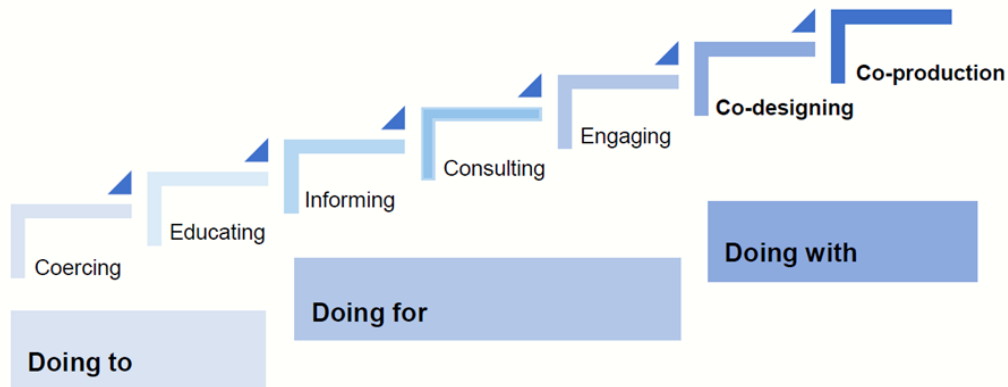


# Co-producing the RCSLT autism guidance

## Key principles agreed by project working group (2022-2023)

### 1. What do we mean by co-production?

- Co-production is part of the RCSLT's commitment to meaningfully engage with people who use speech and language therapy services. Moving away from "Doing to", and increasingly focusing on "Doing with."



- "Co-production is about people from different backgrounds working together as equals. Everyone takes ownership of the work." "Consultation is a one-night stand. Co-production is a long-term relationship." (Transforming Care co-production Tool).

### 2. Ensuring meetings are an inclusive experience for all

- Meetings will be held virtually to encourage a more inclusive/adaptable environment and experience.
- Use of sensory aids is welcomed (e.g. noise-cancelling headphones, fidget items).
- People are welcome to stim free from judgement during meetings.
- Subtitles/captions will be enabled during meetings for those that wish to use them.
- A 'traffic light system' can be used to reflect everyone's communication and interaction preferences and abilities.
  - Individuals can indicate their colour/preference using the chat function at the beginning of each meeting, and at the start of each new session within in the meeting in case their preference changes.
  - Alternatively, people may wish to change their camera background to the colour of their choice or use a visible badge – however, this will not be possible if people have their cameras off.
  - A member of RCSLT staff will then summarise everybody's colour choices and pin it within the meeting chat.
  - The traffic light colours should be included in all meeting agendas.

White	I am able to regulate my own interactions with no external help or support
Green	I would like to contribute and discuss things but may find it hard to initiate this so please approach me and ask me questions
Yellow	Please do not initiate conversation with me unless I have already given my express permission for you to do so
Red	Please do not initiate any interaction with me
Pink	I am currently nonverbal but would still like to participate. Please help me to communicate in ways that I feel comfortable.
Blue	I would just like to observe at the moment please.

Source: Coproduction with Autistic Adults: Reflections from the Authentic Research Collective

- It is a personal choice whether individuals wish to have their camera switched on or off (there is no pressure to have it on).
- Individuals are able to communicate in different ways during meetings (e.g. use of chat function) rather than by speaking.
- We will try to always use the raise hand function to indicate you have something to say.
- The meeting chair or nominated person will monitor the chat and 'raised hands' to ensure voices can be heard. We acknowledge that if there are lots of hands up sometimes a person may not be asked in turn but the chair or nominated person will do their best.
- The meeting Chair(s) will aim to read aloud all comments from the chat but we recognise that some comments may have to be reviewed after the meeting if we are running out of time. Any comments reviewed post-meeting will be captured in the meeting summary and addressed by email if required.
- With consent from the group, the meeting chair or lead author may respectfully interrupt a person speaking if needed to ensure the smooth and timely running of the meeting.
- People can choose to have a 'time out' or step away from the screen whenever needed.
- Ideas and opinions can be shared before/after meetings to allow for additional processing time – this can be shared with Lorna/Penny up to one week after the meeting date.
- We will aim to share meeting agendas and relevant information at least one week in advance and stick to time during meetings.

- Requests for feedback or reviewing of documents will be sent by email with a clear timescale and deadline, and a reminder. A calendar invitation can also be sent for the deadline for those who request it.

### 3. Remaining respectful to all other members of the working group

- We know there will be different opinions among the working group - everyone will show kindness and listen respectfully, even when they disagree.
- We acknowledge and value the variety of expertise and experience among members of the working group (e.g. professional expertise, lived experience etc.) - everyone's experience is equally valuable.
- Members of the working group should maintain a professional style and use polite, respectful language (avoiding critical or personal language).
- We should be grateful for everyone's contributions; and where there is disagreement, build on ideas or offer alternatives, rather than criticising other ideas.

### 4. Encouraging fair decision-making

- Members of the working group should expect that they may disagree with certain decisions, and it may not always be possible to reach consensus.
- Where the working group struggles to reach consensus, it is important that the different perspectives and viewpoints (and the strength of those opinions) are acknowledged in the guidance.
- Key decisions should be recorded in a table, outlining the various views and the rationale for final decisions, including any relevant evidence.

Content topic	Views	Decision	Rationale / evidence (including type of evidence)

### 5. Acknowledging our bias

- The working group comprises autistic and non-autistic individuals, some of whom have autistic children, and some are members of the speech and language profession. Whilst the working group represents a variety of professional and personal experience, we recognise that it is not representative of the entire autistic community.
- In particular, we acknowledge that we cannot directly capture the views of autistic children and young people.
- Final published information should acknowledge the limitations and bias of the working group and recognise any groups that were not represented in this project.

## 6. Making best use of the evidence base

- The lead author and working group will develop guidance based on the latest evidence.
- We recognise that there are limitations and gaps in the evidence base and that there may be differences in opinion as to what constitutes 'good evidence'. Evidence will be selected based on the quality of the research and relevance to the scope and will aim to be fair and balanced with respect to the range of views expressed by the autistic community and their parents/carers.
- Evidence that will be considered includes the lived experience of all autistic people and/or their parents, qualitative and quantitative research and policy and strategy documents.
- We also recognise that some widely used interventions have little research into their efficacy but are considered effective in practice ('practice-based evidence') by those that utilise them including autistic people and their families.
- We acknowledge that historically research has often based outcomes on a neurotypical perspective on what a successful outcome should be. We cannot assume that neurodivergent individuals hold the same view on these outcomes.

*(See scope form for further considerations regarding the evidence base.)*