

All together now



A toolkit on co-production for disabled people and their organisations

This toolkit explains what co-production is and gives some tips on how to make it successful

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why do I need to know about co-production?

- Do you support the aims of independent living—that disabled people of all ages should have the same freedom, dignity, choice and control over their lives as non-disabled people?
- Are you passionate about making disability equality a reality?
- Do you want to help make sure that time and money is not wasted on developing services, policies or strategies that fail to meet disabled people's needs and priorities?
- Do you recognise that it is disabled people who know best what disabled people's needs and priorities are?
- Do you recognise the value of working with the people who provide services, so that they know about disabled people's needs and priorities and how services could support them best?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions then it is worth finding out about co-production. It is not just the latest trendy buzz-word. Co-production can be a way to meet the goals of everyone involved.

For most people co-production is a new way of working. This tool kit tells you about what to avoid, as well as what to do, so you can get the most value from co-production.

1.2 Who is this toolkit for?

The toolkit is for disabled people. It is particularly for people who work with disabled people's organisations (DPOs). It should also be useful for anyone who wants to work in co-production with disabled people or DPOs. This could include people who work for Councils, Health Boards, the police, the Fire Brigade, Scottish Government or voluntary sector organisations.

The toolkit talks about co-producing services for disabled people. But co-production could be used by any group of people to develop almost anything (this is explained more in section 2).

Hopefully the toolkit is written in a way that makes it accessible to anyone who wants to know more about co-production. It is written in plain English and a summary version is also available including in Easy Read and British Sign Language on our web-site:

www.ilis.co.uk

1.3 How can this toolkit help you?

This toolkit explains what co-production is and gives you some tips on how to make it successful. It explains why it is different to other forms of involvement. It tells you about the process of co-production from the start to the finish.

The toolkit can't cover everything but towards the end it tells you where you can get more information about co-production. This is in appendix 1. There is also an explanation in appendix 2 of some of the words and phrases you might come across (it is not just the public sector that uses jargon—disability organisations do too!).

There are lots of examples as you go through the toolkit. There are also some descriptions of what other people have co-produced. These are in appendix 3 near the end of the toolkit.

There are some checklists to help you remember important points. There are also some activities and quizzes that you might like to do to. These are meant to help you think about the information that has been given. Some suggested answers to the quizzes are in appendix 4, although you may think of other things to add.

2. Defining co-production

2.1 What is co-production?

There are lots of definitions of co-production. They usually talk about:

- **Working in partnership:** the people responsible for developing or delivering something (for example, a service) work with the people who will eventually use it or be affected by it. They share their knowledge, skills and resources. They share responsibility for making the process and the end result successful.
- **Working as equals:** the people working together in co-production (the 'co-production partners') are different. They do not have the same powers to act or limitations to what they can do. They have different knowledge, skills and resources. But they are all recognised to be equally important. In that way they are equal partners.
- **Co-producing from the start:** people must work together from the very start. This means before important decisions are taken, when as much as possible can still be influenced and changed.
- **Working together to achieve an outcome:** at the start the partners agree what end result (or outcome) they all want to see. Then they work together to achieve it.

2.2 What can be co-produced?

In theory, just about anything could be co-produced.

a) What is usually co-produced?

Usually co-production is used for:

- **Public services:** public services include social work, housing, education, transport, and health-care services. Public services can be for everyone to use. Some might be particularly for disabled people, young people, older people or another group. Of course, disabled people can be members of other groups too. It is important that all public services are designed to meet the needs of the people who will use them.

The Scottish Government develops policies that say **what** sort of public services there should be across the whole country. Then local Councils decide about local priorities. They decide exactly **how** services will be delivered in their areas. Both national and local decisions about public services can be co-produced with the people who use public services.

- **Community services and facilities:** there are some sorts of changes that affect local neighbourhoods or communities. Examples of these changes might be the development of a new drop-in centre or changes to bus timetables. These might be co-produced with people who represent the local neighbourhood or community that will be affected. Co-production could be used for any type of community development.
- **Service packages for individual service users:** for example, a social worker might work in partnership with a client to agree what services they need to achieve the outcome they want.

Co-production of services for groups of people or for local communities, are both sometimes called 'community co-production'. This toolkit is about that type of co-production. It is not about how to coproduce services for an individual person.

b) What else could be co-produced?

Other examples of things that could be co-produced include:

- **Events:** conferences, seminars, celebrations or any kind of event could be co-produced.
- **Training:** you could co-produce a training pack with people who might want to have the training. This means you could make sure they could understand it and that it met their needs.
- **Toolkits!** This toolkit was co-produced with an advisory group. It included representatives from Disabled People's Organisations, the Scottish Government, the health service and an organisation that supports local councils.
- **Leaflets:** you could co-produce what the leaflet says, what it looks like, what formats it is in and decisions about how the people it is for can get a copy.
- **Commercial products:** It would be possible to co-produce the design of things you can buy, e.g. furniture.

If you are new to co-production it is a good idea to start with something small, such as an event or a leaflet. Like anything, practice makes perfect.

2.3 Who can be a co-production partner?

Just about anyone could be a co-production partner. A co-production partner is someone who is involved in co-production. Who the partners are depends on what is being co-produced and who has an interest in it. Partners for co-producing things that affect disabled people often include:

- **Representatives of disabled people's organisations (DPOs):** these are organisations run by disabled people themselves. They usually have members, or networks of individual disabled people.
- **Representatives of organisations for disabled people:** these are organisations run by non-disabled people for disabled people. They may have members and networks too.
- **Individual disabled people:** they may be involved through their organisations' networks or they may be directly involved themselves as co-production partners.
- **Disabled people's friends, family, neighbours or advocates.**

Their co-production partners could be:

- **People who work for Local Authorities (also called Councils):** they might be from the social work department or the housing department, or another part of the Council. It depends what is being co-produced.
- **People who work for the Scottish Government:** they could be civil servants working in any policy area. Any policy that affects anyone will affect disabled people.
- **People who work for a Health Board, a local school or college, the police, a fire authority or a voluntary sector organisation.**

Activity: Three definitions

Have a look at these three definitions of co-production.
Then think about the three questions below:

“Co-production is a partnership between citizens and public services to achieve a valued outcome”

(New Economics Foundation, 2009)

“Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change.”

