BUILDING CONNECTIONS FUND

Guidance on co-design and community spaces

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This document offers guidance on co-design, evaluation of co-design and evaluation of community spaces. It includes a brief introduction to co-design and why it matters, top tips and tools for creating and monitoring a co-design process, and advice on how to evaluate it.

This guidance was developed for the Building Connections Fund grant-holders who are working specifically on co-design and community spaces, but can be used by any organisation looking to design or improve its co-design process. The short-term projects funded by the Building Connections Fund are already underway, so the sections on evaluation will be most relevant. However, the principles used throughout should still be considered and will certainly apply to future co-design work.

Evaluation in partnership with:

Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

The Building Connections Fund

Following the Prime Minister's endorsement of the Jo Cox Commission recommendations on Loneliness, the Building Connections Fund has been set up to support projects that are able to prevent or reduce loneliness. This is part of Government's wider package to tackle loneliness, including the first loneliness strategy for England and recommendations on standard measures of loneliness.

The Building Connections Fund is a cross-government fund[1] in partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund and The Co-op Foundation. The Fund provides grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations across England to fund projects aiming to prevent or reduce loneliness. These projects target people of all age groups and backgrounds.

About this guidance

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Introduction to co-design

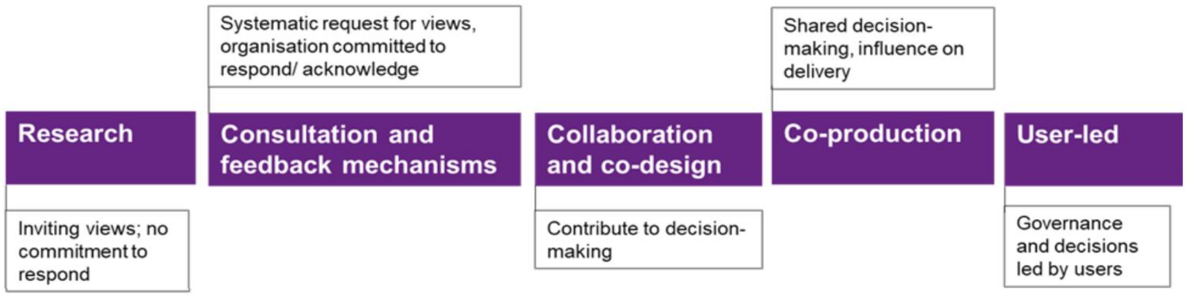
Co-design is when an organisation and its stakeholders work together to design or rethink a service.

Co-design is often mistakenly used as an umbrella term for all forms of user involvement. However, it sits along a spectrum of ways to involve users in service design and development, as shown in Figure 1. Consultation and feedback mechanisms seek advice and opinions from users, whereas co-design allows them to design services in close collaboration with your organisation.

The most important feature of any co-design process is that it recognises the agency of users who are considered "experts" of their own experience. Organisations provide ways for users to engage with each other as well as with staff, to communicate, be creative, share insights, and test out new ideas. Creating a culture of participation is a key enabler. It is equally important to support users, so they can develop the skills, knowledge, and experience required to fully participate—both during the co-design process, and in the evaluation of it.

[1] The cross-government interest spans across Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Education, Department for Transport, Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health and Social Care and Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Figure 1: Spectrum of user involvement approaches



Why does co-design matter?

You may already use some or all elements of a co-design practice.[2] There are three key arguments for doing so:

- users should have a say in the decisions affecting them;
- co-design can create positive benefits for the staff and users involved; and
- can result in better services that deliver better outcomes for organisations and service users.

Youth work has a long tradition of involving young people in the design, delivery, and evaluation of its services, with a commitment to the empowerment of young people at its core.

There is widespread recognition that services co-designed with young people are more likely to be responsive to their needs; able to create the right conditions for engagement, facilitating openness and trust; and, ultimately, effective. Young people's participation creates benefits for young people (through the development of skills, knowledge, and confidence), organisations (by strengthening relationships and building more sustainable and effective services), and communities (by widening the democratic space and changing perceptions of young people).

