

# Co-production Network Newsletter



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For more information about our work please visit: [Slough Borough Council ASC Co-production Network](#)

## Useful links

[Community equipment recycling](#)

[Social Care](#)

[Slough Community Directory - Activities and services to keep Slough residents fit and healthy \(sloughhealth.org\)](#)

# Welcome!

We are pleased to welcome you to the autumn edition of our Co-production Network (CPN) newsletter.

It has been a busy period for the network and we are proud of the work that we have done, some of which we will share with you in this quarterly news update!

Although we work hard as a network, we also have time for fun! We recently celebrated Karen's birthday at a network meeting with a cake!



# Co-production Celebration Event

In July the CPN hosted a celebration event at Chalvey Community Hub to mark National Co-production Week.

The aim of the event was to:

- promote Slough's approach to co-production
- understand the role of the CPN and what it does
- hear about other projects in Slough that have adopted a co-production approach
- showcase how co-production has had a positive influence on health and adult social care services in Slough.

Volunteer CPN members took a lead role in planning and hosting the event. They also shared their personal experiences of what co-production means to them and talked about how their skills and confidence have grown since being part of the network. We also welcomed other organisations in Slough adopting a co-production approach, promoting projects and

positive outcomes for the residents of Slough.

We were delighted that over 100 people attended the celebrations. This included the Mayor, Slough residents, health and local authority staff and other partner organisations.

We heard from senior leaders at Slough Borough Council, including Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, who recognised the value of ensuring residents are involved in local decision making.

'Step together', a dance group for people with learning disabilities, supported by Creative Academy, performed a lively dance which we all enjoyed. They brought lots of energy to the room!

We received very positive feedback from people attending the event, here are just a few of the comments we received!



- *"To our lovely host, Karen thank you for welcoming us with your most beautiful smile!"*
- *"You put together a wonderful celebration of co-production."*
- *"Great to see so many things to celebrate!"*
- *"Impressed with how Slough Borough Council enabled many people at all levels to have a voice and contribute to the systems and processes of the council."*

Karen, one of our wonderful volunteers chaired the event and this is what she had to say about her experiences:

*"I really enjoyed chairing the event and seeing everyone there. It was a bit scary using the microphone, but I got used to it. The dancing was really enjoyable, and they did a great first performance. Thank you to everyone that attended and those that helped with the food. I hope we have another event soon!"*





## Co-production Network involved in recruiting Adult Social Care Managers

As part of the council's commitment to involve residents in local decision making, some of our volunteer members have been part of stakeholder interview panels, to help select senior members of staff to work in adult social care. Our volunteers are keen to provide a residents' perspective, ensuring selected candidates have a knowledge and understanding of Slough and the rich diversity of our town. They also want to ensure that successfully appointed managers can listen to the experiences of people that might need adult social care, as well as their carers.

Their insight and contributions have been really valued by senior managers. David Coleman-Groom, Executive Director People - Adults (DASS) interim, made the following comments:

*"I am very grateful to our co-production volunteers for their time and insightful contributions in helping us make decisions in the recent appointments of senior managers within adult social care."*

Our volunteers have really valued being part of this work. Zhora has shared her experiences:

*"My name is Zhora. As a volunteer with the Co-production Network, I feel honoured to be part of the recruitment team. This makes me feel confident in how I present myself and makes me feel valued in being part of decisions. I am proud to be part of the team to do that. It also makes me very happy that I am able to be represent the co-production team by taking on that task".*

## One Slough Fund

### Contribution from Vicki Atherton, Director of Operations, Slough CVS/WAM Get Involved

The #OneSlough Community Fund issues grants to Slough voluntary and community groups, to deliver projects that meet the needs and priorities of local residents, with the aim of improving health and wellbeing. The fund is administered through Slough CVS, as part of their commissioned service to provide Infrastructure Support Services in Slough.

The Co-production Network has an ongoing involvement and input into the design and delivery of the #One Slough fund, from being part of the original co-design, then agreeing the priority themes each year for the fund, to being part of the evaluation and award panel. Through representing the voice of our residents, and bringing much valued lived experiences, the Co-production Network ensure that the

#One Slough Fund supports those projects that best meet the needs of our diverse communities.

