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Cyd-gynhyrchu
Cymru

Co-production
Network
for Wales

Glossary of engagement terminology

The Co-production Network for Wales

@copronetwales #coproduction

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Why this glossary?

A number of terms are used in the field of engagement, often interchangeably, and frequently with different meanings depending on who is using them; so it is always useful to clarify and agree what we mean when we're at the start of a process. We use the following definitions at the Co-production Network for Wales; they reflect current good practice in engagement, co-production and involvement in the Welsh public services context.

Engagement as a spectrum

"Engagement": an interaction between public services and their service users or members of the public.

doing to		doing for			doing with
coercion protection	education persuasion	information	consultation	participation	co-production involvement
e.g. criminal justice, safeguarding	e.g. smoking cessation programmes	e.g. Council website info on bin collections	e.g. surveys, urban planning, FixMyStreet	e.g. drop-in events, focus groups	e.g. person-centred care, shared decision making
<i>"We have a duty to act to ensure people's safety."</i>	<i>"We know what people need to do, we need to get them to do it."</i>	<i>"We provide information where /when /how people need it."</i>	<i>"We decide what questions to ask, & collect data to inform decisions."</i>	<i>"We listen to people's lived experience, to inform our thinking and decisions."</i>	<i>"We listen to people's experience and share ours. There is equal power in our decision making. We value different experiences."</i>
The organisation has the knowledge. The organisation makes the decisions. The organisation enforces the decisions.		The organisation listens to people's knowledge. The organisation makes the decisions. The organisation enacts the decisions.			The organisation and the people listen to each other's knowledge. The organisation and the people make decisions together. The organisation and the people both take actions on the decisions.

Spectrum model inspired by Sherry Arnstein and TLAP's Ladders of Participation. This glossary focuses on the 'for' and 'with'.

Engagement: definitions


Engagement is the generic term which refers to the entire range of possible interactions between an organisation and the people who access, benefit from, or have an interest in its activities, services and/or policies. This will include professionals in organisations as well as service users and members of the public.

Stakeholder engagement:

Stakeholder engagement generally refers to interactions with organisations and professional bodies, who have an interest in, or influence over, an organisation's activities. Other statutory organisations, public bodies, Members of the Senedd and of Parliament, voluntary organisations and interest groups, may all have something to say about an organisation's proposed course of action. They may need to be kept informed, be invited to share their views and recommendations, or be part of collaborative relationships and partnership working. Even though technically the public has an interest (i.e. a stake) in an organisation's decisions, in current use they don't tend to be included within the term "stakeholder engagement".

Community engagement (public engagement, citizen engagement):

Community engagement (also referred to as public or citizen engagement) refers to interactions with people who may be variously referred to as service users, citizens, customers, patients, community members, people we support, the public, etc. - depending on the cultural norms in the sector of activity. Whatever the term used, their key defining characteristic is that they are connected to the organisation as non-professionals, usually as users of a service provided by the organisation, or otherwise as members of the broader public. This means that they are less interested in the inner processes of the organisation, and more so in the effect that these would have in their lives.

 **Note:** *Voluntary (third) sector organisations and groups often straddle both categories of engagement, because they represent the voices of the people they support, but also operate as organisations. For this reason the voluntary sector is key to statutory organisations achieving robust community / public engagement.*

Doing for: information, consultation and participation

Information:

Providing the public with balanced and objective information. In the context of policy or public services, the aim is to enable people to understand a service, a problem, changes, decisions, etc.

How we know it's information: communication goes one way (from organisation to citizens).

It's not consultation because: information is disseminated but responses are not invited.

Examples: news; public announcements; budget information when approved for disclosure; publications when approved for release.

Consultation:

A formal process by which policy makers and service providers ask for the views of interested groups and individuals. Consultation documents usually include information, about which feedback is being requested.

How we know it's consultation: the organisation determines the questions, publishes them for a fixed time period, and gathers the results to analyse and feed into decision-making.

It's not information because: responses and feedback are sought.

It's not participation because: it's not a two-way conversation.

Examples: Council surveys about budgets allocation; government policy consultations; inviting online comments on draft plans.

Participation:

People being actively involved with policy makers and service planners from an early stage of policy and service planning and review, to shape and influence the outcomes and decisions.

How we know it's participation: the organisation engages in a conversation (which could be in person, digital, asynchronous, etc.) with citizens to gather and understand their views on a topic. This informs the organisation's thinking and decisions.

It's not consultation because: the questions, and the format / method, are less narrow and specific.

It's not co-production because: it doesn't require shared power or shared decision-making.

Examples: drop-in events about infrastructure developments; workshops or focus groups about proposed changes.

Doing with: co-production

👉 Co-production:

In the context of public services*, **co-production is an asset-based approach that enables people providing and people receiving services to share power and responsibility, and to work together in equal, reciprocal and caring relationships.** It enables people to access relevant and meaningful support when they need it; services to be effective and make a positive difference in people's lives; and people, services and communities to become more effective agents of change.

