

SEND NEWS SPLASH

ISSUE EIGHTY TWO
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Examples of Co-production: SSFV

The Cygnet programme is a course for parents/carers of children aged 5-18 years who have received a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) and has been running for many years led by the Educational Psychology Service.

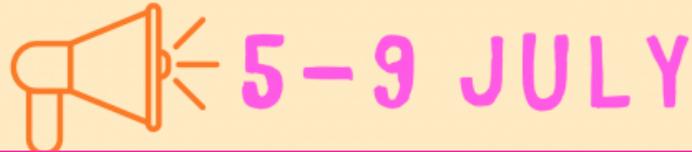
Feedback from parents who have previously attended the programme indicated that they would find it helpful if one of the course leaders was a parent of a child diagnosed with ASC themselves, to provide an additional type of expertise through the 'lived experience'. Other feedback received was that some parents wanted the option to attend an evening course as well as day-time options. As a result of this feedback a parent representative, Caroline Devlin, who has a child of her own with a diagnosis of ASC, now co-leads the course alongside an Educational Psychologist and an evening course is now being offered alongside the daytime option.

Impact of this course:

- Some parents have felt able to stay in touch with the parent co-facilitator through Swindon SEND Families Voice, for ongoing advice and support.
- Consistent attendance of both courses (daytime and evening sessions) indicated that parents valued the option of the evening course which hasn't been on offer previously

Other projects Swindon SEND Families Voice have been involved in the Co-production of include the Annual Preparing for Adulthood Transitions Roadshow and the Upcoming Local Offer Big Fortnight.

CELEBRATE CO-PRODUCTION WEEK



So what exactly is Co-production?

Participation and co-production is not just "taking part" or "being present" but having influence over decisions and actions. Children, young people and families should be involved in the whole process of improving their support and services.

Participation and co-production is important because it not only centres the voice of children, young people and families who receive support from our services, but means we act upon what they are telling us to improve those services. On a micro level this relates to their individual support and ensures they are part of decision-making and outcome setting, they know what they need best and we should to facilitate that, where possible. It also works on a macro level; hearing their experiences throughout the process of developing services ensures they will meet the needs of our children, young people and families.

The Participation Team are a small team with statutory responsibility for gaining the voice of all Children Looked After and Care Leavers as well as strategic responsibility for participation and engagement across children's services. We run the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' Participation Groups; these are groups of children and young people who are or have been looked after by the local authority. They meet once a month in their respective groups to discuss their experiences in care, challenge the Corporate Parenting Board, take part in recruitment for roles within the council and consult on service development and delivery. We are also co-producing a Participation Strategy for the whole of Swindon, developing a Family Advisory Board, and Youth Council as well as running a Participation Champions group and a Participation Network to engage stakeholders across Swindon on matters of Participation. We are currently undertaking work to ensure the voices of Swindon's children, young people and families are heard in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

If you would like any further information on these projects or have any questions, please contact challengeandparticipation@swindon.gov.uk

SEND Service contact details

To speak to a member of SEND service, please call 01793 464641 and we will answer your query in 48 – 96 hours.

Telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday 8am - 5pm and 8am - 4.30pm Friday.

Or you can contact us using our new email address at SENDSERVICE@swindon.gov.uk.

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CELEBRATE
CO-PRODUCTION
WEEK
 5-9 JULY

Examples of Co-production: STEP

STEP have been contracted to deliver participation and co-production work for the last 15 years. However, we have always involved children and young people in the shaping of our service to ensure we are meeting their specific need since our project started in 1984; and STEP has adapted over the years based on what children and young people have told us.

'Real co-production means that services users – children, young people, adults, parents, and carers - are truly, and meaningfully involved in planning and designing services from the very beginning. It is a meeting of minds working together – utilising lived experience, first-hand knowledge, and personal insights – to find shared solutions. When co-production works best, all those involved can share power and have influence over decisions made'.

Benefits of co-production (taken from Participation Toolkit, click [here](#)):

For children and families:

- Increases confidence, self-belief, and life chances by developing their skills.
- Provide a better understanding of how organisations work and how to influence them in the future.
- Gives a voice and influence to those using services who know best what they need.

For Organisations:

- Services are designed, delivered, and evaluated based on actual needs shared by children and families.
- Increased access to, use of and satisfaction with services offered.
- Increases cost effectiveness.

For the wider community

- Breaks down barriers and improves intergenerational relationships.
- An empowering environment raises aspirations in the wider family and community.
- Community cohesion is fostered through the inclusion of children and families in local decision making.

We asked our young people why participation and coproduction is so important to them?

'Only I know what it's like to be me, I know what I need.'

'Teachers and mum made the decision that I needed to go to *****, they didn't even ask me, and then got angry because I wouldn't go. If they talked to me and let me be part of it they would know I don't want help like that, all I need is someone to talk to.'

'Telling people my ideas will give me confidence and help me when I'm grown up.'

'Decisions about my life and what happens to me, should include me.'

'I feel proud when adults listen to me, it makes me feel important.'

'if it's about me, ask me.'

'Making a difference for me, and other young people like me.'

'Having a voice now will help me make good choices about my life when I'm grown up.'

'Adults make things complicated, ask us, we can come up with easy ways to solve problems.'

'Being a part of creating something that will help me is great, I feel good that I'm being listened to.'

'We need to be heard and need to have a say about our lives...If you wanted a new car, would you let me choose it for you without even asking you what you liked...how would that feel?'

'Feel more confident when what I say makes things better.'