

PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 March 2025

Update on Co-Production in Adult Social Care

Report by Corporate Director of Adult Social Care

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - i. Note the update on co-production in Adult Social Care since the LGA Peer Review in March 2024;
 - ii. Consider the report and upcoming work to embed co-production further in Adult Social Care practice;

Executive Summary

2. This report provides an update on embedding co-production in how the Council delivers adult social care in Oxfordshire following the previous updates on 22nd April 2024 following the LGA Peer Challenge and on 4th December 2024 on the preparation CQC Assurance in January 2025.
3. The feedback received from the LGA Peer Challenge highlighted the green shoots of good practice in co-producing support with people receiving support and identified the need this to be developed further.
4. The monthly Adults Performance, Practice and Pounds (PPP) Board oversees improvements in embedding co-production further as part of our Continuous Improvement Implementation Plan which addresses our areas of development and actions for improvement.
5. This report provides an update on the actions on embedding co-production further in delivering adult social care in Oxfordshire including the Co-production Team's successful work programme, Voice of the Person Workshops and signing up the Gloriously Ordinary Language Project.

Background

6. As part of our preparations for CQC assurance and to provide external challenge to our self-assessment, the Director of Adult Social Care invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Peer Review for Adult Social Care in Oxfordshire. The Peer Review took place between 5th and 7th March 2024 and provided a valuable opportunity to check and challenge our

self-assessment ahead of a formal CQC assurance process, as well as to drive our continued focus on improvement and development.

7. The feedback from the peer review highlighted our strengths and identified areas for further developments. These were shared with the Committee on 22nd April 2024 and 4th December 2024.
8. One of the areas of focus for further development was 'further developing the green shoots of good practice in co-producing support with people receiving a service and incorporating the voice of the person in operational and strategic decisions'. This was in line with the improvement opportunities identified in Adult Social Care Continuous Improvement Plan.

Co-Production in Adult Social Care

9. [The Oxfordshire Way in Adult Social Care](#) is our strategic vision to help people in Oxfordshire live independent and healthy lives. The Oxfordshire Way is the way we work with people, their families and communities in a strengths-based way. This means we focus on what people can do, not what they cannot, and help them find solutions that work for them. Our commitment to co-production with people who draw on care and support, carers, staff and partners is central to delivering our vision.
10. Co-production has evolved over a number of years having been conceptualised by an American academic, Professor Elinor Ostrom. Co-production refers to the collaborative process where citizens and public service providers work together in the design, delivery, and evaluation of public services. This approach aims to harness the strengths, skills, and knowledge of both parties to create more effective, responsive, and sustainable solutions to community challenges.
11. By fostering an environment of mutual respect and partnership, co-production seeks to empower individuals and neighbourhoods, enhance service outcomes, and ensure that the services provided truly meet the needs and aspirations of those they are intended to serve. Rooted in principles of equality, diversity, accessibility and reciprocity, co-production is increasingly seen as a vital component in developing public services that are more democratic and service-user focused.
12. In Oxfordshire, Adult Social Care Service has been developing our approach to co-production since 2018. This aligns with the Council's consultation and engagement strategy 2022-2025 (this will be refreshed this year). This strategy outlines how the Council puts residents at the heart of decision-making to support strong, active and inclusive communities.
13. In 2022 the Co-production Team based in Adult Social Care was reorganised, and we now have one Commissioning Officer and one Commissioning Support Officer to support and embed co-production in all we do and to support the Co-production Advisory Board.

14. The Co-production Advisory Board works with people of Oxfordshire to make sure that co-production is the normal way of doing things for everyone. The Board meets every four weeks and brings together people with lived experience and senior officers from Adult Social Care, Children's Services, NHS, and Healthwatch. Its purpose is to promote and develop co-production in current and future services and resources. Please see the Board's terms of reference in Annex 1.
15. The Co-production team develop training resources and materials for staff and stakeholders, such as the Co-production handbook, the toolkit, events and promotions such as the Co-Pro Hour and the Working Together week calendar.