What are the potential outcomes of co-design?

Co-design can result in positive outcomes for individuals as well as organisations and the wider sector.

For individual participants, outcomes can include:

- Increased confidence and engagement
- Social connections
- Access to information
- Stronger relationships

These outcomes are often prioritised for young people, but the knowledge, expertise, and confidence of staff is expected to increase, too.

[2] The most familiar participation model in English youth work is the Ladder of Participation by Roger Hart (1997). It describes eight rungs on the ladder, with youth workers aiming to work on the higher five levels; moving through consultation to the stage where young people can lead and initiate action and finally become equal partners in decision making with adults. In reality, forms of participation are not hierarchical, and will move across these five rungs during different phases of activity.

Figure 2: Example of potential outcomes of co-design for participants

For the organisation and the wider sector, co-design can improve the way services are designed and delivered to make them work better for people. Specific outcomes can include:

- Improved decision-making
- Generation of better ideas
- Improved knowledge of users' needs
- Reduced development costs for services
- Better cooperation between people and organisations, and across disciplines
- Higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty from service users
- Increased levels of support for innovation and change
- Better relationships between organisations and users

Figure 3: Example of potential outcomes of codesign for the organisation and the wider sector

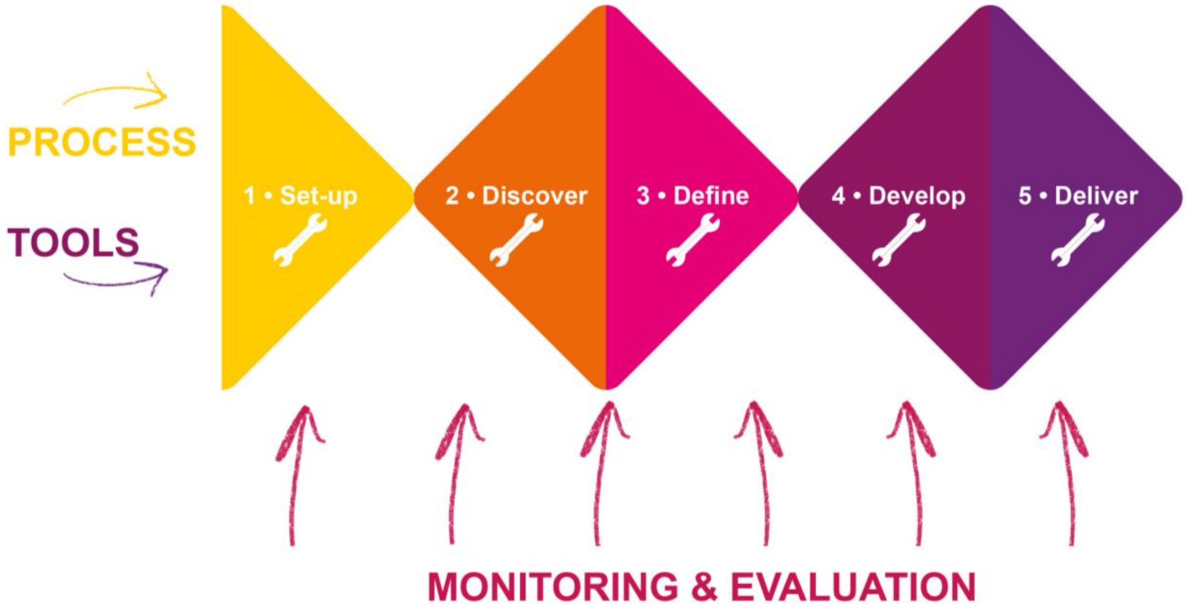
Co-design can also generate negative outcomes. For example, there is a risk that tokenistic co-design or poor execution of co-design creates cynicism amongst young people by raising expectations and not meeting them.

