Teams tailored evaluation approaches that were unique to their own project and group. Some felt comfortable to adapt examples developed by others who have tried to evaluate processes of co-production. For example, one team asked questions related to different principles of co-production to create 'scores' and diagrams that illustrate success in embodying the principles; and another team used a proposed evaluation framework that aims to assess the quality of co-produced research known as Research Quality Plus for Co-Production (McLean et al 2023).

For others it was not appropriate to ask members of the group to complete surveys or write things down. They used recordings of reflective conversations and videos to collect and share information. Other groups used creative approaches such as illustrations, poems and visual minutes. A group working with people with language difficulties designed a physical poster for the wall that was segregated into different themes of feedback, that members used sticky dots to vote on.

Another team trialled creative approaches to capture feedback in workshops, but found the approach was not appropriate for individuals in their group. As a collective of researchers familiar with qualitative approaches they felt comfortable capturing findings from conversations.

Finding an evaluation approach that is appropriate and proportionate to a project and the people involved takes time. Several of the teams adjusted initially ambitious expectations and over the course of the project narrowed the focus of their evaluation to what they could manage with the time and resources available.

5. Capturing the complexity, relational and emotional aspects of co-production

To capture the complexity, relational and emotional aspects of co-production, teams explored and trialled different evaluation approaches. The Deepening Practice sessions encouraged teams to think of evaluation beyond typical perceptions of numerical or common perceptions of 'scientifically' rigorous data. The sessions showcased examples of information gathered through stories, informal lunches and creative approaches including drawing, each with the potential to provide rich insights that should be considered as valuable as quantitative data.

One team designed a feedback activity that was founded on aspects of people's well-being that they had self-identified as important. A few teams' reports included poetry, song, their own drawings and visual minutes.

Another team tried to capture and share the complexities within the relationships between those co-producing their project. They designed a survey that members of their co-production team completed at different stages of the project. The survey aimed to assess how frequently they felt they embodied pre-agreed principles of co-production including those related to inclusion, accessibility and transparency, building and maintaining relationships, power dynamics and respecting and enabling all knowledge and experiences. Building on reflections captured via the survey, they used imagery to illustrate the 'strength' of their relationships over time and the 'messy' nature of forming relationships over the course of the project.

6. Evaluating the process of co-production, or the co-production 'journey'

Taking a co-productive approach to evaluations can broaden what is evaluated, as multiple voices decide "what counts". Evaluating the process of co-production can be as important as, or more important than, evaluating the final outputs. One example of a team that focused their evaluation on the co-production journey, captured learning on individual contributions and growth, team dynamics and the challenges and benefits of co-producing. They created simple surveys based on co-production principles and used feedback from these as a basis for discussion.

The co-production process itself often generates valuable insights and strengthens relationships and understanding among participants. Impacts should be considered in terms of all those involved in the co-production process, including how team members are affected during their journey of co-production.

7. Acknowledging different perspectives and multiple truths

Co-produced evaluations open up the space for those with different experiences, viewpoints, or preferences to shape how the evaluation process is conducted. Evaluations of co-produced projects can unearth 'multiple truths', e.g. contradictions or tensions in how people experience something. When an evaluation process ensures different people's perspectives are incorporated in the design, analysis and sharing of findings, this can enhance the opportunity for those different 'truths' to be identified and reported.

Teams used a range of reporting styles to acknowledge 'multiple truths'. They ensured different people's experiences were reported in their own ways. For example, one report included contributions from different team members using videos, poems and illustrations rather than a written report that was written by one person in one voice. They also included a QR code that encouraged you to feedback and ask questions about the report. Different approaches to reporting allowed individuals to share their own reflections in a way that they were comfortable with.

For those involved in the evaluation process, multiple truths can feel uncomfortable. Building trust between different team members and developing a safe space for navigating differences can help.

8. Time and resources

Co-producing an evaluation requires appropriate time and resources. Other forms of evaluation may be led by one person, however co-produced evaluations need to plan and budget for involvement and ownership from a diversity of people across the different stages of a typical cycle of evaluation from planning, collating information, analysing it and sharing findings.

As well as estimating time commitments and resources at the beginning, on-going reflection and adjustments may see plans and budgets change as people's engagement increases or decreases as the project evolves. Teams reported the need to adjust budgets and plans as they realised the process of working collaboratively took longer than they had anticipated.

A funding environment is needed that allows for approaches to co-producing evaluation to be tested. Each team we worked with adapted their evaluation approaches over the course of the project as they established what worked and did not work for their group and as their project evolved.

9. Inspiration, support and guidance

The Measuring Success in Co-production programme aimed to build individuals' capabilities to co-produce projects and the evaluation of their projects. It provided support to teams that aimed to demystify evaluation and build individuals' confidence in their own ability to evaluate in a way that was appropriate to them and those they work with. In a context where evaluation continues to be perceived as something technical that requires particular skills or training, the value of support for others to break down barriers to co-producing evaluations and build on the Measuring Success programme's learning will be relevant.

Teams were particularly inspired by examples of others using inclusive and participatory approaches to evaluation. A number of teams trialled tools that had been showcased in the sessions. In a context of uncertainty in co-produced projects, examples from others can offer inspiration that then begins a process of trialling, testing and adapting.

Through this programme we built our own understanding and awareness of others who have been exploring approaches that tackle issues of power, inequality and inequity in evaluation and have captured learning about co-producing evaluations. There is a lot to continue to learn from those in the UK and other countries who have been doing this.

We have also built our understanding of supporting people in co-producing evaluations and evaluating co-production and discovered that support is helpful when it:

- **Helps you explore for yourself what works for you** - you will know best
- **Provides a safe space** for learning what works and doesn't work
- Considers the **whole evaluation process** (beginning to end)
- Offers inspiration through **what others have done**
- Takes inspiration from **participatory and inclusive approaches** to evaluation

Our learning emphasises how collaborative, inclusive approaches to evaluation can enhance both the process and impact of co-production projects. Our experience shows that each group and project are different. The way you approach co-producing your evaluation should be relevant and appropriate to your own project's needs and the individuals involved.

Credit: New Possibilities

8. Bringing Co-production and Evaluation together

This co-produced participatory funding programme brought together co-production and evaluation. Our shared goal was to gain a better understanding of the conditions required for good co-production and evaluation across different mental health, wellbeing and/or climate change contexts and projects. This programme was directly building on the findings from the Value of Co-production work, and specifically the Rapid Critical Review (Co-Production Collective, 2022).

Co-producing this programme has enabled us to share insights, challenges and use our collective knowledge, skills and experience to explore solutions with 9 project teams (including our own). This involved a motivation to enact the principles and values of co-production across a range of contexts, and with diverse individuals with lived and living experience and/or employed in organisations or institutions.

Bringing together co-production and 'measurement' is critical to understanding and demonstrating the different impacts (value) of co-production. We wanted to better understand how we can bridge the gap between considering the principles of co-production, enacting them in practice and appreciating their value. In developing our knowledge we also wanted to reduce the gap between knowing and reporting on the challenges and difficulties people face in co-production highlighted previously (Farr et al. 2021). We are grateful to all of the individuals and teams who have contributed and shared their challenges so openly for our pooled anonymous analysis. We hope this provides some space for reflection and direction for action, with the intention of closing these gaps and leading change.

