

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL WORK - TOGETHER -

Through co-production of design, development & delivery of social work education and practice.



the
**SOCIAL WORK
TEACHING PARTNERSHIP**
West Midlands

&

People with Lived Experience Advisory Group

CO-PRODUCTION CHARTER

WMTEACHINGPARTNERSHIP.ORG.UK

**Valuing Collaboration, Developing Connections
&
Inspiring Creative Practice**

Co-Production is Energy

A CONNECTION
is the energy
THAT EXISTS
between **TWO PEOPLE**
when they feel
seen, heard, and valued;
when they can
give and receive
without judgment;
and when they
derive sustenance
and **STRENGTH** from the
relationship.

Brene Brown

“Constructive emotional encounters in co-production contribute to individual positive outcomes and the success of co-production overall”, (Clarke et al, 2019).

The Strengthening Social Work Charter is about our commitment to co-production, which is built and developed through relationships, connection, our energy...

Contents

Introduction	Page 4
The Vision	Page 5
A Trauma Responsive Charter	Page 6
Development	Page 7
Our Survey Said...	Page 8
Values & Principles for Best Practice	Page 9
Standards For Best Practice	Page 10
Pledge	Page 11/12
Next Steps	Page 12
Appendices'	Page 13-25

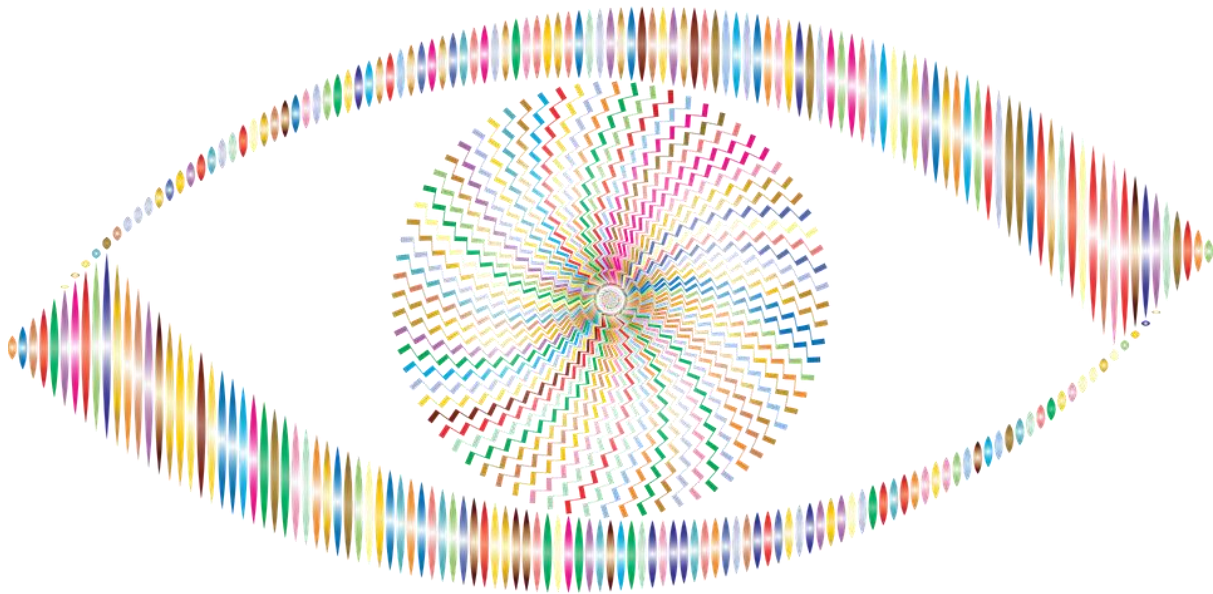


Introduction

The Strengthening Social Work Together Co-Production Charter has been developed by the People with Lived Experience Advisory Group. The collective wisdom of diverse, unique individuals who have shared knowledge, insights, and reflections upon personal, professional, and theoretical contributions. Bringing a valuable and honest depth of experience to collaboration and co-production with people with lived experience.

The group identified that whilst many organisations are taking positive steps towards a co-production approach. Often there are inconsistencies, which may bring about additional challenges that impact upon the co-production relationship and subsequent outcomes of co-production work. However, with a more cohesive, consistent, trauma responsive approach to co-production, collaborative practice may be improved, developed, and further embedded across all activities of the partnership.

The Charter reflects that the lens of lived experience brings a level of knowledge, insight, and empathetic understanding to the co-production relationship, which an observer or witness can never completely share. Therefore, this document is to serve as a best practice guide to working in co-production with people who have lived experience of social work and social care practice.



The Vision

The Strengthening Social Work Together Charter is a collective vision, a clear commitment to achieving best outcomes for all, through collaborative co-production, from the very seed of an idea.

