Co-Production Collective Allies Group
Meeting notes: Wednesday 19 November 2025

Members

Present: Mandy Rudczenko, Niccola Hutchinson-Pascal, Anne Collis, Isaac Samuels, Sarah Welsher, Simon Denegri (chaired the meeting), Shoba Poduval, Hania Tayara (guest, notetaking).

Apologies: Cristina Serrao (co-chair), Marc Stears (co-chair), Ian Needleman, Nat Farley, Nathan Hudson, Rosie McCann.

Actions

Actions agreed in this meeting	Person taking this on	Deadline
• Draft a proposal to share with the group and our community about future Allies Group Co-chairing.	Nicc / Isaac	31 Jan 2026
• Set up a Working Group from Allies Group members with an equity lens to develop thinking on how we handle reputational risk and any lack of values alignment that might arise with current or future partners.	Nicc	31 Jan 2026
• Develop plans for mid-point strategy review of Our Direction 2023-2028 and present to Allies at next meeting.	Nicc	31 Jan 2026
• Share the UCL EDI strategy with the group once able.	Nicc	Ongoing
• Upgrade our Co-Production Collective risk register adding more detail including around possible reputational risk concerns.	Nicc	31 Jan 2026

Actions from previous meetings	Person taking this on	Deadline
● Ask Academy of Medical Science about their safeguarding approach and how they spread ownership of it across the organisation. 　○ Feed into safeguarding statement development work already ongoing.	Nicc	In progress
● Organise conversations with Allies Group members who are coming up to three years on the Group. Come back to the Allies Group with an update and some suggested next steps.	Nicc	Ongoing
● Develop an additional income report that can be shared in advance of future meetings that has a breakdown of funding types/funding that is in the pipeline but not yet confirmed.	Niccola/ Nathan	In progress
● Develop a draft timeline and thoughts on an ideal governance plan for Co-Production Collective (how we make decisions, where we sit within UCL and how we have to report our progress/achievements) for discussion once we are able.	Niccola	Ongoing

Summary of conversation
No conflicts of interest were declared.

Update on actions from previous meetings
- Nicc updated on progress with actions from last meeting.
- Discussion about recruiting new co-chairs as our current chairs are interim.
  - **ACTION:** Nicc to develop a proposal and plan for route forwards for co-chair recruitment at next meeting.
  - Anne volunteered to co-chair as a one-off for the next meeting.

- Isaac & Hania shared update on anti-racism work and the need for more involvement and commitment from our community, particularly noting the silence from some white community members.
- Hania shared why we use the term anti-racism, there's a need for active (rather than passive) terminology and racism. Racism is a negative, violent experience and the language should reflect that.

Group discussions were as follows:

Progress & risk report, Nicc
- Nicc provided an update on income and shared we have some new small grants and a large grant due to be launched soon.
- Nicc also highlighted applications in progress to various funders.
- Simon asked if the NHS 10-year plan has been impacting the Collective's funding prospects.
    - Nicc outlined that it was perhaps a little early to know, that we have had a few enquiries/small pieces of related work.

Anti-racism work update – Isaac and Hania provided an update and group members gave input which included:
- Hania shared updates about the anti-racism working group, workstreams we are working on (including the development of an anti-racism strategy and workplan), and actions to date. Also noted that there will be a section on anti-racism and the outputs to date in the Collective's Impact Report 2025 (due out in spring 2026).
- Isaac noted that it's positive to see we're being invited to run anti-racism sessions for a variety of organisations.

Projects review/Safeguarding and safety

An update was provided and discussion followed as outlined below:
- Hania shared an update on the LACES (London Alliance for the Co-production of Evidence Synthesis) projects we are a part of and the Children & Young People safeguarding policy created as part of that. The policy has been reviewed by the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).
  - Nicc outlined that there are plans as part of our adult safeguarding statement review to bring this to our community for input as well.
- Isaac noted the need to embed the safeguarding work and trauma-responsive/informed practice across a lot of/all our projects.
- Hania shared that there are recurring themes around safety across projects, which is a sign we're focusing our energies in the right places.
- Hania gave updates on the City Bridge Foundation funded suicide prevention work with National Suicide Prevention Alliance (NSPA).

