



# A Guide to Co-production

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## Who is this guide for?

This Guide is designed to support anyone involved in, or interested in becoming involved in, Co-production activity, including Warwickshire County Council Officers, customers and carers, and staff from partner organisations.

The Guide explores what Co-production is and how it looks in practice, and offers suggestions on how to implement, monitor and evaluate partnership working, while also recognising the importance of managing expectations in those circumstances where Co-production may not be appropriate.

The Guide offers an introduction to the principles of Co-production, and can be used alone as a day-to-day resource, or as part of a wider Co-production toolkit.



The Guide explores what Co-production is and how it looks in practice, and offers suggestions on how to implement, monitor and evaluate partnership working.

# What is Co-production?

“Co-Production means making something happen together.”

There are numerous definitions of Co-production that have been developed both nationally and locally. What they all have in common is the recognition that people who access services, and their families and carers, have the expertise and skills to help innovate and improve service provision. We have used two definitions, one local and one national, in developing this guide to ensure that the Principles and accompanying guidance are informed by both the views of Warwickshire customers and carers, and national best practice.



## **Warwickshire definition**

This definition was devised by a group of Warwickshire County Council customers who have personal, lived experience of accessing social care services, and carers of people accessing services, who have worked in partnership with Council Officers to co-design, co-develop and monitor Council decisions and services.

## Co-production is about making decisions with others



It involves planning and producing something that benefits all concerned. It recognises that both service recipients and service providers have a vital contribution to make in improving services. An essential component of co-production is that everyone works on an equal basis and is built on the recognition that people who receive a service are best placed to design and improve it.

### **National Co-production Advisory Group definition**

The National Co-production Advisory Group (NCAG) is a team of people, including people who use services and their carers and families, who are committed to making sure that personalised services and support based in the community become a reality for everyone.

“ Co-production is not just a word, it is not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find shared solutions, In practice, Co-production involves people who use services being consulted, involved and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them. When Co-production works best, people who use services and carers are valued by organisations as equal partners, can share power and have influence over decisions made.”

## Why Co-produce?

People who access services (including customers and carers) have a wealth of knowledge and skills that they have developed as a result of their lived experience. For this reason, they are considered to be 'Experts by Experience'.

Think Local, Act Personal (also known as TLAP - a national partnership organisation committed to transforming health and care through personalisation and community-based support – see [www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk](http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk) for more information) outlines the particular value of Co-production for Commissioners of services:

Taking a co-production approach makes it more likely that you will get things right for people the first time round, preventing expensive repeat visits or underused services. Working with people can lead to the identification of new resources or existing resources being better used.

The importance of valuing the individual's views and wishes, and placing the customer at the heart of decisions regarding their care, is reinforced in Part 1 of the Care Act 2014.

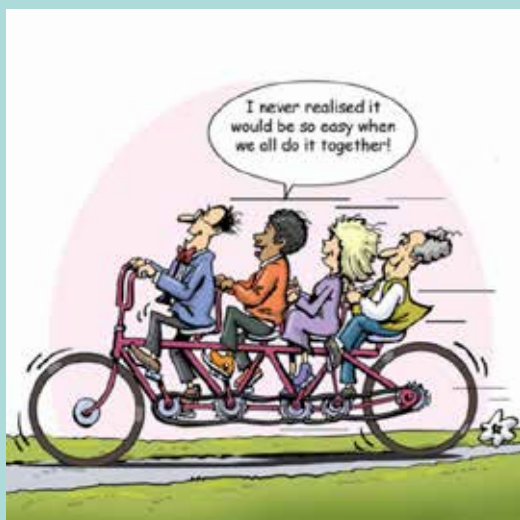
**To make the most of every opportunity, Co-production needs to be considered at every stage of the Commissioning cycle: from Analysing, throughout Planning and Delivering, all the way to Reviewing.**

People who access services, and their families and carers, should, where possible, be involved in every aspect of service design, development and delivery. However, there may be instances where this cannot happen; in such cases, it is the responsibility of Officers to be honest and open about why this is so, and manage expectations from the outset.

