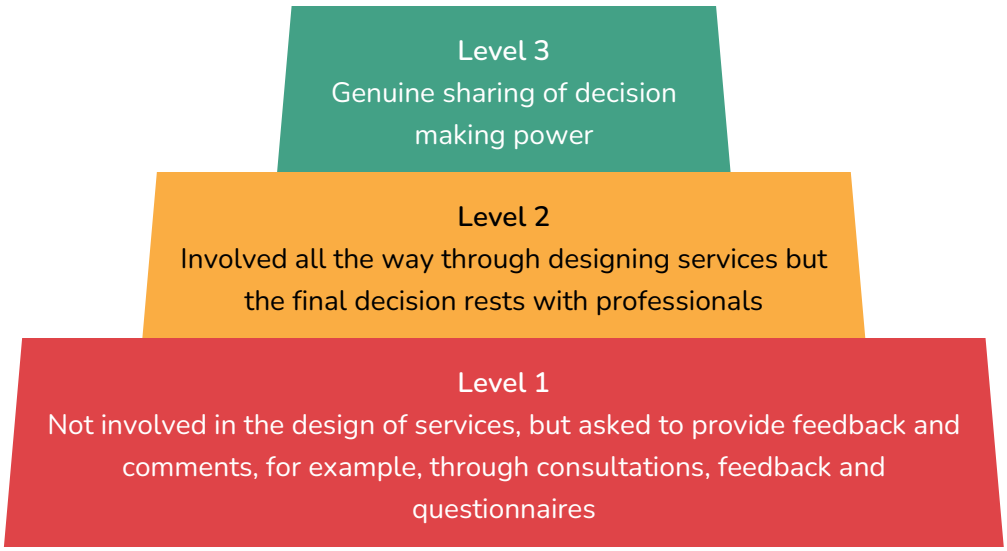
What we mean by collaboration and co-production

In the context of this module, collaboration means all forms of activity where services and people with lived experience work together to make services better.

Co-production is a specific kind of collaboration. It means services and people with lived experience making decisions together and sharing power in the process.

Not all collaboration is the same. It can be helpful to think in stages. Here is a way of understanding what each means in the diagram below:



Level one of the pyramid involves consultation. This kind of collaboration means listening and gathering feedback from women with lived experience. Gathering views about an existing service is valuable but on its own is not co-production.

Level two involves co-design. This means involving women with lived experience in the development of services while plans are still being developed and they can influence their direction. An example of this could be designing accessible resources together. Again, this is valuable but on its own is not co-production. At this level the big decisions are still being made by the service e.g., the decision to create the document in the first place.

Level three is co-production. This means acting on the suggestions of women with lived experience and sharing decision-making power where services and women with lived experience make decisions together about priorities, design, language, accessibility, and delivery. For example, some women who use your service suggest setting up a peer support group and are involved at every stage of developing the new service.

All collaboration is important, because in different ways you are listening to the voices of people with lived experience and using their insight to improve your service. However, the more power you give women with lived experience to make decisions, the greater the possible impact of the collaboration. In other words, co-production (Level 3) is more impactful than consultation (Level 1).

Sharing decision-making power with people with lived experience can be scary or difficult. For example, if you think the best way to improve your service is to do A, but the women you are collaborating with say you should do B, do you take the risk of believing them and trusting their judgement?

Also, there will be other factors that limit how much decision-making power you hand over: the law, operating conditions laid down by your funders, and your own finances are three of these factors.

With these limits in mind, the rest of this module will focus on co-production as the most impactful kind of collaboration and will look at ways your service can maximise opportunities for co-production.