

## Welcome!



**Welcome to our first newsletter for 2025. We are pleased to see the spring bulbs appearing after what has seemed to be a very wet and long winter.**

However, despite the dreary weather, you will read in this edition how our volunteers have continued to support the work of Adult Social Care with commitment and enthusiasm in so many ways.

In this edition, we say a fond farewell to Sally Kitson our Partnerships Manager (along with Sally's dog Walter) who leaves us at the end of March to take on an exciting new role. Sally has been a member of the Co-production Network since 2019 and has been with the council for a phenomenal 20 years. During this time Sally has worked tirelessly with other members of the network to shape our innovative approach towards co-production in Slough. We will all really miss Sally - but wish her all the very best for the future. Sally, we hope that you and Walter will stay in touch!

## How to contact us

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 \(sloughhealth.org\)](#)

**Minor Illness:** Slough Urgent Care Centre in Priors Close is open 8am-8pm seven days a week, providing same day treatment for patients who do not require treatment in the emergency department. More info: [New Urgent Care Centre in Slough | NHS Frimley Health Foundation Trust](#)

**Adult & Children social Care:** For social care emergencies outside of Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, please call the Emergency Duty Team on 01344 351999 email: [EDT@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:EDT@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) or dial 999.



# Volunteer 'thank you' event held in the council chambers



**Adult services were delighted to host a very special 'thank you' celebration on 29 January at Observatory House for our wonderful volunteers. This was to mark the time, expertise and support they have given to the work of adult social care and wider council over the last 12 months.**

They have contributed in so many ways and have really helped improve outcomes for local people.



We are really proud of our approach to co-production here in Slough, and our highly dedicated volunteers that work in partnership with the council and our stakeholders.

Will Tuckley, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Commissioner, and Councillor Anna Wright, Lead Member for Adult Social Care, Mental Health, and Learning Disabilities, joined the celebrations and we enjoyed light refreshments and homemade cake!

Will said: "A little after I joined the Council as Chief Executive, I was fortunate to be able to attend the annual event in Chalvey celebrating the co-production of services for vulnerable people in Slough. I wasn't sure what to expect but was bowled over by the positive spirit in the (large) room. It was very clear to me that the commitment to work together between volunteers, community organisations, the council and health bodies was genuine and, moreover, there was a strong track record of doing so.

"As I said when I spoke, co-production is great in principle, but often hard in practice, and the

progress made in Slough is due to the dedication and hard work by all involved. It was great to be present at the more recent event celebrating our community volunteers.

"Without them, little of this would be possible. Setting aside some time to reflect on their individual contributions and share experience was invaluable. Saying 'thank you' and marking the occasion with a cake was the least we could do."

We were very grateful to Tesco store in Slough who donated some refreshments for the event. Nadia, the community engagement assistant from the store said "I am very pleased to be able to support the event".

**Here are some comments from some of the volunteers that attended:**

Jordan: "Great to see everyone on Wednesday! I think that time allotted for this kind of informal event is very beneficial, as it allows people to develop specific conversations and concentrate on moving things forward organically."

Dolly: "The event was amazing!"

Craig: "It's always good when the council celebrates its volunteers, and this is something it does well. It's also useful to have the opportunity to remind them that we are also residents, taxpayers, and advocates, and have our own expectations."



# Co-production at Hope College



**We are celebrating 10 Years of Hope College and co-production in Slough this year!**

We launched our spring/summer brochure at our Hope College Open Morning in February and marked our ten years with some additional attractions such as a yoga demonstration, free head massages, goodie bags and balloons! We also held a Q&A session where students learnt how Volunteer Peer Mentors use their own experiences of mental illness

and recovery to support others in workshops.

We're also running our 9th Volunteer Ready Induction Course, which is designed and delivered with Volunteer Peer Mentors, to support service users as they transition from mental health services to the Volunteer Peer Mentor role.

**Vickie Miller, Community Development Lead, Slough Community Mental Health Team**

## Co-producing an 'out of hospital' pathway

**Slough recognises the important contribution older people provide within Slough's diverse community. It is crucial they are valued as expert partners and supported to lead as full a life as possible in line with the priorities set out in the SBC Older People Strategy 2023-26.**

At times people will need to access services or need to stay in hospital along with people of any age. At those times, it is important to have clear and proactive pathways (arrangements) in place flowing "out of hospital."

This could be decisions about a person going straight home, needing a new package of care, or having Home First reablement to

support them living as independently as possible in their own home. Discharge to Assess beds will also need to be in place to consider if a person fit and safe enough to go home.