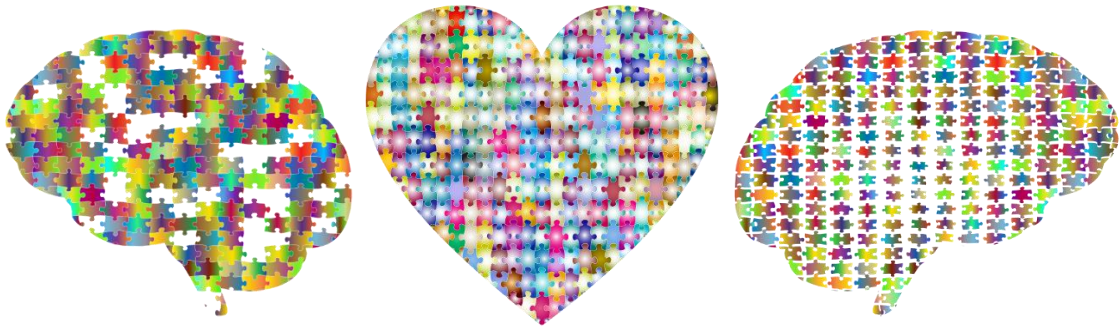
This charter will provide guidance on working successfully in collaboration and co-production with those who have lived experience of social work, social care practice, their carers and those who currently use social work and social care services.

It is a call to action, to ensure people with lived experience are involved in the growth and improvement of services, through commissioning, redesign, development, delivery, evaluation and review of projects, programmes, and services. Ensuring that the voices of lived experience are heard; their knowledge, expertise, insights, and experiences are valued and the shared understanding which this develops informs practice improvement.

The Charter is indicative of a commitment to embedding a trauma informed, trauma responsive approach to guide all work. Working with all individuals with respect, compassion, hope, justice, and collaboration. A commitment to a collaborative, trauma responsive approach closely aligns with the guidance outlined in this charter. The values, principles and standards within the Charter are intrinsically linked and aligned with the values, ethics, and codes of practice for social work.

<https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf/the-pcf/social-worker/values-and-ethics>

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/>



Development

As part of the development process, the People with Lived Experience Advisory Group heard from members of the partnership through reflective conversations, contributions to discussion at meetings, attendance and engagement at a co-production conference, and through survey responses. Which highlighted examples of co-production already happening across the partnership; from those practice examples we recognised that across the partnership there is a varied and inconsistent approach to how co-production is being embedded.

The survey responses highlighted the importance of collaborative practice, across professional boundaries. Building on and extending the network, to bring richness in diversity, to avoid silo thinking and taking a narrow focus with limited perspectives.

The responses also highlight that sustainable, consistent, flexible, and inclusive approaches, that are rooted in connection, relationships, communication, and valuing an effective feedback loop, must be embedded within organisations.

[See Appendix B to explore our survey responses in more detail](#)

Our Survey Said Co-Production Is...





Values and Principles for Best Practice

Through the Strengthening Social Work Together Charter we ask that all members of the partnership commit to holding and championing a set of intrinsic shared core values, which we seek to embed throughout organisational cultures and practice.

- **Connection** – Relationships are the bedrock of effective social work practice.
- **Compassion** – An attitude of the heart and a responsive approach to adversity & trauma.
- **Collaboration** – Through co-ordination, co-operation, and co-production.
- **Justice** – Anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive, empowering approaches that value, acknowledge & champion all diversities, unique identities, and intersectionalities.
- **Respect** – Individuality, identity, skills, knowledge & experience. Be open, honest, transparent, accountable, reliable and practice with integrity.
- **Safety** – Upholding the fundamental right to be protected from all forms of harm. Acknowledging, understanding, and responding to both physical and psychological safety, and demonstrating competence in practice.
- **Hope** - Employing curiosity, acknowledging capability and capacity for positive contribution, internal and external resources, personal development, and sustainable change.

[See Appendix C for further details](#)



Standards Of Best Practice for Trauma Responsive Co-Production

Embedding a trauma responsive co-production approach across all levels of practice is not accomplished through a singular model. It requires constant thought, reflection, awareness, being tuned in, sensitive to individuality, intersectionality, difference, and possibly significant cultural changes at an organisational level. The standards outlined below are to serve as a guide for developing co-production in practice through a trauma informed lens.

Standard One: Collaborative (Realise) – Collaboration with people with lived experience at all levels. Developing awareness of trauma through brain science, the intersectionality of inequality, personal/organisational assumptions, and biases and the lived experience of trauma.

Standard Two: Supportive (Recognise) - Practice is supportive and respectful of individuality, diversity and difference. It is trauma aware, informed, and able to identify where practice may impact in terms of dysregulation and trauma responses.

