

Working Together to ensure better outcomes for the residents of Stockton-on-Tees

Embedding Lived Experience in what we do

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What does “Lived Experience” and “co-production” mean?



Lived Experience is..

Lived experience is defined as “personal knowledge gained through first-hand involvement in everyday events, rather than through representations created by other people”. It can also refer to knowledge gained by people directly involved with someone, for example a carer or a professional where there has been direct contact on a regular basis.

Lived experience feeds into every aspect of public involvement, however it is referred to. What is key is that the information shared is real, not theoretical or assumed. Lived experience is useful to “reality check” what an organisation or a researcher might think when developing or evaluating initiatives. It adds credibility to what we do and is essential if a public body is to remain relevant and be successful.

Co-production is where people with lived experience work on an equal basis with colleagues to identify what needs to change, and how changes can be made for the better. It is about having open and honest conversations, and an organisation being willing to open up to engage with new ideas.

Overview of activity

September 2023 to now

Forming a “Making It Real” board

People with Lived Experience co-produce future plans

- Involves people who access social care and public health teams
- Adults, the majority have a disability, sensory impairment or long-term health condition
- People are from different backgrounds and parts of the borough
- Open door to people, promoted through social media and Stockton News
- Membership may rotate if numbers require this
- Co-production principles apply – people are equals, everyone’s voice is valued
- First task of the group is to co-produce a “Local Account” of the Borough – an honest and thorough assessment of where we are in Stockton, and what matters to them

Relaunch of Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

A big change for a pre-existing board

- Involves people who access social care and health services with a learning disability
- Aims to reduce health inequalities, and develop better services and opportunities
- Group was previously dominated by professionals
- Recruiting members now – aiming for a majority people with lived experience
- Making It Real principles of equality apply; link to the other Board already
- Learned that people with lived experience want to hold meetings at council premises; to have some formality and to be respected as any other forum at the local authority
- Sparked an interest in some to be more involved in making decisions

Other activities

There's a lot going on to involve the public

- Involvement groups at all community-based options (day services); this has led to improvements in operational delivery as well as establishing links with health colleagues to deliver sessions on exercise, mens and womens health plus the police in relation to community safety.
- All partner organisations involve people – this is mandated in contracts and for them to report learning to ourselves. For new contracts, more thorough guidance is being developed to support them involving people who access their services.
- Social work teams involve people in care and support planning and review progress – this is all recorded and has an influence on service improvement.
- The Wellbeing Hub is a good example of how people have been involved

Other activities

Surveys and collaborative working

- Surveys on the impact of alcohol and the impact of the cost of living crisis were co-produced with partner organisations and people with lived experience before publication
- The residents survey also launched which focused on health and wellbeing. It also included an invitation for people to be involved in what we do. All 3 surveys will report in the next 6 weeks following analysis.
- Despite warnings of survey fatigue, the Residents Survey has had an increase in responses.
- Planning joint work with Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS (TEWV) to develop training, and with North-East Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (NE ADASS) on a common vocabulary for lived experience.

Challenges

What we need to improve on

- Diversity of people involved, particularly people who have a substance misuse history, and from some under-represented backgrounds
- We don't just want to involve happy residents; we need to learn from all
- Expenses and remuneration policy – this has had to be fully revised to make it fit for purpose with the involvement of HR and legal teams. Tees Esk and Wear Valleys (TEWV) NHS have helped as we wish to be consistent within the Borough
- People's understanding of what Lived Experience and co-production means



Thank you

Your feedback is very much appreciated