

Over A Brew Session

4 July 2025

**CO-PRODUCTION and
INNOVATION**

**CURATORS
OF CHANGE**

**directors of
adass**
adult social services
eastern region
connecting innovating improving

**Central
Bedfordshire**





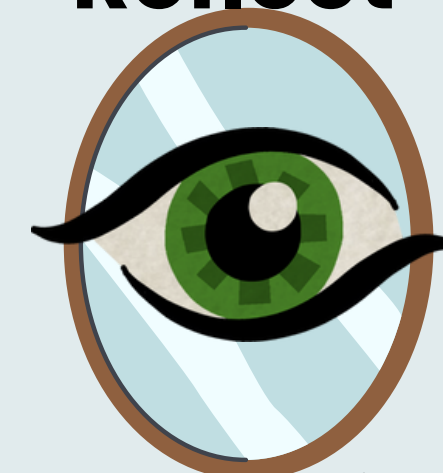
Guide

Grab a brew



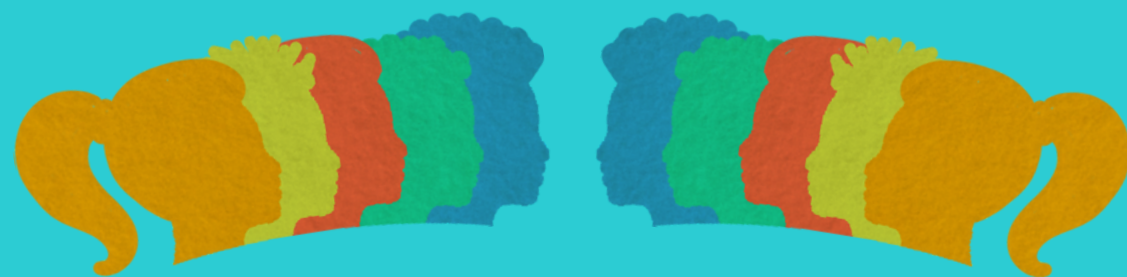
Once you have your brew, ask someone to be the timer

Reflect



Each person has time to think about the questions for ONE minute

Have your say



Each take it in turns to say your response (TWO mins each)



Use the rest of the time to reflect on what's been said (no fixing)

Still got some time?



Talk about:
What's not been said?
What are your lasting thoughts?

INFUSED WITH THE CAMERADOS PRINCIPLES

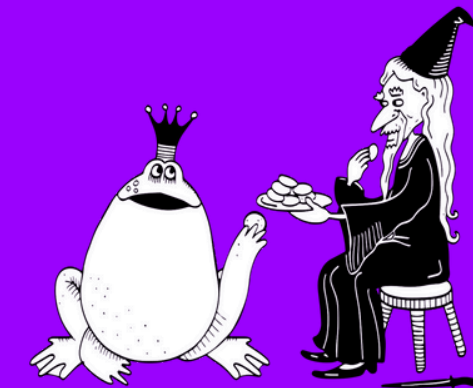
**MIX WITH PEOPLE WHO
ARE NOT LIKE YOU**



**ASK SOMEONE WHO IS
STRUGGLING TO HELP YOU**



**NO FIXING - JUST BE
ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER**



**IT'S OK TO DISAGREE
RESPECTFULLY**



**IT'S OKAY TO BE A BIT
RUBBISH SOMETIMES**



**TO BE SILLY IS TO
BE HUMAN**



INTRODUCTION

This Over A Brew for Central Beds was about exploring the SCIE Coproduction Week theme of **Innovation through Co-production**.

We did this by inviting people to explore their own feelings and experiences of services and support, and talking about how that relates to the topic of 'Coproduction.' We also watched a video of the work Central Bedfordshire have done on co-producing a Dignity Charter for one of their services for people in older age living with dementia.

We had a range of people join including social care officers, family carers, co-production leads, operations managers, a shared lives co-ordinator, a commissioning officer, social workers, and a people participation officer.

This summary includes a summary of the learning and reflections from the activities and the breakout rooms. The conclusions included agreeing innovating through co-production meant going beyond services and funding and shifting the focus more on dialogue and opportunity.

Participants were open to thinking differently about what's possible—coproduction isn't just about compromise; it's about creating space to explore new and shared solutions together.

**Around 30 people
attended the
session to share
ideas, insights
and views... Over
a Brew**



FEELINGS ACTIVITY

We asked people to think of a time when they had a good and bad experience of receiving information, support and advice. We asked how it made people feel and what contributed to those feelings.



The following pages show a summary of what we heard from the people in the session...