## Co-production Principles

People who access services (including customers and carers) have a wealth of knowledge and skills that they have developed as a result of their lived experience. For this reason, they are considered to be 'Experts by Experience'.

Think Local, Act Personal (also known as TLAP - a national partnership organisation committed to transforming health and care through personalisation and community-based support – see [www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk](http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk) for more information) outlines the particular value of Co-production for Commissioners of services:



### Equality

Co-production starts from the idea that no one group or person is more important than anyone else and everyone has skills, abilities and time to contribute.

### Diversity

Co-production should be as inclusive and diverse as possible. Particular efforts may be needed to ensure that seldom-heard groups are included.

### Accessibility

Making everything accessible is the way to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate fully in an activity in the way that suits them best.

### Reciprocity

Reciprocity means people get something back for putting something in – this should always involve a feeling of having made a difference, and customers should be able to see the impact of their contributions.

# Co-production Charter - 'Making it real'

## **Our shared commitment**

We, as people who access services in Warwickshire, families, carers, Council Officers, decision makers, and partner organisations, are committed to working together to ensure that the principles of effective Co-production underpin the shaping and improvement of our services. We recognise that true Co-production is taking place when all parties are able to agree with the following statements:

### **1. 'I am an equal partner'**

It is recognised by all parties that everyone involved has something valuable to contribute and will have the opportunity to do so. People who are responsible for leading pieces of work should be actively exploring and identifying opportunities for Co-production and working in a collaborative way to involve skilled and experienced customers in shaping and influencing services and support.

### **2. 'I am able to participate in different stages of the process'**

Co-production can happen at all stages of a piece of work, from initial analysis and needs assessment through to completing projects and reviewing the outcomes. This should also involve the regular review of Co-production activity itself, with customers and carers taking an active role in quality monitoring and evaluation where appropriate. Customers should be offered opportunities to get involved at all stages if they can, although there may be occasions when this is not possible.

### **3. 'My views and experiences are represented'**

People who access services and their families are 'Experts by Experience' and should be seen as assets in that they are, through their lived experience of accessing services, able to influence and shape service design and development. The views and experiences of adults, young people and children who access services and support, and those of their families and unpaid carers, should be heard; and should be representative of a diverse range of backgrounds, including those groups who are seldom heard, from across the county.

### **4. 'I try new approaches and am prepared to work in different ways to achieve desired outcomes'**

For effective and meaningful Co-production, all parties should be prepared to work in a flexible way and to explore creative ways of doing things in order to achieve the best results for all involved. Officers and professionals should consider innovative ways to engage seldom-heard groups, and dedicated efforts should be made to empower people and communities to co-produce.

### **5. 'I receive clear information, how and when I expect to, and in a way that works for me'**

Decisions and information will be communicated openly through mutually agreed channels, and to agreed timescales, with details and terminology clearly explained and agreed. Information will be shared in a range of formats to meet the communication preferences of everyone involved, including non-language based communication where required, and with sufficient time to enable people to fully understand and apply.

### **6. 'I am able to actively participate in meetings and other events'**

Meetings and other Co-production activities should be held at times and venues that are agreed by everyone involved. Appropriate measures should be taken to involve the majority of people wherever possible (for example, consideration of school holidays, availability of customers outside of office hours). Everyone should be involved in making decisions relating to the work and should have a range of opportunities to fully participate.

### **7. 'My contribution is recognised and valued, and I make a meaningful contribution to service development'**

Everyone feels respected and valued, has their contribution recognised and should feel that they are 'getting something back' as well as 'putting something in'. Everyone involved must feel that they are able to make a difference and be confident that they can have an impact on the outcome of the activity. If they can't, then this is not true Co-production. When decisions must be made that, for any reason, do not reflect the views of all parties, there must be open and transparent processes in place to arrive at 'middle ground' solutions and provide clear justification to those involved.

