



Ordinary lives  
Extraordinary people

# The Big Plan

**Co-production strategy**





# Background

## Why we co-produce?

Co-production at its core, values each person and empowers people to contribute their knowledge, lived experience, skills and insights in the planning, design, decision-making, delivery and evaluation of the services they draw upon.

Achieve together is committed to the following vision and values:

“To provide the best specialist support, inspiring a generation to ensure people live happy, healthy and meaningful lives.”

Drawing on the lived experiences and insights of people we support is essential to our understanding of what happy, healthy and meaningful life means to them. Furthermore, people will have a unique and personal insight into the experiences and challenges of living their own lives, helping us to design effective, high quality specialist support that fits people’s needs, desires and aspirations.



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**Being brave**  
We are creative and confident, empowering the people we support and our teams to achieve amazing things

**Having fun**  
We enjoy spending time with each other, sharing common interests and experiences

**Making things happen**  
We get the most out of every day and celebrate our achievements and success

**Valuing everyone**  
We value the unique talents of every individual and work together to help everyone achieve their full potential

**Inspiring a generation**

Nurturing and celebrating the extraordinary people we support and inspirational teams

**Building meaningful partnerships**

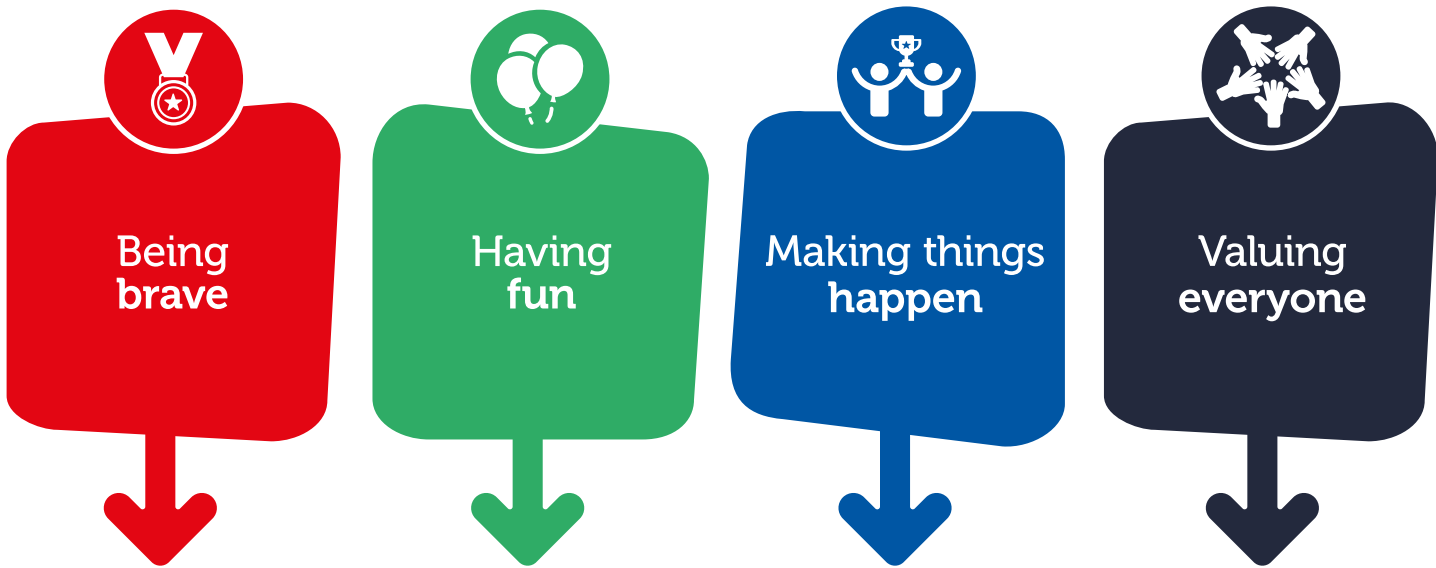
Working with families, local and national communities to create positive change

**Shaping the future**

Leading the sector through insight, investment and technology



# Co-production aligns with our organisational values in the following ways:



**Be brave** in promoting and upholding the culture of co-production and involvement across our organisation.

**Have fun** in co-producing with the people we support in creative and innovative ways.

**Make things happen** by finding solutions to problems working as equal partners with people we support.

**Value** the knowledge, skills, opinions and ideas of people and their circles of support.

**Inspiring a Generation:** through co-production people feel valued and empowered to achieve their goals.

**Building Meaningful Partnerships:** co-production builds equal, reciprocal and trusting partnerships.

**Shaping the Future:** investment into co-production results in better quality of support.







## Co-production in research

In 2023, Nordin et al.<sup>1</sup> did a systematic review of 43 empirical studies which looked into the effects and outcomes of co-production in health & social care context across 12 different countries. The outcomes of the empirical studies reviewed in the article generally point to several key findings:

### 1. Improved outcomes for people drawing on services:

Co-production often leads to better outcomes for people drawing on services, particularly in terms of improved independence, empowerment, and satisfaction with support.