DISCUSSION TOPIC 1 – Strategic development work and strategy review planning

- Nicc gave an update on the plans to review our current strategy (Our Direction 2023-2028) and invited members of the group to support/lead the review.
- Nicc shared that we're putting together the latest impact report for 2025, to be launched in spring 2026.
- Nicc updated on new Allies Group working groups that have been/are being set up, one for project support and one for working on how we can work more closely with UCL.

Discussions that followed included:
- Mandy stressed the importance of involving community members in the review of the strategy and outlined that she felt removed from the day to day work of the Collective so may not be best suited to review the strategy.
  - Simon suggested the objectivity of being removed could be useful.

- Simon asked if something similar has happened before in terms of reviewing the strategy.
  - Nicc outlined that this hasn't been done before as our previous strategy was only for 2 years.
  - Nicc outlined that the impact report is the closest comparison to similar work.
- Anne noted there needs to be clarity and transparency on why this work is being done, how it is being done and who's going to be reading it.
- Isaac asked if this could be a good time to put some key asks together of UCL. They also asked what the Collective's relationship is with UCL senior stakeholders.
  - Nicc asked for support from the Allies Group with this.
- Nicc met with new EDI director at UCL. The UCL EDI strategy is being launched soon.
  - **ACTION:** Nicc to share the UCL EDI strategy with the group once able.

DISCUSSION TOPIC 2 – Culture change work and reputational risk

- Nicc shared that challenges as we are working in a culture change space are coming up across multiple projects – particularly where our values don't always fully align with project partners, this has resulted in tensions and could possibly lead to reputational risk. This is particularly the case around our EDI/anti-racism work.

Discussions that followed included:
- Anne noted we know where the boundaries are and that we need to work out a way to enforce them – we could have clear guidelines to hold partners accountable.
  - Nicc mentioned that these could be included in the agreement we are developing for us with partners and agreements that partners ask us to sign.
- Mandy said it seems like there's a spectrum about what to do – from letting things go to having very clear red lines, and each project will be different.

- Isaac thinks it's really important to decentre the core team and make this part of the strategy we are all working to as a community so that team members aren't targeted and as there is power in community.
- Hania shared that senior people often don't listen to team members and wonders if guidelines are enough.
- Simon asked if reputational risk is noted in our risk register (and if we have one) and suggested we rank all projects on a scale and monitor them. Simon also suggested an escalation process where the Allies Group can be brought in, in extreme cases.
  - Nicc outlined that we do have a risk register and that this is included but committed to formalising it a little more/upgrading it.
  - **ACTION:** Nicc to upgrade our risk register adding more detail including around possible reputational risk concerns.
- Isaac cautioned against very stringent due diligence processes, which could have excluded us working on some projects to date.
- Mandy sits on an NIHR panel which interviews applicants for funding. She suggested that interviews might be a way of finding out if the values of organisations align with ours.
- Simon suggested bringing partners together to learn from each other.
  - Mandy suggested this is part of the strategy review.
  - Simon, Isaac and Mandy happy to help with this.

Any other business
- There was some further discussion about establishing permanent co-chairs (as our current chairs are interim) for the Allies Group going forwards – there needs to be some work done around this, highlighted by Isaac.
  - **ACTION:** Nicc to develop a proposal based on our discussions to date for our approach to co-chairs going forwards to share with current interim co-chairs/the Allies Group and our community.
- Mandy suggested external Chairs i.e. people not involved in our community/our work at all.
  - Isaac noted that if we do recruitment, we need to be conscious of their values (anti-racism, etc.) but there's value in bringing someone independent.

- Mandy also suggested asking our community how this group should be Chaired.
- Nicc suggested we should stick to one living/lived experience and one learnt experience Chair, the group agreed.

Date of next meetings:
- Tuesday 10 February 2026, 11:00-13:00