### **8. 'I am supported to actively and meaningfully participate in and / or facilitate Co-production activity'**

Co-production activity often requires the investment of time, money, and resources, and the people responsible for leading pieces of work should be supported to meet these requirements as far as possible. Co-production can help ensure that resources are used most effectively to develop the services that people really want, and it is important to consider the benefits as well as the costs. Customers should be able to recognise the impact of their contributions, for example through the use of 'You said...we did' responses or other feedback mechanisms.

Consultation, Engagement and Involvement are not the same as Co-production – they are aspects of the Co-production process. See the Glossary (page 16) for more detail on the differences between these elements.

## The 5 'W's (and one 'H') of Co-production

Co-production with customers is a subjective process and the most suitable engagement methods to use for a particular project will always be determined by the customer group and nature of the work. However, there are some key considerations that may help people leading on a piece of work decide where and how to begin...

### **Who?**

Think about the customers who currently access or have accessed a service, but also those who might in the future. How will you identify these different groups? It may be that different engagement methods are required: current customers may have a great of knowledge to impart in a focus group, whereas potential

customers might be more comfortable sharing their views through a survey or questionnaire. Do children and young people access the service? If so, make engagement fun – an activity or game to elicit their views their views can be much more effective than a presentation or interview.



## Who? (contd)

Who are the 'seldom-heard' groups that might access this service? Consider ethnicity, language barriers, and geographical locations – anything that might make it harder for particular customers to share their voice. Seek advice from front-line staff or volunteers who work regularly with these groups, and consider creative ways (e.g. through art or social media) that people can engage, rather than always relying on words.

Not everyone will always want to engage and that's okay. For those who are unsure, consider peer support mechanisms – co-delivering an engagement session with a volunteer who is an Expert by Experience may help put people at ease. Think about the target group and remember you can always talk to the Co-production Team about who has the appropriate skills and experience.

## Where

Customers are most likely to engage in settings in which they feel comfortable, so make links with existing support groups / community provisions. Go out to where the people who want to engage with are – they may not want or may not be able to change their routine to come to you.

Remember that customer views should be representative of the county's whole population. Those customers in very rural areas may struggle to attend face-to-face events, so explore opportunities to utilise virtual engagement where possible. If this isn't possible (where internet connection is limited or people don't feel 'technically savvy') telephone interviews or communication might be more appropriate. peer support mechanisms – co-delivering an engagement session with a volunteer who is an Expert by Experience may help put people at ease. Think about the target group and remember you can always talk to the Co-production Team about who has the appropriate skills and experience.

## What?

There are a wide range of engagement methods that can be used to capture customer views. These include:

Focus groups – great for obtaining a small selection of detailed views on a specific issue.

Surveys / questionnaires – allow for greater quantity of responses but often in less detail.

Interviews – face-to-face or by phone, useful for obtaining personal experiences and tailoring questions to individuals.

Group discussions – a great opportunity to utilise existing networks and engage with people in familiar settings and social groups. Remember, providers can often facilitate these on behalf of Officers and collate feedback, as long as they are fully briefed of what is needed.

Online forums / virtual discussion – useful for conducting a group discussion without having to get people in a room together. Can be done via social media.

Shadowing – spending time with customers and / or providers to get a first-hand sense of the service they are accessing or providing. Useful for informing analysis of the current situation.

The methods listed above provide valuable opportunities for consultation – obtaining customer views to inform service development. This is an essential step in the analysing and planning phases of the commissioning cycle; however, to evidence true co-production throughout, customers should continue to be involved with the process through service delivery and review. This ongoing involvement can be facilitated using some of the following methods:

**Workshops** – often where the doing gets done! A chance to bring people together to work on a particular, usually with a view to producing something tangible by the end.

**Work streams / working groups** – regular, ongoing opportunities to work towards a shared goal. Participation can be in person or virtual.

**Market testing** – an opportunity to 'try out' an idea for a service or provision with customers



before finalising the service specification. This enables professionals to gauge how an idea might be received, and allows customers who may not have been involved in development to express their views.

### **Reviewing, editing and re-drafting** –

particularly useful for documents and other written information (e.g. leaflets), this invites customers to check for accessibility / ease of understanding, and offers the opportunity for written materials to be co-produced by those who will access them.

