

Our Vision and Understanding of Co-production in Camden





Contents

Foreword	3
Our Overall Ambition	3
What do we mean by 'co-production'?	4
Co-production is everyone's business	4
How can people be involved in co-production?	5
Power Sharing	6
Steps of Participation	7
How we will work together	9
Key learning and areas for development	9

Our Vision and Understanding of Co-production in Camden



Foreword

Across Adult Social Care in Camden, we strive to ensure the best outcomes for residents and believe that the power of people and community collaboration are the cornerstones to driving positive and transformative change.

At its heart, co-production in Camden is all about relationships and putting people at the centre of their own care journey. It builds on collective strengths and prioritises what people say they need to live a good life which is a key feature of our 'What Matters' approach to Adult Social Care. Partnership working with residents is by no means new, but we want to do more to truly share power in decisions which impact on the lives of people and their loved ones.

Building stronger relationships with our communities, and particularly those most marginalised in society, is vital to achieving a fairer and more inclusive society and social care system. Embedding co-production in Camden provides an exciting opportunity for us to amplify the voices of residents as we continue to innovate together towards a hopeful, inclusive future.

The nature of co-production means it will look and feel different every time and depends on the residents we're working with and the type of involvement. This framework therefore serves as a guide rather than a rigid structure for how to facilitate co-production. It provides an overview of what we think good looks like so we can work flexibly across our services and help us build on what we've achieved so far.

Our Overall Ambition

This framework is part of Camden's wider ambition to put people at the heart of everything we do. 'Supporting People Connecting Communities', our strategy for people to live and age well in Camden, outlines our commitment to developing our plans together, building on people's strengths and what matters, and addressing inequalities that exist across Camden. Our work also underpins the 'We Make Camden' Diversity Mission: that by 2030, those holding positions of power in Camden are as diverse as our communities.

Linking with our broader goals, we listened to what these ambitions mean to residents. As a group central to the development of this framework, Forward Camden shared their vision for co-production in Adult Social Care:

"We want to create inclusive spaces where every person involved actively collaborates in shaping a social care system that recognises the whole person. Our vision is a commitment to focusing on what matters to Camden residents, ensuring no one is left unheard, unseen or unsupported on their journey toward wellbeing and fulfilment."

Our Vision and Understanding of Co-production in Camden



What do we mean by 'co-production'?

There is no single, agreed upon definition of co-production. For this reason, people's interpretations of co-production can vary. In fact, we often see the term misused when talking about other types of community involvement.

To be clear about what we mean, our co-production group, Forward Camden, decided to create their own local definition. Drawing from a range of descriptions, our aim was to produce something that was clear, concise, and written in plain English. Although Forward Camden's chosen meaning of co-production is what we will adopt locally, we have also included the Care Act (2014) explanation of co-production as another example.

Forward Camden's definition of co-production:

The term 'co-production' refers to a way of working where service providers and those who draw on services and their carers work together in equal partnership to reach a collective outcome. The approach is built on the principle that those who are impacted by or use a service are best placed to help design it.

The Care Act (2014):

Co-production is when you as an individual influence the support and services you receive, or when groups of people get together to influence the way services are designed, commissioned, and delivered.

Co-production is everyone's business

In Camden, we know that people are our greatest asset. Together, we've shown what can be achieved when we work side by side with people and local services and pool our collective knowledge and resources.

