

# **Adult Social Services and Housing Coproduction Strategy 2024 – 2027**



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## 1. Introduction

Our vision for Adult Social Services and Housing in North Somerset is:

To promote wellbeing by helping people in North Somerset be as independent as possible for as long possible.

North Somerset Council provides a range of care and support options to help older people, autistic people, people with mental health issues, people with learning or physical disabilities and their families and carers to live well. We want our services and decisions to be made in partnership with those who understand their needs best, the people who use them.

Our approach to social care and coproduction is guided by the principles of the [Social Care Future](#) movement to reimagine social care. We are committed to their vision, which states:

“We all want 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 the matter to us.”

We want to work alongside people who draw on care and support to help us improve what is available, explore gaps and develop new approaches to supporting people.

One of our aims is to create an equal and reciprocal partnership with people who have lived experience of being supported by Adult Social Services and Housing. This partnership shares decision making power and responsibility for making positive changes to the way adult social care and housing supports people to achieve positive outcomes.

We recognise that whilst we are taking positive steps towards becoming a directorate that incorporates coproduction into our day-to-day work, we are not there yet. This strategy aims to show how we will progress on this journey over the next three years,

including how we aim to grow staff awareness, increase coproduction across the directorate, and coproduce at all levels.

We are also guided by the framework used by the Care Quality Commission to assess how well we are performing against our duties under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014. We want our coproduction activity to evidence our alignment with the quality statements outlined below which form part of this framework. The following quality statements are written from the perspective of the local authority (we) and people drawing on care and support (I).

- We actively seek out and listen to information about people who are most likely to experience inequality in experience or outcomes. We tailor the care, support and treatment in response to this.
- We understand the diverse health and care needs of people and our local communities, so care is joined-up, flexible and supports choice and continuity. We understand our duty to collaborate and work in partnership, so our services work seamlessly for people. We share information and learning with partners and collaborate for improvement.
- We focus on continuous learning, innovation and improvement across our organisation and the local system. We encourage creative ways of delivering equality of experience, outcome and quality of life for people. We actively contribute to safe, effective practice and research.
- I have care and support that is co-ordinated, and everyone works well together and with me.
- I can get information and advice about my health, care and support and how I can be as well as possible – physically, mentally and emotionally.
- I have care and support that enables me to live as I want to, seeing me as a unique person with skills strengths and goals.

Our continued commitment to Quality Assurance is outlined in the [Quality Assurance Framework](#).

Research into the benefits of Coproduction was carried out by The Social Care Institute for Excellence in 2022. They found that coproduction in Social Services led to an increase in self-confidence, self-esteem and sense of empowerment, better health and wellbeing, increased engagement and trust, and higher levels of satisfaction with, and awareness of, services. They also found benefits for professionals, including improved job satisfaction, motivation and practice, and increased trust, engagement and dialogue with people who draw on care and support and carers.

<https://www.scie.org.uk/co-production/understanding-the-difference/>

## 2. What is coproduction?

Coproduction means working in equal partnership with people with lived experience to achieve a shared goal. It is a way of working that recognises:

- everyone has a contribution to make
- all input has equal value
- everyone works together to come to a decision that works for everyone

At North Somerset Council we believe that coproduction should be across all levels, from one-to-one care planning, to writing strategies and policies, and the commissioning of care and support.

## 3. Our coproduction values and commitments

Our values in co-production are centred around the following commitments:

1. **Building Mutual Relationships:** We prioritise establishing trust and mutual respect, recognising that strong partnerships are the foundation of successful co-production.
2. **Effective Communication:** We commit to open, honest, and clear communication, ensuring that everyone's voice is heard and valued.

