



Our Commitment to Co-production

Sandwell Council
Adult Social Care

September 2023 v.8.3



Introduction

Sandwell Council recognise that our communities are at the heart of what we do, and we want to ensure that the views and perspectives of residents' shape and influence our service planning and delivery.

Adult Social Care (ASC) want to enable the 'voice' of people to be at the heart of all service models, and this strategic plan sets several intentions to drive improvement.

This strategic plan captures the current position and different approaches that are required to achieve our aims. Adult Social Care are building on good practice from across the Council, partner organisations (agencies) in Health and the Voluntary sector, often referred to as 'Place or Place based partners/agencies'.

The intention is not to replace any existing policies or plans, instead to gather best practice, strengthen networking, communication and improve the way we involve residents and people who use or require support and/or services. Implementation will therefore require a combined effort as 'One Council' and 'Place' to be successful in our aims.

The Corporate Perspective

Sandwell Council is on a journey and has big plans to improve outcomes for its residents.

The [Corporate Plan](#) sets out the Council's key strategic outcomes:-



We have taken several steps forward in ensuring that we are able to listen to residents' views: -

- In April 2023 we launched Sandwell Consultation Hub, an online platform to house all consultation and engagement activity.
- In June 2023 we launched our [Corporate Consultation and Engagement Principles and Standards](#). The standards are written in compliance with the Local Government Association (LGA) standards and consultation principles.

Our Commitment

One Council approach

Place – Based approach



The Adult Social Care (ASC) Directorate play a key role in improving the lives of residents through delivering, commissioning, and reviewing care and support services.

For people using ASC, there is often more than one agency that works with the individual or family when designing and delivering care or support. ASC is therefore committed to building on the Corporate Standards by working with wider council directorates, and partners to develop an improved approach to co-production.

Through workshops with the Council's Consultation and Engagement Network, WM ADASS, staff and partners, ASC have developed this plan that includes an overarching aim:-

to co-produce a place-based charter of principles and top tips, that will enable people to be involved in their care or support. It will act as a shared resource for all staff to embed good practice.

A place-based approach will drive a common understanding of co-production amongst all council directorates and wider partners. It will support good practice amongst the council, and all agencies to improve outcomes for the people we work with.

Although a wealth of guidance exists, feedback from the workforce included that co-production is still perceived as confusing, too ambitious, and difficult to do. This has given us an opportunity to review how we currently work with each other and residents.

This plan sets out the key actions that we will take to improve our approach to co-production and how we will work with all partners, internal and external to achieve improvements.

ASC are committed to drive improvements in line with ASC guidance. Opportunities to co-produce our principles will be available to all agencies. The good practice will be shared through the Councils Consultation Network and place-based partners for wider dissemination.

Co-production in practice

ASC are required by law to meet statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Care Act 2014 (and wider legislation).

The Care Act states that co-production is:

'When an individual influences the support and services received, or when groups of people get together to influence the way that services are designed, commissioned and delivered'

[The Care Act's statutory guidance \(opens new window\)](#)



The vision for ASC is:

'Building independence and empowering Sandwell residents'

This plan is aligned to both delivering our vision and duty. There is a plethora of evidence that shows the benefits of working together and co-producing where possible including support plans, reviews, even buildings are better when designed together.

Feedback from our customers, residents and partners has already helped us to improve services, but by designing solutions together, from the beginning can support all stakeholders to realise mutual goals.

Social Care in Excellence (SCIE), The Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Directors for Adult Social Services have all produced information to show the benefits of co-production, and ways to achieve it. Involvement brings:

- Meaningful and positive outcomes
- Reduce inequalities by using a person-centered approach considering for e.g., preference, strengths, cultural needs
- People and partners becoming more valued in planning, development and delivery
- More understanding, skills and views added to our work
- A wider sense of ownership
- Finding solutions together
- Learning from people with lived experience

Current Practice – Where we are now

People are part of our service development work through focus groups, workshops, surveys and interviews. There is often engagement with NHS, voluntary organisations and wider partners when commissioning or developing services. Examples include our review on Direct Payments, engagement with Carers for the Joint Carers Strategy 2022-26, community work with Town Teams, Healthwatch and engagement activities in our direct care provision.