Co-production is a specific kind of community engagement, which represents a transition from doing things 'to' and 'for' people, to doing things 'with' people. It is explicitly referenced in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

How we know it's co-production: it's a mindset and way of working underpinned by the following 5 values

- Valuing all participants, and building on their strengths.
- Working in networks and across silos.
- Doing what matters for all the people involved (outcomes focus).
- Building trusted relationships and sharing power.
- Enabling people to be change makers.

It's not participation because: there is shared power and shared decision-making.

It is like involvement (in the Welsh policy context).

** In other sectors like arts, media and retail the term "co-production" holds significantly different meanings.*



Doing with: involvement

Involvement:

Involvement is one of the 5 ways of working enshrined within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, which highlights ‘**the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.**’

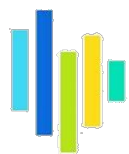
This description is quite broad: it can be interpreted to mean stakeholders and not necessarily citizens. However the guidance from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales states: “**Involvement requires organisations to be open to influence from citizens and stakeholders, moving to a culture of ‘working with’ rather than ‘doing to’. In contrast to consultation, involvement approaches work with people at earlier stages, such as helping to identify issues and potential solutions, and being supported to remain involved right throughout design, implementation and evaluation processes.**”

Involvement covers citizen engagement as well as stakeholder engagement.

(For citizen engagement, involvement is synonymous with co-production in the Welsh policy context.)

Not all involvement is co-production (your audience or end users might be other organisations or professionals),
but all co-production is involvement (when your audience or end users are citizens and community members).

** This use of the term involvement is specific to the Wales public service context. Other sectors and public services in other countries have their own definitions of involvement. There are similarities but also crucial differences, so clarity of definitions matters!*



The 5 ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are interconnected: public bodies must take a **collaborative** and **integrated** approach in order to **involve** people effectively; this in turn enables a **preventative** and **long-term** view to emerge alongside dealing with short-term needs.

When you see co-production in action, the 5 ways of working are likely to be in evidence as well.

Co-production and co-design

Co-design is a component part of a co-production process, but co-design alone isn't co-production.

Co-design:

Co-design sees the design decisions forming part of any given service or project made 'with', not 'for', the people those decisions will ultimately impact upon.

"Co-design is a design-led process that uses creative participatory methods. There is no one-size-fits-all approach nor a set of check-lists to follow. Instead, there are a series of patterns and principles that can be applied in different ways with different people. Co-designers make decisions, not just suggestions." <https://www.thedesigndivide.com/design-terms> from <https://www.beyondstickynotes.com/what-is-codesign>

A complete co-production process is a cycle that includes co-planning (which might be co-creating or co-commissioning, depending on context), co-design and co-decision making, co-delivery (or co-implementation), and co-evaluation. **In practice, co-design is often a good starting point to introduce people to a co-production approach**, due to it producing more immediate and tangible results; and the other phases can be developed from there.



Ideally all the phases are needed for robust co-production to be in place, as a continuous cycle; but as it constitutes a significant change in mindset and practice, it is always a journey. Achieving results in some phases, with a commitment to ongoing practice and improvement, is a legitimate co-productive approach that will yield transformation and impact.

Co-production and co-productive approaches

It is worth making the distinction between **co-production** (as described in the previous pages) and **co-productive approaches**, which may lack some of the elements of co-production but are built on the same values.

Projects and programmes that are not co-production (for lack of citizen or service user involvement) might still adopt a co-productive approach, i.e. embrace the values of co-production. For example, working with colleagues in other teams or other organisations using the 5 values will lead to solid collaborative relationships and effective working practices. While this isn't co-production, it offers multiple benefits, not least a shift in power dynamics towards greater contribution, buy-in, commitment, shared ownership, and more.

You can apply the values of co-production, and take a co-productive approach, to just about anything. For example, you could carry out a consultation by sending out a survey, and still:

- *value all participants, by ensuring you are asking meaningful questions in a range of accessible ways*
- *work in networks, to reach the people who wouldn't otherwise participate*
- *focus on outcomes, by recognising and acknowledging people's motivation to take part*
- *build trust in the relationship, by closing the communication loop and reporting back on results*
- *enable people to see their contribution to any changes.*

 **Because it is rooted in values, co-production has synergies with many other approaches.**

For example: asset based community development, asset based service design, asset based / strengths based approaches generally, psychologically informed / trauma informed approaches, person-centred approaches, relational or relationship-centred approaches, appreciative approaches and appreciative inquiry, design justice, human rights based and children's rights based work, Local Area Coordination, citizens assemblies, community-based participatory design, participatory budgeting, participative / deliberative public engagement, design charrettes, forum theatre, developmental evaluation, participatory research, outcomes based commissioning, ... to name but a few. This means you will find a lot of common ground and probably co-production values in action, whether they are labelled as such or not. Co-production also contributes to strengthening innovation approaches and systems thinking / system change, so look out for the co-productive values being expressed at the heart of organisational transformation.