### 2. Improved quality of services:

The involvement of people who draw on services in the design and delivery of services helps make health and social care more person-centred, improving the effectiveness, relevance and responsiveness of services to individual needs.

### 3. Increased engagement and empowerment:

People who draw on services report greater engagement with their care and support, often feeling more empowered and involved in decision-making. This can lead to better adherence to health and support plans and higher levels of satisfaction.

### 4. Skills and knowledge development:

Co-production provides opportunities for learning and skill development among both people supported and providers. People supported often gain confidence and knowledge, while providers gain insights into the needs and preferences of people they support, and improvements needed to the services they provide.

### 5. Social and emotional benefits:

For people supported and support providers, co-production can foster stronger relationships, community building, and emotional well-being, contributing to overall satisfaction and trust in the organisation.

### Things to consider:

While co-production leads to positive outcomes, the sustainability of these outcomes can be challenging. The studies indicated that long-term success requires ongoing investment in relationship-building and infrastructure. Co-production efforts can sometimes be vulnerable to changes in funding, organisational priorities, unequal power dynamics or employee turnover, which may undermine its continued impact.

In other words, for co-production to have positive long-term impact on the lives of people we support and the quality of the services we provide, we as an organisation need to commit to and invest into embedding co-production into the very culture of the way we work.

<sup>1</sup>Nordin A, Kjellstrom S, Robert G, Masterson D, Areskoug Josefsson K. Measurement and outcomes of co-production in health and social care: a systematic review of empirical studies.





## The Big Plan

In 2023 Unity released the first Co-production Policy in Achieve together. In 2024 and 2025, Unity representatives and Campaign 4 Change members took part in a series of surveys, focus groups and

planning meetings to establish the importance of co-production as a way of working and their ideas for reaching this goal within Achieve together and in wider inter-organisational collaborations.

## A brief history of co-production in Achieve together

Self-advocacy group Campaign 4 Change pre-existed Achieve together and worked on a number of campaigns aimed to advocate for people with learning disabilities and autistic people both locally and nationally, including **#MindYourLanguage** campaign, which subsequently was a major influence on the tone of voice of Achieve together. In 2019, Campaign 4 Change decided to establish a separate group specifically aimed at promoting co-production internally and working in partnership with our organisation as experts with lived experience of drawing on our support – this group named themselves Unity.

At the conception of Achieve together, Unity and Campaign 4 Change were involved in developing our 5-year strategy alongside other stakeholders, defining our purpose, vision and values.

In October 2020, co-production was one of the key parts identified in Achieve together strategy. Over the last 5 years, Co-production Team in partnership with Unity have been working tirelessly to bring this part of our strategy to life, slowly embedding the culture of co-production within our organisation through increased visibility and upskilling of Unity Representatives as our key partners and advocates for other people supported in Achieve together.





# The value of co-production

Through surveys and focus groups, people we support shared why co-production is important to them, with key points summarized as follows:



# The future of co-production in Achieve together

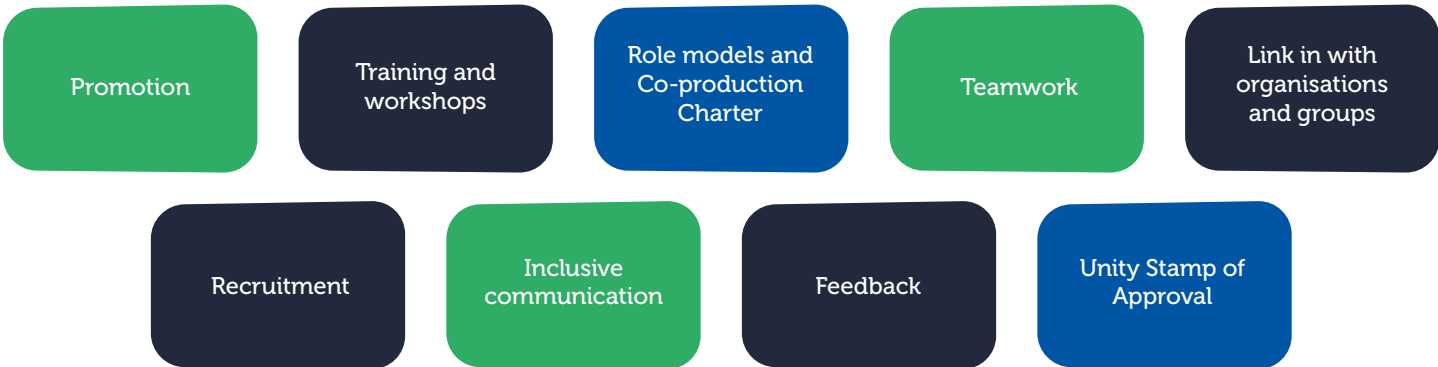
People we support shared their vision for the future of co-production in Achieve together:

“Co-production is HOW not WHAT.”



# The recipe for the culture of co-production

To embed the culture of co-production across Achieve together and realise their future vision, Unity members identified the following key strategies:



**Promotion:** Deliver ongoing initiatives to highlight the importance and benefits of co-production with people supported by Achieve together and their families.

**Training & Workshops:** Co-production e-learning (developed by Unity) to be incorporated into the induction process for all team members at Achieve together, while co-production workshops (led by Unity) to be delivered to senior team members, including Home Managers, Heads of Area Operations, and Community Hub Team Managers.

**Role Models & Co-production Charter:** Senior team members to commit to embodying the culture of co-production by signing up to the Co-production Charter (to be developed by Unity) and serving as role models.

**Teamwork:** Community Hub teams to embrace the culture of co-production and consistently prioritise partnership with Unity for initiatives that directly or indirectly impact people’s support.

**Link in with organisations & groups:** Achieve together, Unity & Campaign 4 Change to build strong networks with other organisations and groups to learn best practice in co-production and exchange ideas.

**Recruitment:** people supported to be actively engaged in the recruitment process at Achieve together, ensuring that we select the right individuals to join our organisation and fostering a strong partnership between people supported and the organisation from the outset.

**Inclusive Communication:** Achieve together to commit to communicating in inclusive ways (easy read, BSL) on matters that directly affect or are relevant to people we support.

**Feedback:** Achieve together to actively seek and act upon feedback from key stakeholders, such as people supported and their families.

**Unity Stamp of Approval:** Unity to develop a system that allows teams to self-assess the level of co-production in their work, or be assessed by Unity if Unity representatives were directly involved.

“Find your inner Captain Co-production!”  
– Unity Representative



# Unity Specialist Roles

Unity Representatives have proposed the creation of specialist roles within Unity, where individuals will be trained and upskilled in specific areas of interest to collaborate with relevant teams on projects and initiatives related to their roles:



**Unity Co-chairs:** Represent the views of Unity as a whole, chair Unity Conferences and are responsible for communication between Senior Leadership Team, the Board and rest of Unity.

**Recruitment Leads:** Work in partnership with the Recruitment Team to review job descriptions, advertisements and recruitment processes to ensure people supported in Achieve together are always involved in choosing people who support them.

**Environmental Champions:** Work in partnership with the Sustainability Manager on initiatives that promote sustainability, ensuring Achieve together operates in an environmentally responsible manner.

**Marketing and Media Leads:** Work in partnership with the Marketing Team to ensure Achieve together Tone of Voice aligns with **#MindYourLanguage**, communications are accessible, and to creatively support Achieve together marketing initiatives.

**Mental Health & Wellbeing Ambassadors:** Work in partnership with the Wellbeing Team and the Forensic Mental Health Team to promote mental wellbeing for people supported in Achieve together.

**Physical Health & Sports Ambassadors:** Work in partnership with the Health Team to promote great physical health and healthy lifestyles for people supported by Achieve together.

**Quality and Safeguarding Champions:** Work in partnership with the Quality Team and the Safeguarding Board to ensure people receive high quality support that is tailored to them, people are safe at all times, never at risk of abuse or neglect. Promote safeguarding awareness and whistleblowing to people supported by Achieve together.