Wider activities involving residents included Vision 2030 and our Local Account, the annual report which is based on feedback from people using services. The Council is already working in a way that involves people and partners, but we know this can be improved by embedding the approach into business as usual, and ensuring people are at the centre consistently, even when we need to share difficult messages. To support this, Co-production is practice sessions are being delivered to staff by Changing Our Lives.



Our key aims – where we want to be

Our aims cover organisation, people and workforce and include:

1. To improve staff knowledge (at all levels) and confidence on co-production and what it 'looks like' using the Ladder of Participation and working with people who have lived experience
2. To enable the co-productive way of working at micro and macro level and embed it into our culture
3. To ensure that staff aim to 'work, or create with people and not 'to do or decide for' people
4. To enable staff to aim for the 'higher rungs' of the Ladder of Participation
5. To provide clarity so people understand the ways to get involved with Council and partner projects
6. To provide a range of methods that allow people to get involved such as surveys, focus groups or steering groups
7. To enable people to be involved at every level, from co-produced support plans and reviews, to commissioning intentions for support services, recognizing that people with lived experience bring in a wealth of expertise, insight and intelligence.
8. To avoid duplication when working with people
9. To remove silo working and improve 'how' we work with people –service recipients, residents, families, organisations and carers
10. To enable a common and consistent approach to co-production for all residents across partners and place
11. To support professionals to work 'smarter' by sharing best practice and information
12. To promote co-production so people are at the heart of creating service and delivery models/solutions
13. To enable a culture of transparency and communication when true co-production is not possible

Key strategic projects that when re-commissioned will be aligned to co-production principles:

- Commissioning a new Direct Payment Support Service (2024) and increasing the number of people with a Direct Payment during the lifetime of contract using ASCOF indicator from 2024 -2026
- Commissioning a new Carer Support offer (2024-25)
- Commissioning Healthwatch (2024)

How we will get there

ASC commissioning have partnered with **Changing our Lives** to deliver key elements of our plan.

There are three key themes identified to deliver our aims; **Education, Infrastructure and Digital**, recognising Sandwell's strengths and areas to develop, with time given to **introduce, implement** and **embed** the new approach.

Key deliverables in Year One

Education

- **Co-production in practice sessions** delivered to staff and place-based agencies
- **Coaching** delivered by person with lived experience to Director of Adult Services
- Implement **strength-based working in care management** to promote the voice of a person during assessment and review processes- informed by SCIE
- **A co-produced charter** that describes Sandwell's principles for good co-production & engagement that all stakeholders across Sandwell can use, and co-produced with partners and residents
- **Learning from others** – including people with lived experience, best practice and data sharing

