

Co-production Network Newsletter



How to contact us

If you want more information about the Co-production Network or want to get involved please:

Email: Belnvolved@slough.gov.uk

Visit: www.slough.gov.uk/co-production

Well done and thank you Marcia!

A very special congratulations to Marcia, one of our committed volunteers for the work she has done to support the Over 50's Forum in Slough. The group celebrated 25 years on 18 April with a lunch at Kingsway Methodist Church.

The mayor was in attendance along with the Leader of the Council, and other partner organisations and residents, to celebrate and mark the achievements of the forum.



Welcome!

Welcome to our first edition of the quarterly Slough Co-production Network Newsletter which we are launching to mark National Co-production Week 2024. It has been developed with the help of our volunteers and we do hope you will enjoy reading it.

The newsletter aims to:

- Promote the importance and benefits of co-production in Slough.
- Provide regular updates about the work the network has been involved in.
- Be a direct channel from members about their experiences of being part of the network.



Hear about us

Who are we?

The Slough Co-production Network is a group of people committed to co-production, working together in equal partnership to create better outcomes for the Slough community and people who use services. It is made up of local people who are experts by experience and health and social care professionals. Together we are all making important decisions about local services.

How we work

The network was set up in 2019 and we are continuing to develop and strengthen how we work together to help residents to live as full, meaningful and independent lives as possible, whatever their health and social care needs.

As a group we meet monthly and participate in important decisions about what local health and social care policies and services should look like. This includes being part of project groups, interviewing senior social care staff, and reviewing and choosing service providers.

Meet some of our members!

In every newsletter we will introduce you to some of our members and they will talk about their experiences of being part of the network. In this issue, please meet Karen, Sue, Mike and Marc.

Karen

Hello everyone. My name is Karen, and I am a member of the Slough Co-production Network. I am also the co-chair of the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

I live in a supported living service in Slough and have experience of social care services.

I am going to tell you about how as a member of the network, I had a say in what the new advocacy service for the people of Slough should look like.

I was really pleased to be asked to get involved as I have personal experiences of using advocacy services.

What I did to help was join meetings with other people in Slough who were also interested in advocacy. I was part of the project group that shared ideas of what a good advocacy service should be. These ideas were included in developing the new service.

I was involved in choosing a new provider, and I helped interview the interested providers. I gave my opinions to those on the provider panel and we made the decision together. I have really enjoyed being part of this work and having a say!

I feel excited about being part of the network as it makes me feel like an important person.



Marc

Hi, I'm Marc and I am proud to be a member of the Co-production Network.

I started working in social care 30 years ago as a carer in a residential home but my drive to co-produce good outcomes with people comes from my relationship with my sister, Lianne.



Lianne is two years younger than me and has profound and multiple disabilities. Growing up she found it difficult to make choices for herself, so I spent a lot of time with her finding ways to enable her to actively shape her own experiences.

As we have aged, Lianne's physical condition has deteriorated and she now, more than ever relies on those who support her to find ways to co-produce outcomes with her. Thankfully the team around her is really good.

Although I have a professional role in Social Care (Executive Director People - Adults/Director of Adult Social Care) being part of the network isn't about that. I feel accepted and appreciated for just being me and recognise that every member genuinely wants to raise the profile of co-production, whilst supporting and enabling those with care and support needs to achieve good outcomes.



Co-production - An Acrostic

Collaborating minds, weaving threads of thought,
Open hearts, sharing visions that can't be bought,
Partnerships forged, where empathy is the key,
Respecting diverse voices, setting creativity free,
Opening doors to change, together we strive,
Dreaming of a world where all of us can thrive,
United in purpose, our efforts promoted,
Creating and implementing solutions, leaving no one behind,
Together we build, with compassion as our guide,
In Co-production's embrace, we volunteers stand side by side,
Opening new horizons in Slough, where possibilities reside,
Nurturing hope and progress in Slough, benefiting all people with love and sharing as our volunteer's pride.

By Dolly Bhaskaran



Sue

Hello, I am Sue and I have been involved in the Co-production Network since it started in 2019. I am a carer for my adult son who has autism and provide support to an older relative who lives in Slough.

Since being involved in the network, I have been involved in a number of projects. One was to help update the leaflet to promote Direct Payments to residents eligible for this type of support. When my son began to receive his support through Direct Payments, his life improved dramatically. Due to his autism, he found socialising and making friends difficult and was a lonely and unhappy young man.

Once the Direct Payments were in place, he was able to employ two Personal Assistants (carers) of his own age. They accompanied him to social events and encouraged him

to mix with others and form friendships. One of them luckily shared his passion for horror films so they are able to visit the cinema on a regular basis.

My son is also able to talk to them about issues he finds difficult to discuss with us, his parents - and that we would find difficult to discuss with him! He is much happier now he has a social life. His confidence in social situations generally has improved.

When the network was asked to be involved in promoting Direct Payments, as part of the wider Adult Social Care transformation programme, I was very pleased to be involved in the updating of the Direct Payments brochure. I was able to use my experience to help review current information and make suggestions for improvement.



Mike

My name is Mike and I'm a parent of two teenage boys and I also look after my Dad who is 89 and lives on his own, so needs quite a lot of help and support. I've enjoyed working in health and social care for over 30 years in various roles and I've been working in Slough for 10 years.

I am a member of the Co-production Network because I believe it's important that all of us working in services listen to people who are carers or use local services so we can understand what's important to them, hear what works and what doesn't, and then work together to make improvements and focus on what matters most to people.

Recent projects

Recruitment of new volunteers to join us

As the work and profile of the group has increased, we have recognised that we needed to recruit more volunteers. Therefore, our volunteers helped facilitate a workshop at Arbour Park aimed at local residents that were interested in hearing about being part of the network. Volunteers shared their personal experiences and showed the film.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCUGyBF6dvs

We are really delighted that, following the workshop, four more volunteers have joined so far.



Recruitment of senior adult social care staff

Community volunteers have taken an active role in decisions relating to recruiting to senior positions. This involved leading a stakeholder panel chaired by one of the volunteers. The panel then feedback on their views of the suitability of the candidates to the recruiting lead and chair of the main panel. The recruiting managers have reported on how helpful this feedback has been as part of decision-making in these important roles.

Helped shape the new autism strategy

The new autism strategy for 2023-28 for Slough was recently approved by the cabinet. Members of the Co-production Network worked closely with the lead commissioner for autism to support engagement events with residents. This resulted in agreeing the vision and priorities for the strategy.

A new autism steering group has been established that will be co-chaired by a volunteer member of the network and carers to help develop and then oversee this important plan for Slough.

Co-production Guide

A group of our volunteers from the network have come together to update our Co-production Guide for adult social care staff to use when they want to involve people who use services in future service design. This is based upon their direct experiences about what is important to them.

Advocacy re-commissioning

Our Co-production Network volunteers joined a project group working with commissioners, social workers, and health care staff to review the autism service and then help design a new model and to agree for the new model to meet the needs of Slough residents ensuring they get a more timely service. They were then part of a panel to help select the provider to deliver the new service.

Re-commissioning of an older people's residential provision

A Co-production volunteer worked with Healthwatch and the commissioner for older people as part of a project to support a review of residential services supporting older people. This involved undertaking on-site 'quality' conversations with service users, evaluating the quality of the service and this work supported decisions around future commissioning.

Winter Blues Campaign

Members of the Co-production Network recognised that winter can be a very difficult time for people and therefore wanted to ensure that Slough residents knew where to go to seek support. They helped co-produce a leaflet which was distributed to partners and community groups.

www.slough.gov.uk/downloads/download/1154/winter-blues-advice-leaflet