CO-DESIGN: A FIVE-STAGE PROCESS

It is important to be clear about the purpose, aims, approach, and intended outcomes of your co-design process. In other words, you need to know what you are trying to achieve before monitoring whether you are going in the right direction, so you can properly assess the results and be accountable for them. Being able to review your co-design approach will also make it possible to improve the quality and focus of the activities involved.

Below is a simplified co-design roadmap (Figure 4), followed by tips on how to measure each stage and links to helpful tools and quality markers. Bear in mind that each stage relates to the co-design process, not the actual design and delivery of a service.

Figure 4: The five-stage process of co-design



Stage 1: Set-up

The aim of this stage is to **get your co-design process off to a solid start**. This covers:

- Engaging young people and other key stakeholders to participate
- Defining participants' level of involvement, scope of influence, and how decisions will be made. Agree these terms clearly and collaboratively
- Agreeing the aims and intended outcomes of the process with participants
- Building the right team and defining what roles people will play, thinking broadly and creatively about where participants may be able to take on new roles to develop skills or contribute in a way that is different to their "day job" (eg, youth worker taking on the role of project photographer)

Top tips and things to monitor:

- **Define the scope and approach:** What do you want your co-design process to achieve? Are there any limitations? Discuss and identify potential conflicts in objectives, look for areas of common ground, and agree both with your participants as far as possible. Consider where you are on the spectrum of user involvement and check that this is appropriate for all concerned.
- **Set clear aims:** You must be clear about *why* you're using a co-design process. Agree what your priorities are, and how you're going to monitor and evaluate progress. Choose metrics to assess and review your performance against.
- **Involve participants early in the co-design process:** Don't wait until you have a set of polished options for participants to discuss, involve them in the development of ideas and approaches.
- **Explore relevant training:** Consider the kind of support you may need to offer participants to increase or adjust what they are able to contribute to the co-design process over time.
- **Ensure inclusivity:** Seek a good mix of participants (service users, staff, and volunteers) with different kinds of knowledge (lived experience, and professional and specialist expertise). Try to recruit participants who reflect your target audience, not just those you currently support. Consider how to accommodate people's availability and needs—holding some workshops or events on a weekend, for example—and ensure venues are accessible to all. Measure inclusivity and representativeness by tracking outputs. These could include:
  - Number of users involved
  - Number of staff involved
  - Range of users involved (age/ethnicity/disability/gender)
  - Number of events held
  - Whether users are invited or volunteer to participate
  - Percentage of users with access to training to develop their skills
  - Range of training available to users

Tools to consider using:

- Customer Journey Mapping, Ideas Farms and Scenarios from OPM
- DIY toolkit

Stage 2: Discover

The aim of this stage is to **discover new insights that may influence your co-design process**. This covers:

- Looking at the world in a fresh way, noticing new things, and gathering insights
- Building new knowledge and perspectives on your chosen issue
- Understanding what is important to your potential users
- Challenging existing assumptions about an issue
- Looking for inspiring examples of services elsewhere
- Producing insights to base the next stage of the design process on

Top tips and things to monitor:

- **Think about outcomes:** How do you want people to think, feel, talk, and behave as a result of your co-design activities? Hold off thinking about the actual activities you plan to deliver until you've got to this stage to avoid narrowing your thinking.
- **Ensure respect:** All co-design participants should be treated as experts, and their time, knowledge, and other contributions must be valued. Explore how you can ensure everyone understands their role and purpose, feels listened to, and is given appropriate compensation.
- **Facilitate meaningful participation:** Co-design is not tokenistic engagement or mere consultation; people should be involved as active participants with meaningful input throughout the process. Consider how you can allow enough time for stakeholders to really consider and influence decisions, and ensure they feel free to disagree with the facilitators.
- **Prepare to adapt and iterate:** Co-design should be a creative process where you don't have pre-defined outcomes and are prepared for stakeholders' input to shape what you end up designing and delivering. It should be full of learning, iteration, and trial and error. Select activities, tools or methods that are responsive to the opinions and desires of all participants and plan how to review them regularly.