Infrastructure

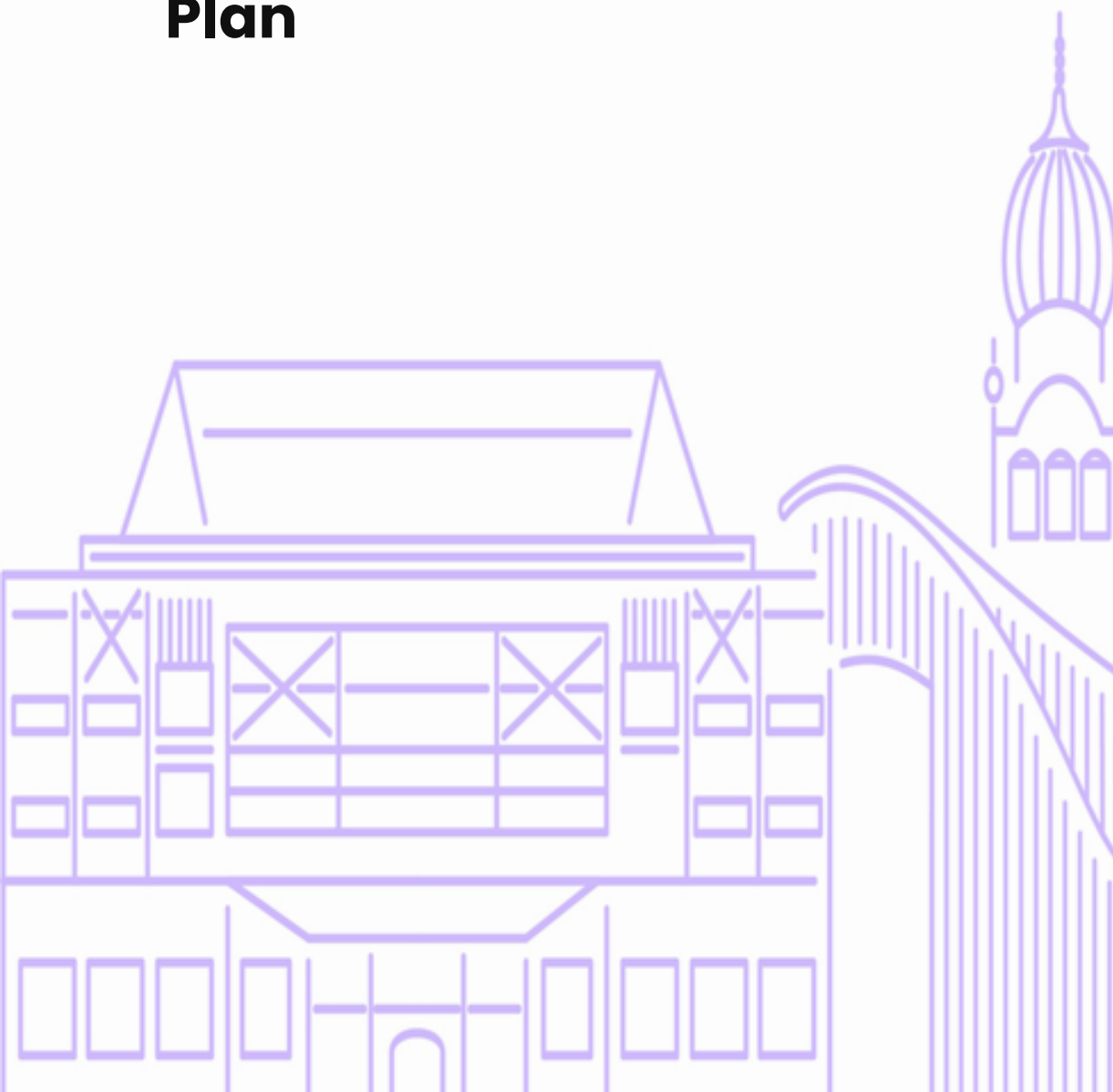
- Promote and share work through the **Council's Engagement network**
- Improved connections of partnerships, representation and networks via a **one council and place based steering** group including **Sandwell residents- Collaborative working**
- Embedding **Citizenspace** across the Council
- Protected time and **resources**

Digital

- Adopt a '**One Council' approach** to support 'every contact matters' by exploring a **digital database**
- Develop a **Sandwell website** that houses all activity and enables residents to get involved across all 'place' based agencies with branding

How we will get there

Summary of Implementation Plan



How we will deliver our aims by 31 March 2025:

- Changing our Lives will deliver co-production in practice sessions to staff from place-based agencies
- A steering group from Sandwell Place agencies will be formed with residents, health, ASC, public health, Equality team, voluntary sector, housing, children's, safeguarding and Sandwell residents
- Changing our Lives will deliver workshops to residents and the steering group to co-produce a Charter that will be available to all agencies
- Reports will include sections to evidence how people have been involved e.g., Commissioning Board
- ASC will review paperwork to ensure the person's voice is evidenced to demonstrate choice and feedback through support planning and reviews via SCIE & strength-based approach workstream
- ASC will review processes to ensure people have a range of mechanisms to feedback on their care and support and these are widely promoted – develop provider forums to support
- An oversight group will promote good practice and areas of development
- The ways that people can get involved will be promoted, including citizen space
- Each agency's internal guidance on how to practically deliver sessions will remain.
- ASC will bring together different engagement networks to ensure people who are able and willing, can be approached to get involved, avoiding duplication.
- Explore a digital database of people who wish to be involved.
- Branding and web page to support the place-based approach will be developed
- Continued attendance at the WM ADASS Co-production network and the Councils Consultation and Engagement network to ensure best practice and innovation
- An action plan is in place to progress actions which is reviewed quarterly at ASC Commissioning Board and the Place-based steering group for partnership work.
- Governance and maintenance structures will be developed to ensure ongoing work