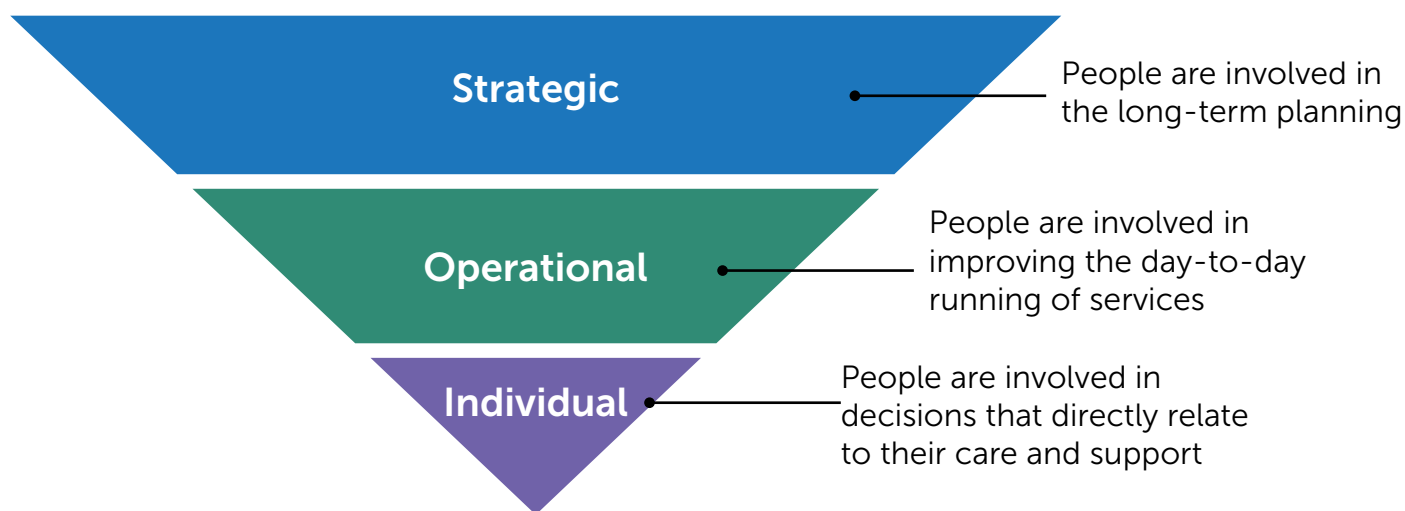
This framework builds on these successes and challenges us to go further. We want our borough to be a place where everyone feels included and can be involved in shaping the services they draw on. A co-production approach transforms Adult Social Care into a shared endeavour, and this will only be possible through a shared commitment from residents, our workforce, senior leadership, providers, health partners and voluntary and community sector organisations.

Echoing our vision in 'The Way We Work', we need to move beyond working in service silos and foster a culture of collaboration that evolves over time. Sharing ideas and learning from one another will enable us to be bolder and more creative and pave the way for people to have a more active and powerful role in how services are designed and delivered.



How can people be involved in co-production?

In Adult Social Care, people can be involved in co-production across three different levels: Individual, Service/ Operational and Strategic. It's important to consider these levels when working with residents to understand the different ways people can influence their care and support. These involvement levels also help people identify which activities they're most interested in and suited to.



Individual Level Co-production

- People are actively involved in decisions that relate to their care and support.
- People can develop the trust, skills and confidence to be more involved in service-level and strategic partnerships.

Examples in Adult Social Care:

- What Matters approach in Adult Social Care: builds on people's strengths and empowers people to have greater choice and control.
- Family Group Conference: involves a co-production approach with family members and friends and empowers attendees to produce their own plan of support.

"A one size fits all approach doesn't work, we need to be treated as individuals with different needs and support requirements" (Camden Expert by Experience)

Service Level/Operational Co-production

- Residents are involved in shaping and re-designing services.
- Residents can design, deliver and/or evaluate individual or multiple services.

Our Vision and Understanding of Co-production in Camden



Examples in Adult Social Care:

- **Planning Together:** this partnership meeting involves people who draw on services, family members, carers, Adult Social Care, and voluntary and community organisations coming together to make changes and improvements to services for individuals with learning disabilities and autism.
- A 'Resident Lead' facilitates resident meetings and activities within services, with staff support where required.

**"Good communities and services mean flexibility, and being involved in decision making about what topics are discussed or activities are run."
(Member of Forward Camden)**

Strategic Level Co-production

- Residents work with us strategically through 'high-level' decision-making in areas such as policy, procedures, guidance, good practice and quality assurance.
- This level moves beyond individual care, support and specific services; instead, it focuses on long-term planning around design, delivery and evaluation.

