

Working towards Coproduction in West Sussex - The 'Together for Change' Panel



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Rowan Westwood – West Sussex Parent Carer Forum
Jessica Bubb – West Sussex County Council

"Because Coproduction is not just a method - it's a mindset. It's about recognising that no one has all the answers, but that together, we can create something better! "



Introduction



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This agreement, signed by West Sussex County Council, NHS Sussex, and WSPCF, commits all partners to **genuine coproduction**. It explicitly includes the creation of a coproduction panel. And that's where Together for Change comes in.

Introduction

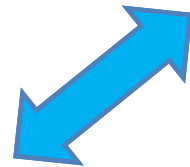


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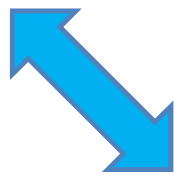


**West Sussex
Multi-agency
Steering Group**

SEND and AP Board



Together for Change Panel



Introduction



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The West Sussex steering group has a large participation rate with members from the ICB, Social Care, Commissioning, Early Help, Parent Carer Forum, Participation Team, Specialist Advisory Teaching Team, SENDIAS and the local offer.

Outcomes

- To embed the principles of the co-production into everything that we do as a local area.
- To ensure that co-production is considered for all aspects of our improvement work and impact is measured, and that the Steering Group has strategic oversight of this area of work.
- To ensure there are opportunities for children and young people to engage in active coproduction both at an individual and wider level and to participate in surveys, communications and working groups.
- To ensure there are parent carers to engage in active coproduction both at an individual and wider level and to participate in surveys, communications and working groups.

Activity



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Key Outputs from the Steering Group

- Charter Development: The final version of the Co-production Charter has been produced, going through six iterations. The charter was co-designed by WSPCF, Young Voices, and the multi-agency group, and a first version has been produced by graphics. Early Help and Social Care will use this charter in training and guidance to embed co-production practices across the council's work. The Charter can be found by following this link [WSSCC Children First co-production charter for working with parents, carers and children](#)
- Series of articles that have been shared on the Local offer for Coproduction week, which can be found by following this link [Celebrating National Co-production Week - West Sussex County Council](#)
- Collecting Evidence on Effective Co-production Practices: The group is actively gathering evidence across CYPL (Children, Young People, and Learning), from professionals and parents to identify and share effective co-production practices. This is done by looking at individual, operational, and strategic levels of co-production.

CHILDREN FIRST CO-PRODUCTION CHARTER FOR WORKING WITH PARENTS, CARERS AND CHILDREN

Commitment to building collaborative meaningful partnerships; starting with what really matters.



WHAT IS CO-PRODUCTION?

Co-producing with parents and children involves creating collaborative partnerships where their insights and experiences shape decision-making for individuals, services and policies. For example:

Individual level: school staff meet with parents, carers and children before writing an individual support plan, and then the plan is written co-productively.

Operational level: parents, carers, children and young people work together to create a school behaviour policy.

Strategic: parents, carers, children and professionals work together to create a long-term plan, using data and case studies to develop a support service for young carers.

“At West Sussex County Council we believe embracing co-production can lead to effective, sustainable, and responsive services.

This is our commitment for working together. We believe we must create inclusive environments that value the contributions of all those involved, ultimately resulting in better outcomes for individuals and communities.”

HOW TO CO-PRODUCE

- Listen to each other and demonstrate that we have taken on board what each other has communicated.
- Communicate in an easy-to-understand way.
- Support individuals to take part, by making reasonable adjustments.
- Always be open, honest, and realistic.
- Involve individuals in decisions, so they are there as part of the decision-making processes. If decisions are made without individuals explain why.
- If you gather views act upon them.
- Treat individuals with respect and dignity.
- Give individuals the tools they need to feel safe to enable them to share experiences.
- Provide individuals with information, which is accurate, timely, accessible, and consistent.
- Involve individuals at the earliest opportunity. Set out clear guidelines and any limitations of projects.

KEY ASPECTS OF CO-PRODUCTION

1. **Collaboration:** individuals actively participate in decision making about themselves / those they care for, including the design, delivery, and evaluation of services, rather than being presented information
2. **Learning:** participants learn from each other, leading to skills, and trust within the community.
3. **Empowerment:** co-production empowers groups by giving them a voice in decision-making processes, rebalancing power dynamics between all involved.
4. **Innovation:** diverse perspectives can lead to creative solutions.
5. **Equal Footing:** address historical power imbalances, fostering mutual respect, ensuring that all individuals have an equal say and influence in decision-making processes.



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Why we created the Panel



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- We created Together for Change because we needed a space where coproduction could actually happen—not just be referenced. A space where professionals and parent carers could meet as equals, share ideas, challenge respectfully, and shape services together.
- Before this panel, feedback was often gathered in silos, after the fact, or not at all. Now, we have a doing space—where ideas are brought earlier, shaped live, and improved collaboratively.
- Who attends? Parent carers and a mix of professionals (rotational basis) including the DSCO, DCO, Health Rep, SEND and Inclusion Team Rep, Early Help Rep, Local Offer Officer.