Standard Three: Responsive (Respond) – Practice is dynamic, and responsive to individuals' thoughts, feelings, emotions, routines, and rituals. There is a clear shared understanding of what this process will entail; what value will be drawn from the work and how it will meet individual, community, and organisational needs. Guidance is given where behaviour responses fall below standards, and individuals are aware of and resist re-traumatisation. Practitioners self-regulate, are responsive and take a solution focussed, strengths-based approach that is informed by the insights and understanding of past experiences.

Standard Four: Reflective – Having deliberate conversations throughout co-production, exploring what's going well, where there's room for development and critical feedback is encouraged. Recognition that people hold experiences of their narrative and truth, that are often in complete juxtaposition to your own. Collectively, we need to value this and recognise that both truths can exist in the same space.

[See Appendix D for further details](#)

An introduction to the pledge

As part of Strengthening Social Work Together, we are asking all partners to commit to making a pledge to embed co-production more deeply in the way that we support collaboration, value, and champion development. Being innovative in the way we nurture and invest in relationships to enable practice to thrive.

Co-production is about reciprocal relationships between all stakeholders; recognising the value in learning and developing from knowledge and insights gained through lived experience, and it is an important part of both personal and practice development.

Our People with Lived Experience Advisory Group actively support partners to use co-production approaches to improve practice across the partnership. Within this document are examples of good practice through co-production; practice that is collaborative, innovative, and rooted within our relational values.

Co-production is not static. It is continually exploring in more depth the ways that power, injustice, oppression, exclusion, and discussions play out in systems and within people's everyday lives. Therefore, a key feature of this Charter must be how we all are going to commit to ensuring co-production evolves and becomes embedded at all levels of practice design, development, and delivery.

Please complete the pledge on the next page and email it to:
westmidlandsteachingpartnership@coventry.gov.uk

The Pledge

We are/I am committed to continuing to embed the principles of co-production in the way we / I work. To championing and supporting collaborative, co-produced working as best practice throughout the partnership. The following pledge represents the ways in which we / I will focus our / my efforts to continued learning, improving, and fostering a culture of co-production in our/my work:

We/I will actively seek ways to support people to overcome the barriers to working with us in collaboration & co-production:

When co-production is nurtured and developed effectively, it leads to more equitable and effective systems and services. All voices, insights and experiences are valued equally, and people can make meaningful contributions, choices, and decisions. However, it's important to recognise that the playing field is often uneven, and there can be many barriers which prevent people from collaborating and co-producing as fully as they might like to; that's if they are even aware that they are able to. Part 1 of this pledge is a commitment to seeking ways to reach out to, and work with a wider range of individuals. Embedding a culture of continual network strengthening and engaging with diverse communities and dissenting voices.

We/ I will co-produce and collaborate with people with lived experience from the very seed of an idea and in the design, development, and delivery of services. We will value insights and learning that come from both constructive and critical challenge and support:

Co-production is about de-constructing the box. It's about stepping outside existing assumptions and beliefs. Recognising that diverse perspectives, specifically those of individuals with a range of lived experience, can create appropriate, effective, and innovative ways of working together. Harnessing the value and insight that comes with that lived experience to improve practice, and outcomes for all stakeholders. Part 2 of this pledge is a commitment to working alongside people with lived experience as critical friends, so that we can continue extending our thinking and ambitions. All partners will strive to ensure that meaningful co-production is a feature of the design and delivery of services, programmes, and projects. Shaping the way decisions are made, work is carried out, and engagement with all stakeholders, wider communities and society is developed. This will involve each organisation, service, and team, developing an annual co-production and engagement strategy/action plan.

We/ I will support the wider service, our teams, and colleagues to build and embed co-production into their work:

Co-production evolved from conversations about the relationship between people who deliver services in a professional capacity, and those who access those services to receive support. We want to find more ways to bring this to life in the day-to-day work and engagement of the organisations, services, and teams that we support. Part 3 of this pledge is to commit to working in a way where we can support, encourage, and empower individuals to play a key role in the delivery of their support and engagement. Through local planning, national representation, and the design and development of new activities, projects, programmes, and events.

Signed: _____

Role: _____

Date: _____

Next Steps...

Our hope is that you will not only read the Charter but share it and use it as a tool for developing good collaborative, co-produced practice. We hope it will help members of the partnership to develop and navigate relationships and connections with people with lived experience and those who work with and alongside them. We hope you will use it to plan, prepare, develop, deliver, and evaluate (at individual, team, service, or organisational levels) with people who have lived experience, both those you know about and those you are yet to meet.

We are keen to learn and report on how the Charter is used and what impact it has, so please let us know what your experience is.