**Sex and Relationships Leads:** Work in partnership with the Health Team and Wellbeing and Collaboration Team to promote great support around sexuality, relationships and sexual health for people supported in Achieve together.

**Positive Behaviour Support Leads:** Work in partnership with Positive Behaviour Support Team to ensure people get the right and least restrictive support with behaviours that challenge.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions:** Work in partnership with At:Bu group to promote inclusive practices in Achieve together and raise awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion.

**Learning and Development Leads:** Work in partnership with Learning and Development Team to ensure support teams get the right training in order to support people well.

**Events and Community Leads:** Support in planning, organisation and delivery of internal events in Achieve together.

**Employment Ambassadors:** Work in partnership with the Co-production and Employment Partner to promote the benefits of employment and increase the number of people we support in paid and voluntary roles.

**Technology Leads:** Work in partnership with the IT Team on digital transformation initiatives.

**Finance Leads:** Work in partnership with the Finance Team on initiatives that promote financial literacy for people we support such as understanding benefits and support funding.

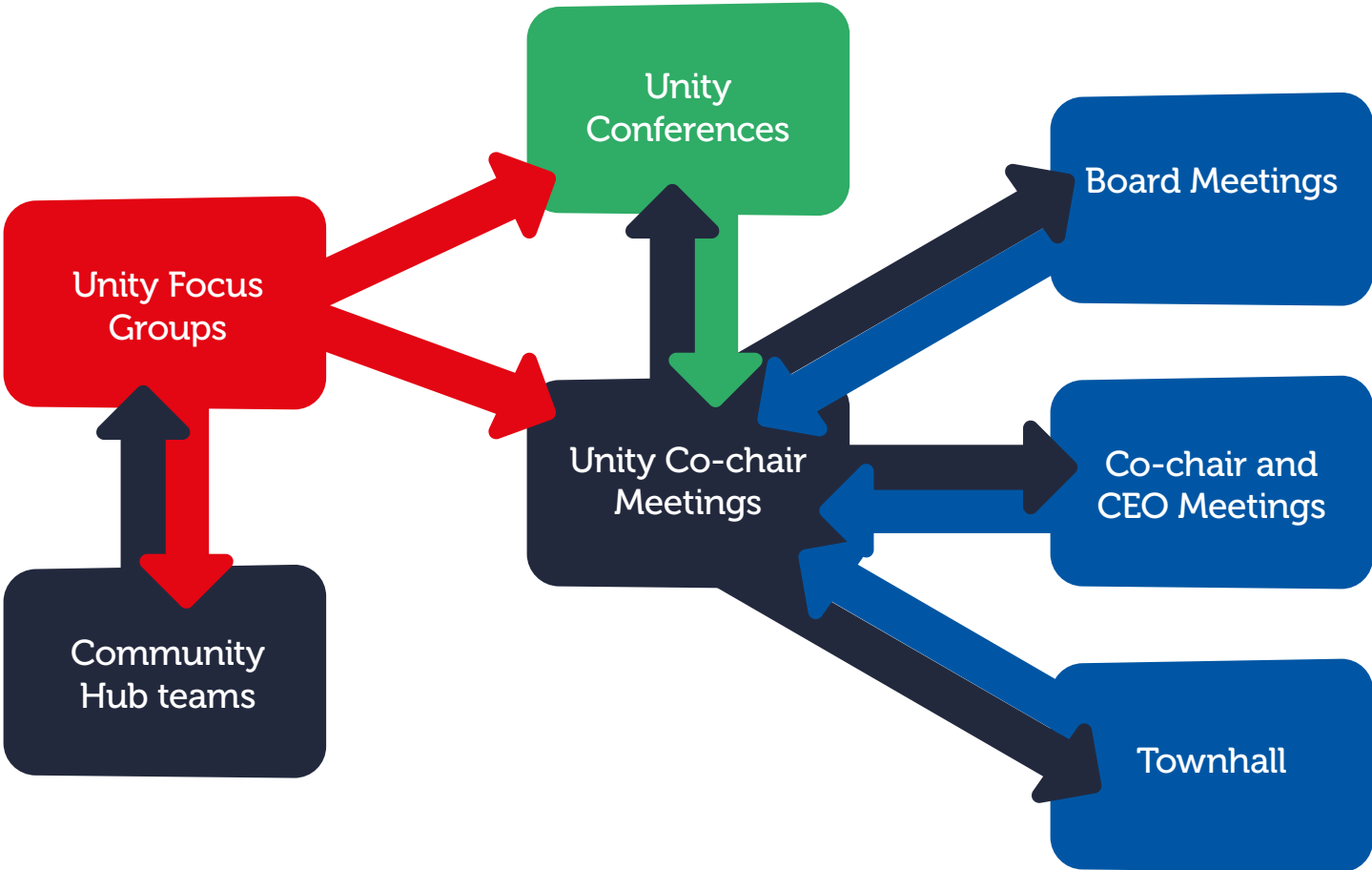
**Housing and Tenancy Leads:** Working with the Estates and Welfare Benefits Teams to ensure people's rights in relation to housing, tenancies and benefits are upheld, and that people live in homes that are safe and well maintained.