Tools to consider using:

- Customer Journey Mapping, Ideas Farms and Scenarios from OPM
- DIY toolkit

Stage 3: Define

The aim of this stage is to **define the problem to be addressed through the co-design process**. This covers:

- Prioritising key insights
- Finding patterns and themes in the insights you have uncovered
- Defining the key design challenge
- Checking the brief against initial direction and capabilities/interest of the organisation and partners. Does it feel achievable? Will it make a difference to the people you're trying to help?

Top tips and things to monitor:

- The tips in Stage 2: Discover (see above) also apply here. In addition:
- **Check engagement:** People's continued engagement with the process is a good sign of how it is progressing. Do participants want to come back? Is engagement growing as the process unfolds?
- **Stick to agreed roles:** It is important that participants have the level of influence they expect to have. Is there transparency about how decisions will be made? Does everyone understand how the process is developing and feel confident enough to contribute and test ideas out loud?

Top tips and tools to consider using:

- **Brainstorm drivers and hurdles:** Brainstorm what participants perceive to be the drivers and hurdles to a project's success. Collect ideas on two separate sheets of paper. Establish what the project can and can not address, and agree which drivers it would be best to focus on in order to overcome the hurdles.

- **Prioritise ideas using assessment criteria:** Assessment criteria—agreed standards and expectations for co-design—can be useful for considering the views of multiple stakeholders and deciding which are the best ideas to take forward. Different criteria can be used for different groups of stakeholders and each idea can be scored against them and discussed as a group. There are lots of good reasons to prioritise and select ideas for further investigation. You might want to select ideas that:
    - Have the potential for the greatest impact on your target users
    - Generate a new way of looking at the problem you identified in your brief
    - Are most likely to unlock new resources
    - Are most unusual, and therefore represent the greatest learning opportunity
    - Challenge some functions of your organisation that you would like to explore creatively

  There is no right way of balancing these factors. You will need to decide which is most important for your project.

Stage 4: Develop

The aim of this stage is to **develop ideas or solutions and refine them through a series of prototypes**. This covers:

- Generating ideas, including practical and "wild" ideas to encourage creative solutions
- Thinking-through-doing
- Spotting risks and designing around them
- Making ideas real in small tests—what designers call prototypes—so you can get feedback from key stakeholders
- Generating evidence that the ideas will work
- Getting buy-in from key people needed to deliver the idea

Top tips and things to monitor:

- The tips in Stage 2: Discover and Stage 3: Define also (see above) also apply here. In addition:
- **Adopt the right mindset:** No one has all the answers; don't be afraid to try things out and fail. The solution is out there, and with a clear focus on your problem and those experiencing it, you will find it. Think of as many ideas as you can, make them tangible, and test them.
- **Consider creative ways to test your ideas:** It's easy to believe that testing involves too many people, or too much time and resources. Consider what you are trying to find out and how you can gather feedback in a low-risk, low-scale way. For example, to test the basic premise of a website, draw an outline of the page using pen and paper, and ask potential users for feedback on the layout, language, and content.

Tools to consider using:

- Customer Journey Mapping, Ideas Farms and Scenarios from OPM
- DIY toolkit
- **Role play:** Define a character or characters who will use or deliver the end product or service you are designing. Isolate key moments where these users interact with it and act them out.

Stage 5: Deliver

The aim of this stage is to **finalise, produce, and deliver the activity identified through the co-design process**. This covers:

- Detailing a final solution, then producing and launching it
- Gaining support and funding for a solution
- Mapping how you want to develop it in future

Top tips and things to monitor:

- **Ensure the loop is closed:** After people have given their time and knowledge, it is important they feel they are still involved. Ensure that you communicate the changes made and that exit and development strategies are created for users who want to progress.
- **Gauge effectiveness of the process:** Use outputs that can include:
  - Percentage of users who felt valued in the process
  - Number of users who dropped out of process
  - Number of users who want to stay engaged in the project
  - Change in participants' self-esteem, confidence, and skills
  - Change in facilitators'/designers' knowledge, and understanding of users
- **Consider your measurement approach:** Now that the co-design process is over, a key indicator of the project's success will be if change happens as a result. Consider how to set up a framework for evaluating whether and how your activity achieves its intended outcomes. Its success will be an important indicator of a successfully executed co-design process. Look at NPC's Four Pillars approach, and five types of data. We also recommend looking at The Building Connections Fund guidance on evaluation for grant-holders.