3. **Inclusivity:** We believe that everyone can contribute and encourage diverse participation to enrich our collective efforts.
4. **Recognising Skills and Strengths:** We are attentive to the unique skills and strengths of individuals, leveraging them to enhance our co-production activities.
5. **Creative and Person-Centred Coproduction Activities:** We use innovative and tailored approaches to coproduction, focusing on the needs and preferences of individuals.
6. **Sensitivity to Trauma:** We are sensitive and responsive to the impact of discussing traumatic experiences, providing a safe and supportive environment for all individuals.
7. **Extend Coproduction Beyond Familiar Voices:** We aim to broaden the scope of coproduction by engaging with a diverse range of individuals, ensuring that all voices, especially those less heard, are included in the process.
8. **Ensure Coproduction is everyone's responsibility:** We will ensure that the principles and practices of coproduction are an integral part of all staff's roles and there is a good understanding of what coproduction is and how people can coproduce in their respective positions.
9. **Standardise Coproduction Knowledge:** By developing a consistent definition and promoting practical examples, values, and behaviours, we will foster a common understanding of coproduction among all stakeholders.
10. **Create a Robust Business Case for Coproduction:** We will articulate the benefits and value of co-production, demonstrating its impact on service quality and community well-being.
11. **Understand Coproduction in Marginalised Communities:** We commit to exploring and learning from the experiences of coproduction in marginalised communities to ensure inclusivity and equity.
12. **Focus on Transformative Outcomes:** Our co-production efforts will prioritise transforming people's lives.
13. **Value Lived Experience in Decision-Making:** We will rapidly incorporate the outputs of coproduction into strategic decision-making, giving equal weight to the voices of people with lived experience.

14. **Challenge Preconceptions:** We will address and dispel any preconceptions about the capacity and motivation of people with lived experience to be equal partners in service improvement.
15. **Recognise the Time Investment Required:** We acknowledge that coproduction requires time to be done effectively and are committed to investing the necessary resources as this leads to improved results and satisfaction.
16. **Innovate Communication with Underrepresented Groups:** We will train our staff to use innovative and creative means of communication to engage with less heard groups.
17. **Value Qualitative Data:** Our staff will be trained to appreciate and utilise qualitative data, recognising its importance in understanding the human aspects of service delivery.
18. **Measure success:** Together, we will measure the effectiveness of the coproduction process to evaluate the degree to which coproduction activities address the needs and priorities of the community, whether people with lived experience have found coproduction meaningful, just and fair.

We will work with the North Somerset Council Citizens panel and other groups across North Somerset Council to ensure consistency and proactively work to avoid duplication and align so our work complements what is already available.

## 4. Themes

To achieve these values, we will work to the following themes:

### 4.1. Theme 1 – Working together to create an inclusive, accessible and diverse service

**Aim 1:** Improve the accessibility and inclusivity of services for the individuals we support in Adult Social Care and Housing.

**Action:** Understand and identify barriers to accessibility and inclusivity for specific groups. Develop a plan to address these barriers.

**Aim 2:** Increase representation and participation of individuals with lived experience in the decision-making processes related to Adult Social Services and Housing.

**Action:** Actively seek to engage a wider pool of people with lived experience to engage with through the Coproduction and Review Panel and People's Advisory Alliance. Seek to welcome and engage people from all backgrounds and particularly underrepresented groups including [global majority](#) (the group of people in the world who do not consider themselves or are not considered to be white) and LGBTQ+ people. Ensure that these groups are actively involved in the coproduction processes and have a meaningful role in shaping the direction of services.

**Aim 3:** Foster a culture of inclusivity and collaboration among service providers, people who draw on care and support and community members.

**Action:** Encourage open communication and feedback to ensure that all voices are heard and valued in the decision-making processes.

Proactively seek to engage with as many people as possible, to ensure everyone is part of the process and not just a small group, or where the loudest voices are heard.

## 4.2. Theme 2 – Working together to promote independence and interdependence

Interdependence recognises that we are all, to some extent, dependent on our families, communities and services such as adult social care and the NHS. Interdependence is necessary to enable us to maximise our potential including independence and wellbeing.

**Aim 1:** To ensure that coproduction is part of every role in Adult Social Services and Housing.

**Action:** Staff training/Coproduction and Review Panel training - involvement with the Panel/awareness events.



**Aim 2:** Empower people who are supported by Adult Social Services and Housing to increase their own independence or interdependence and give them autonomy to help shape their personalised care plans.