FEELINGS ACTIVITY – GOOD EXPERIENCES



When people had GOOD experiences receiving information, support and advice, they felt:

- **Relief and Reassurance**
 - *“Relieved and reassured”, “All is well”, “A problem shared is a problem halved”*
- **Valued and Understood**
 - *“Heard, listened to, valued”, “Understood and confident”, “I felt I had some control”*
- **Confidence and Empowerment**
 - *“I can do this!”, “Empowered”, “Confident and supported”*
- **Hope and Optimism**
 - *“Hopeful that I don’t have to do something difficult on my own”, “Happy”, “Things felt organised”*



FEELINGS ACTIVITY – GOOD EXPERIENCES



And the reasons people said that contributed to the POSITIVE feelings were:

- **Active, Respectful Listening and Communication**
 - *“Not rushed”, “Human language, not over-professionalised”, “i was listened to and not palmed off with a stock response”*
- **Feeling Informed and Involved**
 - *“Felt I knew my options”, “Information shared helped with resources”, “The staff member gave me choice and control”*
- **Trust in Relationship and Person’s Approach**
 - *“It was how the person spoke to me, felt included, listened”, “Their approach”, “Knowledgeable and experienced individuals”*
- **Empathy, Time and Support**
 - *“They gave their time”, “The other person’s openness”, “Not being alone – having someone to support”*
- **Clarity and Purpose**
 - *“Clear and concise – easy to follow”, “Clarity of purpose”, “Effective communication”*



FEELINGS ACTIVITY – BAD EXPERIENCES



When people had BAD experiences receiving information, support and advice, they said they felt:

- **Frustration and Disempowerment**
 - *"Frustrated and devalued", "Fobbed off – not valued", "Done to, not with"*
- **Loneliness and Isolation**
 - *"Alone", "Isolated", "Let down"*
- **Confusion and Anxiety**
 - *"Stressed and confused", "Causes me anxiety, upset, doubt myself", "What is my role here?"*
- **Anger and Injustice**
 - *"Angry", "Disappointed", "Injustice", "Humiliated"*
- **Lack of Control**
 - *"No control", "Misinformed, unsupported, resentful"*



FEELINGS ACTIVITY – BAD EXPERIENCES



And the reasons people said that contributed to the **NEGATIVE** feelings were:

- **Poor Communication and Follow-Up**

- *“Not being called back/contacted”, “Lack of communication between different authorities”, “Stock response – not hearing what I’m sharing”*

- **Being Excluded or Dismissed**

- *“Holding ‘professionals only’ meetings which I was excluded from”, “Professional knows better than me about my life”*

- **Lack of Empathy or Respect**

- *“The way the person spoke to me”, “Lack of care or attention”, “Humiliated”*

- **Overuse of Jargon and Complexity**

- *“Use of jargon/complex terminology”, “Lack of understanding of legal jargon”*

- **Systemic Failures and Overload**

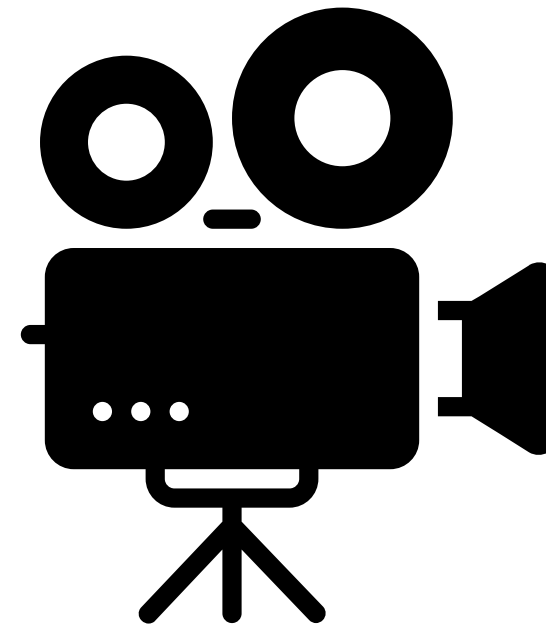
- *“Silo working, workload capacity challenges”, “No support”, “Lack of time given”*



STORIES ACTIVITY

We showed participants in the workshop a video and asked them to think about:

- How it made them feel
- What they connected with
- What they learned



The video shown to the group was about work Central Bedfordshire have done on co-producing a Dignity Charter for one of their services for people in older age living with dementia....

The following pages are what we heard from the participants of this activity as they listened to the story.

STORIES ACTIVITY – WHAT WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE

What did you feel/experience when watching the film

- *“Positive – seeing how simple it is”*
- *“Hopeful that we’re thinking differently”*


What did you connect with in the story?