**Panels** – customers' involvement with recruitment, evaluation or procurement. Can also be useful opportunities for quality assurance – e.g. moderating anonymised cases, evaluating monitoring data etc.

**Visits** – for example, customers conducting joint quality monitoring visits to local services with Officers. Warwickshire's Peer Reviewers (see page 14) have been fully trained in how to carry out quality assurance work in partnership with WCC staff and can offer lots of expertise to support this approach.

### **When**

It is a good idea to take each stage of the commissioning cycle and identify opportunities for Co-production. For example:

**Analyse** – involve customers in needs assessment and identifying gaps in provision. Find out about experiences of current services – what improvements would customers like to see?

**Plan** – customers are key in writing policies and service specifications. Customers can help staff to develop 'I' Statements to demonstrate the outcomes they want the service to achieve. ('I' Statements are measurable markers for change, explained from the customers' perspective: 'I feel safe when I'm at home', 'I know how to access information to help me manage my personal budget', 'I am able to attend social groups in my local community'.) Remember the importance of evidencing how customer views have informed a document.

**Do** – customers should be involved in recruitment and selection processes, from developing job descriptions through to shortlisting and interviews. Think about ways customers can support with procurement of services – if providers give presentations, customers could be part of an evaluation panel. Officers and customers can co-deliver training sessions, or co-facilitate workshops – hearing from customers directly often has the greatest impact.

**Review** – even when a service is up and running there are opportunities for customer involvement. With support and training, customers can be active in supporting quality monitoring by visiting providers and engaging with customers – Officers should identify areas where this might be a beneficial approach. Broader customer feedback can be sought through surveys, and by inviting customers to share their more detailed experiences as case studies or 'true stories'. If quality / contract monitoring processes are being updated or amended, customers should be part of the development process.

Remember: the most valuable feedback often comes 'in the moment'. Officers should be ready to capture the customer voice in any situation – give customers time after discussions / interviews / workshops to evaluate their experience.

Customers – don't be afraid to ask for an opportunity to share your views, if one is not offered.

### **How**

The ways in which Co-production is approached will be different for each project or piece of work – the 5 'W's are simply to give you some ideas to get started with. Pages 10-11 provide more suggestions on how Co-production can be embedded practically into a piece of work.

It is important to remember that not everything can be co-produced, and there may be elements of projects where there are not opportunities for customers to get involved. That's okay – Officers just need to be open and transparent about what these areas of work are, and why they are not suited to Co-production.

# The process of Co-production

Customer input, and the impact of using customers' knowledge and experience to inform service delivery and development, should be evaluated and evidenced throughout all stages of the Co-production process. The following recommendations offer guidance for Officers and professionals in particular on how to utilise customer expertise at various stages of a project, and suggestions as to how to record and monitor the difference customers are making through their involvement.

## During the Planning stage...

- 1.** Come to the table with a blank agenda and build it with people who access a service, their carers and families. Monitor how this agenda progresses and record any changes so that it is clear how customer views have shaped the direction of the project.
- 2.** Before starting a piece of work, develop a Co-production Plan to identify all opportunities for customers and carers to be involved in shaping and influencing the work. Seek support from people who access services to regularly review the Plan and evaluate planned and completed activities. Plan templates can be obtained from Commissioners, who have already started using these.
- 3.** Use the checklist on page 13 when planning Co-production activity to check all key Principles are being met and to identify any gaps in your planned engagement methods. This will help you to think about what you want to achieve (using the 'I' Statements) and how you can fully co-produce each aspect of your project (the Things to Consider). The checklist can also be used to review each stage of a project and identify further opportunities for Co-production moving forward.
- 4.** Officers should ensure all customers involved in a project understand the desired outcomes from the outset, and work in partnership to agree a set of tailored 'I' Statements / outcome measures. This will ensure all parties are working towards the agreed goals.

