CO-PRODUCTION POLICY

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1. Introduction and Commitment

At Pathways Associates CIC, co-production is fundamental to who we are and everything we do.

As a disabled-led Community Interest Company, we are committed to enabling people with learning disabilities, autistic people, and their families to live the lives they choose as equals in their local communities. We achieve this through:

- Actively drawing on the expertise and lived experience of disabled people, self-advocates, families, and professionals
- Co-designing, co-delivering, co-evaluating, and co-improving solutions — including training, policy development, strategy support, capability building, and organisational practice

Co-production means working as equal partners from the very beginning, valuing different kinds of knowledge equally, and sharing power and responsibility. We follow best practice definitions (SCIE, NHS England, Skills for Care) that describe co-production as genuine partnership rather than consultation or involvement.

This policy sets out our approach, principles, roles, and processes to ensure co-production is meaningful, consistent, accessible, and impactful.

2. Scope This policy applies to all Pathways Associates CIC activities, including:

- Development and delivery of training and learning programmes
- Policy and strategy support
- Capability building
- Expert Hub activities
- Self Advocates Training Partnership
- Confirm and Challenge meetings
- Other co-production networks
- Events, partnership working, evaluation, and internal decision-making

It covers:

- Colleagues
- Volunteers

- Experts by Experience
- Self-advocates
- Partners
- Commissioners
- All other stakeholders

3. Co-Production Objectives

We aim to:

- Centre the leadership and expertise of disabled people — especially people with learning disabilities and autistic people — and their families in all stages of our work
- Empower people with lived experience to shape decisions, solutions, and outcomes that directly affect them
- Build strong, respectful, and sustainable partnerships between disabled people, families, professionals, and organisations
- Drive innovation and break down barriers by combining diverse perspectives and evidence
- Achieve real, measurable improvements in inclusion, equality, wellbeing, and life outcomes for the people and communities we serve

4. Core Principles

Our co-production is guided by:

- **Equality of partnership** — all partners (Experts by Experience, self-advocates, families, professionals) are equal and no one's knowledge or voice is more important than another's
- **Lived experience leadership** — people with learning disabilities and autistic people lead and shape our work
- **Respect and value** — we recognise and honour the diversity of experiences, identities, communication styles, and contributions
- **Transparency and openness** — clear communication about purpose, process, decision-making, and how input is used

- **Accessibility and inclusion** — all activities are designed to be accessible, with reasonable adjustments, multiple participation methods, and support as needed
- **Shared power and responsibility** — power is shared, decisions are made together, and accountability is mutual
- **Recognition and fairness** — Experts by Experience and self-advocates receive appropriate thanks, payment, support, and development opportunities (following best practice rates and principles)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Leadership Team and CEO**
  - Champion co-production as core to our mission and values
  - Ensure resources (time, budget, support) are allocated
  - Oversee monitoring, evaluation, and policy review
- **Colleagues, volunteers, and associates**
  - Actively participate in co-production activities
  - Build skills in co-production and inclusive practice
  - Listen, learn from, and act on lived experience input
- **Experts by Experience, self-advocates, and people with lived experience**
  - Lead and co-produce through Expert Hub, Self Advocates Training Partnership, networks, and co-delivery
  - Share insights, review materials, co-design solutions, and help evaluate impact
  - Receive fair recognition, payment (where appropriate), and support
- **Partners, commissioners, and stakeholders**
  - Engage meaningfully in co-production processes
  - Value and act on lived experience leadership
  - Contribute expertise while sharing power and decision-making

6. Co-Production Processes

We embed co-production across the full cycle:

- **Engagement and planning**
    - Involve people with lived experience from the earliest stages (design, scoping, planning)
    - Use accessible methods (Confirm and Challenge meetings, Expert Hub, surveys, one-to-one conversations, creative approaches)
- **Design and co-production**
    - Co-create content, materials, training, policies, and strategies together
    - Co-deliver training and solutions wherever possible (aligned with Oliver McGowan Code of Practice standards)
- **Implementation and delivery**
    - Put co-produced solutions into practice with ongoing involvement and monitoring
- **Evaluation and learning**
    - Regularly evaluate impact through co-produced methods
    - Capture feedback, stories of change, and outcomes
    - Communicate clearly what changed as a result of input
- **Closing the loop**
    - Share results and learning openly
    - Celebrate successes
    - Use learning to improve future co-production

7. Training, Development, and Support

We commit to:

- Providing ongoing training and development for colleagues, volunteers, Experts by Experience, and partners on co-production, lived experience leadership, accessibility, and inclusive practice
- Supporting Experts by Experience and self-advocates to build confidence, skills, and paid roles in co-production and training delivery
- Embedding best practice from the Oliver McGowan Code of Practice, SCIE guidance, and related frameworks

8. Monitoring, Review, and Continuous Improvement

- This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if there are major changes in legislation, guidance, or our work
- Reviews will be co-produced with Experts by Experience and stakeholders
- We monitor how well we are living this policy (through feedback, participation levels, impact stories)
- We use learning to strengthen our approach

9. Conclusion

Pathways Associates CIC is dedicated to genuine co-production that delivers better outcomes for people with learning disabilities, autistic people, and their families. By working as equal partners, valuing lived experience as essential expertise, and continuously improving our practice, we will create more inclusive, effective, and impactful solutions — together.