Gaye, CPN volunteer involved in the funding decision has had this to say about her experiences:

*"I decided to get involved as I think it is important that council money is spent wisely to benefit the community. I think that new groups can make a real difference to Slough with financial support. Working with others, I was able to help make important decisions and ensure fairness. As a local resident, I was pleased to have a part in this as I feel that the funding can make a real difference to people's lives.*

*As a co-production volunteer, I felt supported by Slough Borough Council to be part of the panel."*



## Review of Single Homelessness

**In May, the council invited Homeless Link to undertake a review of the Single Homeless Pathway in Slough. We wanted to ensure co-production was at the heart of the review - so that the voices of people with lived experiences could be front and centre. Whilst engagement with people in services who are currently or formerly homeless was critical, we were very lucky to have additional support from representatives from the Co-production Network.**

The very first meeting with the review team from Homeless Link included a very experienced co-production member, to ensure we started as we meant to finish.

Homeless Link were delighted with this approach. They have worked with numerous councils and said this was the first time that a co-production representative was part of the very beginning of the work, sharing knowledge and insights which they continue to offer via the regular steering group.

The review team has a co-production lead too, and he has spent significant amount of time being schooled on what it's really like for people with housing need in Slough. We were also lucky enough for another co-production member to take time out to discuss their own experiences of using supported accommodation in Slough, and what helped and hindered them in their journey.

We are now heading towards the end of this project, anticipating the final report in October. We know the co-production representatives will also want to be part of developing the action plan, following the recommendations from the report. This will ensure that the review has real impact on how we shape services going forward, which will benefit many people who are homeless, or in unsafe accommodation.

## Technology Enabled Care

Slough Borough Council is actively pursuing technology enabled care (TEC) as a means to help vulnerable and elderly residents maintain as much independence as possible within their own homes.

To ensure that the views of residents are considered, the commissioning team is collaborating closely with co-production volunteers. This partnership aims to gather insights on the progress of ongoing TEC projects, thereby helping the council to effectively utilise various forms of technology, to support vulnerable and elderly residents. Additionally, there are numerous opportunities to engage with co-production volunteers in shaping the future of technology enabled care in Slough.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## Integrated Health and Wellbeing Service

The co-production volunteers played a crucial role in supporting the re-commissioning of the Integrated Health and Wellbeing Service (IHWS).

They reviewed our consultation plan, offering valuable insights on important elements to capture. One volunteer from the Co-production Network joined the IHWS procurement board, actively contributing by sharing their views, attending presentations, and participating in the evaluation panel. Their input during the scoring and final decision-making was invaluable. In return, Slough Public Health delivered training to CPN members, focusing on public health issues, particularly the determinants of healthy life expectancy.

Joycelyn, our volunteer member had this to say; *"I was pleased to work in collaboration with Public Health officers and other stakeholders to make sure that the service commissioned supports health and wellbeing in Slough. The tender evaluation process was complex but fair and necessary, I enjoyed being part of the procurement board"*.



## Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review

The LGA assessed the council against the Responsive Services and Customer Care section of their equality framework for local governments including how the council works with people with lived experience of using social services. **Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) 2021.**

The Co-production Network volunteer members met with the reviewers, and spoke about their experience of services and working in partnership with council officers. Specifically to commission and design adult social care services, starting with the development of strategies underpinning services for adults with learning disability, autism, carers and older people.

As well as currently co-chairing relevant boards to oversee the implementation of the priorities within those strategies. They also discussed other services impacted by the Covid pandemic which did not reopen having impact on wellbeing and social isolation. The council's financial difficulties which continue to impact services was also discussed and other community concerns.

David Coleman-Groom, Executive Director People - Adults (DASS) interim, said: *"I am once again very grateful to our co-production volunteers being part of this review and sharing their experiences with the review team."*

## Our visit to Turning Point

"My name is Shahnaz. I was invited by Bestina to accompany her to Turning Point to talk to some of the people who use their services about SBC co-production, and we invited them to join as members.

"There was the very friendly and welcoming lead, whom I had met before. We were in a group together on our recovery journey. That made things more comfortable for me.

"Bestina was talking and highlighting our involvement and work through co-production, and shared our co-production promotional video.

At the end of the session, people were asked what they thought. Most responded that they were interested. I could see the enthusiasm in their faces."

# Adult Social Care Strategies

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The People, Strategy and Commissioning Team support the development and implementation of the Adult Social Care strategies. In each of our newsletters, we aim to provide an update on the Partnership Board activities that support the strategies, including how the Co-production Network is connected to the work programmes. This time we are focusing on the autism and learning disabilities Partnership Boards.

