

Guide to co-production for lived experience experts

Adult Social Care



Contents

Overview	3
How to use this Co-production Guide	3
What is co-production?	3
What types of activities does it cover?	4
Where will these activities take place?.....	4
How will I be supported?	4
Preparation for co-production activities	4
Reasonable adjustments	5
How will I be rewarded?	5
Adult Social Care payment framework	5
What to expect from Adult Social Care when being paid for your involvement	6
Impact on benefits.....	7
What if I don't want to receive any form of recognition?	8
Travel costs.....	8
Payment process	8
Why should I get involved with co-production activities?	9
Case study 1: Stephanie.....	9
Case study 2: Piara.....	9
Case study 3: Matt.....	9
Case study 4: Emma	10
Case study 5: Janice	10
Case study 6: Debbie	10
Case study 7: Phil.....	10
Common questions/what to expect when participating in co-production	11
What should I wear?	11
How will I be supported to get to an in-person co-production activity?.....	11
What do I do if I find myself not agreeing with what is being said?	11
Will there be a quiet space available for prayer or time for reflection?	11
What happens if I change my mind or I'm not able to continue to be involved?.....	11
Is there a limit to how much I can be involved with co-production activities?	12
How can I get involved?	12
Who should I contact for more information or if I need this information in a different format?	12
Support provided to develop this Co-production Guide	13

Overview

Adult Social Care (ASC) at Surrey County Council (SCC) would like to provide information about how local people with lived experience of care and support needs can get involved in co-production activities jointly with professionals, to plan, deliver and monitor support and services together.

This guide has been co-designed with members of a Co-production Working Group and Surrey Coalition of Disabled People.

How to use this Co-production Guide

This guide has a number of short sections which we hope you will find easy to read and understand.

If you don't want to read the whole guide, you can use the contents table to find the most relevant section or sections for you.

If you need to ask for this information in a different format or language, contact details are provided on page 12.

What is co-production?

Co-production can be defined as 'a relationship where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support together, recognising that both have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities' (Social Care Institute for Excellence).

Co-production is also:

- an ethos: these are values which shape our culture
- an approach: how we do things, and how we act, work and operate, shaped by our ethos

We believe that:

- everyone is an asset and has capabilities
- everyone has a right to be heard and included
- everyone's perspective (point of view) matters equally
- everyone's contribution matters equally and should be recognised by giving them something back for the work they do
- everyone will be offered opportunities for personal development

What types of activities does it cover?

The following activities are examples of the types of activities that co-production might involve:

- attending a one-off working group or engagement session
- writing something for an organisation's website (such as a blog) or user-testing web pages
- speaking to a new member of staff as part of their induction
- attending staff training relevant to the co-production activity
- providing regular advice on development of a service
- peer reviewing a document and providing feedback
- steering or reference group member
- interview panel
- co-facilitating a training session
- co-facilitating a presentation
- co-facilitating a staff induction

Where will these activities take place?

These activities may be held in-person, online or a mixture of both, so hopefully there is something suitable for everyone.

How will I be supported?

Preparation for co-production activities

Adult Social Care will:

- inform you what the co-production activity is for
- provide you with a named contact and their contact details
- provide a clear outline of the involvement and commitment required from participants
- ensure that any personal information is kept confidential. Everything that is discussed within the meeting will be anonymised and **will not** be attributed to individuals
- provide the date, time, format, and location of the co-production activity (in-person, online, or hybrid (mixture of in-person or online))
- provide full details of venue, travel requirements, accessibility arrangements etc.
- outline the topics being discussed with an agenda that includes breaks

- highlight in advance any triggering or distressing topics
- be available to answer any questions you may have beforehand
- offer links to Surrey Welfare Rights Unit, Surrey Coalition of Disabled People and other information regarding benefits and payment information

Reasonable adjustments

Adult Social Care will also try to ensure that reasonable adjustments are offered at every point of the co-production process, particularly in relation to how meetings are organised.

This may include:

- providing any written information in your chosen format e.g., Easy Read, Large Print or Screen Reader Accessible
- providing British Sign Language interpretation to support co-production activity
- providing information in a different language if required
- providing papers in advance to allow you time to process information

If you don't receive this information, you can contact the person in charge of the co-production activity to ask for the papers in advance and for more information about any potentially distressing topics the activity may discuss.

How will I be rewarded?

One of the core principles of co-production, 'reciprocity', highlights the need to recognise people's contributions by giving something back for the work that they do. Depending on the activity, this could mean being paid for your contribution e.g., money or a gift voucher or alternatively it could mean a non-financial form of recognition such as a thank you card or written reference to help with employment opportunities.

Adult Social Care payment framework

The Adult Social Care payment framework co-designed with people with lived experience (led by Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust), scores co-production activities and places them on a recognition scale with suggested ways to recognise people for their involvement.

