

**Title:** Beyond the buzzword: Understanding and implementing co-design in a community managed mental health service

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Co-design is an approach to innovation in mental health research and policy that is increasingly called for to support system reform and service redesign. In 2019, Mind recognised that to play our part in mental health systems transformation, greater investment was needed to build co-design capability within the organisation. The Participation and Co-design team was established to embed participation by people from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences in decision making at every level across the organisation.

Last year, the lived experience-led team conducted a co-design project with consumers and carers who had been involved in engagement opportunities at Mind as part of the development of the Participation and Co-design Framework. The project aimed to create a resource for staff to embed genuine participation and true co-design in everyday practice. Through a series of workshops and interviews, we identified and refined the benefits of participation and co-design, critical success factors, and practical ways that staff could create the conditions for optimal participation. The findings were synthesised and presented in a position statement titled “Working together to make a difference”.

In this presentation, we will outline the position statement and describe how it has underpinned two co-design projects that were conducted in response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, social connection and housing specifically. The position statement provides a solid foundation to support co-design practice with people with relevant lived experiences in service delivery contexts.

#### Learnings

- Co-design is increasingly valued in mental health policy and practice, but the term may be unfamiliar to people with lived experience.
- Consumers and carers who have been involved in co-design projects have insights into critical success factors and the conditions required to support optimal participation.
- True co-design is ambitious, but possible in service delivery contexts with planning and resources.