To support this work, Slough Borough Council has developed a cross department approach to help support our out of hospital pathway. A project group had been set up made up of operational and commissioning representatives and will be co-produced with older people from Slough's Co-production Network as well as input from Frimley ICB. This group will meet fortnightly to develop the pathway and make a real difference to the lives of people in Slough.

## Co-production volunteers joined the Adult Social Care end of year celebrations

**We were delighted that some of our volunteer members joined this event to hear about some of the achievements within the department. Adult Social Care staff also heard about some of the work the Co-production Network volunteers have supported over the past twelve months.**

The co-production volunteers met staff from the operational and commissioning teams and shared a buffet lunch. They also secured second place in the seasonal quiz and without cheating!



# Co-production Network involved in developing the adult social care charges consultation

**Some volunteer members of the Co-production Network were involved in helping to design a consultation survey about proposed increases in Adult Social Care fees and charges, working on a short timescale.**

As this is a very complex area to understand, it is important to ensure questions and information are as clear as possible in order to ensure a meaningful consultation process for Slough residents.

Anna Grainger, Senior Manager

Adult Social Care, who was overseeing the work met with the volunteers to review the proposed information for the questionnaire and the survey questions.

As a result of their input, the questions and information was changed to a much friendlier and (hopefully) more understandable consultation.

Anna made the following comments: "The group gave such brilliant suggestions and also remarked that people do

understand the financial situation at the moment and that they want to work with the council playing their part together to support people in the community. This was fed back to the councillors at the cabinet meeting. I am very grateful to the group for this."

Details to the survey including an easy read version can be found here: [Adult Social Care Payments - Paying for care and support - Slough Borough Council - Citizen Space](#)

## Update on our Adults Mental Health Commissioning Strategy

**The Adults Mental Health Commissioning Strategy 2024-2029 was formally approved by Cabinet on 17 February 2025, marking a significant milestone in transforming mental health services for residents.**

This strategy ensures better access, stronger community support, and more integrated care pathways. The strategy was shaped by engagement with the Co-production Network, and the input of its members played a vital role in identifying priorities and shaping the action plan.

The next phase of implementation begins in March, with the establishment of a Steering Group. This group will oversee the delivery of the strategy, ensuring that actions remain focused, achievable, and responsive to local needs. The Co-production Network will continue to be a key partner in this process, ensuring that lived experiences remain at the heart of decision-making.

Thank you to the CPN for their invaluable contributions in shaping this strategy. Your voices have helped build a stronger, more inclusive, and community-driven approach to mental health in Slough. We look forward to continuing to work together as we move into the delivery phase of this important strategy.

You can find the Cabinet reports here: [Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 17 February 2025, 6.30pm](#)

**Mayowa Kushimo,  
Interim Mental Health Commissioner**

## Voluntary and community services - one year on

**The redesigned services supporting residents and the voluntary and community sector began in the summer of 2023 - shaped by wide feedback from the CPN, the Community sector and health and care partners.**

A report on the progress of these services went to Cabinet in January 2025 and was well-received by councillors who were able to see the impact these services are making on the local community.

Successes include:

- an increase in funding from the Better Care Fund to the 'One Slough Community Fund' - from c£100k pa to c£170k pa
- external grant funding of just over £2.5 million achieved by community groups for local services within Slough
- Community Connectors working alongside teams within Adult Social Care and Wexham Park Hospital, with an improving record of supporting people away from 'formal' care and into local community support
- positive working relationships based on partnership.

The full report can be read [here](#)

# Progress update on Slough Adult Autism Strategy 2024-29

**The Slough Adults Autism Strategy 2024-2029, approved by Cabinet in February 2024, sets out a commitment to reduce health inequalities and enable autistic adults to live well and independently within our community. A one-year progress update was presented to Cabinet on 17 February.**

Summary points from the report are listed below:

- Significant progress due to collaboration of autistic adults, their carers, and statutory, commercial, and community partners.
- Autism awareness prioritised at strategy launch during autism acceptance week with a successful community event in partnership with Slough Children First at Arbour Park stadium.
- Autism Steering Group established, 40 + members, including autistic adults, carers, and local organisations. Group chaired by a carer of an autistic adult and member of the Co-production Network, ensuring lived experience is at the heart of decision-making.