Examples in Adult Social Care:

- **Co-production Framework:** We've involved people who draw on services, our workforce, commissioners, commissioned services, and community organisations in shaping this framework, which includes our strategic plan for co-production over the next 5 years.
- **Carer's Action Plan:** Our co-produced Carer's Action Plan is shaped around what carers have identified as their main priorities.

Power Sharing

In Camden, power sharing means people have more choice and control over their care planning and can be involved in designing and delivering services as equal partners. By involving diverse groups, including seldom heard communities, we want to create more equitable distributions of power, with people's ideas and experiences as central to how we make decisions.

We know that true power sharing is not always easy or possible. Although we have a long way to go before power sharing is standard practice, we'll actively work towards our ambition by creating the right conditions for this to happen and provide support for people to be involved in a meaningful way.



Steps of Participation

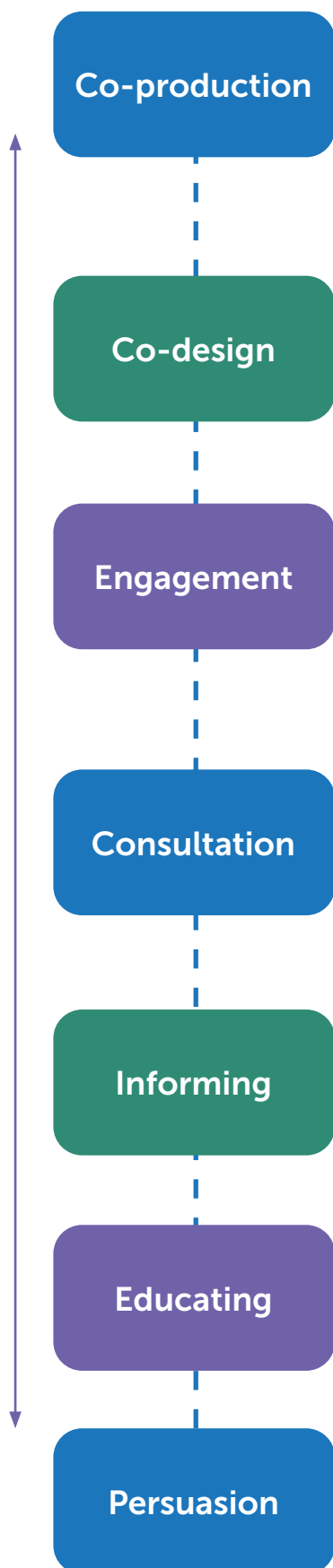
Our 'Steps of Participation' model is adapted from the Think Local Act Personal 'Ladder of Participation'. It outlines different types of involvement between Adult Social Care and residents and explains how we can share decision-making power when designing and delivering our services.

Being honest about the level of influence people can have is essential when working together meaningfully. Calling something 'co-production' when it's not results in unmet expectations and affects our relationships with residents. To avoid this situation, we need to ensure there is a shared understanding of what co-production and other types of participation are from the start.

In Camden, we're committed to co-producing whenever possible, but there may be cases where this isn't feasible or appropriate, for example when there are issues around confidentiality and privacy or where a decision needs an urgent response. In these cases, other forms of participation might be more suitable, and it's important to explain why we're using a certain approach.

The 'Steps of Participation' model starts from persuasion and educating ('doing to'), through informing, consultation, and engagement ('doing for') to co-design and co-production ('doing with'). Each step represents increased power sharing and capacity for people to be involved in decision-making. The double ended arrow in the diagram highlights that this process is not always linear, and it might be necessary to move across and between steps, depending on what is most suitable.

Our Vision and Understanding of Co-production in Camden



Co-production: This is the highest step, where people and organisations work together as equal partners in decision-making to design, deliver and evaluate services. It's a true collaboration, with shared responsibilities and power.

Example: 'Synergy' provides an Experts-By-Experience co-production service for adults with learning disabilities and those transitioning into learning disability adult services.