Co-production training and staff development

16. In 2022 we co-designed and established the Oxfordshire definition of Co-production: "Co-production is the process where providers/professionals and stakeholding citizens equally share a whole-life responsibility for the creation and delivery of products, services, or knowledge." This is based on sound, good practice that is peer reviewed and championed by the Social Care Institute for Excellence.
17. Between 2022-2023, the Co-production team published three books as part of the development and training for co-production in Oxfordshire covering three levels of understanding and development: "getting started with co-production," "co-production in practice," and "your co-productive project," also known as the Green Book, Gold Book, and Purple Book.
18. During 2023, Level 1&2 training sessions were developed and delivered to pilot teams.
19. In January 2024, we launched regular online seminar sessions, 'Co-Pro Hour', which cover topics relating to aspects of co-production in Oxfordshire. Friday morning Co-Pro Hour sessions have regularly seen an audience of sometimes as many as 80 people, ranging from staff, citizens, partners/providers, Councillors, and senior leaders.
20. The popularity of these sessions has spread into other networking areas and have been recommended at colleague forums and, recently, the ASC & HESC (Adult Social Care & Health, Education and Social Care) Roadshow hosted by senior management.
21. Co-Pro Hour has also directly impacted on our training scheme, with more than 35% of training session bookings coming directly from Co-Pro Hour attendees.
22. Staff engagement with the Co-production team, our sessions and our training program has demonstrated Oxfordshire County Council's commitment to co-

production and continues to be praised throughout the council as a great positive influence towards our vision and the Oxfordshire Way.

23. In July 2024, we launched an intense roll out of the Level 1 training courses, offered to all Adult Social Care, Public Health, and Children's Social Care Staff. We have also run and booked training with partners such as the Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action (OCVA) and Homelessness Alliance Network. Our calendar of training events has a capacity for 300 staff to attend training, with a further 200 spaces to be made available in the first quarter of 2025.
24. During **Working Together Week 2024**, our Co-production team delivered seven Co-Pro Hour sessions, three hosted events and an exhibition in County Hall. Overall, 34 staff were involved in producing and presenting work to our audiences, as well as nine people from external organisations representing NHS, providers and strategic partners. We celebrated some great examples of working together, and shared reflection and learning with one another. Our colleagues highlighted that some of the key challenges for achieving co-production and working together was time available to dedicate to a great piece of work, and our ability to reach seldom heard voices and those who would not usually take the time to work with us.

Our Approach to Co-Production in Adult Social Care

25. We simplified the way we think and talk about co-production. We have described three main types or areas of co-production, illustrated below:



As part of **person-centred practice**, we

- Hear the voice of the person who draws on care and support in all we do, starting with every interaction with an individual and their circle of support,
- Carry out strengths-based assessments and person-centred planning,
- Capture the voice of the person and what matters to them in our record keeping,
- Act and decide with the person to make a difference.

- Participate in Social Care Futures programmes across commissioning and operations team members.

In **Commissioning services**, we

- Co-produce and co-design commissioning strategies for specific population groups, communities of interest or service areas, including but not limited to formal consultation, involvement and engagement,
- Involve people with relevant and up to date lived experience in the planning, development, design and commissioning of services – throughout the traditional commissioning cycle,
- Use a variety of feedback mechanisms to inform service evaluation and improvement,
- Develop opportunities for user-led services and more active partnerships with VCSE and community groups – promoting collaborative commissioning, particularly in our prevention programmes,
- Look beyond commissioning services towards our responsibility for creating the conditions for people to live their best life with the greatest independence possible, in connected communities. This contributes to the council's Place Shaping agenda, beyond social care.

We invest in and maintain our **Co-production – architecture and infrastructure** including

- Dedicated Co-production team to support and embed co-production in all we do and to support the Co-production Advisory Board.
- Co-Production Advisory Board, which works with people of Oxfordshire to make sure that co-production is the normal way of doing things for everyone. The Board meets every four weeks and brings together people with lived experience and senior officers from Adult Social Care, Children's Services, NHS, and Healthwatch. Its purpose is to promote and develop co-production in current and future services and resources. Please see the Board's terms of reference in Annex 1.
- Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers – formal arrangements for the engagement of the care sector, including provider forums and communications channels.
- Training resources and materials for staff and stakeholders, such as the Co-production handbook, the toolkit, events and promotions such as the Co-Pro Hour and the Working Together week calendar.
- Working closely with Oxfordshire County Council Engagement and Consultation Team and NHS Integrated Care Board communications team.