## During the Delivery stage...

- 5.** Throughout the course of a project, no individual should take responsibility for solving every problem themselves — allow the whole group to find collective solutions and record decisions on the Co-production Plan to evidence joint decision-making.
- 6.** Record 'lessons learned' from Co-production activity on your Co-production Plan, whether these reflect successes or areas for improvement. Use these lessons to inform future Co-production, and evaluate the impact of your chosen engagement methods.

## During the Review stage...

- 8.** Clearly evidence how customer input has been used – for example, by including in specifications, policy documents and business cases, through consultation reports, or by sharing 'You Said, We Did' examples.
- 9.** Develop and implement a feedback system to be used throughout the process of Co-production to record customer views on their involvement and capture suggestions for improvement. Questions for customers could include: 'what difference do you feel you have made?', 'what were the benefits of participating in Co-production activity for you?', and 'what were the challenges?'

## And all the way through the process...

**10.** Don't be afraid to seek support! There are lots of good practice examples online (see the TLAP and Governance International websites in particular), and seek out opportunities to share challenges and solutions with your colleagues. Customers, as Experts by Experience, can also be a valuable source of Co-production advice.

## Measuring the impact

A commitment to Co-production requires Officers and other professionals to evaluate the effectiveness of Coproduction with customers and other stakeholders. There are various ways in which this can be done, but for any piece of work, impact can be assessed using a three step process:

### 1. Evidence

Customers, carers and other stakeholders who have taken the time to engage in Co-production activity should be able to see their work within whatever is produced or undertaken – this includes detailing their contributions in service specifications and other commissioning documents,(e.g. strategy or policy); demonstrating how customer/stakeholder involvement has influenced decision making; and actively using customer/stakeholder feedback to drive improvements or change.

Within the WCC Strategic Commissioning Business Unit, Commissioners are required to clearly evidence the Co-production elements of all pieces of work: this is a requirement of Senior Leadership sign-off, and it is recommended that partner organisations adopt similar measures to emphasise the value placed upon customer/stakeholder input. Evidence of Co-production activity should include details of who was involved, which engagement methods were used, what the purpose of the activity was, and the impact of customer and stakeholder involvement on the final outcome.

### 2. Evaluate

It is important to check that customers, carers & key stakeholders feel that their voices have been heard, and they have felt able to make a difference by contributing to a piece of work. A suggested method for gathering this feedback is via the use of a postcard or comment card, such as the one above right:

Co-production is not always easy – it involves a culture shift towards shared power and the understanding that no one view is more important than another.

Accept that sharing power means taking risks. Take a chance!

Pages 14 and 15 include some examples of just how successful Co-production can be.



The image shows a feedback postcard from Warwickshire County Council. The header reads 'Warwickshire County Council wants to hear about your experience of being involved.' followed by the council's logo. Below this, it asks the respondent to provide details of their involvement and to tick one of four statements regarding their experience of being heard and influencing decisions. The statements are: 'I feel my voice has been heard and has influence', 'I feel my voice has been heard and may influence', 'I feel my voice has been heard but I am not confident it has influence', and 'I do not feel I can have influence'. There is a text box for a more detailed response and a footer with contact information: 'customerfirst@warwickshire.gov.uk'.

Capturing and measuring customer responses enables professionals to evaluate how well they are working in partnership, and will support the identification of any areas for development.

Using a postcard to capture customer feedback ensures that customers have the opportunity to reflect on their experience.

### 3. Audit

A final measure of whether Co-production activity has been carried out in a meaningful and effective way is by using the checklist (page 13) to audit the process. If all parties are happy that the Co-production Principles have been met, and genuine partnership working can be evidenced in all eight areas, the project can be considered to have been co-produced.