(The Challenge of Co-production; Boyle and Harris 2009)

Co-production is “an approach that recognises the value of partnership between disabled people and public authorities in developing services, policies and strategies”

(Evaluation of Local Housing Strategies Co-Production Pilots, Scottish Government 2011)

Questions:

1. Are the definitions easy to understand?
2. Which do you think is the best definition?
3. Can you write a better definition?

2.4 Why is co-production important now?

Although disabled people's voices haven't always been heard, there are some very good reasons why people are listening now. The Scottish Government wants to change the way public services are designed and delivered. There are a lot of new developments that say that the people who use services must be involved in decisions about services and they must have choice about the services they get.

You may have heard of some of these developments. It doesn't matter if you haven't. You don't need to know about them to be involved in co-production. But, if you do want to know more about them, Appendix 1 tells you where you can get more information.

Some of the developments you may hear about are:

- **Independent living—A Shared Vision:** this is a statement that says disabled people should have choice, control, freedom and dignity. It was agreed by the Scottish Government, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA), and the disabled people who are members of the Independent Living in Scotland project Steering Group.
- **Self-Directed Support—a National Strategy for Scotland:** this is a 10 year plan to change the way support is delivered, so that it is co-produced in equal partnership between people and professionals. There will be a law about this to make it happen.
- **The report from the Christie Commission:** This said that effective services must be designed with and for people and communities. It said it was important to work closely with individuals and communities to understand their needs and make the most of their talents and resources.

- **The Equality Act:** This includes duties on the public sector to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. One of the things they must do is encourage people from 'protected groups' (including disabled people) to participate in public life, if their participation is low.

If you hear people talking about any of these, it might mean there are opportunities to get involved in co-production. Or, you could talk about them yourself to encourage other people to think about using co-production.

2.5 When does co-production work best?

a) When to coproduce

Co-production isn't going to be appropriate in every situation. It will be most appropriate when:

- There are real choices to make and real opportunity to try out new ideas. If there really isn't any choice about what will have to be done then it would be wrong to raise disabled people's expectations that they can have an influence.
- It is the start of the development process, before important decisions have been taken and when there are most opportunities to make changes.
- There is enough time to involve partners properly. Co-producing services or policies can take a long time (co-producing an event or leaflet is quicker). Co-production may not be suitable for urgent pieces of work, particularly if everyone is new to it.
- The partners can agree on the outcome they are going to work towards. If they can't then co-production is unlikely to succeed.

b) Rewards and risks

Co-production can bring many rewards for everyone. For example:

- It can lead to better outcomes because the development process has been directly informed by disabled people’s needs and aspirations.
- It can lead to more creative ideas because it is possible to look at problems from the partners’ different perspectives.
- It can mean that precious money and time are not wasted on services that fail to meet disabled people’s needs or, worse still, create new needs. This is not what anyone would want to happen.
- It can improve attitudes towards disabled people – and their partners. Everyone understands each other better.

However, there are some risks to co-production. Risks are things that could stop rewards from being achieved.

Quiz 1: Rewards and risks

Below are some examples of rewards that co-production can bring. What do you think could stop them from happening?

Suggested answers are given in appendix 4.

REWARD	WHAT COULD STOP REWARDS FROM HAPPENING?
A better outcome for all	A better outcome for all will be hard to achieve if....
Sharing knowledge leads to new, creative ideas	New, creative ideas will not happen if...
Better relationships between partners	Relationships will not get better if...

There is a lot you and your partners can do to reduce risks and get the most from the rewards of co-production. This toolkit aims to help you to do this. As you go through it you will probably notice more rewards and risks.

2.6 What’s different about co-production?

Co-production has particular characteristics that make it different to other forms of involvement.

a) Co-production, not consultation or information giving

You may very well have experience of responding to consultation exercises. This is when you are given an opportunity to comment on suggestions that the people responsible for the service or policy have already made.

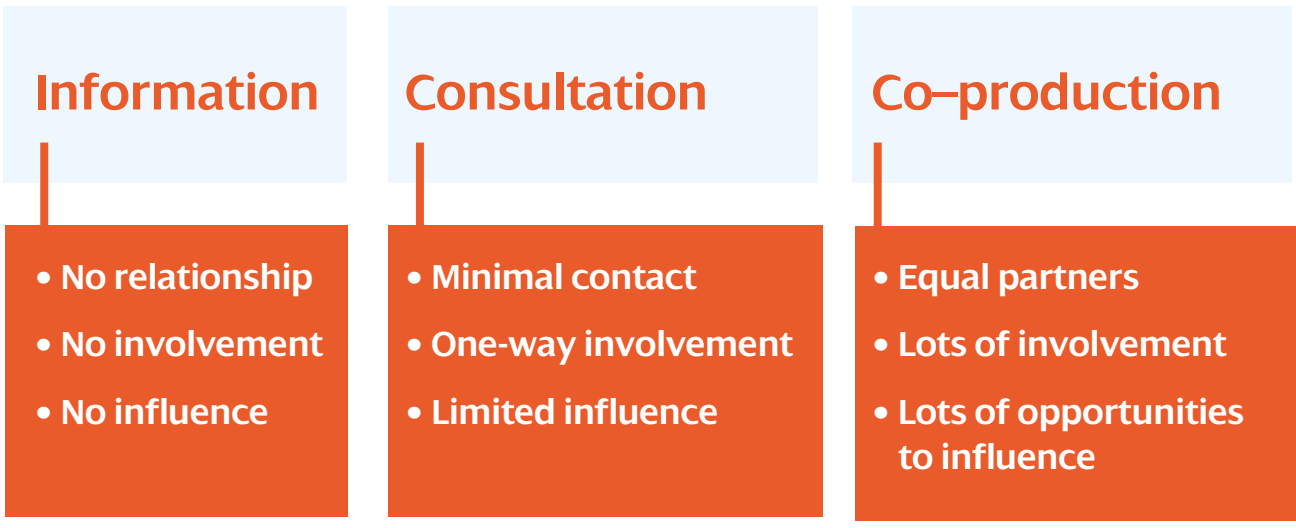
Co-production is not the same as consultation. With co-production you are involved from the start. You work with the people responsible for the service or policy to develop suggestions about what could happen. You should have much more opportunity for influence with co-production than is usual with consultation. Co-production also means more than just being involved.

Co-production is at the opposite extreme to just being given information about something, like a service for example. In that case you have no say in designing the service or the way that the information is given to you.