Tools to consider using:

- "Decide" and "Change" tools from PWDA

HOW TO EVALUATE CO-DESIGN

Not enough attention is paid to assessing the quality of a co-design process, and measuring the impact associated with it. Co-design is challenging to measure because:

- It can include a wide range of activities
- It is a process rather than a programme or intervention
- It may not have pre-defined outcomes
- Different young people are likely to engage in different ways, or have different experiences.

However, evaluating your co-design process will provide evidence on how it can help you and others to rethink and plan work, while also offering insights into how community spaces can be used to address loneliness.

This guidance focuses on the three-month projects currently funded by the Building Connections Fund. For short-term projects like these, the main focus should be reflecting on:

- The benefits of the co-design process for staff and young people
- The quality of the co-design process
- The insights to emerge from the co-design process about tackling loneliness (including the role of community spaces)

Measuring the benefits of co-design for staff and young people

It is important to explore how co-design activities have both shaped the delivery of your work and created change for young people. Reflecting on the benefits to young people involves a dual focus:

- The impact of participation on the skills, knowledge, behaviour, and attitudes of young people
- The impact of participation on their experiences of loneliness and social isolation specifically

The five types of data framework below provides an overview of the kinds of data to consider collecting.[3] For Building Connections Fund projects, this will help to develop a comprehensive picture of the effects of co-design on young people's personal and social development, as well as their experiences of loneliness.

The framework highlights data that every organisation should be able to capture routinely, regardless of size or capacity. It also emphasises the importance of process—what happened, how was it experienced, and why did it occur—rather than just the end result (ie, impact).

The table sets out the five types of data, explaining what each might tell you about young people's experiences of co-design and of loneliness, and how to go about collecting it.

[3] See https://www.thinknpc.org/blog/5-types-of-data-for-assessing-your-work-an-explainer/

	Type of data	What is it?	What will it tell you about co-design?	What will it tell you about loneliness?	Tools
Appropriate for all grant-holders	**User data**	Information about the young people engaging with your work	*Whether the types of young people involved are as you intended* This can be compared with data for your provision more generally to determine how representative your co-design participants are. You may want to consider whether any particular groups are over- or under-represented, and whether particular steps to engage young people were more effective than others.	*Whether the types of young people involved are as you intended* You will likely have a target group in mind when designing provision intended to address loneliness, although it may be broad—such as *'young women aged 13-18 living in certain wards'*. This data will help you to understand whether your target group is engaging at all, and, if so, to what extent. It may reveal that other groups of young people are engaging frequently, possibly highlighting unmet need. It may be possible to explore the relationship between these characteristics and the other types of data, including the type and level of engagement, the positivity of their experience and, the outcomes achieved.	Registration or sign-up forms, referrals, partner records (eg, from schools or healthcare providers)
	Engagement data	Information about *how* young people are engaging with you—how often, how long for, and in which specific activities	*Whether young people are engaging with the co-design process as intended* You can explore what types of co-design activities are being provided, which activities young people are engaging/sticking with the most, the extent to which they engage (eg, staying for the full session), and the extent to which engagement is sustained. You may find that you need to design particular types of approach to engage different groups of young people.	*Whether young people are engaging with provision as intended* The impact of provision on young people's experience of loneliness is likely to be greatest when engagement is sustained, and relationships are established. This means you will need to understand young people's "paths" through your provision, whether anything seems to trigger disengagement, and if there are specific patterns for particular groups. Ultimately, your service design is a hypothesis (a theory) about how your provision will work best. Included in that theory will be some ideas about how young people will engage. Engagement data will help you to test those ideas, and make changes based on what you learn.	Registers, sign-in sheets, website analytics, digital tools eg, smartphones
	Feedback data	Information about young people's experiences	*Whether young people are experiencing the co-design process as intended* Effective co-design is about sharing power with young people as equals. Whether young people *feel* they have experienced this is critical.	*Whether young people are experiencing the "active ingredients" of provision as intended* Your service design will be based on one or more hypotheses about what young people will experience, and how they will feel, in order to reduce levels of loneliness and isolation. Feedback data enables you to test, quickly and easily, whether young people are experiencing and feeling what you hoped.	Feedback through informal conversations, social media, instant feedback tools