In addition to providing more evidence that individuals and teams apply the principles of co-production differently, and find certain conditions more evident or important to invest in, we have confirmed previous findings from the Value of Co-production, that co-production is a complex methodology or process, and the journey is uncertain. The journey needs to start somewhere (and that may be less clear) but it also involves relationships and can be emotional and takes time and resources. So, bringing in evaluation, we need to treat it sensitively in unravelling the evidence and impacts through reflection, adaptation and learning by doing.

8.1 Capturing complexity and tolerating uncertainty

To build on the Value of Co-production work, we felt it important that we are able to provide some evidence that illustrates the complexity of co-production using our chosen approach to co-producing the evaluation, pooling data, analysis, interpretation and reporting. The figure and text below serve to illustrate and describe the complex interaction between the principles, conditions and other factors associated with human experience and context. See Figure 5, below.

Quick link: for principles and values of co-production see page 26.

Setting up and Principles of co-production - these main categories are a helpful starting and ending point but can be very broad and undefined things to enact

Individual conditions - may be practical, emotional or psychological, relational, financial and structural, environmental, etc - and they may overlap across different principles

Underlying factors - human experiences and contexts matter and are dynamic. Some underlying factors may be more or less relevant, important, and can have positive or negative impacts depending on the challenges or strengths relating to individuals, team, environment, setting, structures, existing power dynamics, etc.

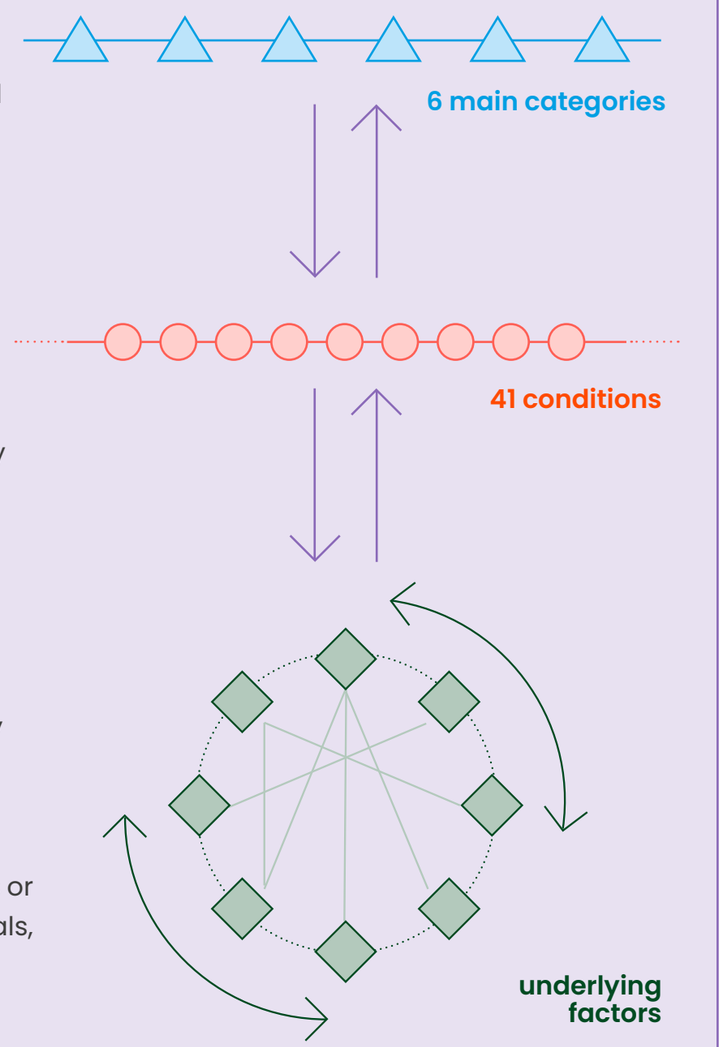


Figure 4: complexity of layers in co-producing, evaluating and analysis

- Beginning with the **5 core principles of co-production** can be a helpful **starting point** but these are very broad and so can be difficult to enact. When analysingthe data, we used principles as our main categories to help organise the information and used reflexivity (conscious consideration of how our own perspectives, biases, and values might influence process and findings). We wanted to understand how the principles of co-production could relate to the conditions identified and how we, and others, might action them. This is explored in more detail in our Reflective Learning Resource (see page 19).

- Several of the different projects demonstrated that for some conditions to be present, a number of principles needed to be enacted. These **conditions and underlying factors** may be practical, emotional or psychological, relational, financial and structural, cultural, etc., and they may overlap across different principles. e.g. emotional support was identified as a condition that featured in at least 3 principles. Evaluation processes may benefit from considering this.

- Most teams reported that **certain conditions** were particularly important when setting up co-production and evaluation processes. We created an additional category to allow for this, and this is the first table in Figure 2 on page 12. It shows conditions 1 to 12 that relate specifically to this stage of co-production.

- We know that co-production is complex and the journey is uncertain. We have found that **Co-production relies on relationships between people** and is influenced by **their own experiences** as much as it is methodological. Regardless of the specific perspectives (or identities) of most people involved in this programme, they have reported experiencing some form of emotional labour in co-producing that needs to be treated with compassion and kindness.

- **Enacting the principles with integrity** makes agreeing a **sensitive and relevant approach to evaluation** vital to meaningful co-production, ensuring there is an embedded process of reflection and adaptation (a continuous cycle of improvement).

8.2 Building capabilities through 'learning by doing'

From our collective experiences, 'Learning by Doing' is the most effective way to develop capabilities in both co-production and evaluation. Everyone came from different starting points. This practical 'hands-on' learning approach in co-production and evaluation is essential as different people, teams and organisations start or develop their journeys with both. Throughout the programme some people commented that through considering how to measure success and the evaluation process, they were able to broaden their understanding of co-production and see it in a different way, i.e. to improve ways of working. This often helped the team move forward and ensure aims and expectations were being met. Evaluation was not just a method to capture impact and outcomes but a process to continually check against aims and expectations and adapt. In this regard reflective processes were seen as a key ingredient to support enacting the principles of co-production.

Our findings lend more support to the fact that **a rigid framework (i.e. set approach) is unlikely to be as helpful as adopting a 'reflective and adaptive' process** to enacting the principles and goals of co-production tailored to the project, people and setting.

In our **Co-production Reflective Learning Resource**, we have shared some key learnings from factors and/or actions that teams identified relating to optimising the conditions for co-production with embedded evaluation. In addition, we have included open questions to support a flexible 'learning by doing' exploration of conditions in setting up and following a successful journey with co-production. We hope these help you in considering and prioritising what is most important for people and contexts to humanise the process and navigate the challenges in co-production.

