

# The Value of Co-production

## What is co-production?

Community co-production of public services is *'the public sector and citizens making better use of each other's assets and resources to achieve better outcomes or improved efficiency'* (1) with *'an approach to working together in equal partnership for equal benefit'* (2). Elements of co-production at the local level include (2):

- Co-planning of policy
- Co-design of services
- Co-prioritisation of services
- Co-assessment (including co-monitoring and co-evaluation)
- Co-financing of services
- Co-managing of services
- Co-delivery of services
- Co-research of and for services



## Why should Bradford Council engage in co-production?

**Co-production** can be a **meaningful policy and public services tool** for councils while **achieving cost effectiveness**. This understanding of cost effectiveness moves away from a narrow understanding of financial efficiency – often leading to a 'race to the bottom' in public service provision – towards running **better services that maximise public benefit** (3). While there may be some initial or continual costs to engage in co-production, such as staff time and facilitation expenses (4), when co-production functions well it **enables policies and services to achieve better value for money and meaningful outcomes**.

Co-production with the local communities and groups that will be affected by policies and programmes, when done well, can lead to:

- **Better targeting** of what communities need, ensuring programmes meet actual need versus perceived need
- **Preventing or addressing problems** on the front end rather than down the line when interventions may become more expensive (e.g. hospitalisation costs) (3)
- **Delivering better outcomes** on areas including public health, wellbeing, and inequalities, so money spent yields better outcomes
- **Increasing local social capital and skills** within the community, including increasing quality years of life (5)

Various policy and public service areas in Bradford can benefit from co-production, **tailoring solutions with communities for better outcomes**. Successful initiatives have taken place in various areas, examples including:

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council worked with Co:Create to transform Rotherham into a 'Child Centred Borough' using a co-production, 'community journalists' approach. Coproduction contributed to the outcome of Rotherham's overall OFSTED rating increasing to 'good' in 2018 (rated 'poor' in 2014) (6)
- Hammersmith and Fulham's set up of the Disabled People's Commission, leading to eight co-produced recommendations which were accepted in full by the Council's Cabinet in 2017. Subsequently, this led to the setup of the co-production implementation group featuring disabled residents, Councillors, and senior council officers, producing amongst other things a new direct payment support service and working with residents on the Disabled People's Housing Strategy (7)
- An NHS England (East) commissioned research into co-production case studies, including with Hertfordshire to support people with progressive neurological disease, and Luton using co-production to identify crisis points for carers and commission solutions for carers supporting people with dementia (8)

## What is the HDRC and how can they help?

The Bradford Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) is National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funded service in the Council. It aims to develop the capacity and capability of the Council to be research, evidence and data driven in developing policy and practice to reduce health inequalities and improve health.

The Bradford HDRC focuses on:

- **Developing co-production** to involve, work with and support local communities and stakeholders in research and setting priorities
- **Conducting research**, developing evidence and developing collaborative working with academic policy experts through the Evidence into Policy Hub
- **Developing data systems**, access, sharing and use of data for research through our data science team
- **Developing staff research and evidence skills** through our training and capacity strand
- **Developing governance systems** to support best practice in research and evidence use

If you would like to work with the co-production team, have questions or would like to discuss your research needs in more depth, please contact the HDRC team at [hdrc@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:hdrc@bradford.gov.uk).

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2. Co-Production Collective. The Value of Co-Production Project Interactive Summary. 2022.

3. Boyle D, Harris M. The Challenge of Co-Production: How equal partnerships between professionals and the public are crucial to improving public services. London: Nesta; 2009.

4. Oliver K, Kothari A, Mays N. The dark side of coproduction: do the costs outweigh the benefits for health research? Health Res Policy Syst. 2019;17(1):33.

5. Loeffler E, Bovaird T. Assessing the effect of co-production on outcomes, service quality and efficiency. Co-production and co-creation: Routledge; 2018. p. 269-80.

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8. Harlett N, Grieg R. Co-producing support for people with long-term health conditions: Evaluation of an NHS East of England co-production programme. NHS East of England Clinical Networks; 2016.