- Autism Community Coffee Chat group established - protected, dedicated space led by and for autistic adults to share ideas and actively shape the strategy's action plan. Now scoping the design of multifunctional hub to host autism-related initiatives and events.
- Partnered with several groups to promote independence, including Autism Berkshire, developing drop-in advocacy and other community initiatives within council spaces. Plans underway to redesign 'Safer Places scheme' to make Slough more inclusive and accessible.
- Weekly employability drop-in sessions held at The Curve in partnership with Ways into Work, supporting autistic adults access job opportunities and training.
- Working with Slough Borough Council (SBC) Human Resources and autistic adults to co-design staff training, focusing on neurodiversity and inclusion and creating a more inclusive workplace/workforce within SBC. The goal is to meet the Neurodiversity Employment Index standards by the end of 2025.

## Future actions include:

- Creating formal links with employers, promoting neurodivergent talent, transport planning and workforce upskilling to recognise and adequately support neurodivergent adults.
- Integration of health and social care agenda is also progressing, albeit at a slower pace. Working with Public Health, Frimley Integrated Care Board, Berkshire Health NHS Foundation Trust, and other health partners to introduce sensory-friendly health checks and improve uptake of regular health screenings. Moving forward to 2025 and beyond, the Autism Steering Group will actively work with these partners to promote effective prevention and early intervention, as well as improving diagnostic pathways and pre/post autism diagnosis support.

The first year of Autism Strategy 2024-29 has laid strong foundations for further significant progress in year two. You can find the full report here [Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 17 February 2025, 6.30pm](#)



## Second autism coffee morning



A second autism coffee morning was hosted by members the Autism Partnership Board and the Co-production Network on 20 February at Chalvey Community Centre.

It was an informal opportunity for people to come together and connect as a group over a cup of coffee. The group shared lots of

ideas and agreed that they would like to continue to meet on a monthly basis at Chalvey. It has also now given itself a name, which is 'SAT: Slough Autism Together.'

One of the artist group members will be designing a logo for the group too! We look forward to seeing the group flourish.

## Developing a co-production training resource for Adult Social Care staff

Members of the Slough Co-production Network have supported the development of a training video which will be used to support Adult Social Care staff to:

- hear more about the Slough CPN and how it works
- hear from volunteers about their experiences of being part of the CPN
- help them to think about how they can apply a co-production approach to their work including involving the CPN.



## Support for the Slough Safeguarding Partnership (SSP)

The CPN were asked for their support, from the SSP, for a project to create accessible safeguarding leaflets and information for Slough professionals and the wider Slough community.

The information is about keeping safe from harm or abuse, helping others keep safe and where to get help, if needed.

Several volunteers from the CPN shared their interest in being a part of the group to provide feedback and advice regarding the safeguarding information. There will be a meeting to share the leaflets and information.

Barbara Jacobson, Safeguarding Partnership Adults Lead shared that she is: "Looking forward to working with the CPN volunteers, so that communication about preventing abuse and harm is effective and helpful for the whole Slough community, and that they are aware of where to turn for help and advice, if they have concerns about abuse or neglect."



# Meet our members!

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

## Zhora



### My name is Zhora.

As a volunteer with the Co-production Network, I feel honoured to be part of the recruitment team helping to select new managers. This makes me feel confident in how I present myself and makes me feel valued in being part of making decisions.

I am proud and happy to be part of the co-production team. It has been wonderful working with all the members including volunteers and council staff.

I really like being able to represent carers regarding needs and welfare. I am also the link to the Carers Partnership Board which is an important connection between the two groups.

I really enjoy getting involved in different tasks. We work well as a team and are the voice of the community of Slough.

## Sally



### After nearly 20 years of working for Slough Borough Council in different commissioning roles, I am moving on at the end of March.

I have been truly privileged to be part of the Co-production Network since it started in 2019. Together with a group of committed volunteers and colleagues, I have seen how it has developed and grown into an established and highly respected group, that has been part of important decision making within Adult Social Care and the wider council.

I have so loved spending time with such dedicated and skilled volunteers who really want to work in partnership, to help improve the lives of Slough residents. They have been involved in so many amazing

projects, sharing their lived experiences, expertise, and knowledge of Slough with such energy. I genuinely believe that despite the challenges we have faced in Slough, their involvement has made a huge difference to what we do.

My apologies but I had to include a picture of Walter in my goodbye message! He has also made many great friends with the members of the CPN during our virtual meetings!

I will really miss working with the CPN and am leaving a big part of my heart here, but I will keep a beady eye on what will follow. I am so happy that co-production is now an embedded way of working here in Slough and know it will continue to flourish!