**Action:** Develop personalised care plans in collaboration with people who draw on care and support that focuses on building skills, accessing resources and setting goals to promote independence. Provide training and support for stakeholders to help individuals develop the necessary skills and confidence to live independently and thrive in our communities.

**Aim 3:** Clarify roles and responsibilities within the coproduction process to ensure effective collaboration and accountability.

**Action:** Create clear guidelines outlining the roles and responsibilities of people who draw on care and support, staff and service providers involved in the coproduction of Adult Social Services and Housing. Establish regular communication and feedback channels to ensure all parties work together and are accountable for their contributions to the coproduction process.

### 4.3. Theme 3 – Working together in our communities ensuring that peoples voices are heard

**Aim 1:** Ensure that the voices of individuals receiving support from Adult Social Services and Housing are central to the decision-making processes.

**Action:** Ensure a range of ways are available and accessible to people with lived experience to gather feedback and receive input on their experiences, needs and preferences. Encourage active participation and engagement from individuals receiving support to ensure that their voices are heard and considered in policy, strategy and service development.

**Aim 2:** Engage a range of stakeholders, community members, advocacy groups, charities and service providers in the coproduction process to promote collaboration and inclusivity.

**Action:** Develop an engagement plan that outlines how different groups will be involved in coproduction and policy development. Develop strong links with these organisations and work together to strengthen processes within Adult Social Services and Housing.

**Aim 3:** Foster a culture of transparency, openness and trust in community decision-making processes through coproduction in relation to Adult Social Services and Housing.

**Action:** Communicate regularly with people involved about the progress of the coproduction policy development, including updates on feedback received, decisions made and next steps. Encourage open dialogue, active listening and mutual respect among all participants to build trust and create a supportive environment.

#### **4.4. Theme 4 – Working together to understand, evaluate and communicate the impact and outcomes of coproduction**

**Aim 1:** Ensure that people involved are informed about the outcomes of coproduction in Adult Social Services and Housing.

**Action:** Develop clear and accessible communication materials that outline the goals, objectives and outcomes of coproduction in Adult Social Services and Housing. Distribute these communication materials widely to stakeholders, people who draw on care and support and community members to ensure that everyone is well-informed.

**Aim 2:** Facilitate open and transparent discussions about the possible outcomes of coproduction, including both benefits and challenges.

**Action:** Develop channels which provide opportunities for people to ask questions, share concerns and discuss the potential outcomes of coproduction. Encourage active

participation to ensure that all perspectives and views are considered in the decision-making process.

**Aim 3:** Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Coproduction Strategy to assess its impact on Adult Social Services and Housing outcomes.

**Action:** Establish a review and evaluation criteria to measure the effectiveness of the Coproduction Strategy and Coproduction and Review Panel to ensure it is achieving its intended outcomes. Regularly review and analyse the data available on the outcomes for people who draw on care and support and satisfaction levels to identify areas for improvement and make informed decisions about the future direction of coproduction.

#### 4.5. Theme 5 – Working together to ensure that coproduction is sustainable and there is a plan for long term development

**Aim 1:** Identify key areas where coproduction can be improved and establish clear objectives that are achievable and measurable.

**Action:** Ensure we have an effective feedback mechanism in place to gather feedback from staff and people with lived experience. Regularly review and evaluate the feedback provided to influence ongoing decision-making.

**Aim 2:** Create a culture of collaboration.

**Action:** Encourage a collaborative approach to coproduction by engaging everyone in the process, building strong relationships and promoting trust and respect among all involved.

**Aim 3:** Identify areas of improvement.

**Action:** Engage with people who draw on care and support and their families and community members to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement in the current support service provided.