## Autism Steering Group

The Autism Steering Group, co-chaired by a carer for a person with autism (also a member of the Co-production Network), is predominantly composed of individuals with lived experience, many of whom discovered the group through their involvement with the Co-production Network.

These members play a crucial role in guiding the group's work, ensuring that Slough progresses towards becoming an Autism-friendly town. They uphold the principle of "nothing about us without us," ensuring that decisions regarding autism are made by those directly affected.

The co-chair, with their extensive experience as a carer, significantly contributes to shaping agendas and informing the best approaches to specific discussion topics. Clear, jargon-free communication is a top priority, ensuring that all activities and decisions are accessible and relevant to the autism community.

A coffee morning is being planned in November for autistic people, working together to make Slough a more autistic friendly town.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

The Co-production Network volunteers have played a pivotal role in the LD Partnership Board by co-chairing the meetings alongside professionals. These volunteers, who are either individuals with learning disabilities or carers, bring invaluable lived experience to the table.

Their involvement has been instrumental in shaping the board's action plan and achieving significant progress in a short period. The support provided to these co-chairs includes dedicated time for agenda discussions, both before and after meetings, and ensuring communication is clear and jargon-free.

Additionally, the volunteers created a promotional video to inform the community about the board's creation and its aims, further enhancing awareness and engagement. This approach has ensured that the board's activities are genuinely aligned with the needs and priorities of people with learning disabilities, fostering a more inclusive and effective partnership.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## Training our volunteer members

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We recognise the importance of training our volunteers to equip them for their role.

Over the last six months they have attended a range of training sessions including understanding council governance and decision making, safeguarding processes, effective communication skills, health and safety, and the role of public health and adult social care teams.

Sue, one of our volunteers said: "As a co-production member, the training undertaken this year has proved to be invaluable, informative, enjoyable, and interactive. The trainers have all been excellent, putting participants at ease, encouraging group discussion, and listening to all opinions and comments.

I particularly enjoyed the governance training as, although I have often heard the word used in relation to Local Government, I did not fully understand what it meant. The trainer made it all so interesting and I now have a much better understanding of the importance of governance in decision making throughout the council."

We will continue to build upon the training offered to our volunteers and are guided by areas they have identified as important to them.



# Meet our members!

In each of our newsletters, we will be introducing you to some of our valued members.

## Jane



**My name is Jane, and I am the Director of Commissioning with Slough Borough Council.**

I am responsible for a number of different areas within Adult Social Care, including Strategic Commissioning, Partnerships, Quality Assurance, Contract Management, Purchasing and Direct Payments. I have been a member of the Co-production Network since it started in 2019 and am incredibly proud of all the work members do.

This has included developing and delivering important strategies, recruiting into key roles within the directorate, updating information leaflets for direct payments, organising events, designing services and much, much more. I am really passionate about co-production and believe that the network plays a vital role in ensuring that the voices of local people are central to the work that we do.

## Marcia



**Hello, I am Marcia, and I have been involved in the Co-production Network since it started in 2019.**

When I joined, I had been caring for my husband who was diagnosed as having Alzheimer's in May 2015. Firstly, he was able to remain living at home attending a day care centre one day a week, but after his first admission to hospital in October 2017 his health deteriorated and on returning home, he needed professional carers employed to help with personal care. Initially, the care was provided by the council's re-enablement team, then by a local care company. In February 2018 his health deteriorated further, and after a second hospital stay my husband moved into a local care home where he remained until he passed away in March 2020.

Since joining the team, I have been able to use my personal experience, good and not so good, of some of the NHS, Adult Social Care services and carers to give a personal opinion when new social care services are being planned.

I have been involved in several projects including the recruitment of the director of adult social care, which I found very rewarding.

## David



**Hi, I am David. I have been working in Slough since June of this year, and within the last month I have become the interim Executive Director for Adult Social Care.**

The role holds the legal responsibility for adult social care, including the quality of practice, safeguarding and access to information, advice, and guidance and to make sure there is a strong provider care market.

I have worked in social care for the last 20 years ranging from children's social care and adults and I am passionate about making a difference and ensuring people can live the life that matters to them. When I am not at work, I spend my time with my husband and 3 children, we are lucky enough to live near the beach so try to be outside as much as possible.

In all the years I have worked in the sector I have never come across a Co-production Network which is as strong as the one in Slough, as a member of the network I am committed to ensure that co-production is embedded not only within adult social care, but also the wider council.