Recent Examples

26. Recommissioning our Learning Disability Short Breaks Service in 2024



In 2023, the Live Well commissioning team developed a new model for Learning Disability Short Breaks Service (known as Respite). Initially the team drew on management information and business intelligence to develop the proposals, combined with engagement activity, including individual conversations with people who had direct experience of the existing service, staff delivering the service, and a survey of stakeholder views. The aim was to offer greater flexibility and access to activities and would have offered improvements to the service, based on the feedback received.

27. However, when this model was presented to a wider group of experts by experience, their families and carers, we heard that they felt their experiences were not included in the plans fully. Based on this, the officers established a plan to co-design the future service.
28. Between January and February 2024, weekly working groups were established to redefine the service model as “Short Breaks”. These working groups were attended by experts by experience, current provider Brandon Trust, self-advocacy group My Life My Choice (MLMC), and Oxfordshire Family Support Network (OxFSN), a not-for-profit organisation run by and for family carers of people with learning disabilities. OxFSN agreed to lead a face-to-face co-production and co-design workshop, where a wide range of stakeholders were invited to influence the new delivery model.
29. As a result of this feedback, there was a total reset of the approach, leading to the development of a new specification and model moving forward. The draft specification was shared with OxFSN and MLMC who reviewed and provided feedback, refining the specification to better meet people’s needs. People drawing on the support have contributed to setting the questions for the tender process and there will be an Expert by Experience on the evaluation panel.
30. We are developing **Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan** with people with lived experience. We used a variety of methods including, Sharing Your Story form, Open Focus Groups, and a World Café Style Engagement Events.

These approaches have been supported by the Councils Engagement and Consultation Team.

31. We started designing the plan by asking people with a learning disability to share their stories and experiences of living in Oxfordshire, and to also include what good looks like to them. This was shared with Community Support Services, organisations, and service providers. So far, 24 people have filled in the Sharing Your Story forms.
32. The Live Well Team visited five of the Community Support Services for Open Focus Groups and met with 49 people with a learning disability and 21 staff.
33. To help reach as many people as possible the Learning Disability Plan World Café was promoted by OxFSN and on their social media platform, the Engagement and Consultation Team's network/platform, and via leaflets sent to organisations including service providers, the Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers (OACP), Oxford Health NHSFT, and Community Support Services. OxFSN also offered to speak to people and to pass on their views if they were unable to attend the event. Oxford Family Support Network hosted the Learning Disability Plan World Café Event in Didcot on the 26 November 2024. 81 people attended the event. The Learning Disability Plan will be launched in June 2025 during the Learning Disability Week.
34. Our Age Well Commissioners and care home residents co-produced a refreshed set of [care home standards](#) for the county.

Working with Social Care Futures

35. We work in partnership with Social Care Futures which is a movement built on the belief that *'we should all be able to live in the place we call home, with the people and things that we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing the things that matter to us'*. This is in line with our strategic vision, the Oxfordshire Way, which aims to promote independence, helping people to stay well in their community, keeping fit and healthy for as long as possible.
36. We participate in the Gloriously Ordinary Lives programme which focuses on considering care and support through a different lens and asking, *'how can we help people to lead 'gloriously' ordinary day-to-day lives?'*.
37. An important part of this is using a normal language in our interactions with people and avoiding jargon and abbreviations. This is the Gloriously Ordinary Language programme, which is an eight-month collaborative programme developed with people with lived experience and other local authorities. As part of this, we examine the language embedded in Adult Social Care and will
 - examine the language of our Care Act Assessment and Support Plan to determine how we can make it more 'ordinary' and inclusive.
 - look at the language of our policies and practice guidance.

- review the language used in our recruitment materials and job descriptions.