Task	Outcome
Attending a regular network or involvement group	Voluntary activity
Attending staff training requested by the individual for personal and skill development	
Attending a one-off working group or engagement session	Thank you card
Writing something for an organisation's website (such as a blog) or user-testing web pages	
Speaking to a new member of staff as part of their induction	
Attending staff training relevant to the co-production activity	
Providing regular advice on development of a service	Voucher for a fixed price (to be agreed beforehand and mirror the £15 hourly rate)
Peer reviewing a document and providing feedback	
Steering or reference group member	Payment at an hourly rate of £15 per hour or voucher
Being part of an interview panel	
Co-facilitating a training session	
Co-facilitating a presentation	
Co-facilitating a staff induction	

What to expect from Adult Social Care when being paid for your involvement

You will receive:

- clear information about the subject matter of the activity
- clear information about the duration (how long) and frequency (how often) of the commitment
- clear information about any additional costs which can be claimed in addition to the payment offer (including expenses for necessary travel for the co-production activity)

- a simple explanation of how each activity will be reimbursed
- options for a lower payment amount, declining payment, or contributing voluntarily
- clear information to explain that involvement is different to employment
- access to induction support and supervision during the co-production activity
- a nurturing and rewarding environment that meets any additional needs you may have
- guidance about appropriate support and advice from an expert about how receiving payment may affect your benefit entitlement. Further information is provided in the next section
- sufficient time if you receive state benefits to obtain reliable advice on your benefit conditions and consider what level of involvement and payment you can accept. Sufficient time is also allowed to follow required Jobcentre Plus procedures
- support if any training, learning or accessibility needs are identified
- details about the named person leading on the co-production activity who should be contacted if there is a problem with payment or expenses

Impact on benefits

Payment for people's time is always treated as earnings, regardless of how it is described (e.g., vouchers) and could affect your income.

Receiving payment for involvement is likely to have implications if you are currently employed, unemployed, receiving state benefits or retired. It may also have implications if you are liable for income tax and National Insurance, receiving a pension, pension credits or tax credits.

Relevant legislation on paying people who receive benefits can be found online:

- **Website:** www.scie.org.uk/co-production/supporting/paying-people-who-receive-benefits/

You can find up-to-date information online about how benefits could be affected from Surrey Welfare Rights Unit:

- **Website:** www.swru.org/advice-support/people-with-lived-experience-carers/

If you need further advice about your personal circumstances, you can contact Surrey Welfare Rights Unit as follows:

- **Telephone:** 01483 492949
- **Textphone (via Relay UK):** 18001 01483 492949
- **Email:** advice@swru.org

What if I don't want to receive any form of recognition?

If you do not wish to receive any form of recognition, this is not an issue and you are still very welcome to work with Adult Social Care. Please just let your named Adult Social Care contact know, as well as Surrey Coalition of Disabled People.

Travel costs

In addition to any payment/reward for co-production costs, expenses for necessary travel for co-production activity can also be claimed. Please note that payment will be in line with Surrey County Council's Travel Policy and receipts must be provided to support any travel claim.

If you need to travel by taxi, please discuss this first with your named Adult Social Care contact.

Payment process

Surrey Coalition of Disabled People manages the process for Adult Social Care around paying people for their co-production work.

You will be sent a Co-production Payment Form to fill in to request your form of payment.

It will ask for:

- your contact details
- what co-production activity you took part in
- the number of hours completed
- how you'd like to receive payment
- travel expenses if applicable

Surrey Coalition of Disabled People aims to get your payment to you within two weeks of the co-production activity taking place. Payments are made on the second and last Friday/Saturday of the month.

Why should I get involved with co-production activities?

Case study 1: Stephanie

‘I like to think that this journey has been about working with peers and professionals for the benefit of improving services provided throughout Surrey. I felt that having both mental and physical disabilities, my lived experiences could be of some use in co-production of accessibility to meaningful services.

The professionals who managed the group made me feel included and valued and I greatly appreciated that, as I wanted to be of use in the group. I personally got a lot out of the group through listening to others lived experiences and how they created coping mechanisms in their daily lives.

On a very personal level, I live alone and have no family living, so my daily challenges can sometimes feel overwhelming. What this focus group also showed me is that Surrey does know that people like me exist and that they want to help in any way they can and just knowing that, alleviates the isolation that people with disabilities can feel, especially if they struggle to leave their homes.

To anyone in Surrey living with disabilities, I would say if you got the chance to take part in a similar focus group, I would encourage you to take part as it gives you a voice that you otherwise would not have. It is an opportunity to say I am here; I am not alone, and this is my story, it has been a privilege to take part.’