8.3 What we hope for the legacy of this programme...

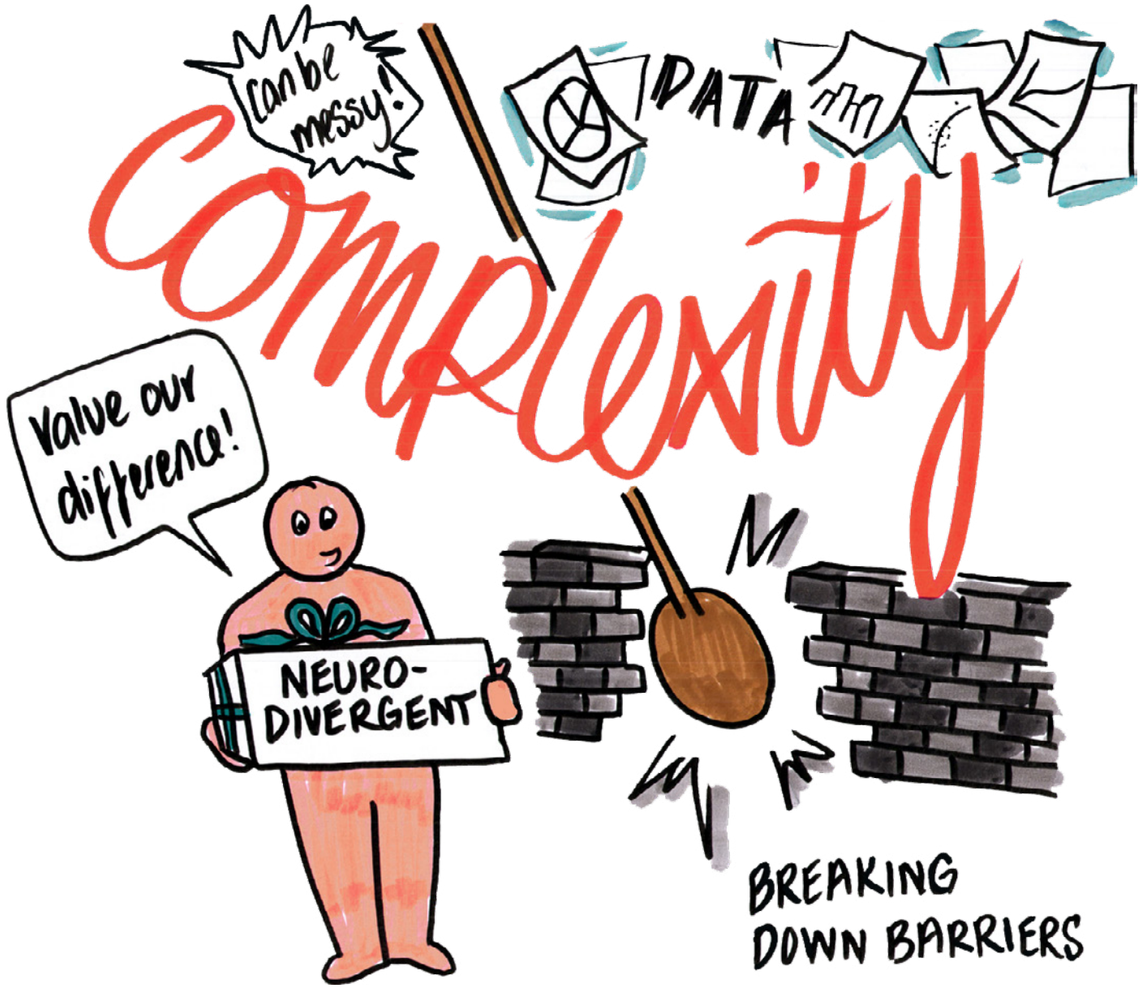
A key goal of this programme was to 'measure success in co-production'. Our response is that all of these terms may translate to different meanings for individuals, organisations, institutions. By evaluating or measuring aspects of the process (not people) – sensitively – our findings support and extend those from the Value of Co-production (Co-Production Collective, 2022).

We asked a wide range of people what a helpful output from this programme could be. We were keen to avoid duplicating existing tools, but in responding to feedback wanted to provide something inclusive, and of practical use, to help co-production journeys, regardless of stage, experience or expertise. With the above in mind, the resources provides a template to help you adapt and create a bespoke, context led co-production and evaluation approach. This is not a recipe for success, but we hope a starting point for conversations and planning that you can adapt, prioritise or change as you learn within your team/ project.

In our '**Co-production Reflective Learning Resource'**, we have shared some key learnings from factors and/or actions that teams identified relating to optimising the conditions for co-production with embedded evaluation. In addition, we have included open questions to support a flexible 'learning by doing' exploration of conditions in setting up and following a successful journey with co-production. We hope these help you in considering and identifying what is most important for people and contexts to humanise the process and navigate the challenges in co-production.

By investing in this programme, the learning approach and people involved, we hope that the Co-production Reflective Learning Resource will support others to explore the conditions for co-production. We hope it will inspire a more reflective approach in co-producing evaluation and in enacting the principles of co-production throughout the journey.

We would like to track the value that the learning has made and ask anyone drawing on this report or the Co-production Reflective Learning Resource to cite it in their work as, **Co-production Reflective Learning Resource - Measuring Success in Co-production: Learning by Doing (2025).**



Credit: New Possibilitie

Project Summaries

The following set of summaries have been developed by extracting information from the teams' project reports. These are their experiences of their projects as they reported them.

Summary 1

Co-production From the Inside Out: finding freedom in a secure place

by Louise Scott, Susan Marmot, Liliana Bellini, Kate Sherwell, Derrick Mason, Siobhan Kunadu-Yiadom & Nici Butchart

Aim: Our main goal was to improve engagement and then share an understanding of innate health with a women's refuge developing and delivering a 6-week mental wellbeing course.

Rationale: Improve engagement and share our understanding of a psychological wellbeing approach – Innate Health. At the heart of our project was the goal of delivering a 6-week mental wellbeing course using the 'Innate Health Approach' to the staff of a women's refuge. This is grounded in two universal truths: (1) everyone can have access to psychological wellbeing and wisdom, regardless of their circumstances; (2) our perceptions of life are shaped by moment-to-moment thinking. We believe that recognising these truths enables us to experience peace of mind and contentment, leading to behaviours that reflect our inherent kindness and benevolence. We wanted to share this with organisations and individuals to reduce psychological distress for those who have experienced some kind of social injustice or trauma in their lives.

Journey: Our co-production journey had many twists and turns, leading us to a meaningful partnership with I Choose Freedom, a women's refuge. Our team considered several possible recipients for our training and our concept of engagement changed through this process. During this process, Siobhan introduced the idea of the women's refuge. Having been profoundly touched by the principles of innate health, she envisioned sharing these insights with the refuge that had provided vital support for her and her children. The journey encountered many pivot points – a critical turning point arose through a conversation and an insight that staff needed to be grounded before supporting refuge members; who became the training participants.

Knowledge, experience and expertise: People with lived experience and expertise (including mental ill-health and navigating personal challenges, including abuse, domestic violence, the criminal justice system), as well as facilitators and a lawyer (The Big Simple) and a researcher (Innate Health Research).

How we evaluated our work: In the spirit of how this started – with connection and simple conversations (individuals in team and group conversations with refuge staff), our primary approach to evaluating the value of co-production has been through open conversations. We chose this as the most appropriate approach for our project, given the size of our team and the nature of the population we worked with. These open conversations allowed for genuine insights and reflections from both the refuge and our team and have fostered collective thinking and enriched our understanding of co-production. We have also reflected at several points on our journey and used this to adjust our approach to co-production.

We worked with a team of 6 people who worked over 3 locations, supporting 39 women and their children.

What we found from evaluating our co-produced project: Our evaluation indicates that our belief in nurturing innate health within co-production frameworks could enhance both individual contributions and collective outcomes, making it a foundational element for effective, equitable collaboration. Conversations shifted focus – co-production evolved organically and prioritised connections and wellbeing over predefined outcomes. Themes identified from group conversations were that the course helped through: (1) awareness of thoughts and emotions; (2) connection and support; (3) transformation through insight; (4) the dance of learning.