How we rate: The Star of Involvement



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The Star of Involvement is our tool for rating submissions.

- ☐ Originally a ladder, redesigned as a star to remove hierarchy.
- ☐ Reflects that **all types of involvement are valuable**.
- ☐ Used live during panels to score submissions immediately after presentation.
- ☐ Helps submitters understand where their work sits on the co-production spectrum.
- ☐ Encourages growth from **consultation** to **collaboration** and **co-design**.

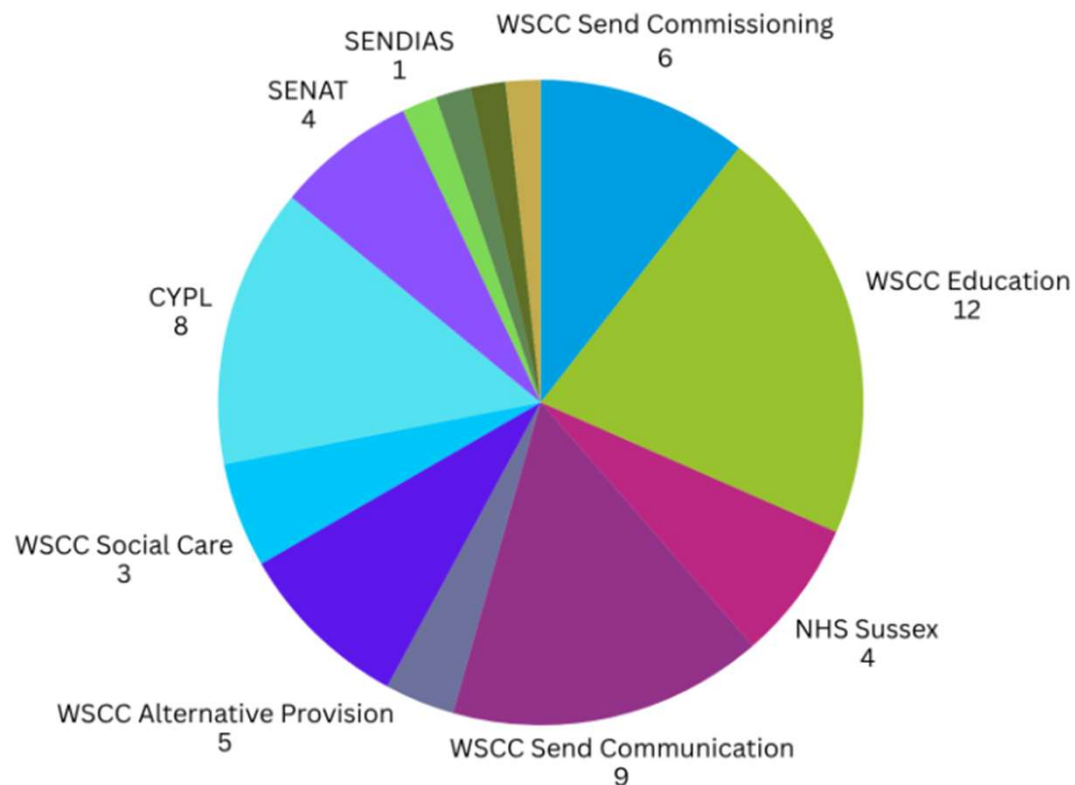
Why it matters:

- ☐ It's simple, visual, and empowering.
- ☐ It helps everyone reflect on how coproduced their work really is.
- ☐ It's a learning tool, not a judgement.

Impact of the Panel – Year One



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What came to panel?