# Co-production Checklist

## 'I' Statement

## Things to consider

'I am an equal partner'.	Are decisions made by all group members in partnership?	Are customers and professionals equally represented in the group?	Do all partners understand their roles and responsibilities?	
'I have opportunities to participate in all stages of the process'.	What opportunities have been identified for Co-Assessment?	What opportunities have been identified for Co-Design?	What opportunities have been identified for Co-Commissioning?	What opportunities have been identified for Co-Delivery?
'My views and experiences are represented'.	How have customers informed your understanding of the current situation?	How have customers supported the development of policies / specifications / documentation?	Have you engaged with customers from a diverse range of backgrounds? What methods did you use?	Have you engaged with customers from across the county? How did you ensure this?
'I try new approaches and am prepared to work in different ways to achieve desired outcomes'.	Have you used a range of engagement methods? How successful were they?	Have you developed a Co-production plan to support your project? Is this being used?	Have you consulted customers about how best to engage them in this project?	
'I receive clear information, how and when I expect to, and in a way that works for me'.	Have you agreed with all parties the methods by which they prefer to be contacted?	Are easy-read versions of key documents available? Are customers aware of them?	Have you agreed timescales for distributing information / meeting minutes etc?	Do customers know who to contact if they need further information or clarification?
'I am able to actively participate in meetings and other events'.	Have you discussed preferred meeting times with all parties?	Are meetings held at venues that are suitable for / local to the majority of attendees?	Can travel arrangements (e.g. taxis) be made for customers when required?	Have alternatives to formal meetings been considered? (e.g. to engage young people)
'My contribution is recognised and valued, and I make a meaningful contribution to service development'.	Can customers have a genuine impact on the outcome of a piece of work?	How are customers able to see how their contributions have been used to inform service development?	Is a feedback process in place to follow Co-production activity? How effective has this been?	
'I am supported to fully and actively participate in and / or facilitate Co-production activity by the provision of appropriate funding and resources'.	Is a budget available to reimburse customers'out of pocket' expenses?	Can replacement care be provided or funded to support parent / carer engagement?	Can resources (e.g. stationery) be made available to support customers with Co-production tasks?	Are paper copies for key documents available to customers? Are customers aware of how to access these?

# Examples of Co-production in practice

Co-production is not new to Warwickshire; there are already a number of successful initiatives happening within the local authority – and beyond. Talk to the Team to find out more about how customers have been making a difference so far. Below are just a few examples...

## Peer Review Programme

Peer Reviewers are volunteers who know what it's like to access services the Council commission - they might be family carers, or live with a learning disability, autism or physical impairments. Reviewers work in partnership with Council staff to monitor standards and make sure people receive good quality support and services, and their contribution can help to change things if this isn't happening.

Peer Reviewers go on visits to Providers, and use a set of quality standards as a guide to talk to other customers, their families and staff about the service. They also observe how staff support people, and complete a report about what they heard, saw and felt from a customer perspective. Council Officers visit Providers to monitor quality and so does the Quality Care Commission but the Peer Reviewers are uniquely placed to be able to draw on their lived experience and offer a different perspective on services. By Officers pooling their knowledge and expertise, and working alongside Peer Reviewers as experts by experience, Warwickshire can ensure that people accessing commissioned services receive support that meets their needs and furthers their independence.



## SEND Voice newsletter

The SEND Voice newsletter was co-produced by Warwickshire County Officers and parents from Family Voice Warwickshire, the Parent Carer Forum for families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The first issue was published in July 2015 and provided an introduction to the local SEND Programme, including the areas of work currently being addressed, and the key people involved.

The newsletter was designed, written and produced in partnership, with an Officer and a Parent acting as co-editors, and the content was proof-read by parents new to SEND services to ensure it was easy to understand and as jargon-free as possible. Feedback on the newsletter included the comment that it had 'the look and feel of something that had been truly co-produced'. It is hoped that future issues will be even further co-produced by involving young people.





## All-Age Autism Strategy

Developed in 2013 / 14, a co-productive approach was adopted to shape and influence this strategy. A two phase consultation process was used in order to initially gather people's views on different areas of a person's life and then undertake a 'checking exercise' for respondents to confirm accurate interpretation of these views.

Phase one involved a comprehensive public consultation process which enabled customers to put forward their initial views on a series of all age topics, ranging from diagnosis of autism, education, employment, housing and accessing community facilities.