Some of our key learnings around the conditions for co-production:

Space held using co-production principles has been crucial in nurturing authentic connections among team members and partners.

Trust fostered creativity and collaboration, creating an inclusive environment where "everyone's voice mattered equally".

Our beliefs that innate health is an essential condition for successful co-production: if we show up to co-production with a quieter mind, we are more open, more at ease, and ultimately more successful at co-production.

Freedom is a new feeling we have shared as a team in the secure space created through co-production; this has enabled us to access greater wisdom to shift creativity and focus on the journey rather than the outcome.

Using collective wisdom and strength, we looked at the quality of our thinking (using the Innate Health approach) rather than the content of the challenge which helped problems to dissolve or feel less daunting.

Listening to lived experience – in our team and in the refuge – offered a change in direction for the project, shifting the focus from supporting the people in the refuge to supporting the staff first.

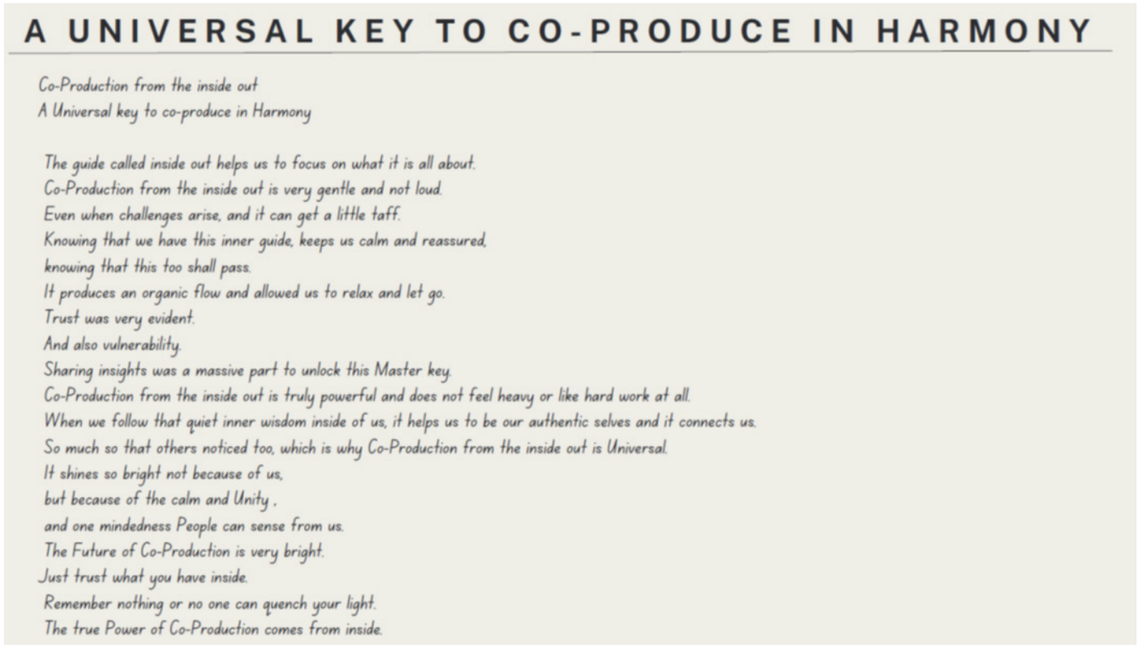
Sufficient time, funding and resources can offer more flexibility and confidence to move forward with external collaborators.

Learning and growth was important to learn about balance of voices within the team: fostering self-reflection and self-kindness and acknowledging a need to step back from our own insecurities.

Turning up as ourselves: not needing to be 'professional' but enabling all members of the team to share vulnerabilities.

Key outcomes:

- All seven members of our team experienced personal and professional growth, felt free from past limitations and we have reflected on how the principles of co-production and innate health approach have facilitated this.
- Thirty people have benefited from the programme so far (via 2 training courses).
- Four new projects in the pipeline with ideas around evaluation and co-production.
- Delivered two conference talks about the project.



A UNIVERSAL KEY TO CO-PRODUCE IN HARMONY

Co-Production from the inside out
A Universal key to co-produce in Harmony

The guide called inside out helps us to focus on what it is all about.
Co-Production from the inside out is very gentle and not loud.
Even when challenges arise, and it can get a little taff.
Knowing that we have this inner guide, keeps us calm and reassured,
knowing that this too shall pass.
It produces an organic flow and allowed us to relax and let go.
Trust was very evident.
And also vulnerability.
Sharing insights was a massive part to unlock this Master key.
Co-Production from the inside out is truly powerful and does not feel heavy or like hard work at all.
When we follow that quiet inner wisdom inside of us, it helps us to be our authentic selves and it connects us.
So much so that others noticed too, which is why Co-Production from the inside out is Universal.
It shines so bright not because of us,
but because of the calm and Unity ,
and one mindedness People can sense from us.
The Future of Co-Production is very bright.
Just trust what you have inside.
Remember nothing or no one can quench your light.
The true Power of Co-Production comes from inside.

A poem about our project by Siobhan Kunadu-Yiadom

For more information: The Big Simple & Innate health research

Summary 2

Co-producing an Evaluation of the Aphasia New Music Group

By Adam, Adhé, Biddy, Chaz, Colin G, Colin L, Finn, Francesca, Haide, Kerri, Lorna, Lucy, Mark, Mickey, Nick, Sharon

Aim: To co-produce a method of evaluating the impact of creative music-making on the lives of people with aphasia (language difficulties acquired after brain injury).

Rationale: We wanted to learn whether participation in music sessions benefited people with aphasia in ways that matter to them, rather than in ways that researchers might think are important. While co-production has always been central to the Aphasia New Music Group's (ANMG) creative activities, this project focused on co-producing our evaluation of the impact of these activities.

Journey: The project was initiated through discussions aimed at reaching a consensus on what participants valued about the music workshops. Through a collaborative process, themes were identified and validated by the entire team using a voting system to accommodate diverse communication abilities. The team evaluated various methods for collecting data and ultimately chose an adapted bullseye target as a tool for rating outcomes. This tool was trialled and refined after feedback from music-making sessions. Additionally, a video was created to document and share the evaluation process, with team members contributing and reviewing the content to ensure authenticity.

Knowledge, experience and expertise: The lived/living experience team comprised 12 people with aphasia and a partner of a person with aphasia. A music and theatre producer with expertise in creative workshop facilitation, and two research Speech and Language Therapists were also part of the team. Guest musicians and filmmakers facilitated workshops and captured project footage.

How we evaluated our work and what we found: To evaluate the impact of the music workshops we employed a participatory approach. Co-producing the evaluation required flexibility, patience, and ongoing reflection to accommodate diverse needs and insights.

This involved:

- **Theme Development:** Initial discussions highlighted what the workshops meant to participants. These were summarised into themes through content analysis and validated via team consensus using voting.
- **Evaluation Tool Selection:** The team reviewed potential methods, settling on an adapted bullseye target divided into thematic segments with a rating scale from 1 to 10. This tool was tested in sessions and refined based on feedback.
- **Video Documentation:** Workshops, performances, and the evaluation process were filmed, with a final 7-minute video created, using iterative feedback to capture the project journey and findings.

An image from our evaluation video

Some of our key learnings around the conditions for co-production

Co-production in Evaluation: Integrating co-production into evaluation processes can be challenging but rewarding. This fostered a sense of ownership and ensured that participant perspectives shaped outcomes.