It might help to think of these differences in terms of:

- How close the relationship is between the people responsible for designing the service and the people who are going to use the service. At one extreme they could have a close relationship because they are working together as equal (though different) partners. At the other extreme they have no real relationship at all.
- How much involvement the people who are going to use the service have in designing the service.
- How much they can influence decisions about the design of the service.

You could show this as a diagram:



Different activities can take place at different stages. Co-production happens from the start of the process to develop a new service (or whatever is being co-produced). Consultation happens when some decisions have already been taken. Information is given after the development process has finished, for example to tell people about the new service. All have a role to play in achieving positive results.

b) Co-production, not campaigning

Perhaps the most important thing about co-production is that it requires a very different approach to the campaigning you might have done before.

It does not mean that you compromise your aim of making things better for disabled people or your insights into what would and wouldn't work. Co-production won't be successful without these.

Co-production means that you need to work with, rather than against the people responsible for the things you want to get changed. It is not about you winning and them losing, or them winning and you losing. It is not about pushing them to give in to your demands. This can sometimes feel like a big adjustment to make.

c) Partners, not just service users

It can also mean a big adjustment for your partners. They may never have thought of service users as partners before. They may not be used to working with disabled people. They may be worried about doing or saying the wrong thing. They may be anxious that disabled people will expect them to do things they can't do.

Co-production means that people who have the power to make decisions without asking anyone choose instead to share their power. They see the people who would be affected by decisions as valuable 'assets' whose knowledge and skills are necessary to make good decisions.

d) Valuing difference

It is because of the differences between the partners that co-production can be so valuable. Looking at a problem from different angles means that it will be better understood. Working together leads to a better understanding of different experiences and perspectives. Both these mean that creative, effective and realistic solutions are more likely to be found.

Activity

Before you look at the checklist that comes next, see if you can write your own list of the things that make co-production different to other forms of involvement. Then you can compare the two (you may have thought of things to add to the checklist on the following page).

Checklist:

What's different about co-production?

Co-production:

- Happens from the start of the development process.
- Means agreeing at the start the outcome you all want to see.
- Means agreeing how you will work together.
- Requires a close working relationship between co-production partners.
- Allows lots of opportunities to influence or change things.
- Means sharing power more equally.
- Means sharing responsibility for making it a success.
- Recognises that all participants are 'assets', including people who use services, because they all have valuable knowledge and skills.
- Recognises that it is the partners' differences that can make co-production so valuable and effective. Everyone has new things to learn from each other.

Quiz 2: What should you do?

Think about the situations described in the table on the following page. Should you get involved? Would co-production be appropriate? Is it likely to be successful? What could be the rewards and risks? There are some suggested answers in appendix 4.

Situation:	What to think about:
1. Your local authority needs to make cuts to social work services and wants to co-produce these with you.	
2. A health board wants to co-produce a major redesign of hospital facilities to make sure they're accessible to everyone. However, they've already made a lot of decisions and it may not be possible to change much.	
3. The Scottish Government team working on self directed support wants to get the service users' views about how the quality of self directed support should be evaluated. It is proposing to hold an all-day event to explore this with service users.	
4. You work for a local Disabled People's Organisation. Your members are concerned what the Scottish Government's plans to integrate health and social care will mean for them.	

3. Get ready, get set...

3.1 Opportunity knocks?

a) Making the first move

You might want to be involved in co-production but where do opportunities come from? If you are an individual disabled person, a good place to start is by joining a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO). You might find out about opportunities through the DPO you join.

If you work for a DPO, what changes do your organisation and its members want to see? Who does that mean your co-production partners would need to be? Do they know about your organisation? What sort of relationship do you already have with them?

Opportunities will usually be initiated by potential partners who need to develop something. They might invite you to join a project group or a steering group, for example. Obviously, if they've never heard of your organisation they won't know to approach you. They won't know about what your organisation does or what it is interested in. If they do know your organisation but relations have been difficult, they might think you wouldn't want to work with them as partners. Therefore, although working in co-production can be a good way to strengthen relationships, it helps if there is already some kind of relationship in place.

Of course, there is nothing to stop you trying to make opportunities happen rather than wait for others to approach you. For example, if your organisation is interested in getting a particular thing changed, you could invite officials working in that area to meet with you. Then you could ask them if they know about co-production and if you might work together as partners.

This might be more likely to be successful if it is about a local issue.

Another possibility to think about is that some public appointments can be opportunities for co-production, or to work in similar sort of ways. For example, you might be appointed to be a member of a government advisory committee.

b) What questions could you ask?

If your organisation is approached to become a co-production partner, you might need to get some more information about the opportunity before you can decide whether to take it up.

For example, you could ask:

- What exactly do they want to coproduce?
- How much opportunity is there going to be for you to influence what happens?
- What sort of result do they want to see?
- When will the process start?
- How much time is it expected to take?
- What are they expecting you to do?
- What can they do to meet your access needs and enable you to participate?

3.2 Partners in co-production

You'll definitely learn more about each other as the process goes on. But before it starts it's worth finding out what you can about your partners. First, though, it's helpful to think about who you are!

a) Who are you?

What can you contribute? These are the sorts of things that disabled people and their organisations could contribute to co-production that could be useful and influential:

- Understanding of what independent living means to disabled people.
- Knowledge about an issue, for example transport, housing, community care, employment services, education, etc.
- Knowledge about disabled people's lived experience, what they need, what works and what doesn't work.
- Hands-on experience of delivering services or supporting disabled people with advice, training or advocacy.
- Evidence from research that your organisation has done.
- Evidence of the problems that people contact your organisation about.
- Understanding about disability access issues.
- Contact with lots of disabled people and the ability to get their input too.

What support do you need?

If you are to participate equally as a co-production partner, you might want some training, or some peer support. You could carry out a 'skills and knowledge audit'. This means writing a list of the skills and knowledge you're likely to need, then working out which you've got and which you'll need to get. For example, you might need:

- Skills to intervene effectively in formal meetings (there's more about this below).
- Influencing and negotiation skills.
- Knowledge about the usual processes for developing policies or services.
- Background information about what has previously happened regarding the issue you will be working on.
- Finance skills, so you can understand budgets (though co-produced solutions aren't necessarily costly).
- Networking skills.
- Assertiveness skills, so you can make your point in the most effective way.

You might get this support from a DPO, or a DPO might be able to arrange it for you. You might get information about usual development processes, background information or training to understand budgets from your co-production partners.