- *“Like the idea of self-reflection for staff”*
- *“Taking it back to basics– the foundations of human interaction!”*
- *“Human connection”*
- *“As a practitioner and also a parent/carer I see both sides of the fence. Parent/carer I see the power imbalance with the way professionals work with families. I use this in my own practice to ensure the families I support do not feel the same way I do.”*


What are the learnings from the story?

- *“The simplicity and creativity – leads to deeper human connection”*
- *“Small changes – big impact”*
- *“How much is it really about just about displaying stuff – need to go beyond the words”*
- *“Language is so important”*
- *“A starting point for any co-production is providing a platform for people to be listened to”*

BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY



We asked people to go into Breakout rooms and to discuss co-production in Central Bedfordshire. People used the following prompts to think about the topic.

- 
- What are you thinking or feeling about co-production now?
 - What has stood out in terms of the learning (about co-production)
 - What can you take into your work?
 - What does Central Beds need to do differently
 - What do we understand about innovation through co-production and what can we do?

The following pages are a summary of what we heard...



Reflections on Co-production: What It Means Now

- **Going Beyond Services and Funding – It's About Dialogue and Opportunity**
 - *"Curious about when expectations don't meet the reality... is this where we need to be?"*
 - *"There is so much opportunity for even better than compromise!"*
 - *"Rather than a 'no too expensive', how about a 12-week trial with shared learning?"*

Participants are thinking differently about what's possible—co-production isn't just about compromise; it's about creating space to explore new and shared solutions together.



BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY – WHAT WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE



Suggestions on what Central Beds could do differently:

- **Make the System More Human**
 - *"Assessments should include space for discussion about how someone is feeling about their situation."*
- **Value Wider Life Experience**
 - *"Valuing people sharing their broader life experiences – not just their service use."*
- **Improve Accessibility**
 - *"Local offer website – videos bring things to life, more accessible than written documents."*

There's a clear message: Central Beds should shift focus from systems and labels to people and possibilities, creating room for emotional, relational, and creative approaches.



BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY – WHAT WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE



Innovation through co-production; what can we do now?

- **Rethink What Innovation Means**
 - "Is 'being kind' a new innovation? 😊"
 - "Being kind: being with the person – not prioritising the process."
- **Start with Everyday Tools That Shift Culture**
 - "The Jargonator – genius idea!"
 - "Ring a bell when jargon is used."

Innovation is seen not as high-tech or high-cost, but as relational, cultural, and embedded in everyday practices—often small but powerful changes that improve connection and understanding.



What Will You Do Differently?

- *"Have lived experience present in learning spaces."*
- *"Try small things like trials, with shared learning."*
- *"Use clearer language and reflect on tone."*
- *"Champion more diverse voices."*



Conclusion: A Standout Idea

- **"Be human – everything else will follow."**
 - This simple but powerful principle seemed to resonate across all responses. Whether through better language, deeper listening, greater inclusion, or shared experimentation –co-production is, at its heart, a human process. Kindness, curiosity, and courage to try differently are not just values, but the drivers of meaningful innovation.

FEEDBACK AND TAKEAWAYS FROM THE SESSION

It's been a really interesting session; lots to reflect on! We need to strip things back to basics in terms of human interaction. The NHS and LA's need to provide the resource to manage Coproduction in a meaningful way- without the time and capacity, it becomes box-ticking!



*Really enjoyed today's session.
Thank you for sharing your best practice :-)
Hopefully see you soon*



This session has been really informative and thoughtful. Always good to reflect on how we work with other people and communication styles and how this can impact on people's lives. Very important to involve people in developing services and value their expertise. Thank you.

Thank you everyone, your information is very helpful and will support the work we are doing



This session has been really informative and thoughtful. Always good to reflect on how we work with other people and communications styles and how this can impact on people's lives. Very important to involve people in developing services and value their expertise. Thank you.



FEEDBACK AND TAKEAWAYS FROM THE SESSION

*Thanks so much
for a really
interesting session*



*Thank you for a
good session.*



This has been a very interesting and helpful meeting, I look forward to further meetings. I am very keen to be able to contribute to the Co-production strategy and include this up front in the CBC Carers Strategy. Importantly I feel that there should be a clear outline of what Carers should expect when they are supporting a service user, they also need to be supported by the social worker and specifically that the co-production values should be contractually included in contracts with non-council providers and the carer and social worker needs to hold them to account in needing to adhere and practice the co-production values.

Thank you very much, helpful and informative, nice to meet everyone and look forward to doing more co - production 😊, have a good weekend all 😊



*Take care everyone, thanks
for all your wonderful
insights!*





Thank You!

**To register for Regional ADASS EAST Over a Brew Sessions
with CURATORS OF CHANGE, please click on this link:**

**[https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/curators-of-change/e-
mopxga](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/curators-of-change/e-mopxga)**