Inclusive Communication: Adapting ways of communicating and creating an accessible evaluation process were crucial for meaningful participation.

Value of Lived Experience: Incorporating the perspectives of people with aphasia provided a richer understanding of the music workshops' impact.

Key outcomes

- **Evaluation Method Developed:** A co-produced evaluation tool was designed, trialled, and refined based on participant feedback, enabling participants to rate their experiences meaningfully.
- **Impact Insights:** The project provided valuable insights into how creative music-making sessions impact people with aphasia, highlighting benefits such as improved communication, emotional well-being and social connection.
- **Documentary Video:** A video was produced to capture and disseminate the project's process and findings, raising awareness of aphasia and the benefits of creative engagement.
- **Strengthened Relationships:** The project deepened connections among participants, fostering a supportive community that can serve as a model for future initiatives.

For more information our Measuring Success in Co-production: Learning by Doing Report video is available to watch on YouTube here

Summary 3

Homelessness and Dual Diagnosis: A Co-Production Project

by Mark, Manzoor, Ross, Mandy, Leigh, Sophie

Aim: To create a resource to increase awareness of dual diagnosis (co-occuring mental health and addiction issues) in the homelessness sector.

Rationale: Dual diagnosis is an under-addressed issue in the homelessness sector, often misunderstood by practitioners and policymakers. We wanted to improve awareness and service delivery by reflecting the unique insights of those with lived experience. We did this by focussing on developing accessible and impactful communications to a range of people relevant in the lives of those with lived/living experience.

Journey: We began with monthly meetings as part of an existing lived experience programme. Over time, as relationships grew, the focus shifted to fortnightly sessions, maintaining momentum and support. The early stages prioritised the team getting to know each other, building trust, and providing training in co-production and communication skills. Through collaborative discussions, the idea for a podcast emerged. The group co-designed a podcast, determining its audience, themes and the logistics. Members participated in every stage, from developing content to learning the technical aspects of recording. The team worked through challenges such as scheduling conflicts, adapting to members' varying levels of digital literacy, and maintaining participation during personal hardships.

Knowledge, experience and expertise: The core team comprised six members, four of whom had lived experience of homelessness. Each brought unique skills, perspectives, and contributions. Some team members recorded voiceovers and others supported technical aspects of the podcast. One of our team provided speech and language therapy support. Additional help came from staff, a freelance artist, and podcasting professionals, who provided technical training, visual documentation, and editing assistance.

How we evaluated our work and what we found: We adopted reflective methods to evaluate the project. After each session, members recorded answers to reflective questions, such as their feelings about the session and their own contributions. Further insights were gained from group evaluation sessions, allowing members to review the process. Creative expression was encouraged using visual minutes and team members created further drawings to capture their feelings about the project. These approaches prioritised inclusivity and accessibility, yet the lack of transcription expertise limited deeper analysis. Collective group evaluation of progress noted successes and areas for improvement, such as pacing and other aspects of inclusion.

The key objective was to create a podcast which stemmed from the realisation that existing materials lacked personal perspectives. The podcast authentically captures diverse perspectives on dual diagnosis and homelessness and provides an accessible and engaging resource. While the podcast's wider impact is yet to be measured, the project has already sparked change within the participating organisations and empowered its members. We hope that this work can drive meaningful change.

An image by Jolie Goodman that shows our reflections on the funding programme's approach

Some of our key learnings around the conditions for co-production

- **Building trust and relationships:** The initial focus on relationship-building created a strong foundation for co-production. Members noted that taking time to get to know each other was essential.
- **Flexibility in outcomes:** The shift from creating quick-reference materials to producing a podcast showed the importance of adapting to the group's evolving ideas and needs.
- **Inclusivity:** The project emphasised inclusive practices, such as using visual minutes and ensuring quieter members could contribute in their preferred ways.
- **The power of lived experience:** Team members felt empowered by sharing their stories, which added depth and authenticity to the podcast.
- **The importance of support:** The group dynamic provided a sense of belonging, which helped members navigate personal challenges while staying committed to the project.

Key outcomes

- **New skills and confidence:** Members gained confidence, communication skills, and technical knowledge. This has contributed to personal and professional growth.
- **Embedding co-Production:** The project inspired the two organisations primarily involved, to integrate co-production more meaningfully into their work. The team feel that the language and practices around co-production have significantly evolved.
- **Ongoing connections:** The relationships built during the project are expected to last beyond its completion, with team members expressing interest in future collaborations.

For more information: The trailer for the podcast is available here with supporting visual images. The full podcast series is available to listen to here.

Summary 4

Promoting Mental Health Conversations at the University of Warwick

By Beatriz Lagunas-Castan, Benjamin Boachie, Damien Homer, Flora Barros Azevedo, Inca Hide-Wright, Samantha Wilson-Thain, Tom Baines, Tom Ritchie and Tor Riches

Aim: The primary aim of this project was to promote conversations about mental health between staff and students at the University of Warwick. The goal was to create a resource that would support and encourage these conversations, increasing confidence in discussing mental health struggles and support needs.

Rationale: This project stemmed from the recognition of the growing need for mental health support within the university. By fostering open dialogue about mental health, the project aimed to reduce stigma and provide both staff and students with the tools and confidence to seek and offer support.

Journey: The project ran from January to September 2024 as follows:

- The project started by focusing on the conditions needed to enable co-production. This included understanding each other's needs, expectations and creating a common understanding of the principles of co-production.
- This was followed by a period of discovery where we identified the sources of mental health support available and worked to agree the problem that we wanted to solve. We wanted the project team to agree the problem to be solved and so intentionally kept this phase of work quite loose. However, as a result it did take longer to arrive at a consensus whilst we grappled with the topic and how to make decisions within the group.
- Once we agreed to focus on promoting mental health conversations, we started to work faster and more effectively. This is where the team formed the idea of sharing their own experiences of mental health problems – an idea which resulted in our three videos led by our students and involving student actors.
- Whilst we have been capturing reflections on how we worked together throughout the project, the final phase of the project was dedicated to evaluation giving rise to our overall findings

Knowledge, experience and expertise: The group was composed of four students, four staff members, and an external consultant. This provided a mixture of knowledge and experience which was crucial in understanding the different needs and challenges faced by the university community. The team undertook mental health awareness training with Haringey Mind.

How we evaluated our work: We had regular feedback and reflection sessions during weekly meetings. We also used different digital tools to capture and share meeting notes and check project progress and we conducted surveys with participants.

We built our evaluation around 5 principles of co-production and tested a survey for the team to rank and reflect on how well we were working against them. We gathered two sets of responses – one for how people felt at the start of the project and the other towards the end. We compared the results and used this as the basis for further analysis and reflection.

Whilst the survey was useful, its real value was in helping us have a better conversation about how we were working and our individual relationship with the project.

The evaluation identified various challenges in managing power within the group and how our relationship with power changed over time. This was also impacted by the lack of face-to-face meetings combined with each team member's availability (which changed throughout the project). We have made recommendations for improvements that would benefit future work.

