



Win-Win Alliance Disabled people leading change (Disability Rights UK, Shaping Our Lives, NSUN and CHANGE)

Top Tips for Co-production

Introduction

Disabled people and people with lived experience (service users) welcome being able to contribute to service policy, design, delivery and evaluation of the services you provide and the processes you use. Many service users want to do this to help others in the same position as them, to 'give something back'. Service users have valuable lived experience which you and your organisation can benefit from.

However service users cannot automatically become useful representatives – they need induction, training and support just like any paid member of staff would. They need to be valued and motivated and rewarded too.

Good processes and systems for co-production and involving service user representatives will lead to better, more efficient and more effective services which are valued by their users. Bad processes and systems will not improve your services; they will put service user representatives off being involved, and in some cases can cause aggravation and distress to the service users who have been subjected to them.

There are simple, practical things you can do to provide inclusive and accessible involvement activities. Be realistic with your goals and make affordable and quick changes to your systems.

Top Tips

When you recruit disabled people for co-production and involvement activities, ensure that you capture their access and communication requirements. Keep this information and refer to it every time you contact or involve that person. Ensure that you always communicate in a person's preferred format.

Ensure you have up-to-date training in disability awareness, disability equality and the Equality Act 2010. It will help you to understand simple practical low cost steps you can take to make activities accessible for everyone taking part.

Provide disabled people, and other service users interested in being involved, an opportunity to talk to you about what you are trying to achieve, how you are planning to do it and what will be involved for the participants. This gives the potential participant a chance to decide if the involvement activity is appropriate for them.

Involve everyone in the practical arrangements for all co-production activity and allow the participants to agree arrangements that are inclusive for all.

Ask people who are currently involved in your engagement and involvement activities what makes it a good experience and what makes it a bad one. Tackle the bad experiences and create an action plan to improve your practises.

Ask co-production participants why they got involved. Offer the same opportunities for recognition, reward and personal development as incentives when recruiting participants in further activities.

Think about all the good practices you have for valuing staff in your organisation. Think about how they can be made available and applied to disabled people and people with lived experience who give their expertise to your service.

Provide a single point of contact for co-production activities. This person can ensure that any concerns are addressed appropriately.