Co-production and qualitative research

Qualitative research

Conducting qualitative research with citizens who have lived experience of an issue, through interviews, focus groups, ethnography, observations, or qualitative surveys, does not in itself constitute co-production (even though the techniques used can sometimes look the same as those used in co-production approaches). There is little to no sharing of power when the expertise and decision-making sit with commissioners and researchers. Qualitative research isn't co-production... unless you're doing co-productive research.

Co-productive research

A co-productive approach to research, or public involvement in research, is research being carried out 'with' or 'by' citizens instead of 'to', 'about' or 'for' them. This is based on the belief that people affected by the topic of the research and the knowledge generated by the research are best placed to design, deliver and analyse it, and have knowledge and skills that are valuable to the research. Citizens are involved as equals in all aspects of the research. The activities might include working alongside designers or researchers to decide which research projects to prioritise, shape the research goals and questions, develop research materials, conduct interviews, collect and analyse the data, draw out insights from the data,... and being credited as part of the team in the published results.

"Co-producing a research project is an approach in which researchers, practitioners and the public work together, sharing power and responsibility from the start to the end of the project, including the generation of knowledge." (NIHR INVOLVE, 2018)

A co-productive approach to research can sometimes be referred to as peer research, community research or participatory research. It may be a standalone approach to carrying out research in an academic institution or research organisations; or it can be a useful element during different phases of co-production (for example, during co-design when trying to explore issues before designing solutions, or during co-evaluation when trying to find out what has worked and what hasn't).



Public engagement in research: Whilst there isn't one agreed definition, this usually involves an academic institution sharing research knowledge with communities that are local to them or communities that they have researched. The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) define public engagement as: *"the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit."* Examples of public engagement are science festivals open to the public to join discussions about the research, or engaging with local schools to share research findings from a study in their community. Whilst there are many benefits to this way of working, it cannot be considered a co-productive research approach because citizens are not involved from the start to the end of the research process.

Co-production and the margins

You can engage with people for lots of different reasons; qualitative research and co-production are just two of them. Co-production isn't qualitative research; but in policy and public services, co-production can augment your research findings (whether they are generated by co-productive research or traditional research).

Building knowledge

With qualitative research, you're generally trying to build a complete picture of a situation. Your sampling is important, because while you may not reach everybody in your target audience, you must make sure that your sample is representative so that your data and insights are robust.

Solving challenges together

With co-production, and especially in the co-design phase, **it's not about information gathering but about problem solving**. People with different perspectives, including citizens and professionals, come together to generate ideas, test them, and build better services together. Here it's not about large sample numbers and proportionality to the whole population, but about having the "right people" in the room: professionals who are willing to try new things, and citizens with lived experience who are committed, want to show up, bring their energy and are excited about the possibilities. It's okay to work with small numbers. If just one person has an excellent idea, it doesn't make it less excellent just because only one person had it.

Inclusive co-design: designing from the margins

The participants will likely be self selecting, which is great in terms of their willingness to participate. But examine the demographics and backgrounds of your participants carefully: the people who generally find it easiest to self-select are white, middle class, and older. In order for your co-production to be effective, you **must** involve people who are from minority, underrepresented, and marginalised audiences; those who are the most impacted or under-supported in this situation. (This will be a different combination of people in every project.) Make sure you remove barriers to involvement and enable them to take part fully.



If you **over-represent the underrepresented voices** in your co-production and co-design processes, then you're designing from the margins, which is a good thing. Your solutions will always be generalisable for the people who have more privilege and less complex needs. Indeed, inclusive design benefits everyone, because many of us will have additional needs at some point in our life, whether these are situational (e.g. carrying a baby in one arm), temporary (e.g. having a broken arm in a sling), or a permanent change in our circumstances (e.g. losing use of one arm).

"Solve for one - extend to many": <https://www.oxfordcc.co.uk/our-thinking/solve-for-one-extend-to-many-inclusive-design-and-why-it-matters/>

Good practice guidance

The National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales

They offer guidelines to support and encourage good quality, consistent engagement activity with service users and the general public, for the third sector and the public sector. They are available in easy read format and are accompanied by a Practitioner's Engagement Manual.

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/national-principles-for-public-engagement-in-wales/>

(The Third Sector Support Wales website requires registration and login to access resources, but this is free.)

The Children and Young People's National Participation Standards

They offer specific guidelines for working with children and young people.

<https://gov.wales/children-and-young-peoples-participation-standards-good-practice-guide>

The Co-production Network for Wales offers a range of resources and support for your co-production and involvement journey.

<https://coproduction.wales>

<https://copronet.wales>

<https://info.copronet.wales>

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The Co-production Network for Wales is a community of practitioners who learn, share and improve together. A range of resources and events are available to support you.

*Membership is free for individuals.
Organisational membership is available for teams.*



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We help public services improve outcomes for people through co-production and involvement.

The Co-production Lab Wales offers a range of training, facilitation, and project support. We are a not-for-profit organisation, and our surplus contributes to funding the work of the Co-production Network for Wales.



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