			You need to provide consistent ways for *all* young people to tell you what they have experienced, anonymously, and for you to respond by explaining what you heard and what you've changed as a result. Feedback data should be as light-touch as possible—to minimise the burden of data collection—and, ideally, systematic—to increase consistency and allow for comparability over time.	Feedback data also allows you to ask open-ended questions like *'What could we do better?'*.	(eg, '*Rate your visit today – Good, neutral, bad*'), light-touch surveys, self-assessments, peer observations
Appropriate for some grant-holders	**Outcomes data**	Information about how young people have been influenced or helped in the short-term	*What has changed in the short term—for staff, organisational processes, your services, the young people involved in co-design, and your broader service users* It is likely that observed changes will relate to skills, knowledge and awareness, and behaviour. There may also be changes, for example, to young people's level of self-efficacy, motivation, and empathy for others.	*Whether young people's level of self-reported loneliness and/or social isolation has changed, and why they think this has happened* Outcomes data is about understanding what young people gain from your work in the short-term. Some of these will be "intended"—you established them in advance and hoped they would happen—and some will be "unintended"—you didn't expect or plan for them to happen. Unintended outcomes can be positive or negative, so it's important to check what else might be happening for young people, alongside the outcomes "of interest". You are not trying to "prove" that these outcomes were caused by your work. This data will tell you how *young people think* they have been helped by your work. You don't need to collect outcomes data from all young people, you can just collect data from a sample of young people using your provision.	For time-limited or light touch projects, this will draw primarily on qualitative information, such as interviews, observations, and self-assessments
	Impact data	Information about the longer-term difference experienced by young people	*Whether the changes reported by young people and staff have helped them to make longer-term positive changes in their lives and organisations respectively*	*Whether the outcomes young people reported have helped them to change their lives for the better* There may be particular areas of long-term impact you are interested in, such as (re)engagement in learning or work, better health and wellbeing, or stable housing. The key is that young people achieve these changes for themselves, sometimes several years after leaving your provision. It is likely that these changes will also have been influenced by other factors in young people's lives.	High-quality evaluation, sometimes carried out externally, and/or with a comparison group

Ultimately, an objective of your co-design activities is to increase the effectiveness of your work in addressing young people's experience of loneliness and isolation. There are different ways you can measure this:

- The What Works Centre for Wellbeing's Brief Guide to Measuring Loneliness explores different measures for understanding experiences of loneliness. It focuses on a core pre- and post-measure—the ONS national indicators of loneliness—which can be used by organisations working *directly with young people* to reduce loneliness. These indicators are less relevant for organisations that *support other organisations* to reduce loneliness, work on infrastructure or systems change, or seek to prevent rather than reduce loneliness. For these organisations, the guidance offers additional information about measures that may be more relevant.
- The Building Connections Fund guidance on evaluation for grant-holders builds on the Brief Guide to Measuring Loneliness by providing practical guidance for understanding evaluation and evaluating your activities. It offers a step-by-step approach for developing an evaluation framework, including practical approaches and tools, and advice on key issues, such as involving users in evaluation, carrying out surveys, interviews, focus groups, and case studies, analysing data, and ensuring compliance with research ethics and data protection regulation.

