Co-production & Cha Chat Change

What is Co-production?

"The pooling of knowledge, skills, capabilities and experiences to reach shared solutions; **assuming equal partnerships between participants"**

DIY Health Toolkit

Equal partnerships

Co-production is about you working with your local community to think about how you can address fuel poverty together. This means working with your Energy Champions as **equals.**

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As members of the same community you have equal capacity to provide momentum, take decisions, take action and provide support.
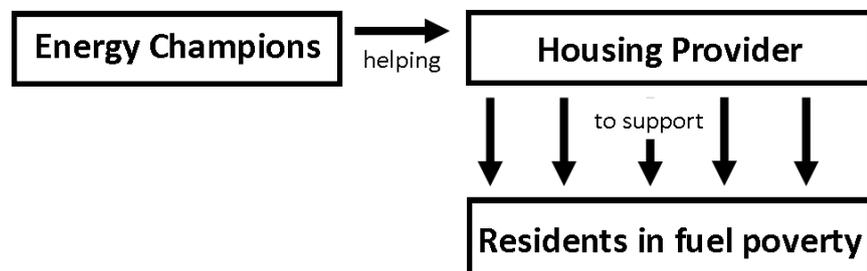
Co-production is not about your residents **helping you** to address fuel poverty.

This is because this implies that the housing provider is in charge – you provide the momentum, take decisions, take actions and provide support. Residents in this scenario are mainly there to be supported or to feed into decisions. Residents and their potential contributions can be overlooked or seen as less important in this model.

Support and change comes from everyone

Co-production is an approach based on the fact that support is delivered by a huge range of individuals and groups in a huge range of contexts for example:

Making communal heating charges easier to understand for tenants

Inviting someone to talk to them about switching energy provider

Teaching their children how to save energy in the home

Housing Officer

Knitting Group

Parent

Working together to address fuel poverty

Family member

Community Engagement Officer

Lending a relative money to put on their electricity meter

Coordinating a community cooking club

Volunteer

Energy Company

Giving out energy saving tools at a community event

Charging a reduced tariff to someone with high disability-related energy.

Whilst housing providers play a very important role in supporting residents around energy costs, the support and actions taken by other groups, individuals and organisations are equally important.

Co-production is an approach that gives equal weighting to support provided in all contexts by all parties.
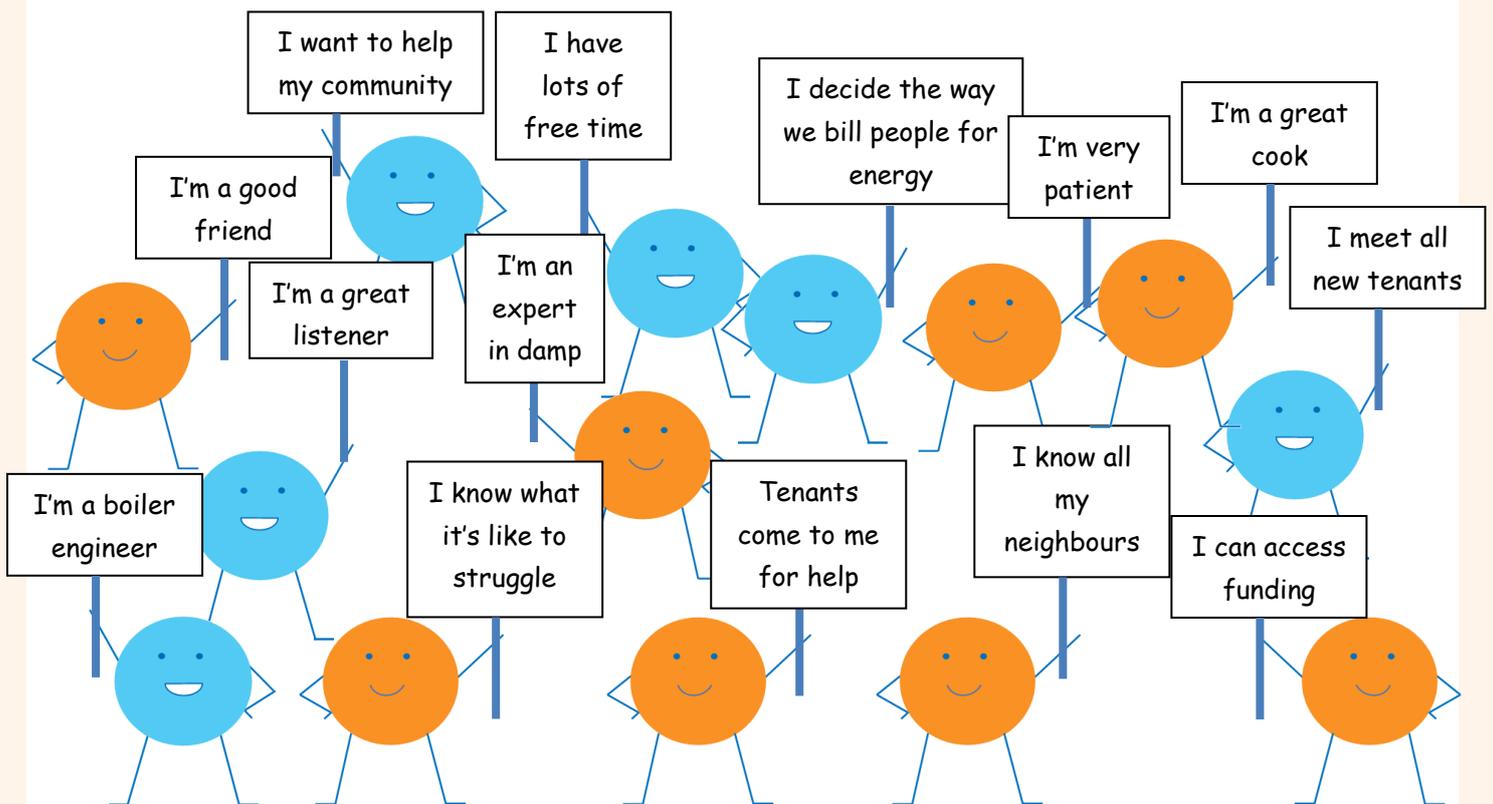
Knowledge, skills, capabilities and experiences