Who do you represent?

If you work for a membership organisation, what networks do you have? How could you involve them? Think through how to get their views and ideas - not just information about problems but ideas on solutions too. You might run events, use Facebook or twitter, or write a blog for example. You'll also need to feed back to them what happened. It's important that they know what co-production is and what to expect. They need to understand what the task is and that not everything they say is likely to be acted upon.

What's your 'bottom-line'?

For co-production to work, everyone needs to be as flexible as possible. They need to be open-minded to new ideas and willing to compromise about things that aren't essential. No one has all the answers and new thinking can throw up exciting, creative approaches that could work. Even if you and your co-production partners disagree with each other about something, if both of you are willing to compromise a bit you can usually agree on a solution in the end.

However, there could be one or two things that you might not want to compromise on. This is your 'bottom-line'. For example, your bottom-line might be that the aims of independent living must be respected.

Your partners too will have 'bottom-lines'. For example, they won't be able to agree to anything that would cost more than they have in the budget.

It is a good idea for all the partners to know about each other's bottom-lines from the start. They can then work to find creative solutions that respect everyone's bottom-lines.

What does your Board think about it?

If this is going to be a big piece of work over several months, if it is about a controversial subject, or could be risky in some way, it's important you get the Board's agreement that your organisation should take this on. You'll need to make sure that they understand what co-production is. They might want to agree the 'bottom-line'. They might want progress reports. You'll also need to make sure (perhaps with your line manager) that you have enough time freed up to participate.

b) Who are your co-production partners?

You might not know much more about your new partners than who they work for, their names and job-titles. However, if you're going to build good working relationships with them it will be very helpful to know about their roles and the organisations they work in.

If they work for the voluntary sector, you'll probably be familiar with what this means. But it can be different in the public sector. For example:

What's their role?

People who work for the Scottish Government and people who work for Local Authorities (also sometimes called local government or Councils) are called civil servants or officials. Their role is broadly to support elected politicians, like Government Ministers or local Councillors, by delivering policy and getting it put into practice. They cannot be Party political, though.

What power do they have?

You need to know what power your partners have to take decisions. The process will be much more worthwhile if they can take decisions, rather than if they have to make proposals to their boss, who then makes proposals to their boss, and so on.

What procedures do they have to follow?

Officials often have to follow complicated procedures. Things that look very simple and quick to do can sometimes take ages. Also, as everyone knows, money is very tight these days. Officials will usually have a budget that says how much can be spent on what. Sometimes these can be very inflexible. Even if they want to spend more on something, or to spend the same amount of money in a different way, this isn't always possible.

What drives them?

They have to make sure politicians are not put in difficult positions. They obviously have to follow procedures and keep within budgets. They may also be involved in other activities and have to juggle competing priorities. There may also be legal restrictions on what they can do.

Of course, there is more to your partners than their job. They're also people! Like anyone else (including you), their views will be informed by their personal experience, they are motivated by their interests and so on. They may very well be doing their job because they care passionately about making a positive difference.

They will always try to be professional in the way they work with you. This means they may not show if they are angry or upset. But think about how you feel if someone shouts at you – or if someone praises you. It is important to think about how your co-production partners might be feeling, if you are going to build a good relationship with them.

3.3 Understanding your role as co-production partner

Your role as a co-production partner requires you to:

- Share responsibility for the process and the outcomes.
- Give up time to prepare for meetings, and attend meetings or other co-production activities.
- If you work for a membership organisation, find ways to keep your membership networks informed of what's going on and give them opportunities to contribute their views and ideas (remember that you are not there just to talk about your own issues).
- Contribute all you can that is likely to be helpful.

Although there are different ways you could be involved, it is quite likely that you will need to attend some meetings. You may well have lots of experience of this. In case you haven't, here are a few tips about how to make sure you—and the meetings—are effective:

- Think before you speak—not just about what you want to say but the best way to say it, in the right tone.
- Choose your moment to speak. Don't interrupt other people.
- Keep what you say short and to the point.
- If someone hasn't said anything, see if you can find a way to bring them into the discussion
- Don't just repeat what someone else said.
- Always propose solutions when raising problems.
- Stick to agreements, even if you didn't win the argument.
- Don't bad-mouth partners to others. If you have a problem with them, talk to them about it.
- Humour can be a good way to keep a happy atmosphere!

Activity

Before looking at the checklist below, see if you can write your own list of the things you need to have done if you are to be ready to start co-producing. Then compare the two lists (you might well have thought of other things that could be added to the list below).

Checklist: Ready to start?

- I feel confident that I understand what co-production is.
- I am committed to sharing responsibility for making the process work well and for the result.
- I will work with my co-production partners to make sure we all have a shared understanding of what we're trying to achieve.
- My Board supports our organisation's involvement.
- I have enough time to participate properly and to involve my organisation's membership networks.
- Members know how to feed in their views and get feedback.
- I understand my role as a co-production partner.
- I know what support I need and where to get it from.

4. Go!

4.1 Early days

Co-production starts from the very beginning of the development process.

a) Practicalities

Before you can start working together there's some practical stuff to sort out.

- **Access requirements:** it's really important that you make clear what your access requirements are at the start. You may also need to support your partners to understand them and meet them. For example, you should tell them if you need information in a particular format or if you need lots of breaks, a hearing loop or somewhere to walk an assistance dog. Or, you might need a wheelchair-accessible venue or particular lighting or a BSL interpreter.
- **Where are you going to meet?** a 'neutral' venue can be a good idea. This means you meet somewhere other than the partners' places of work. This isn't always possible, though, and it might cost money that could be better spent on other practicalities, like meeting access requirements.
- **Communication methods:** Agree on how and when you're going to communicate. Your partners should make sure that you're not overwhelmed with masses of information. Contact between meetings can be important to keep everyone engaged.
- **Background information:** This can be important if everyone is to participate fully.

b) Agreeing where you want to go and how to get there

- **Co-production:** Make sure everyone has a shared understanding of what co-production is and that they are committed to working in this way.
- **Setting ground rules:** How are you going to work together? If you are to build and maintain good relationships it can be very helpful to co-produce some ground rules.

Examples of some ground rules:

- Take responsibility for promoting equal participation.
- Say if you don't understand something.
- Always be respectful, even if you don't agree.
- Keep everyone informed if something relevant happens.
- If you miss a meeting, respect decisions that were made.
- Everyone will keep to agreed deadlines or let partners know if they can't.
- Information will always be sent out well before a meeting, allowing enough time for everyone to prepare.