Assessing the quality of the co-design process

It is important to reflect on *how* the co-design process was experienced by all involved. To gain insights into this, you will need to consider questions relating to your staff, the young people involved, and your organisation's experiences as a whole. Some questions can be answered by participants sharing their perceptions (eg, how they felt or what they thought). Others can be answered by consistently monitoring the five stages of the co-design process, as laid out in the previous section.

Co-design can include a wide range of activities, and different young people are likely to engage in very different ways and have very different experiences. Part of your evaluation should focus on the quality of those activities and what opportunities people had to engage with them. How you measure the activities' effectiveness will depend on your aims and approach, the setting you work in, and the steps your co-design process followed.

Co-design also attempts to put everyone on an equal footing, where each person's opinion carries the same weight. The process is underpinned by the voluntary engagement of the young person and building trusting relationships. It is also important to evaluate the *facilitator's role and the relationships* they have developed during the co-design process.

It might be helpful to divide questions for participants into stages; either using the five stages of the co-design process, or before, during, and after the co-design process. These might include:

Before co-design process:

- Why did you want to get involved with the co-design project?
- What were your expectations of co-design before you started the work?
- Was the information given prior to starting adequate? Did you know what you would be doing and what was expected of you?

During co-design process:

- What did you think of the process overall?
- What activities did you enjoy? What activities did you not enjoy? Why was that?
- Did you feel your opinion was listened to and acted on?
- What were your relationships like with other stakeholders?
- What were your relationships like with the facilitators?

- Were you provided enough support to participate in the activities?
- Were you happy with the result of the co-design process?

After co-design process:

- How did it feel once the project had finished?
- Did being involved in the project have any impact on you, whether positive or negative?
- Did you feel informed after your involvement had finished?

Obtaining insights into addressing loneliness and social isolation

The co-design process will give you valuable and important insights into what young people feel the best outcomes are for them, and—just as importantly—how they might be achieved. Understanding how and why change occurs matters as much as understanding whether there was any change at all.

Your insights can be shared with your peers (other organisations in your networks or partnerships) as well as funders. They can also be shared with young people to sense-check their relevance and importance.

- What do you know about loneliness and social isolation among the young people you aim to support?
- What do you know about what has been tried before with young people similar to those you support?
- What do young people say about what would help them to feel less lonely or isolated?
- What role could technology play in your work?
- What do you know about the "active ingredients"—the key experiences for young people—of your work?
- What do you know about the key design features for your work (eg, duration, intensity, group versus one-to-one, targeted or open, builds-based or outreach)?
- What do you know about what "success" looks like?
- What do you know about how you might evaluate the extent to which success has been achieved?
- Who else needs to be involved in creating sustainable change for young people?

For organisations working specifically on community spaces:

These short-term projects are an opportunity to co-design activities with young people, but also start to put things into practice. With that in mind, consider these learning questions and how you might answer them:

- What do young people think works in the use of community spaces?
- How can loneliness be combatted through the use of community spaces?
- Do any of these learning points relate to the wider population, or are they specific to young people?

Once your project is up and running, may want to consider evaluating:

- What outcomes does your project achieve around youth loneliness? For further guidance on using measures such as the national indicators of loneliness to evaluate your impact on loneliness, see The Building Connections Fund guidance on evaluation for grant-holders.

Qualitative learning questions you may want to answer include:

- If your project is sustainable, and how, by reflecting on funding streams/partnerships to support the work
- How the use of the community space contributes to positive experiences for young people
- *How the use of the community space brings people together

- *What elements of your approach specifically support a reduction in loneliness

**These two process questions are best answered through interviews and focus groups with young people and staff, as well as with the wider community, if there is an intended role for them.*

Putting everything into practice

The Building Connections Fund's co-design and community spaces projects are likely to be time-limited and short-term. This doesn't mean evaluation should take a back seat. Evaluation is important for projects of all lengths, because it helps you learn what went well and what you could do better in the future. This information is crucial not only for your organisation, but for other organisations like yours.

