

Common obstacles resolved using the Spectrum

The Spectrum addresses some of the most common obstacles that people have experienced when working with the ladder representation of co-production.

Problem	Solution
Hierarchical visual representation: The ladder image has become widely recognised and stuck in people's minds as the only image they associate with co-production.	New Spectrum representation: The Spectrum graphic gives a new conceptual illustration of how participation can work well in a range of ways. There is still movement between "doing to" and "doing with" people, but the hierarchical nature of top and bottom is removed
Co-production is the only way: Only "full co-production" is seen as good. Other types of participation are seen as only being stepping stones to co-production, rather than valid in their own right.	Positive representation of each part: Each type of participation in the Spectrum can be useful in different circumstances. People's participation can influence decision making in a range of ways.
Crossed assumptions and misunderstandings: - The organisation isn't clear what level of influence they are able to offer in their decision-making process. There is no easy way for organisations to describe what they are offering. - There are crossed assumptions about the purpose of participation, and everyone ends up disappointed and frustrated at lack of progress. - Thinking and relationships become entrenched, and people feel hopeless and angry. - Organisations can be reluctant to offer further opportunities for involvement because of these problems, and people will hesitate to take part in participation in the future.	Clarifying function and improving relationships: - There are questions to help organisations choose, before starting, what type of participation and level of influence they are able to offer. - The Spectrum clearly describes the function of each type of interaction across it. Trust can grow when people have a shared understanding of what is open to change and what isn't, and the extent of their influence on the decision-making process. - Lines of communication can open up and people can work together effectively, once everyone knows "what the deal is" that's being offered. - Once people grasp how different the Spectrum approach is and how effective it can prove in clarifying expectations, a positive shift in relationships can happen.