- **Outcomes:** The partners need to agree what outcome they want to see. For example, an outcome might be 'more disabled people in employment' or 'disabled people travelling independently'.
- **The task:** Then the partners need to work out what task to carry out to achieve the outcome. For example, to achieve the outcome of 'more disabled people in employment' the task might be to design some training in interview skills. The training would be an 'output'. If it is a big, complicated task you could break a task down into priorities or themes. You can then decide on what order to tackle them in.
- **The process:** It's most likely that co-production will happen through regular meetings. However, partners might also run events or workshops to get wider input. Focus groups might discuss particular themes. Steering groups of service users might oversee the work. The partners might decide they want an independent person who knows about co-production to work with them and help them make the process successful.
- **Work-plan:** Agree how often you're going to meet and when any other activities will happen. Allow for everything taking longer than expected. Remember to include enough time to involve your networks.
- **Measuring success:** Agree how to measure the success of the process as you go along. You could quickly check how things went after each meeting, and have a more thorough discussion every few meetings. When it's all over you can look at how successful the whole process was and what you learnt from it.

Examples of things to check to measure the success of the process:

- Are we really co-producing this?
- Is anyone worried about anything?
- Are we respecting the ground rules we set?
- Are we following the work-plan and its timetable?
- What do we think is going well?
- Is anything not working well?
- What have we learnt?
- Is there anything else we can do to make the process successful?

During the process you can think about how you will know if the outcome you want to see has been achieved.

For example, if you are co-producing a new service to promote independent living for all disabled people living in your local area, you will want to know whether the new service has done this.

To measure success you need to be specific about what effect you want the new service to have.

Examples of ways to measure the success of an outcome:

Depending on what is being co-produced, you could:

- Set targets about numbers of people - like the number of disabled people who use a new service, attend an event or use a web-site.
- Set targets about when – for example, by the end of the first year we want 3000 disabled people to be using the new service.
- You could use feedback forms, surveys or collect views on Facebook. You could interview people who have used the new service, or read the leaflet, and so on. You could bring together a group of them to discuss it. You could ask them questions like 'what did the new service mean you could do that you couldn't do before?' or 'did you find the leaflet easy to understand?' or 'were there any problems?' or 'what would make it better?'.
- You could look at statistics, like employment rates, numbers of people getting qualifications, hospital discharge rates, or the numbers of people getting a benefit.

Partner organisations like health boards and councils should have experience of measuring success. They also may have access to statistics.

You could use these to compare the situation before and after the new service (or whatever you have co-produced) is introduced, and see what difference it has made.

c) Agreeing roles

All co-production partners have a responsibility to keep things on track and to support other people to play their part. There can also be lots of opportunities for people to take on responsibility for activities and actions as you go along. But ongoing roles include:

- **Chairing meetings or events:** It can be a good idea to find someone who isn't directly involved but who is well-respected by all the partners. Another possibility is to have co-chairs, one from each of the co-production partners' groups. They need to work closely together. It's likely to work best if they share responsibility for every meeting rather than take it in turns. The Chair/s have particular responsibility to lead the process. They make sure decisions are taken and meetings finish on time. But everyone has a role to play.
- **Taking minutes, recording decisions and action points:** it is important views and ideas are not lost through poor minute-taking and paraphrasing.
- **Co-ordination and administration:** Somebody needs to be responsible for arranging meetings or events. They need to make sure everyone knows what they're doing and when. Again, everyone has some responsibility for this.

d) Agreeing if anyone else should be a partner

Once you all get together, you need to think about whether anyone else should be at the table.

- **Stakeholders:** are there any other key players who have a direct interest or different perspective? Who else could add value? Who else should be a co-production partner?
- **Skills and knowledge audit:** The partners could do an audit of themselves, like the one it was suggested you did of yourself/ your organisation. This means they decide what skills and knowledge they need, then work out what skills and knowledge the group has, and whether there are any gaps that others could fill.
It might be useful for your partners to develop their understanding of a particular issue. You might be able to make suggestions about where they could find out more, perhaps be visiting local disabled people or shadowing someone.
- **Visiting experts:** The group might want to get some expert advice about one of the subjects that is going to be discussed at a meeting. There's nothing to stop you inviting someone with expertise about that subject to that meeting. They may not need to come to all the meetings.

In general, though, it's really helpful if the same people can be involved from start to finish. This isn't always possible, of course. But, if the same people are involved it saves time, as you don't have to keep explaining things and going over old ground. It also helps to build good relationships.

It's best if the group of partners doesn't get too big. Around 10-15 people is about right. Of course, more could be involved through your networks, or Facebook, for example.

4.2 Building and maintaining good relationships

There are a number of reasons why they might go off track that it can be helpful to think about.

a) Beware stereotypes

We're all capable of stereotyping. All partners need to be aware that they might be making wrong assumptions about each other.

For example, your co-production partners from local authorities or Scottish Government might know nothing about disability. On the other hand, they could be disabled people themselves! Representatives from Disabled People's Organisations might know nothing about how to deliver public services. But they may have worked in the public sector and know a lot about it.

b) Don't look back

In the past, disabled people and their views have not always been treated with respect. We have been disabled by services that don't meet our needs and by policies that take no account of us. It is not surprising if we sometimes get very angry about this.

Sometimes people who work for local authorities or the Scottish Government (for example) might have had difficult meetings with disabled people. Perhaps they got angry with the officials because they didn't feel they were being heard.

Whatever has happened in the past, it is really important for all the partners to start afresh. Everyone needs to look forwards to the positive opportunity they now have to hear each other, learn from each other and work with each other in equal partnership.

c) Three ingredients to good working relationships

Building good relationships takes time. The three most important ingredients to building a good working relationship are:

Trust: Trust is built by:

- Transparency and openness.
- Treating each other with respect.
- Everyone doing what they have agreed they will do and trusting that their partners will too.

But always try to remain objective, keep alert to any problems on the horizon and don't be afraid to say if you see one coming.

Good communication: This includes:

- Using the right style and tone. It is usually more effective—and definitely more professional—to remain calm.
- Using words that are easy to understand (jargon alert, everyone!)
- Giving feedback about what suggestions have been taken up, what suggestions haven't been taken up and why. Co-production partners and networks need this sort of feedback.
- Keeping everyone informed of anything they need to know about, or might like to know about.
- Being proactive. Don't wait to be asked. Say if you have an idea, don't agree, don't understand or thought something went really well.