In planning your evaluation, there are several key principles to bear in mind:

- **Involve young people in decisions about *how* to evaluate**, not just in the evaluation itself. For example, you could involve young people in deciding what it is you most need to learn, and what the intended outcomes should be. You could offer training to enable them to contribute to peer-to-peer research; for example, facilitating small groups. Plan how you are going to analyse your results and consider holding a session with young people to reflect on what the findings are saying.
- **Embed evaluation activities into provision as far as possible**, thinking about how you can build a culture of learning, while measuring at the same time.
- **Focus on learning as you go**, rather than trying to "prove" something at the end. For example, you could set up fortnightly or monthly reviews to discuss feedback and progress against your aims, and identify anything that is not working well that you might want to change.
- **Balance qualitative (words) and quantitative (numbers) data** to help you gather different types of insight for a richer picture of your impact.
- **Don't be afraid of sampling** when you only want to ask a segment of the young people you engage about particular topics.[4]
- **Draw on standardised measures** where you can, particularly the national indicators of loneliness. These have been statistically tested to ensure the quality of information provided by their usage, and will also enable you to collect data that is comparable with other organisations using the same indicators.
- **Consider how you can best support participation**, particularly among young people with disabilities or special needs. Co-design is about creating a process that encourages and supports people to engage, addressing their wants and needs, and enabling them to participate in a way that suits them. Consider whether young people have the information, skills, and confidence to participate, and if there is anything you can do to improve this. It may be helpful to define clear boundaries and set realistic parameters, so that all participants understand what is or isn't possible within the context of the partnership.
- **Don't focus too much on the long-term** and instead focus on the relationships and quality of setting you create for young people. It's challenging and resource-intensive to evaluate long-term impact.

Further information on applying the principles and advice in this guidance will be provided through a workshop and webinar, details of which will be shared with you.

[4] For practical guidance on sampling and other evaluation tools and methods, see *The Building Connections Fund guidance on evaluation for grant-holders*

FURTHER READING

Principles of Co-design, NSW Council of Social Service

The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design: A step-by-step guide that will get you solving problems like a designer, IDEO.org

Benefits of Co-design in Service Design Projects, International Journal of Design

OECD-OPSI Curated Innovation Toolkits (Airtable)

Children and Young People's Participation. Free online course from the Open University

You Get Me? Leaflet written by young people about practitioners and young people working together

Youth Participation Best Practices Toolkit: Part I, Save the Children

Co-Design with children & Young People, National Children's Bureau

Make it Count: Why impact matters in user involvement, NPC

EBCD: Experience-based co-design toolkit, The Point of Care Foundation

A Guide to Becoming a 21st Century Teacher, Point B

Our Place Guide to Co-design, Our Place

Co-design for organisations working with people with disability, People with Disabilities Western Australia

Co-design toolkit, The Metro-Regional Intellectual Disability Network

TRANSFORMING THE CHARITY SECTOR

NPC is a charity think tank and consultancy. Over the past 15 years we have worked with charities, funders, philanthropists and others, supporting them to deliver the greatest possible impact for the causes and beneficiaries they exist to serve.

NPC occupies a unique position at the nexus between charities and funders. We are driven by the values and mission of the charity sector, to which we bring the rigour, clarity and analysis needed to better achieve the outcomes we all seek. We also share the motivations and passion of funders, to which we bring our expertise, experience and track record of success.

Increasing the impact of charities: NPC exists to make charities and social enterprises more successful in achieving their missions. Through rigorous analysis, practical advice and innovative thinking, we make charities' money and energy go further, and help them to achieve the greatest impact.

Increasing the impact of funders: NPC's role is to make funders more successful too. We share the passion funders have for helping charities and changing people's lives. We understand their motivations and their objectives, and we know that giving is more rewarding if it achieves the greatest impact it can.

Strengthening the partnership between charities and funders: NPC's mission is also to bring the two sides of the funding equation together, improving understanding and enhancing their combined impact. We can help funders and those they fund to connect and transform the way they work together to achieve their vision.

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