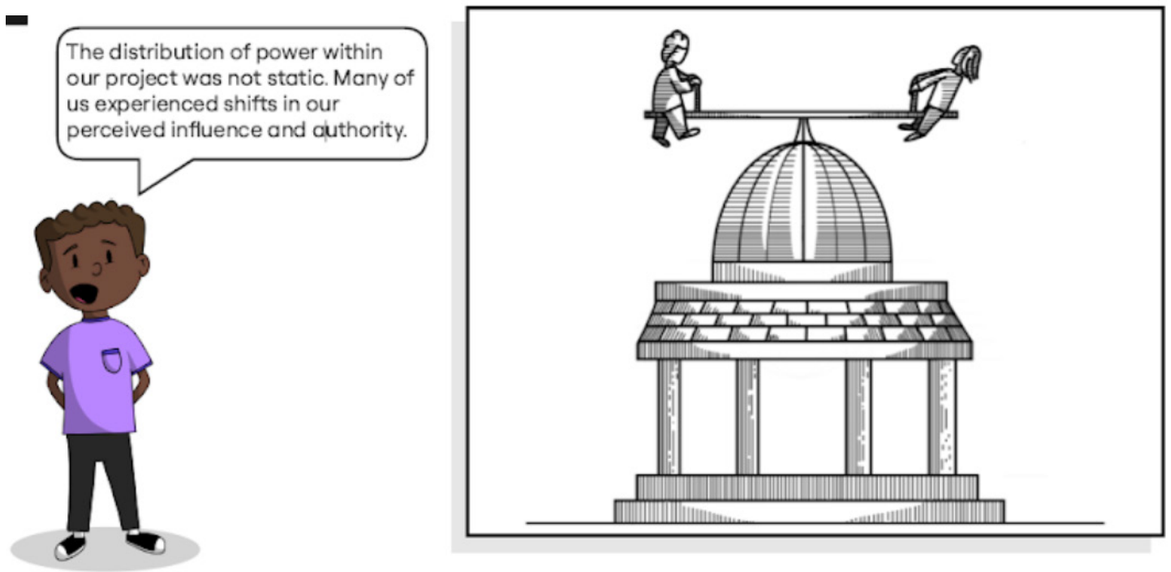
Some of our key learnings around the conditions for co-production

Importance of individual consultations to understand personal expectations and support needs.

Using multiple communication and recording tools to keep all team members engaged and informed.

Value of external training to enhance the team's understanding of mental health issues.

Sharing power and decision-making is complex, difficult and requires regular, open and group reflection. This cannot be achieved with a foundation of strong relationships and trust amongst everyone involved.



An illustration from the report

Key Outcomes

- Creation of a dedicated #GetWarwickTalking webpage on the Warwick Wellbeing Services website. This includes videos of interviews with staff and students sharing their experiences.
- Increased awareness and confidence among staff and students to engage in mental health conversations.
- A sustainable resource that supports ongoing dialogue about mental health within the university community.

Further information is available on our webpage

Summary 5

Exploring Neurodivergence and Maintaining and Acting on Eco-Hope

by Jen, Lauryn, Claire, Ellie, Becki, Kit, Rebecca, Emma, Jonathan, Gudrun

Aims: To co-produce an accessible pilot learning opportunity and evaluation framework to support neurodivergent people working, or studying in sustainability-related areas.

Rationale: The project sought to explore how neurodivergent experiences shape approaches to climate action and eco-hope, through fostering a safe, inclusive environment.

Journey: The Nifty Sustainability team successfully recruited a diverse, neurodivergent co-production group before conducting several co-produced workshops that evolved in structure over time to meet group needs. The workshops explored what eco hope means to us, the challenges and strengths of neurodivergent minds in tackling the climate crisis and ideas of how spaces could be made more accessible. Through this process, we trialled and reflected on ways of recruiting and working with neurodivergent minds to harness innate strengths. We co-produced and delivered a well-received final showcase highlighting the group's discussions, which was attended by over 100 people, including notable guest, Chris Packham.

Knowledge, experience and expertise: 10 members made up the team including 5 from Nifty Sustainability and 5 who were recruited for the project. We provided collective expertise, using both personal and professional skills and lived experience of neurodivergence, sustainability, co-production, communication and research.

How we evaluated our work: Verbal feedback was the primary evaluation method due to challenges we experienced using visual, digital tools. We embedded reflection in our workshops, supported by midpoint one-to-one check-ins. Reflections guided project adjustments and fostered continuous learning.

Verbal feedback was the primary evaluation method due to our strengths and preferences around reflection, which we embedded reflection in our workshops, supported by midpoint one-to-one check-ins. While we trialled visual, snapshot evaluations, these didn't feel in depth enough for our group. As a team we captured what was working and what wasn't and adapted our approaches accordingly and these reflections guided project adjustments and fostered continuous learning. For example, at the start, the group felt we needed more structure to work around for each session and for the project as a whole so we provided suggested agendas with plenty of time for participants to add thoughts and ideas. In the one-to-one check-ins, one participant mentioned she was finding it hard to speak up in whole group conversations. She suggested introducing hand signals for non-verbal input (such as supporting what someone else was saying by waving) and breakout rooms for smaller group discussions, which were well-received as an additional format.

Some of our key learnings around the conditions for co-production

As a group, we reflected often on what was working for co-production and we decided some of the key aspects were:

- A safe, compassionate, and flexible environment where all voices are heard and valued.
- Effective recruitment and clear communication of project processes can reduce initial project ambiguity.
- Frequent check-ins across a range of formats (whole group discussion, small group discussion, email, one-to-one check-ins) ensure that access needs and preferences are met and help to maintain group engagement.
- Balancing open-ended exploration with some structured support, helped neurodivergent participants.

Key Outcomes:

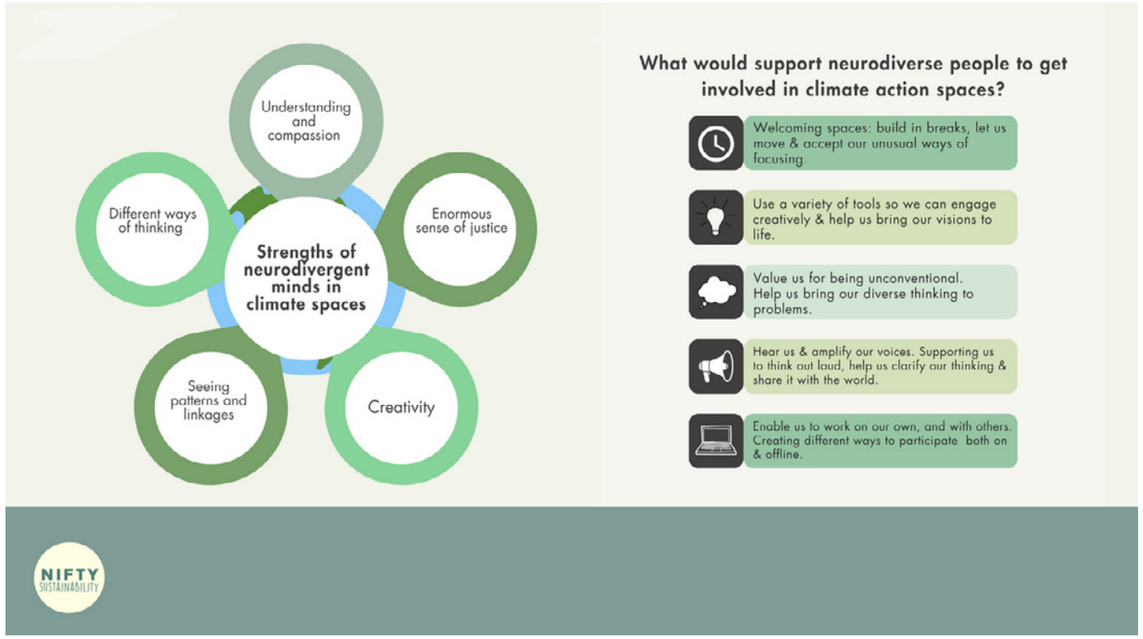
- **Practical:** Adoption of hand signals for non-verbal contribution to discussions and verbal evaluations was useful. This allowed us to refine processes for workshops, timings, and provided structure.

