

All in this Together?

Co-production and public service delivery

Public services are in crisis, brought on by economic and demographic factors, exacerbated by a legacy of inequality and disadvantage in many of our communities.

Co-production offers a solution

WHAT is it?

Co-production is a democratic and effective method of commissioning, designing, delivering and evaluating public services. Service professionals, service-users and their communities work side by side to provide solutions which benefit all.

Co-pro provides a well-evidenced **whole-system model** of delivery based on **reciprocity, mutuality** and **equality**.

WHO'S doing it?

Everyone who's anyone! Coproduction is being used successfully with: young people, old people, families, mental health patients, care homes, communities, housing associations, environmental projects etc. Examples on the handout are drawn from my research into over 100 case-studies from all sectors.

WHY do it?

Co-production offers a powerful response to funding cuts through harnessing the experience, knowledge and abilities of all participants - a previously untapped resource.

It is at the heart of the emerging focus on **prevention/early action** as the only viable response to increasing demand and decreasing budgets. There is a direct link between the principles and practice of co-production and the priorities of the UK's Early Action Task Force: to 'create strong communities, invest in deep-value relationships, generate social capital, and ensure that everyone has the support they need...to reach their full potential'.

The values of co-production also link to the wider **wellbeing agenda**. Research commissioned by the new economics foundation suggests that there are five factors which contribute to our sense of wellbeing: connecting, learning, giving, being aware, and being active. Co-production encourages participation and mutuality, valuing the contributions of each participant and providing opportunities for learning. Confidence grows, new relationships are made, and a sense of community emerges, increasing both the wellbeing of participants and the resilience of the wider community.

As part of an evidence overview, 90 co-pro professionals in the UK and USA were asked what the **benefits of co-production** are, for themselves, their organisations, and for service users. Their responses reinforce a growing body of evidence that suggests that co-production has the capacity to; increase service relevance and effectiveness, improve relationships between providers and recipients, increase participant engagement and ownership, improve service-users' sense of wellbeing, and help to build active and thriving communities.

The case for co-production is compelling, both in its own right as a democratic and effective approach to service delivery, and as an answer to the need to provide better, individually-tailored services to increasing numbers of citizens at a time of recession. The need is urgent. Success requires all of us to collaborate, in a spirit of generosity and mutuality, undertaking:

"collective action to transform society and to lift all of us together."

Aneurin Bevan.