**Specialism Advocates:** Advocate for themselves and others supported by Achieve together, particularly in areas of expertise such as support for D/deaf individuals, people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, acquired brain injuries, mental health diagnoses, and other complex needs.





# Unity Processes



## Unity Focus Groups:

- Community Hub teams will engage with Unity Specialists on projects and initiatives relevant to people and their support – this can be initiated either by Unity or Community Hub teams. Unity Specialists will meet in two types of focus groups: regularly scheduled specialism focus groups (e.g. Recruitment Leads’ bi-weekly meetings) or project-based focus groups (e.g. Heroes Awards planning meetings).

## Unity Co-chair Meetings:

- Updates from all focus groups will be fed back to Unity Co-chairs via monthly Unity Co-chair meetings.

## Meetings with the Chief Executive Officer:

- Unity Co-chairs will bring key updates and issues to the Chief Executive Officer (or a nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team) via monthly meetings.

## Presentations to the Board:

- Unity Co-chairs will present key issues / initiatives to the Board three times a year.

## Presentations at Town Hall:

- Unity Co-chairs or a nominated Unity Representative will present updates at Town Hall monthly.

## Unity Conferences:

- Unity Co-chairs will host Unity Conferences three times a year, providing Unity Representatives with updates from focus groups, Town Hall meetings, and discussions with Chief Executive Officer, Senior Leadership Team, and the Board. All Unity Representatives will have the opportunity to raise key issues and questions, which will be shared with the Town Hall, Chief Executive Officer, Senior Leadership Team and the Board as needed.



# Ladder of Co-production and Unity Stamp of Approval

In 1969, Sherry Arnstein developed the Ladder of Citizen Participation to highlight the varying degrees of the power citizens can hold in decision-making processes. Later, Think Local Act Personal adapted this framework into the [Ladder of Co-production](#), outlining the progressive steps toward co-production in health and social care.

The Ladder of Co-production can be divided into 3 parts: 'Doing to', 'Doing for' and 'Doing with'.

The bottom two rungs of the Ladder describe practices where people who draw on support have no decision-making power and their opinions, knowledge and skills are not sought. In other words, services are 'done to' people. Bottom rungs of the Ladder include:

**Coercion:** when people draw on services as passive recipients. Providing first aid to an unresponsive person to protect their life is completely appropriate. However, planning someone's support without their involvement (or the involvement of their circle of support) is not.

**Education:** when people draw on services as passive recipients and are supported to understand the services they receive. This can be appropriate or not, depending on the situation. For example, a doctor advising a person what they need to do to be healthy may be appropriate. However, a support worker telling an adult what time they must go to bed is not.

The middle rungs of the Ladder of Co-production describe practices where people who draw on support have opportunities to contribute their thoughts, opinions and knowledge or these are taken into consideration. In other words, services are 'done for' people. Middle rungs of the Ladder include:

**Informing:** when service providers clearly explain how the services work and the reasons behind certain decisions to the people who rely on them. For example, when a social worker explains to a person how to navigate the benefits system to their best advantage or when a service provider explains to people how to use the new complaints procedure and clarifies how it is designed to protect their best interests.

**Consultation:** when service providers actively seek the opinions of people who draw on services, however the final decisions made may or may not take these opinions into account. For example, a support provider organisation asking people to complete a survey to gain their feedback about the support they receive.

**Engagement:** when service providers actively engage people who draw on services in decision-making and people have the power to influence these decisions. For example, a support provider organising focus groups to ask people what is important to them about their support and plans their support services based on people's feedback.