Support: One of the main points about co-production is that partners have lots to learn from each other. They will need each other's support:

- Everyone makes mistakes. Be patient with each other.
- If they get something right, give some positive feedback.
- Little things can really matter, like being met at reception or saying 'well done'.

Sometimes you will need to make judgments about getting the right balance in the way you behave. For example:

- Trust needs to be balanced with objective monitoring of what is and isn't happening.
- Being proactive yourself needs to be balanced with allowing others space and time to act.
- Honesty needs to be balanced with sensitivity.
- Openness needs to be balanced with respect for confidentiality.

Quiz 3: True or false?

Which of these statements do you think is true? Which is false? Circle your answer.

There are suggested answers in appendix 4.

True or False?	
You should always try to be friends with your co-production partners.	True / False?
Your co-production partners use language that is inappropriate. You are sure they don't mean to cause offense so it's best not to say anything.	True / False?
You are very upset about something your co-production partners have done. You should tell them.	True / False?
Your co-production partners tell you (nicely) that the things you are telling them are not relevant to the task. You should go away and think about it.	True / False?
Co-production is the best way to get what you want.	True / False?

4.3 What's the problem?

There is no reason to expect problems to arise, particularly if you take the actions suggested in this toolkit. However, things might not go smoothly all the time, no matter how much everyone wants them to.

If you are able to spot problems early on then you and your co-production partners can take action to sort them out before they get serious.

The most common problems arise from poor communication. Therefore, improving communications is often solution.

You could raise problems (and what you think solutions might be) when you are reviewing the process. But don't feel you have to wait if you think a problem needs addressing before then.

Quiz 4: How can you solve the problem?		
Problem:	Warning signs:	How can you solve the problem?
No shared understanding of the task.	Partners don't seem to be listening to each other. They don't take each other's comments on board. They keep saying things that don't seem to be relevant. They keep asking you to do things that you can't do.	
Partners aren't sharing responsibility.	There's clearly a problem but no one is saying anything. Or partners are good at raising problems but not at suggesting ways to solve them.	
Lack of trust.	Partners are behaving as if this was a competition that one will win and one will lose. They are not telling each other important things. The atmosphere is tense.	
No responsibility is taken for leading or managing the process.	Meetings are poorly organised. People don't know what's happening or when. You seem to be going round in circles.	

The good thing about problems is that there's usually a lot to learn from them! It is always useful to think about why a problem has come up. What could the partners have done to stop it happening? What will you do differently next time?

5. After co-production: what next?

5.1 What happened?

When the process ends, go back to the measures you set to see if the process was successful overall. Were there good things that happened that you weren't expecting? Were there other things that didn't go so well but that you learnt from?

The co-production process will probably finish with the development of an output; perhaps a strategy, service design or new transport timetable. However, at this point you still won't know if the outcome you agreed at the start has been achieved. The output needs to be implemented—put into practice—before you can know if it has achieved the targets you set. This means it is necessary to monitor what happens. It is then possible to evaluate how successful it is, or whether more needs to be done.

It is possible that your organisation will continue to play a role of some kind:

Supporting delivery: This might be a role in delivering the service, depending what the service is and what your organisation does. For example, your organisation might provide peer support or training for people who use the service.

Monitoring what's happening: Disabled People's Organisations can be well-placed to monitor what's happening on the ground. They can find out what disabled people think of it and whether they have ideas about further improvements.

One possibility is to be part of a monitoring group that reports on progress. It might make sense for it to be made up of representatives from the Disabled People's Organisations that were involved in co-producing the initiative. Or, the monitoring group could include disabled people who weren't involved in the development process.

This might make it more objective. It might also include people who are now using the service, or whatever was co-produced. Take action to sort them out before they get serious.

5.2 Keep in touch

If you've built good relationships with your co-production partners, it is worth finding ways to keep in touch. There's a good chance you can be useful to each other again in the future.

There are different ways you could keep in touch. For example, you could:

- Send them your organisation's newsletter.
- Invite them to your organisation's events (perhaps they could run a workshop).
- Let them know if you find out something that might interest them, such as feedback on new problems arising or new ways of delivering a service.
- Invite them to visit your office.
- Invite them to meet disabled people from your networks.
- Ask them to keep you informed of any new developments, or if you can help with something.
- Suggest you have regular meetings, even if just once a year.

5.3 Share success and learning

A lot of people are interested to know more about co-production right now. Many people are new to it. Even people who have done it before will be keen to learn more about what others have done. It can be really helpful to share your experience with other people who are interested in co-production. Success can inspire others. Learning points can help them to avoid making the same mistakes.

The Independent Living in Scotland project hopes this toolkit has helped you to feel confident about co-production. We hope it will inspire you to have a go. Please tell us what you think of the toolkit. You could use the form at the very end of the toolkit, or you could phone or e-mail us, or tell us in whatever way suits you best.

We would also love to know about your experiences of co-production. We plan to set up a 'community of practice' for disabled people and their organisations. This will be a way to share your experiences and discuss co-production with other people. You can find out more about this by looking at our web-site: www.ilis.co.uk

As more people get involved in co-production, understanding about what it is and how to do it successfully will continue to develop. If everyone shares their learning then everyone can learn more easily and more quickly. This will lead to better outcomes. And this is what co-production is all about.

Appendix 1

Further information

Some other guides on involvement and co-production

National Standards for Community Engagement: These Scottish Government standards set out best practice for public bodies who want to engage with communities:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/engage/NationalStandards

'Do-it-yourself' (DIY) Factsheets on co-production and involvement: The Independent Living in Scotland Project has factsheets on co-production and involvement. Have a look on their web-site: www.ilis.co.uk

"Are We Being Served?" is published by Glasgow Disability Alliance:

www.gdaonline.co.uk/fileuploads/gda-toolkit-are-we-being-served-4044.pdf

"Developing social care: service users driving culture change": This is by the Social Care Institute for Excellence: www.scie.org.uk/publications/knowledgereviews/kr17.asp

"In This Together: Building knowledge about co-production": This is by the New Economics Foundation: www.neweconomics.org/publications/in-this-together

"Local Action - The handy guide for communities working with councillors" This was produced by Supporting people, Sustaining Communities' (bassac) and Urban Communities. It is written for England but can be adapted for Scotland: www.urbanforum.org.uk/handy-guides/local-action-a-handy-guide-for-communities-working-with-councillors

10 essential shared capabilities: this is about mental health practice but could be more widely useful: www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/351385/10_essential_shared_capabilities_2011.pdf

Particular subjects it might be helpful to know more about

Christie Commission: You can see the report of the Christie Commission by going to this web-site: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/27154527/0

Civil servants: There is more about their role on: www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/UKgovernment/Centralgovernmentandthemonarchy/DG_073447

The Equality Act: There is information about this on:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/

Independent living: There is lots on our web-site about independent living.