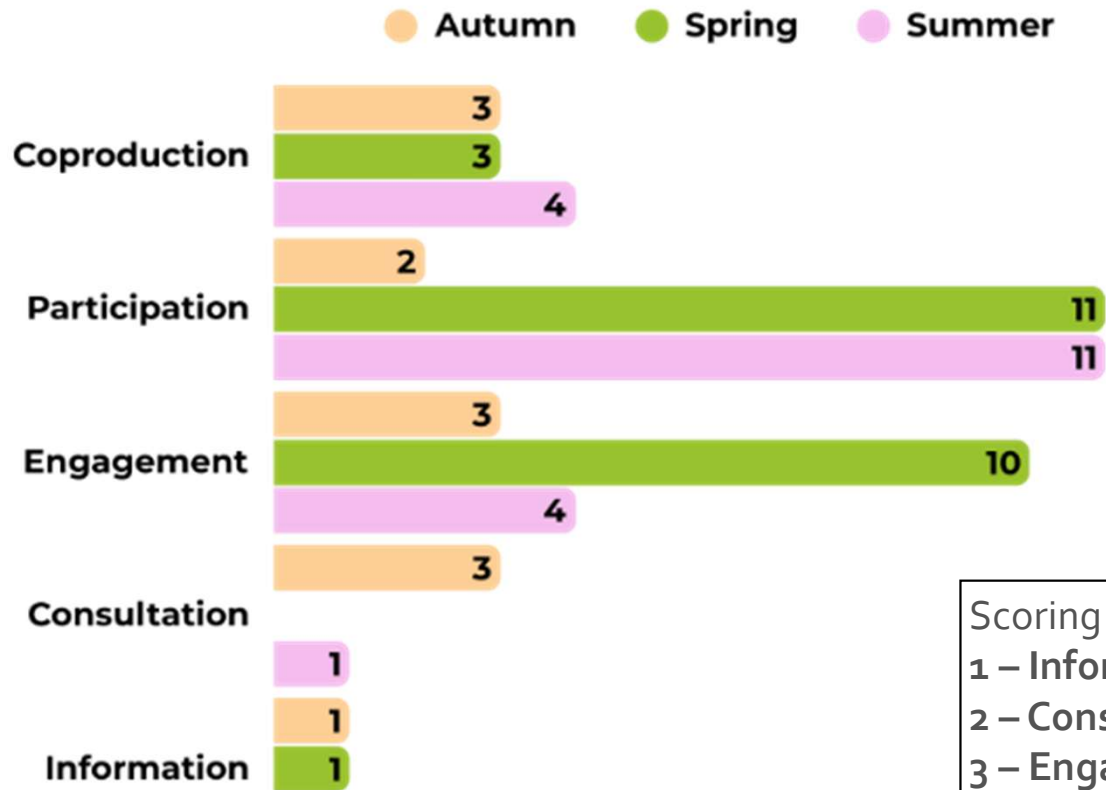
- ☐ Each panel is 2 ¼ hours long
- ☐ 16 panels held across the year
- ☐ 67 submissions reviewed in total

Submissions for 24-25 Academic year

Impact of the Panel – Year One



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Involvement Scores

Scoring Terms:
1 – Informing
2 – Consulting
3 – Engagement
4 – Participation
5 – Coproduction

Involvement scores increased term by term:

- Autumn: 3.3
- Spring: 3.6
- Summer: 3.9

Impact of the Panel – Year One



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Term	Group	Total People	Feedback Completed	Capture Rate
Autumn	Attendees	17	13	76%
Autumn	Submitters	12	8	66%
Spring	Attendees	37	23	62%
Spring	Submitters	18	15	83%
Summer	Attendees	53	41	77%
Summer	Submitters	22	18	81%

Feedback scores:

- Attendees: 9.7/10 average usefulness
- Submitters: 9.3/10 average usefulness
- 100% of respondents would attend or submit again and recommend to others

Impact of the Panel – Year One



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- **Quotes from Parent Carer Attendees:**

“It’s great to be part of the panel and have my voice heard in shaping change for the future.”

“Seeing my input genuinely shape discussions and outcomes.”

- **Quote from Professional Attendee:**

“Excellent to hear more about issues I don’t have personal experience with, which helps me in my role.”

- **Quotes from Submitters:**

“The perspective of the parent carer really influenced my decision... this shows the power and importance of the parent/carer voice.”

“You can’t get this type of feedback anywhere else.”

“Always useful to get different ideas that I can act on to improve the piece of work.”

Impact of the Panel – Year One



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Over the past year, the Together for Change Panel has proven to be a powerful tool directly shaping work across local services. The panel ensures that lived experience is central to development, helping work move from “good enough” to genuinely impactful.

- ☐ Improved Materials and Communication
- ☐ Honest Reflection and Professional Growth
- ☐ Shaping Future Work
- ☐ Stronger Systems and Collaboration

The panel is more than a discussion space, it drives meaningful change, ensuring projects are coproduced, accessible, and responsive to the needs of SEND families across West Sussex.

Why it Works

- **Live scoring** using the Star of Involvement
- **Online booking system** for submitters
- **Clear agendas and scheduling**
- **Immediate feedback and action tracking**
- **Dedicated webpage** to share impact - <https://www.wspcf.org.uk/together-for-change-panel/>



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"It's just it's so lovely to observe. How constructive and calm and positive the discussions were today. I haven't experienced anything else where it's been like this. And you know, having the participation and engagement happening live in the session rather than saying 'we need to go away and do that separately', it's so fruitful.

It just makes sense."

Professional observer from Surrey County Council

What's next?



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- We are currently trialling a **Pan Sussex** 'Together for Change' Panel
- Commissioned by NHS Sussex to create a space for collaborative working on Sussex wide projects.
- All three Sussex PCFs attend, along with LA and NHS professionals
- Work so far includes:
 - Creating a Sussex Wide Hospital Passport
 - Engagement around Sight Checks in Special Schools
 - QA around Annual Health Checks



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Any Questions?