The top rungs of the Ladder of Co-production describe practices where people who draw on services work in equal partnership with the service providers. In other words, services are "done with" people. Top rungs of the Ladder include:

**Co-design:** when service providers work alongside people to design the services they draw upon. For example, people are invited to design the new key-worker policy together with support providers: they plan what the policy must include, make decisions about key-workers' responsibilities and make plans about the rollout of the policy, they are not, however, involved in the delivery and execution of this policy.

**Co-production:** when service providers work in partnership with people who draw on services from the conception, through the decision-making, design, delivery and evaluation of services, initiatives or projects. For example, people who draw on support are partners in creating a new strategy for a support provider. People contribute their ideas, are part of strategic planning and design of services, help present and rollout the strategy across the organisation, help achieve the goals set out in the strategy and evaluate how well the strategy is working. In other words, people work in partnership from the beginning, through all stages of the project until the end.

Co-production

Co-design

Engagement

Consultation

Informing

Education

Coercion





**Indigo Stamp:** awarded when people supported have been equal partners from the conception right through to the outcome of a project or initiative - corresponding to the 'Co-production' rung of the Ladder of Co-production.



**Green Stamp:** awarded when people supported have been partners in one or some parts of a project or initiative - corresponding to 'Co-design' rung of the Ladder of Co-production.



**Orange Stamp:** awarded when people supported have been engaged in the decision-making, and their ideas and opinions influenced the outcome - corresponding to 'Engagement' rung of the Ladder of Co-production.



## Unity Stamp of Approval

In 2024, Unity co-produced a process where projects and initiatives within Achieve together can undergo an assessment of the level of involvement of people we support. The assessment is carried out by Unity Representatives, following which, if the project or initiative meets the criteria set out by Unity based on the Ladder of Co-production, it can be awarded one of three Stamps of Approval,

Unity will also create a toolkit that teams across Achieve together can use to self-assess the involvement of people supported in various projects and initiatives, with the potential to launch it nationally as a valuable resource for other organisations.

## The Mission of Campaign 4 Change

To advocate for human rights, good lives and the right support for people who draw on social care, through campaigns and collaboration with other organisations and groups. For people with learning disabilities and autistic people to be seen as equal and valued citizens in our society.

### 7 Keys to Citizenship

Simon Duffy, a philosopher, social activist and author, describes citizenship as a set of rights, responsibilities, equality and belonging that dignifies people's everyday life. Alongside his co-author Wendy Perez, a woman with lived experience of navigating and living life to the fullest with a learning disability, they describe 7 Keys to Citizenship – things that people need to be valued and equal members of society and live a good life.

**Meaning:** all people need to have something, which makes them thrive in their lives, brings them joy and a sense of accomplishment, something worth living for. These could be passions, skills, goals, ideas and these are completely unique to every single person.

**Freedom:** all people need to have the freedom to be themselves and live their lives the way they choose, feel in control, make decisions about their lives and have the freedom to make mistakes they can learn from.

**Money:** all people need an income to live their lives without fear of poverty, hunger or homelessness, this means receiving a fair pay for work or having a system where people who cannot work in exchange for money, also get good financial support.

**Help:** all people need help with various things in their lives, which means having reliable services and citizens working together to help each other in mutual respect and partnership.

**Home:** all people need a safe, stable and comfortable place to call home in their own communities. Having a home roots the person as a belonging member of their community.

**Community:** all people need to feel a sense of belonging through taking an active part in their communities, sharing their gifts, skills and passions, working together to create something and make things happen.

**Love:** all people need love from family, friendships, romantic & sexual partners, neighbours, community and self. All people have a right to love and be loved. This means creating a society where everyone is accepted as an equal citizen.

Campaign 4 Change, through their work in self-advocacy, aim to move the needle closer to Simon and Wendy's vision of citizenship for people with learning disabilities and autistic people, holding the 7 Keys to Citizenship as the foundation of everything they do.





## Campaign 4 Changes current and proposed partner organisations and groups:



Universities and Research | Local Groups

## Campaign 4 Change 2025 projects and initiatives

### Easy Read Training & Consultancy Package

In late 2024, Campaign 4 Change piloted training for 64 Million Artists on creating easy read documents and reviewed the materials produced by the organisation. The group now proposes to develop a training and consultancy package that organisations can subscribe to for tailored support and guidance from Campaign 4 Change.

### Easy Read Conversation Cards

Based on popular conversation starter cards available from many retailers across the country, Campaign 4 Change propose to create an easy read equivalent to aid conversations between different groups of people on different topics.