Go to: www.ilis.co.uk/independent-living/

Models of disability: There is a short paper on Inclusion Scotland's web-site about the medical model and the social model of disability. It is on: www.inclusionscotland.org/reports.asp

Disability organisations: The independent living movement and differences between organisations 'of' and 'for' disabled people is explained in 'It's Our World Too': www.ilis.co.uk/uploaded_files/15p_it_s_our_world_too_plainenglish_pdf_level_3_revised_240510.pdf

Measuring success: This is a Scottish Recovery Network resource on the reflective evaluation of services: www.scottishrecovery.net/Latest-news/sri-2-promoting-recovery-focused-mental-health-service-delivery-in-scotland.html

Policy: The Independent Living in Scotland has a guide about developing policy and what policy is: www.ilis.co.uk/get-active/ilis-do-it-yourself-guides/

Self-directed support: The 10 year strategy for Self-directed support is on this web-site: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/05120810/0

Appendix 2

What the jargon means

Asset – a valuable resource. But an ‘asset-based approach’ can have different meanings. Here it means an approach that recognises that disabled people have valuable things to contribute. However, it can mean working with service-users to map the positive things in their life (their ‘assets’), like friends or places they like to go. It can also mean improving local communities’ ‘assets’, by developing local people’s skills and improving local facilities.

Civil servants - people who work for governments. Some work to develop policy and some provide services direct to the public, like paying benefits, issuing driving licences or running prisons.

Community development - action to strengthen communities, by promoting the participation of people who live in them and building their skills.

Outcome – the end result; the effect of an output.

Output – something that is developed or produced, like a service, a policy a strategy, an event, and so on.

Public appointment – an appointment to the Board of a public body or a government committee.

Public sector duty – the duties on public bodies (in the Equality Act) which say what they have to do about equality.

Policy – a principle, rule or decision about what should be done or how something should be done.

Remit – what a person, group or committee can deal with or has the authority to deal with.

Stakeholders – the different people or organisations who have an interest in the subject in question.

Strategy – a plan of action to achieve a particular goal.

Appendix 3

Examples of co-production

1. Evaluation of Local Housing Strategies Co-Production Pilots

“The membership of the co-production pilots in Argyll and Bute and North Lanarkshire were very different – one was large in size (up to 20) and included a mix of professionals and disabled people (although in the minority), while the other was much smaller (up to 5) and by design only included disabled service- users/community members. Ideally, a number somewhere between these two examples may have been more effective...

The different conceptions of co-production in the two pilots shaped the style and progress of the groups. Both groups determined the key housing issues or priorities, but thereafter the work-plans differed.

An important issue in sustaining the groups was the nature of information provision, what was provided and how. This includes the style of meetings and the approach of local authority staff.... There were examples where shifting of power towards service users was difficult...One of the key features of co- production is that senior managers have to delegate control to the staff involved in groups, and these members have to be willing to use it.

In both the pilots the commitment and enthusiasm of the lead officers and staff involved was clear. But both pilots had training and support needs...

Linked to the pilots’ overall understanding of co-production was the lack of clarity over the specific roles of group members. This was worked through and there was some evidence of team working and equal status to varying degrees. But it was clear that more development time and capacity building is required for a more active role to emerge from community members. Capacity building is also required amongst local authority staff – to change from the norm of leading and presenting to an audience, to acting as an equal partner... Key to the role definition is discussing constraints and boundaries to decision making at the beginning of the process...

... While co-production brings with it a change in roles, it still requires leadership: sometimes the move to co-production can result in group members or the ‘champion’ organisation being reticent to take a leadership role as others may see it as ‘taking over’...

The evaluation has shown that the groups did achieve some influence over decision making.”

The full evaluation report is on:
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/365083/0124090.pdf

2. Independent Living Strategy, Westminster Government

“In 2006, the government agreed to carry out a review of independent living. The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) established a cross-government Independent Living Review with an independent panel of experts.

The Independent Living Review project team worked in partnership with disabled people, making sure that the people whose lives are affected by policies have had a chance to influence and shape the project. In developing the Independent Living Strategy the project team also worked with government departments.”

The Independent Living Scrutiny Group (ILSG) is an independent group of disabled people that offers government its views on progress on delivery of the Independent Living Strategy.

The ILSG will publish a report every year to keep disabled people informed about progress.”

<http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/odi-projects/independent-living-strategy.php>

3. Community co-production: Playbusters

This is a community development organisation that uses the skills and experience of people to make real change. Playbusters has evolved as the community redefines its needs. Long-term projects include neighbourhood clean ups and teaching children Spanish.

Playbusters employs project staff but has been very successful in recruiting over 90 volunteers building on their skills and capacity to address community priorities. ‘Helping Hands’ was initiated by them for frail and disabled people, as well as young families, to fill the gap when “normal” services around the East End ceased due to the bad winter weather in 2011-2012. It involved Parkhead Housing Association and Glasgow City Council.

4. A mixed group of co-production partners: The Independent Living Core Reference Group

This is a group that looks at independent living issues across Government. Its members are from the Scottish Government, CoSLA, the National Health Service, the independent living movement and other voluntary sector organisations. They work with others to deliver an agreed work plan.

5. Inclusion Scotland’s ‘Human Rights and Independent Living Toolkit’

The toolkit was co-produced with disabled people. The brief for the project, the process and its outcomes were developed by disabled people and agreed with the consultants who were employed to do the work. The consultants developed some training materials about human rights and independent living. They then delivered the training to two disabled people’s organisations and an advocacy organisation.

After each training session the participants said what they thought of the training. They said what worked well and suggested ideas for improvements. The materials were then revised accordingly. After all the training, the materials were turned into a toolkit. The people who had been trained commented on the draft of the toolkit and their comments were included.