Case study 2: Piara

‘It is incredibly empowering to be involved in a project from beginning to end that you know is going to make a difference to service users in the community. The co-produced activities give me the courage to have a voice and make new friends. They can be online sessions or in-person events and some of the projects will offer payment for your contribution. Personally speaking, my mental wellbeing has benefitted greatly from these opportunities because the activities will often involve people with lived experience of mental illness, and I enjoy learning about their experiences and how they have overcome challenges.’

Case study 3: Matt

‘As I don’t leave the house, the fact that the co-production activity was online, gave me the opportunity to participate and be fully involved. I found it interesting and empowering.’

Case study 4: Emma

‘I enjoy co-production because it gives me the opportunity to share my lived experience with professionals who want to help others. The professionals then have more understanding and empathy. Co-production is easy because I can hop online. It is rewarding, fun and I have met new friends.’

Case study 5: Janice

‘The Surrey carers commissioning team had heard from carers that they were very worried about what to do if there was an emergency situation when they were unable to carry on their caring role for a short while. A carers commissioning officer invited unpaid carers to join a small working group to find out what unpaid carers would need to be in place.

The working group explored the various circumstances when they might need someone to step in at short notice and also how the needs of the person they care for, would be properly identified so they would have peace of mind if they were unable to continue caring. The group and the commissioning officer designed and developed a Carers Emergency Service. This was honed over a number of meetings and involved carers through to the commissioning of the service which is now in existence. This is how co-production with unpaid carers can make a real difference.’

Case study 6: Debbie

Debbie co-produced and delivered a training session for the Surrey County Council web team about Easy Read and digital accessibility for people with a learning disability:

‘I felt it was really good and very interesting. I felt more confident and learnt a bit about different things. They did not know about the stuff I was talking about. It was good for me to explain it to them. It was a brilliant day and I had a lovely time.’

Case study 7: Phil

The Get it Right! team are people with a learning disability who work with Surrey County Council staff to develop Easy Read materials. A team of three people meet each month to review materials and provide feedback on the quality of the work. Phil has been a member of the team for more than a year:

‘I like to interact with other people when doing the Easy Read Get it Right and I like to read the sentences to see if it goes with the picture. I really enjoy it when

we have a session together and I like it when we get paid for doing Easy Read Get it Right.'

Common questions/what to expect when participating in co-production

What should I wear?

Dress comfortably in something you'd wear out in public. Be aware if you are attending an online session that the video will only show your head and shoulders. Wearing something that covers your shoulders can be more appropriate.

How will I be supported to get to an in-person co-production activity?

If an activity is being held in-person, your travel expenses will be reimbursed. Speak to the named person organising the co-production activity for specific details about transport including if you need to travel by taxi.

What do I do if I find myself not agreeing with what is being said?

Whilst healthy discussion is often encouraged, there may be sometimes where you need to take a break from the meeting or leave the meeting all together. Make sure you let the person facilitating the meeting know you've left, either before you leave or through a follow-up conversation later, where you will have the opportunity to explain the reasons if you'd like to.

Will there be a quiet space available for prayer or time for reflection?

Please speak to the person that is organising the co-production activity. They'll be able to tell you more about the facilities that are available at the venue.

What happens if I change my mind or I'm not able to continue to be involved?

You have the right to withdraw from the co-production activity at any time. Please don't be concerned if you need to stop.

Is there a limit to how much I can be involved with co-production activities?

Adult Social Care aims to work with a range of different people and hear from diverse voices throughout co-production work. Therefore, this will be taken into consideration as part of the co-production recruitment process.

How can I get involved?

There are a number of ways to find out about opportunities to co-produce with Adult Social Care:

- **Online:** we will promote opportunities to get involved on our web pages: www.surreycc.gov.uk/yourvoicematters
- **Surrey's user and carer groups and networks:** opportunities will be advertised via user and carer groups and networks. An overview of what exists in Surrey is available from: www.surreycc.gov.uk/yourvoicematters
- **Communication channels:** information about co-production activities will be promoted in newsletters, social media and in-person

Who should I contact for more information or if I need this information in a different format?

Easy Read, Large Print and Screen Reader Accessible versions of the Co-production Guide are available to download from the Surrey Coalition website:

- **Website:** <https://surreycoalition.org.uk/co-production-information/>

If you need the information in another format including hard copy or if you have any questions, you can contact us as follows:

- **Telephone:** 01483 456558
- **Text (SMS):** 0790 867 1402
- **Email:** coproduction.asc@surreycc.gov.uk

Support provided to develop this Co-production Guide

With grateful thanks to the Co-production Working Group, Surrey Coalition of Disabled People and Surrey and Borders Partnership for their assistance in developing this Co-production Guide.

We would particularly like to thank Stephanie, Piara, Matt, Emma, Janice, Debbie, Phil, Megan Siarey, Nikki Roberts and Colette Lane.

We would also like to acknowledge the input from the 'Get it Right!' Group with regards to the Easy Read version of this guide.

Updated July 2025