- **Emotional:** Group members felt seen, heard, valued and less isolated in their activities.

- **Empowerment:** Participants gained confidence which encouraged them to contribute creative ideas, such as developing infographics and research ideas. They were also able to apply learnings to other projects.

- **Broader impact:** Our work sparked significant interest from external audiences, with potential for future projects and partnerships exploring this interesting intersection around neurodivergence, taking climate action and maintaining eco hope. There was also a lot of learning around how to make 'neurotypical' spaces more inclusive for neurodivergent minds so that innate strengths can be harnessed.

- **Future Plans**: include extending the project's findings into new contexts, explore further funding opportunities, and create additional outputs.



An image the team created about the findings

For more information: Please contact Jen: jendyer@niftysustainability.org.uk and see the [Video of our showcase]. And for a great read with a cuppa, please see our latest blog, 'Welcoming neurodivergence in climate action' by Rebecca Kinge, member of our Co-Production squad.

Summary 6

Closing the Loop Beyond the Loop: Strengthening Partnership Working with Meta-Co-Production

by Gemma Evans, Debora Mo, Sarah Rae, Jane Carthey,
John Valavanis, Naidoo Armoordon

Aims: The project aimed to co-design an evaluation and learning tool to strengthen co-production within an existing mental health in-patient transformation programme.

Rationale: Co-production often lacks standardised frameworks for evaluation. By integrating lived experience and research, the team sought to create a practical tool that mental health providers could use to meet evidence-based standards. This aimed to define "good enough" co-production, while supporting continuous improvement in co-production practices using evaluation as a tool to assess co-production.

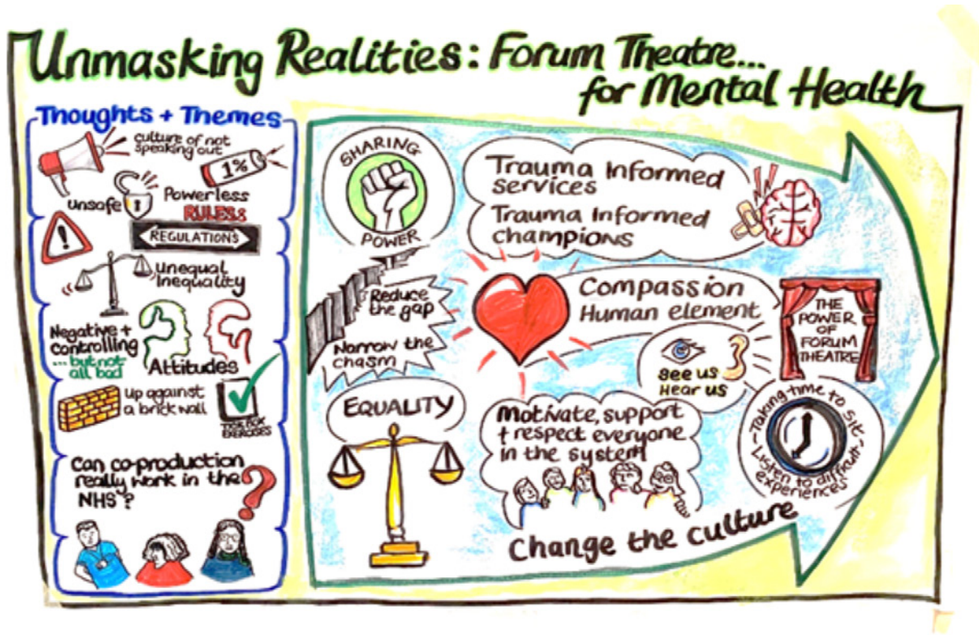
Journey: The team adopted a structured yet flexible approach to build team trust. We co-designed and iteratively co-developed six versions of the survey and tool based on creative co-production activities with people with lived/living experience and professionals.

We embraced creative methods using online tools such as Mentimeter, graphic facilitation, poetry and immersive theatre to capture insights from those with lived/living experiences. Challenges included the need to process large amounts of information and cope with lengthy meetings, technical and payment issues, and delays experienced due to changing personal circumstances. We maintained an equal partnership approach as the project was lived experience-led and this required 'buy-in' from the professionals involved.

Knowledge, experience and expertise: The project was led by four lived experience partners and two professionals. Team members brought diverse expertise in co-production, research, and facilitation, and the lived experience leadership provided integrity and inclusivity. However, training and further support with leadership would have been helpful.

How we evaluated our work: We used ongoing reflection with evaluations conducted at every stage, using the evolving tool. Feedback mechanisms included verbal reflections, feedback forms, and in-person sessions which all provided insights into the team's processes and outputs. The prototype tool was tested on four workstreams with feedback on the experience of the tool at this stage demonstrating that the standards were found to be helpful. Similarly the survey was seen as useful, although lengthy.

The whole process was a continuously reflective journey. In terms of our own project team we started off by getting to know each other, exploring our values and experience and carefully considering individual ways of working. We met bi-weekly and after completing the latest iteration of our tool, we would spend the first half of the meeting discussing the results and comments, and agreeing to any changes based on this. For example, when one team member expressed that they had a visual impairment that made reading small text difficult we agreed to increase the font size in our correspondence.



An image by Sarah Yiannoullou about the theatre event

Some of our key learnings around the conditions for co-production

Core values: Kindness, trust, and supportive relationships are critical for successful co-production. We found that the co-production process necessitated alignment with agreed values and co-production principles, ensuring that the process had integrity.

Flexibility: Balancing thoroughness with accessibility remained a challenge, particularly regarding survey length and technical language usage. We learned that we needed to be especially flexible in mental health co-production

Human connection: Foundational to success were relational approaches to build trust and foster open communication.

Integrity: The process of co-production needs to have integrity as this strengthens trust and is especially crucial when working with marginalised groups. Without integrity the outcomes of any co-production process essentially become meaningless.

Key Outcomes:

- Our reflexive 360-degree evaluation and learning tool comprises: success standards (defining poor, "good enough", and excellent practices); a survey to measure standards; a results template summarising evaluation results, and guidance for reflection sessions.
    - As a group we decided that we preferred the language of 'below standard, meets standard and exceeds standard' because we felt the other terms carry a value judgement.

- Early feedback has been positive, especially regarding the standards, with interest in wider sharing of the tool.

- Unexpected findings were gained, such as the importance of integrity and prioritising human relationships in co-production.

For more information links to our resources include:

- Success standards
- Evaluation survey
- Feedback template
- Full project report

Summary 7

Assessing the Impact of Co-Production in Fostering Equality and Diversity in Mental Health and Wellbeing Research

by Katerina Fotopoulou, Michael Moutoussis, Christin Henein, Indy Sira, Natalie Marchant, Venessa Bobb-Swaby, Georgia Pavlopoulou, Tom Plender, Sahrish Hussain, Kel O'Neill, Ellie Maycock, Avili Feese, Bridget Mildon, Shahood Khan

Aims: To co-produce strategic priorities for mental and neurological health research by the newly established Centre for Equality Research in Brain Sciences (ERB) at UCL.