You can download the toolkit for free here:
www.inclusionscotland.org/

Appendix 4

Further information

Suggested answers to quiz questions

Rewards:	What could stop rewards from happening?
A better outcome for all	A better outcome for all will be hard to achieve if the partners don't really agree on the outcome they want to see. They each pull in different directions. They compete with each other rather than work together as partners.
Sharing knowledge leads to new, creative ideas	New, creative ideas will not happen if partners have a fixed idea of what would work. They are not willing to think about new ideas that might work. They don't really listen to each other or respect each other's ideas.
Better relationships between partners	Relationships will not get better if partners make wrong assumptions about each other. They behave in ways which increase distrust rather than build trust.

Quiz 2: What should you do?

Situation:	What to think about:
Your local authority needs to make cuts to social work services and wants to co-produce these with you.	You might be able to protect the most important services, or find new ways to deliver them that cost less. But can you agree an outcome? Some people may well lose out. You would have to share responsibility for this.
A health board wants to co-produce a major redesign of hospital facilities to make sure they're accessible to everyone. However, they've already made a lot of decisions and there may not be scope to change much.	You still might be able to make a positive impact. However, this isn't really co-production. If you don't agree with the decisions already taken and they can't be changed, you don't want to share responsibility for them - or for anyone to think you do.
The Scottish Government team working on self directed support wants to get the service users' views about how the quality of self directed support should be evaluated. It is proposing to hold an all-day event to explore this with service users.	This could be a good opportunity to be heard. But, is the event to be co-produced? What will the Scottish Government do with the views of service users? Will they be involved in what happens afterwards? It's unclear whether this is a consultation exercise or the start of power-sharing through co-production.
You work for a local disabled people's organisation. Your members are concerned what Scottish Government's plans to integrate health and social care will mean for them.	Find out all you can about the plans, who the lead officials are locally and how local plans will be developed and implemented. Invite them to meet you to see if there are opportunities for co-production.

Quiz 3: True or false?

	True or False?	Answer
You should always try to be friends with your co-production partners.	True / False	False. You can certainly be friendly and you might become friends but this is a professional, working relationship.
Your co-production partners use language that is inappropriate. You are sure they don't mean to cause offense so it's best not to say	True / False	False. False. You need to tell them BUT be sensitive to the fact that they if the mean well (and they almost certainly do) they might be quite upset to find out they've got it wrong. Educate them rather than tell them off.
You are very upset about something your co-production partners have done. You should tell them.	True / False	True. BUT first try to work out why they've done it. Could you have done something to prevent it? The way you tell them is important. Explain what the problem is as calmly as you can.
Your co-production partners tell you (nicely) that the things you are telling them are not relevant to the task. You should go away and think	True / False	True. You may be telling them things that are important to the people you represent but which don't really have anything to do with what you're working on. BUT it may be that your partners have not understood why something is relevant. If so, you need to find a way to explain it to them. It may help to confirm you all have a shared understanding of the task.
Co-production is the best way to get what you want.	True / False	Neither! It may be, but this is not a competition. The aim is to find a way to get the best solution for all the co-production partners

Quiz 4: How can you solve the problem?

Problem	Warning signs:	How can you solve the problem
No shared understanding of the task.be friends with your co-production	Partners don't seem to be listening to each other. They don't take each other's comments on board. They keep saying things that don't seem relevant. They keep asking you to do things that you can't do.	You need to discuss this with each other. Confirm that you have a shared understanding of the problem you are trying to solve, where you are trying to get to and what you each can and cannot do ('bottom-lines').
Partners aren't sharing responsibility.	There's clearly a problem but no one is saying anything. Or partners are good at raising problems but not at suggesting ways to solve them.	Don't be afraid to say if you think there's a problem. Before you raise a problem, think about what the solutions might be. Your partners may have other useful suggestions.
Lack of trust.	Partners are behaving as if this was a competition that one will win and one will lose. They are not telling each other important things. The atmosphere is tense.	You need to go back to the ground-rules you set at the start (and if you didn't set any, set some fast!).
No responsibility is taken for leading or managing the process.	Meetings are poorly organised. People don't know what's happening or when. You seem to be going round in circles.	You need to go back to what was agreed about roles, responsibilities and the plan for the process. If you haven't agreed how the process will be led and managed, partners may be wary about taking action to address the problem in case it looks like they're trying to 'take over'.

Appendix 5

What do you think of this toolkit?

1. Please say who you are (you can tick, circle or underline):

- I am a disabled person
- I am a non-disabled person
- I work for a Disabled People's Organisation
- I work for an organisation for disabled people
- I work in the voluntary sector
- I work in the public sector

Please send your feedback to:

Email: contact@ilis.co.uk
Website: www.ilis.co.uk
Twitter: [@ilisproject](https://twitter.com/ilisproject)
Facebook: [@independentlivinginscotland](https://www.facebook.com/independentlivinginscotland)

If you work in the public or voluntary sectors, please say what your job is:

2. Did the toolkit help you to feel confident about:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----|----|
| What co-production is? | yes | no |
| How to do it? | yes | no |

3. Did it encourage you to have a go? yes no maybe

4. Did you find it easy to understand? yes no mostly

If something was difficult to understand, please say what it was:

5. Did you find the checklists useful? yes no

6. Did you find the activities and quizzes useful? yes no

7. Do you have any questions about co-production that the tool-kit didn't answer? yes no

What are these questions?

8. Do you have ideas about things that could be added to the toolkit or changed to make it better?

9. If you know of any examples of co-production good practice please tell us about them here.

10. If you have been involved in co-producing something, please tell us about it here.

- What was it?
- Who were your co-production partners?
- What did you learn?
- Did you use the toolkit?



Independent **Living in Scotland**

Inspire • Involve • Invest

The ILiS project

The Independent Living in Scotland (ILiS) project began in June 2008 when the Scottish Government announced funding to develop independent living in Scotland. ILiS aims to strengthen the Independent Living Movement and support disabled people to have their voices heard at national and local level so that decision-makers work with them to deliver independent living.

An expert group of disabled people guide the ILiS project.

Information

Visit our website at **www.ilis.co.uk** you'll find lots of information about independent living. If you are a disabled person or a Disabled People's Organisation you'll find lots of tools, information, ways of sharing resources and experience with others in the Movement, and much more besides.

Website www.ilis.co.uk

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