We all have different ways in which we can help.

Co-production is about exploring how the unique knowledge, skills, capabilities and experiences of a group of individuals can be channelled to solve a shared problem – in this case fuel poverty.

"The point is not to consult more or involve people in decisions, it is to encourage them to use the human skills and experience they have to help deliver public or voluntary services"

Co-production: A Manifesto for growing the core economy, New Economics Foundation

"How can we work together to use these skills, capabilities, experiences and knowledge to tackle fuel poverty?"

Working towards shared goals

We all have different priorities and goals, even in relation to a single issue like Fuel poverty.

The aim of Co-production is to agree actions that work towards the priorities and goals of everyone taking part. Not only does this mean that they are more likely to meet the needs of the community overall, it also gives everyone a real motivation to see the actions succeed.

Co production in action – case studies from Nesta Co-production Catalogue

Richmond Users Independent Living Scheme (RUILS)

RUILS supports older people, and people with learning difficulties and mental health challenges, to live independent lives in their communities.

The distinctions between people who provide and receive services are blurred; the majority of decision makers at RUILS are also service users.

A peer-to-peer support scheme was set up to better involve users in the running of services, and to tap into the skills, knowledge and expertise of their members which go beyond what members of staff can offer. In the peer-to-peer scheme, buddies act as one-to-one coaches, helping the person they support to overcome challenges and/or achieve a goal that is important to them. RUILS makes it clear that peer supporters are not there to take over or act as advocates; their role is facilitative.

RUILS also helps its users and members to pool their personal budgets. This enables people with personal budgets to increase their purchasing power, and also helps them to expand their social networks by bringing people together around activities that they enjoy.

Shared Lives

Shared Lives is about a household – family, couple or single person – including another individual in their family and community life who need some help to live the lives they choose. Traditionally Shared Lives schemes focused on supporting adults with learning disabilities, but over recent years they have broadened to include older people, people with physical disabilities and people with mental health problems.

Shared Lives mixes paid and unpaid caring contributions. It shows how the assets within the core economy – people's time, skills and empathy – can be used to support the delivery of services. Relationships are reciprocal ensuring everyone involved is valued as an individual and makes a contribution to the life of the household and their community. By supporting people to live in a community setting, the wider networks of the community are engaged in providing support and friendships.

People involved in Shared Lives have identified benefits including: increased control and choice for 'users'; developed 'user' confidence, self-esteem, skills and independence; developing stronger reciprocal relationships with others, widening social networks and integrating better into local communities; improved physical and emotional well-being; reduced likelihood of abuse; increased

KeyRing

KeyRing is a supported living service for vulnerable adults. The approach is to set up a series of local networks, of which each has nine adult members and one volunteer (the navigator), all living independently, usually within a 10-15 minute walk of each other. KeyRing's support is based on people living in their own homes, but sharing their skills and talents with each other and with their communities. It is about helping people to live independently by building networks of interdependence with other KeyRing members and the broader community.

Volunteers are much like good neighbours who help people out when challenges arise; such as helping to read and pay bills, or organising necessary housing maintenance. But volunteers also help members make links with each other and with the wider community. One of the first things that members of a new network start to work on is a personal and community map which highlights people's networks of friends and acquaintances and draw out formal resources and amenities, and informal networks and assets within the community.