### Wheel of Engagement Podcast

Campaign 4 Change are aiming to record more podcast episodes this year with guest speakers from partner groups and organisations, on topics such as social care reform, co-production, working in partnership with families and online wellbeing.

### Co-production Training

In February 2025, Campaign 4 Change delivered a 3-hour lecture on co-production to social work undergraduate students at the University of Bradford. The group has proposed to develop this into e-learning and training which could be delivered to other organisations and internally in Achieve together.

### Online Wellbeing & Anti-radicalisation

Following the unrest in the UK late last year, Campaign 4 Change started developing a series of easy read resources around wellbeing online, explaining things such as social media algorithms and misinformation. Given the risk of people with learning disabilities and autistic people becoming radicalised and noticing a gap in resources around this subject, the group is proposing to develop a resource pack and an awareness campaign.





## Co-production Team's resource & expertise

### Wheel of Engagement

The Wheel of Engagement is Achieve together's person centred support framework to ensure people are supported in a holistic and individual way, considering various aspects of one's life and best practices in support. The Wheel of Engagement was designed involving people who draw on support and has been reviewed and evolved several times. In the past 5 years, Unity have been promoting best practice in all parts of the Wheel of Engagement, educating teams through presentations, training, roadshows and podcasts, creating and sharing useful tools and resources based on monthly Wheel of Engagement themes. This year, Unity have decided to divide the year into seasons instead, to focus on various aspects of the Wheel more holistically. The seasons are defined by the characteristics and events typically associated with specific times of the year.

The new Wheel of Engagement seasons are:

- **Reflection & Motivation (January – March):** at the beginning of a new year, this is a time to support people to reflect on their strengths and talents, think about self, personal identity and what is important to them, take care of their wellbeing and set new goals for the year ahead.
- **Learning & Growth (April – June):** to achieve the goals set at the beginning of the year, this is a time to support people to gain new skills and knowledge, try something new, and as the weather gets warmer, get more active.
- **Connection & Belonging (July – September):** in the warm and light summer months, it's a great time to connect with friends and spend quality time with family, create new connections and get busy with community life.
- **Nurture & Celebration (October – December):** as the year is coming to a close, we spend time celebrating people's achievements, nurturing people's confidence, self-worth and self-reliance.

Unity in partnership with key stakeholders plan to review and redevelop the Wheel of Engagement again this year, considering the new Wheel of Engagement seasons and 7 Keys to Citizenship.

#### Rachael Gholap, Co-production & Advocacy Partner

Rachael brings more than 10 years of expertise in facilitation of self-advocacy for people we support through forums, focus groups and other avenues, specialising in supporting self-advocacy for people who are D/deaf and use British Sign Language. Rachael has extensive experience in facilitating co-design workshops, enabling people we support to actively make decisions about their care and support. Rachael excels in collaborative project management and event organisation which greatly contributes to the success of various Unity and Campaign 4 Change initiatives.

#### Stephen Brown, Co-production & Employment Partner

In addition to his vast skills in collaborative approaches and facilitation of co-production, Stephen has a specialist knowledge in employment for people who draw on support and may receive benefits, promoting and raising awareness of the value of contributions by people we support to their local communities through paid or voluntary employment and meaningful engagement. Furthermore, Stephen is an experienced trainer and skilled in graphic design, technology and easy read communication.

#### Simon Tobin, Autism Trainer & Ambassador

Simon brings a unique expertise to Co-production Team both as an experienced autism trainer and a person with lived experience of being autistic and drawing upon support of Achieve together. He is a passionate self and peer advocate, and as Unity Co-chair, is a representative voice of people we support. Simon ensures Co-production Team not only facilitates co-production within Achieve together, but also leads by example in the way they work together as a team.

#### Elmi Terjavainen, Co-production Manager

With over 7 years of experience in collaborative work with people we support, Elmi brings skills, knowledge and passion to embedding the culture of co-production across Achieve together and ensuring people we support feel empowered and skilled in decision-making, co-design, co-delivery and evaluation of the services they draw upon. Elmi has supported, upskilled and guided Campaign 4 Change and Unity during various phases of both groups' development, through collaboration in an equal partnership and facilitation of workshops, focus groups, conferences, filmmaking and other creative projects. Through strategic planning and supportive leadership, Elmi oversees Co-production Team's development in terms of their vision, goals and skills. In addition, Elmi is proficient in easy read communication, video-editing and technology.





Ordinary lives  
Extraordinary people

# Contact us

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