A wide range of consultation methodologies were utilised to ensure views were sought from a diverse range of people including children and adults with autism and their families. These methods included Twitter; questionnaires co-produced with adults with Asperger Syndrome; visits to local support networks; and a creative consultation in which an artist was commissioned to work with children and young adults, using art as a way of obtaining views and opinion on the key question, 'What's important to me?'

The second phase of the consultation process aimed to check with customers whether their views had been interpreted correctly and also share with people how within the strategy their views would be responded to by highlighting proposed commissioning intentions using the 'You said...we will' methodology.



These methodologies, combined with images from the creative consultation, were embedded into the final strategy to evidence how people's views have set the future strategic direction of services and support for people with autism across Warwickshire.

Overall feedback from respondents showed that they felt that their views had been accurately interpreted, and that commissioning intentions clearly reflected their input.

## Re-design of CAMHS



Commissioners of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) across Coventry and Warwickshire have been working throughout 2015 to redesign how these services are delivered. In order to get the best outcome from the CAMHS redesign, Commissioners wanted to co-produce the new system alongside those who use, refer into, and provide children's mental health services. YoungMinds, the leading national charity, was asked to lead on the initial co-production work and delivered a number of workshops and surveys. Over 750 children and young people, parents and carers, professionals who refer into CAMHS, and CAMHS providers contributed to this work, which led to the development of a draft outcomes framework for what a redesigned CAMHS system should aim to deliver.

A number of more detailed sub-outcomes were then developed to fit under the headline outcomes. Commissioners wanted to ensure that these detailed outcomes still met the expectations of those who will use, refer into and provide CAMHS, and so used a 'You Said, We Did' approach, sending a questionnaire to young people, parents



and carers, and professionals, to gain their views on this revised framework. Results from this questionnaire will be reviewed to make any final changes to the framework, and Commissioners will be working on the implementation of the CAMHS contract during 2016. The specification for the service will have been co-designed with customers and professionals, which Commissioners hope will have a huge impact on the quality and effectiveness of children’s mental health services in the long term.

## Learning Disability Statement of Intent

Warwickshire’s Joint Adult Learning Disability Statement of Intent 2015-2020, entitled ‘It’s My Life’, was initially developed based on feedback gathered during the evaluation of the previous strategy. Commissioners used the findings of a seven week consultation to draft a plan for ‘It’s My Life’, and then released this plan for extensive consultation in February 2015.

The consultation was wide-reaching, with over 3000 customers commenting on whether they agreed with the plan, what additional issues might need to be included, and what priorities for delivery should be. In order to gather the views of as many people as possible, Commissioners used a range of engagement methods throughout the consultation, including workshops, surveys, and dedicated carers’ consultation sessions, and people were encouraged to engage in familiar environments, such as through the Learning Disability Hubs. Commissioners worked in partnership with providers and a local empowerment service to facilitate consultation

events, and information was provided in accessible formats such as via DVD and using supporting symbols (‘Widgets’).

The development of the Statement of Intent demonstrates a highly effective consultation process, with feedback being gathered in a targeted and efficient way due to engagement events focusing on specific themes. Customers received recognition of their contributions through clear feedback mechanisms, including ‘easy-read’ reports and newsletters, and the final Statement of Intent was fully informed by the views of Warwickshire residents.



# Glossary of Terms

**Accessible** – able to be interpreted and understood by all parties. Achieving accessibility may involve taking extra measures such as adapting language, adding visuals, providing 1:1 explanation, or any other adaptations necessary to ensuring everyone can access information.

**Consultation** – asking for feedback from customers / carers about a decision or proposal, but not directly involving them in the decision-making process.

**Engagement** – any activity or mechanism through which customers and carers are actively involved in service development / decision-making

**Experts by Experience** – people with lived experience of accessing services (customers), and their families / carers, who can use their experience to influence and shape services.

**Involvement** – engaging with customers and carers and taking account of their views when making decisions, but no co-designing / reaching decisions in partnership

**Seldom-heard** – groups of people who may experience barriers to accessing services, and / or who are under-represented in engagement and decision making.

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