Co-design: Residents work alongside organisations to shape and design services or policies. People have a significant influence on the decision-making process but are not involved in 'doing the doing'.

Example: We are co-designing a new and improved mental health day service with people with lived experience and other key partners and aim to integrate this as part of a mental health support pathway.

Engagement: This level involves active involvement, where people can engage in debates and discussions on issues. Their input is taken seriously, but final decisions are still made by organisations.

Example: A 'Tenant Participation and Engagement Programme' is underway to open conversations and bring neighbourhoods together to talk about what would improve services and satisfaction for people living on our estates.

Consultation: Individuals are asked for their opinions, views, or preferences on a particular issue, but the decision-making power remains with organisations.

Example: We have consulted with residents on their experiences as part of a co-design approach to recommissioning our Learning Disabilities Floating Support Service in 2024.

Informing: People and communities are given information about services, and they may be helped to try and understand them. That's all that happens at this stage.

Example: A day service for older adults sends out a monthly newsletter to let people know about activities happening in the service.

Educating: At this level, organisations give information to people who draw on care and support. It is a one-way flow of information with limited input from individuals.

Example: Staff at an accommodation service deliver a training session to residents around safeguarding.

Persuasion: This is the lowest step where people have little choice but to comply with decisions made for people. There is no real opportunity for participation and people are passive recipients of services. **Example:** A person is told they must attend a program or facility, even where they say they want to explore other options.

Our Vision and Understanding of Co-production in Camden



How we will work together

'Supporting People Connecting Communities' outlines our commitment to 'developing our plans together through participation and co-production' as one of our overarching principles in Adult Social Care.

Our guiding principles underpin this and define what's important to us when we are co-producing and how we will work together. They are rooted in what residents, our workforce and key partners have told us but were developed and agreed by the Forward Camden co-production group.

Relationships

Building on our collective strengths and focusing on what matters

"Always having the 'human' in mind, rather than systems or processes."

Inclusivity

Valuing all and promoting diverse and equitable partnerships

"Often, we see the same faces involved in co-production, we need to make sure there are a variety of voices and people."

Communication

Listening and understanding as the foundation for building trust and relationships

"It's important to listen to people's stories."

Accessibility

Everyone has the opportunity to be involved in a way that suits them

"Thinking about the language we use – does this support inclusion or exclude?"

Honesty/ Transparency

Being clear, open, and accountable

"We need to be clear and open when co-production will not be possible."

Realistic

Taking a balanced approach to where we are and where we want to be

"The pace of work shouldn't be our processes or systems, it should be based on community needs."



Key learning and areas for development

Conversations with residents, our workforce and partners have highlighted common themes which help to build our understanding of what will support better partnership working as we move forward.

- **Co-production is messy** - Co-production isn't about having all the answers, it's about how we work towards a shared purpose or goal and learn together. Starting from a place of compassion, listening and being open to new ideas is what's most important for impactful outcomes for people.
- **A consistent approach** – People have told us it can be frustrating when co-production is stopped or severely impacted by change, for example, changes to staffing or environmental factors like the pandemic. A lack of consistency can affect trust and the relationships that have been built and developed over time. While we know change is inevitable, making sure that we have robust processes in place for co-production will go a long way to ensuring consistency and continuity of knowledge, plans and ambition.
- **Accessing involvement opportunities** – There's a variety of ways people can get involved in developing services across Camden, but residents have told us these aren't always easy to find and that they often rely on word of mouth from staff. We will bring this information together in one place so people can find out what co-production activities are available and how they can participate.
- **Capturing our learning** – Each engagement activity brings new insights and ideas but there can also be synergies across different programmes of work. This can sometimes mean residents repeating what they have told us in similar contexts. People should only have to tell their story once and their input should influence both current and future projects. We will use the Practice Guide to hold anonymous feedback and best practice that our workforce can continue to use. This will enable us to learn from the things that didn't quite go right and keep doing more of the good stuff.



Moving Forward Together:
Our Co-production Framework
**Our Vision and Understanding of
Co-production in Camden**