Rationale: Scientific discovery relies on research funding. However, it is well known that research funding allocation is biased against minorities in science, including well documented gender and racial bias. We aimed to co-produce what our centre will fund and how it will fund it to minimise such bias. We also hoped to co-evaluate and model such efforts so we can influence other funders, particularly around small funds that are critical to let early career scientists 'get on the science ladder'.

Journey: We started by focusing on what the centre could fund and support more generally, but we then realised the task was too wide. We had numerous challenges, including initial confusion about roles, administrative obstacles, and personal setbacks but we learned to focus on narrower tasks, seek help, and adapt to changes. Therefore, we decided to focus on our own 'small grants' competition. We ensured that the content and the process of the competition was more equitable. That more narrow task allowed people to understand and co-deliver their role better and the team felt a recognised sense of safety and achievement, and feedback from our users was overall positive. This iterative process, guided by continuous feedback and co-evaluation, allowed us to recalibrate our goals without compromising our EDI values, ultimately forming strong, positive relationships for future projects.

Knowledge, experience and expertise: This project brought together researchers, clinicians, and ethnically diverse individuals with lived experience of mental and neurological health challenges and neurodiversity as well as representatives of local, ethnic minoritised groups.

How we evaluated our work: Throughout the project, the team co-produced research themes and EDI guidelines, developed evaluation methods adapted for accessibility, and created feedback tools for process improvements. The evaluation framework incorporated quantitative and qualitative feedback and allowed for continuous adjustments to power dynamics by rotating leadership roles. Both academic and non-academic partners provided continuous feedback, but we also examine the opinions of previous and current applicants to our grant competition, we presented to academic and non-academic meetings and our faculty, and we presented also to academic media such as nature Magazine and the newsletter of the British Neuroscience Association, and the equality network (ALBA) of the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies.

Some of our key learnings around the conditions for co-production

Psychological safety to enable us to capture the diversity of experience from the team.

Emotional and well-being support were facilitated by regular check-ins and wellness plans.

Challenges were encountered in adhering to the University's administrative systems (ethics procedures and payment systems) and due to unexpected changes in personnel (personal and professional circumstances).

Fostering an inclusive environment, allowing the team to adapt and grow while maintaining their co-production principles required: equitable collaboration, flexible leadership, commitment to shared principles, respectful communication, and adequate time and resources.

Key Outcomes

We co-produced new strategic priorities for funding: i.e. we co-determine what projects are eligible for research funding by the Centre

We co-produced new procedures for funding selection: Our co-production journey resulted in new criteria, new forms, new reflective guidelines, and new processes directly involving users of research and bias-free lottery processes in the selection of bids for funding by the Centre

We won a competitive EDI Caucus [UKRI (UK Research and Innovation)/British Academy] follow-up grant to study small grant processes across UCL, national and international partners and use our co-produced processes as a benchmark

Co-written article detailing the lessons we have learned (to be published in a peer-review journal).

Co-prepared a report and website animation explaining our new grant selection processes (in preparation).

A word cloud from our team's reflections

This word cloud visualizes the most frequently used words from our qualitative analysis of the team's reflections. At the end of the project, each team member shared their thoughts on what they had learned about co-production and what they felt was the key ingredient for success. The size of each word reflects its frequency in these reflections, with larger words appearing more often.

More information at Centre for Equality Research in Brain Sciences website.

Summary 8

The East of England Psychological Professions Co-production Group

Details of this project are not available: a report was provided in line with grant requirements and data are included in the pooled evaluation analyses.

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This programme has been co-produced with a range of individuals and partnering organisations in **The Measuring Success Team** (listed alphabetically):

- Vanessa Bennett, Co-Production Collective
- Anne Crisp, The Evaluation Exchange and Compost London CIC
- Rob Ferguson, Co-Production Collective community member
- Briony Fleming, The Evaluation Exchange, UCL and Compost London CIC
- Nick Hillier, The Academy of Medical Sciences
- Niccola Hutchinson Pascal, Co-Production Collective
- Gemma Moore, The Evaluation Exchange and UCL
- Siobhan Morris, UCL Grand Challenges
- Aleem Nisar, Co-Production Collective
- Lisa Richardson, Co-Production Collective community member
- Caroline Rouse, The Evaluation Exchange and Compost London CIC
- Ruth Unstead-Joss, The Evaluation Exchange and UCL
- Other co-producer members of the Co-Production Collective community

This programme was funded by a participatory research grant from Research England with additional funding from the Academy of Medical Sciences and UCL Grand Challenges.

Different partners led on designing and delivering on different elements of the programme, with key decisions co-produced and delivery supported by others. Partners were broadly involved in co-production of the programme as follows:

Co-Production Collective staff and **Co-Production Collective community members** were involved in co-ordinating and delivering the co-production of the funding and programme, Sharing and Learning sessions, Cuppa-style sessions, support for the 8 project teams, and evaluation of ourselves.

The Evaluation Exchange, a partnership between **UCL** and **Compost London CIC**, coordinated the design of and led on the delivery of the Deepening Practice sessions. They provided tailored evaluation support for the 8 project teams in the Measuring Success in Co-Production programme. **Compost London CIC** was also the community partner facilitating the distribution of funds to each of the 8 teams. The Evaluation Exchange authored Section 7 of this report, with inputs from other partners.

We would also like to acknowledge those who have provided valuable input at different stages in the programme.

Funded project teams:
Listed in report

External reviewer (evaluation):
Isaac Samuels, Peoples Voice Media

External reviewers (grant applications)
Natalie Farley, Sem Lee (Co-Production Collective Community members), Shoba Poduval (UCL)

External reviewers (reporting)
Anne Collis, Stuart Dodzo, Christoforos Pavlakis (Co-Production Collective Community members)

For further information contact: coproduction@ucl.ac.uk

Terminology and Glossary

What we mean by 'conditions': we have discussed what we mean by 'conditions' throughout the programme. For this purpose, these could be circumstances that may influence how the principles or values of co-production are enacted (how we grow and develop our ways of working). Contributing to how these conditions develop, there seem to be a range of different factors. These could relate to the context or working environment, systems or interactions, for example.

What we mean by 'evaluation': our definition is a continuous process that helps you understand and measure the difference a co-produced programme, project or process makes. This process enables us to **learn about what does, and doesn't work**, and share these findings to help change or improve something (it's not about evaluating individuals or performance here).

What we mean by 'monitoring': this is about what we do to **notice and measure or collect** information throughout the project to helps us to 'evaluate'. We felt this needs to happen in a collaborative and human way: thinking together about the ways in which we can collect information (which sometimes can feel quite sensitive or personal) to capture learning about co-production processes that will enable us to change.

What we mean by 'success': the difference or the change that co-production enables in terms of impacts and value. It's not about 'not failing' either!

By impact we mean - the effect or change that happens for the individuals involved, the project, or other groups of people, society, cultures etc.

By value we mean - how much usefulness, meaning or worth something is perceived to have.

Contact us

For further information about this work please contact Co-Production Collective or the partners outlined below.

Co-Production Collective

Email: coproduction@ucl.ac.uk
Website: www.CoProductionCollective.co.uk

The Evaluation Exchange

Email: r.unstead-joss@ucl.ac.uk
Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/evaluationexchange

Compost London

Email: info@compostlondon.org.uk
Website: www.compostlondon.org.uk

Co-Production Collective

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