Voice of the Person Programme

38. Building on the learning from the 2024 LGA Peer Review, we developed a programme to set a shared vision for co-production that prioritises creating inclusive and sustainable relationships:
 - Building genuine connection by fostering **belonging**
 - Ensuring each voice is heard through open **exchange**
 - Redefining roles through **place** and **time**
39. We worked with Dr Clenton Farquharson, who is nationally recognised as a leadership figure with subject matter expertise for this project, and has recent, relevant knowledge of Oxfordshire County Council's current position and ambitions in this field, based on his role in the LGA Peer Review in 2024.
40. The programme included developing and facilitating a series of workshops in Autumn 2024 to strengthen co-production in Oxfordshire focusing on
 - Leadership
 - Co-production mechanisms
 - Person-centred practice
 - Commissioning
41. Workshops were well attended by Council staff and people with lived experience and
 - inspired genuine culture growth in adult social care and our wider community of partners (involving a cross section of colleagues and peers)
 - started a movement for change, developing the Oxfordshire Way and shaping our social care future together
 - articulated our commitment to co-production, exploring what that means in reality
 - adopted language to support culture growth and strengths-based, person-centred practice
 - built relationships.
42. The key early messages from the workshops were:
 - Our choice of language matters – it can be a barrier to communication and to relationships.
 - We need to simplify our language, using words from home.
 - People who receive support must play a role in making change.
 - Our values are on display everywhere, but not lived deeply.
 - People need time to think and decide.
 - Pick up the phone. Have a conversation.
 - Focus on equity: we won't always get it right, but acknowledge, learn, implement. It's a journey.
 - Co-production mechanisms: conversation first, project second!

- Colleagues are proud of the human relationships they build, proud of making a positive difference, proud of improving services.
43. The findings and materials from the workshops will be collated in a report that will be shared with leadership team and will be reflected in our continuous improvement programme.

Next Steps

44. We will continue to develop the programme of activities to promote co-production, working with the Co-production Advisory Board. This includes our commitment to training, as outlined above.
45. We will review any recommendations arising from the CQC Assurance visit once their report is received. There may be specific advice about co-production or affirmation about good practice the inspection team observed in Oxfordshire.
46. We will work with all our partners to ensure co-production is central to everything we do, for example by supporting their initiatives and by including it in our contracts.
47. We will continue to evolve our co-productive practice through our participatory 'Voice of the People Workshops' and our continued engagement with external organisations such as Social Care Futures.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

48. Adult Social Care's priorities are shaped by our corporate vision and priorities, with particular focus on
- Tackling inequalities - working with partners to address inequalities focussing supporting on those in greatest need, embedding and implementing our digital inclusion strategy
 - Prioritising the health and wellbeing of our residents: working with partners to implement our health and wellbeing strategy prioritising preventative initiatives, and
 - Supporting carers and the social care system: deliver seamless services, explore new ways to provide services promoting self-directed support and increasing choice.

Financial Implications

49. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:
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Legal Implications

50. The Care and Support Statutory Guidance, supporting the Care Act 2014, states that
- “The core purpose of adult care and support is to help people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them in their life.... Underpinning all of [the] individual ‘care and support functions’ (that is, any process, activity or broader responsibility that the local authority performs) is the need to ensure that doing so focuses on the needs and goals of the person concerned.” (para 1.1)
51. This report provides an update of the local authority’s progress in meeting that core purpose.

Comments checked by: Janice White, Head of Law and Legal Business Partner (Adult Social Care and Litigation).

Staff Implications

52. Co-production in Adult Social Care is overseen by Deputy Director of Health, Education and Social Care (HESC). Core activities are carried out by the Co-production team supported by staff including Principal Social Worker as needed. There are no new or additional staffing implications arising from this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

53. Equity in experiences and outcomes is a key priority for Adult Social Care arising from our statutory duties under Care Act 2014 and CQC Assurance Framework.
54. Equality and inclusion are key pillars of co-production and are supported by activities covered in this report.

Risk Management

55. Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team has oversight of the risks and maintains a risk register and reports to Senior Leadership Team and Informal Cabinet through monthly updates.

NAME Karen Fuller, Corporate Director of Adult Social Care

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: Oxfordshire Co-production Board Terms of Reference



5c Team Up Terms of
Reference v4.pdf

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