## 5. Staff responsibilities in coproduction

Coproducton in Adult Social Services and Housing should be seen as everyone's responsibility. We all engage with people every day in the work we do. This can be seen in the strengths-based care planning, individualised support and working with staff in North Somerset Council and other providers. Coproduction supports some of the key approaches in the [Practice Framework](#):

- Collaboration – We will recognise the value of overcoming challenges and improving the systems through obtaining feedback, participation and a commitment to work through challenges and competing demands.
- Inclusivity – we actively seek to recognise and address inequalities, oppression and exclusion.
- Empowerment – we make sincere efforts across the organisation to share power to collaborate effectively and put people with care and support need and the heart of decision making

The themes outlined in this strategy encourage participation from staff across the directorate to:

- Engage with existing local community groups where possible to promote the understanding of Adult Social Services Housing.
- Encourage the people we support to provide feedback on the support services they have received.
- Promote opportunities for people to be involved and share their views on Adult Social Services and Housing.
- Build strong relationships with the providers they work with and ensure any feedback supplied is passed on to the Policy, Strategy and Development Team.
- Make a commitment to understanding what coproduction is, how it is relevant to their role and their responsibilities.

## 6. Ethical considerations

We recognise that working with people who have received support may have an impact on their wellbeing and mental health and want to do everything we can mitigate these risks. Practice guidance will be developed to ensure any staff working to engage and coproduce with people with lived experience understand the impact this may have when people are talking about potentially upsetting experiences and can make fully informed decisions about participating in coproduction activity.

This includes:

- Consent – ensuring people are aware they have a choice as to whether to participate and can change their minds at any time.
- Supporting staff – if they are dealing with distressing circumstances,
- Supporting people with lived experience – how we can support people and when to seek help or refer people back into support services,
- What to do in a crisis – protocols for staff in dealing with crisis situations,
- Professional boundaries – ensuring relationships between staff and people drawing on care and support do not cross professional boundaries,
- Limitations of what staff can help with – including when changes can't be made,
- Complaints – what to do when someone has a complaint.
- Being open and honest about the limitations of coproduction and what can and cannot be achieved.

## 7. Limitations to Coproduction

We recognise that we will not always be able to coproduce. This list outlines some of the occasions and reasons when we may not be able to coproduce and is not exclusive. This acts as a guideline to inform where coproduction may not be possible, we will endeavour to engage with people in other ways, if appropriate.

1. We are still growing our capacity to coproduce and acknowledge that we may not always have the resources available.
2. Sometimes we must consult by law or must act in a certain way because the law tells us to.
3. At times in-house changes or changes to system processes may not be possible to coproduce.
4. In matters of safeguarding and keeping people safe where decisions need to be made in someone's best interest.
5. If we are working to timeframes set by external partners or providers which make a co-productive approach unlikely.
6. When we must make decisions in an emergency or crisis, and we do not have the necessary arrangements in place to coproduce.

## 8. How we developed this strategy

Over the past year we have taken a 'getting on with it approach' to coproduction, learning as we go what works and what doesn't, adapting to what people want and developing the programme of coproduction as needed.

Our learning as a team over the previous year, includes:

- Training and engagement with Social Care Futures,
- Talking to people in North Somerset about what is important to them,
- Learning from other Local Authorities about how they 'do' coproduction,
- Research into where coproduction is working well including advice from Think Local Act Personal (TLAP)
- ConnectEd research cafes and training sessions

The Coproduction Strategy was written and developed by the Coproduction and Review Panel. Members include people who have received support from Adult Social Services with a range of experiences and the Engagement and Participation Officer for Adult Social Services.

The group researched several other strategies and adapted what worked and was relevant for North Somerset Council, Adult Social Services and Housing. We used the learning above including what people have told us and worked from a blank page developing what is important and achievable for the group and the directorate.

## **9. Conclusion and next steps**

Coproduction is an important part of how we work in Adult Social Services and Housing. Much of the work relating to coproduction is already underway and often part of people's roles. The coproduction already happening has been successful and shown good results in involving people with lived experience. This strategy aims to formalise those processes, ensure we are recording and monitoring this work to gauge the success and expand coproduction across Adult Social Services and Housing.

From the Coproduction Strategy a detailed action plan will be developed, outlining specific actions over the next three years. This will be monitored by the Coproduction and Review Panel and the Policy, Strategy and Development Team.

## **10. Accessibility**

Council documents can be made available in large print audio, easy read, and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English. For more information email: [adultspolicy@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:adultspolicy@n-somerset.gov.uk)