Critically the networks developed are not simply for vulnerable adults, but instead informally incorporate a wide range of people from the local community. Assets and resources from within the membership base and beyond are carefully identified, in some cases nurtured, and then mobilised to maximise the networks scope and impact.

What are the **Cha**, **Cha**t, **Cha**nge sessions?

As Energy Champions, residents who are traditionally seen as the recipients and beneficiaries of support are intended to be designers and deliverers of a service to their community.

The three Cha, Chat Change (Cha) sessions aim to take this even further. They are a forum for housing provider staff, Energy Champions and any other interested parties to meet and work together on an equal footing to tackle fuel poverty amongst local residents.

By the end of these initial sessions we hope the participants will agree at least one short, medium and long term action.

Achieving these actions might need contributions from just one or a combination of participants.

How will they work?

The way the sessions are run will vary depending on what works for each group. If you have staff in your organisation who are experienced in Co-production and would like us to work with them, we can design the sessions together. However, we initially expect them to last three hours each and to roughly break down as follows:

Session 1
- ✓ Introductions
- ✓ What is fuel poverty and why do we want to tackle it?
- ✓ What is happening now?
    - o What is going well in relation to energy costs?
    - o What problems are people having in relation to energy costs?

Session 2
- ✓ What are the possibilities?
    - o How can we turn problems into possibilities?
- ✓ What are we working with?
    - o What individuals, groups and organisations exist that can help this happen?
    - o What are their skills, knowledge, capabilities and experiences?

Session 3
- ✓ Narrowing down
    - o What are our favourite possibilities?
    - o How could this work in practice? What might get in the way? What is possible and what would need to happen to achieve it? Is it a short, medium or long term action?
- ✓ Agreeing actions
    - o Choosing our favourite short, medium and long term action
    - o Agreeing who's involved, next steps, timescales and support needed

Cha Chat Change

What will they focus on?

There are many types of support that can help tackle fuel poverty including:
- Helping people to change the amount of energy they use
- Helping people to minimise the cost of their energy and manage their payments
- Making it easier for people to understand their energy costs
- Helping people who fall behind or are struggling with their energy costs
- Changing people's homes so that they use less energy

There are also different times that people might need help around energy costs:

- When they move into a new home
- When something changes the amount of energy they use e.g. death in the family, new baby
- When they are struggling to pay their energy costs
- When something changes the way they manage their energy usage e.g. new boiler, insulation
- When not heating their home affects their home, health or other area of their life (e.g. damp)
- As the topic of fuel poverty is so wide and time is limited, we would like to start the sessions with a more specific idea of what area or time period the group would like to focus on. This would be based on preferences of people taking part but could change at a later date if the group thinks it's necessary.

Who do you want to be there?

STAFF

When thinking about who you want to be involved in the Cha sessions, you might want to think about anyone who is likely to be involved in potential actions that might come out of them. If key staff have been involved in the sessions, they are likely to have more ownership of the actions and so are more likely to follow up on any that require things of them.

Whoever takes part will need to approach the Cha sessions with an open mind and have some stake in reducing fuel poverty in your community. The Empower team can help with this.

Staff you may want to consider include:

- ✓ Community engagement staff:
    - o Knowledge and experience of Co-production
    - o Capacity to support Energy Champion activities if needed
- ✓ Welfare rights officers/ energy related staff
    - o Specialist knowledge of fuel poverty and financial health
    - o Active experience and capacity to support residents
- ✓ Letting officers/ housing officers
    - o Capacity to work with tenants at the start of a tenancy
    - o Knowledge and understanding of the processes, challenges and opportunities presented at the start of a tenancy
- ✓ Repairs and maintenance staff
    - o Knowledge of heating systems and controls
    - o Knowledge of damp and condensation problems
    - o Experience of supporting tenants with damp and condensation problems

OTHER PEOPLE FROM THE COMMUNITY

The sessions needn't be limited to just your staff and energy champions – you may choose to involve other individuals or groups that have an interest in preventing fuel poverty.

How can Energy Champions prepare?

Through the course of the Energy Champions training we will be taking certain actions to make Cha Chat Change sessions more likely to succeed. This includes:

- ✓ Encouraging Energy Champions to reflect on their experience, knowledge, skills, capabilities and experiences
- ✓ Introducing the Co-production sessions to the Energy Champions and exploring what they might get out of them
- ✓ Exploring possible areas that the Energy Champions might be interested in focusing on in order to narrow the initial scope of the sessions

How can you prepare?

1. Decide who you would like to come to the Cha Chat Change sessions
2. Introduce Empower to anyone you would like to feed into running and designing the sessions
3. Think about any good/ bad times to hold the sessions
4. Make sure you have an idea of what key things you are currently doing as an organisation to address fuel poverty
5. Reflect on your knowledge, skills, capabilities and experiences that might be relevant to the sessions