How we will get there



An Implementation Plan for delivery has been developed and refreshed

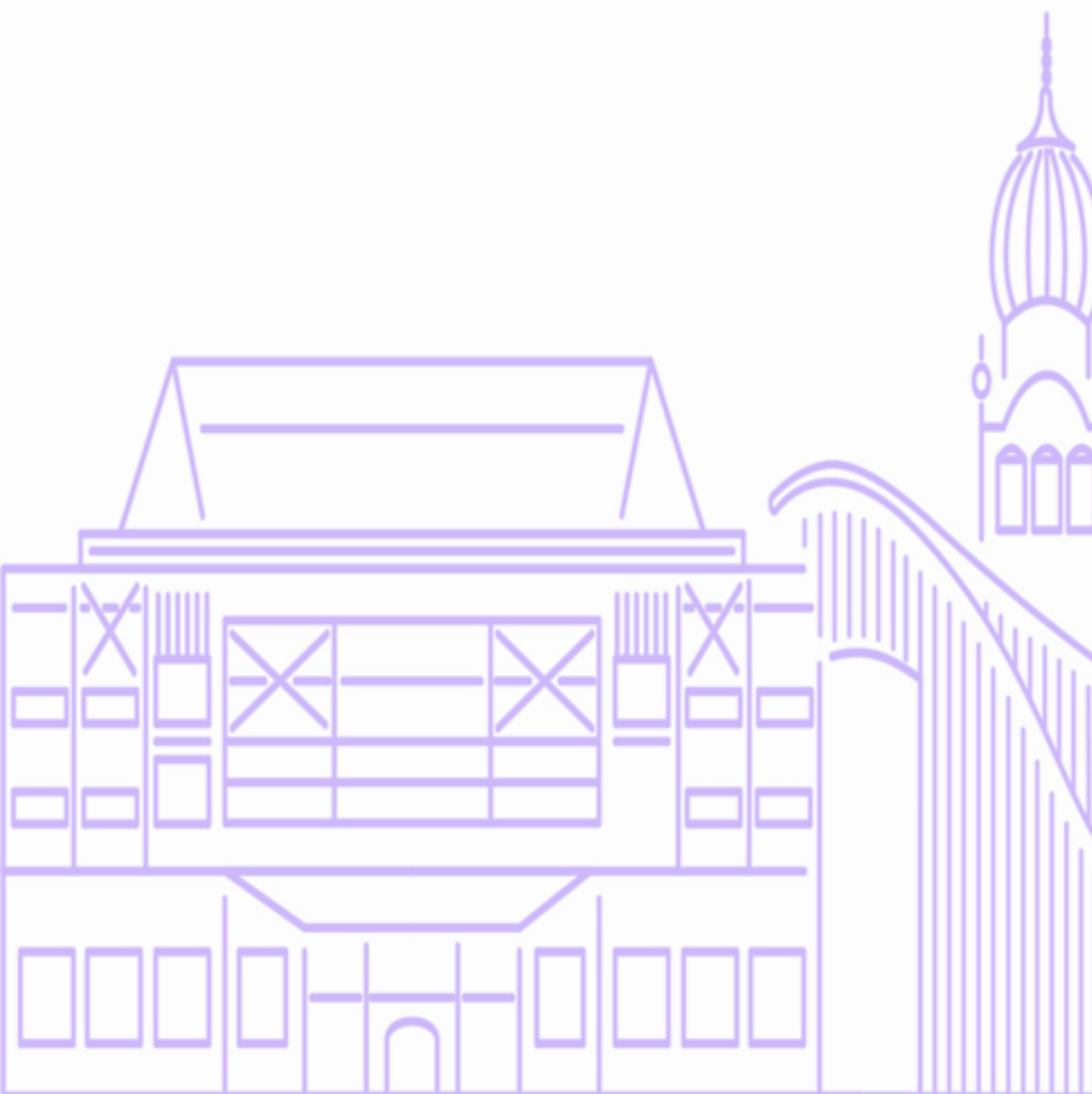
Our Commitment to Co-production Implementation Plan

Adult Social Care

One Council Approach

June 2023

v3.2



To get involved please contact:

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