

London Borough of Barnet

Engagement and Co- Production Strategy and Charter for Adult Social Care (Draft)

November 2022

YOUR | LIFE,
YOUR | CARE,
YOUR | CHOICE.

Engagement and Co-production Strategy for Adult Social Care

What we do at the moment

- We work with **individuals** and **families** on their care and support.
- We work with people to **understand** and **improve** Adult Social Care services.
- We involve people in **shaping new services** and **making change** to Adult Social Care.

How will we work?



- **Reciprocity**
- **Impact**
- **Representation and diversity**
- **Accessibility:** everyone is different
- **Share power to empower**

Where we want to get to

- We will hear from more people about their experiences and use this to make **positive change**.
- We will build our **People's Voice** community to provide more opportunities to be part of Adult Social Care.
- We will move beyond feedback to participation in adult social care, and ensure that people have a voice across a **wider range of services**.

How we developed the strategy...

We worked with people across Barnet, created a **steering group**, ran **surveys**, talked to **individuals** and **groups**, and heard from **experts** inside and outside of the borough!

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1. Introduction

“I enjoy feeling that my views matter” People’s Voice member

Why a strategy?

In Barnet, we know that individuals and communities are the experts in their own experience. Only by working together can we make sure that adult social care services are excellent for everyone.

The aim of this strategy is step up our ambitions when it comes to engagement and co-production in adult social care. We have a long history of involving people in this area and would like to build on this to make engagement and co-production a key part of what we do across the whole of adult social care.

It is part of our wider strengths based approach in Barnet, valuing everyone’s unique perspectives and qualities. There is also a charter which sets out our commitments on engagement and co-production.

How did we put it together?

This strategy has been put together through speaking to and engaging with many people in Barnet, including people with experience of adult social care, carers, voluntary and community groups, council staff, Councillors, and many others. More information is in the appendix.

The work has been led by a steering group, which has brought together residents, professionals, voluntary sector, and others to try out a new way of working. We worked with the steering group to put co-production into practice, building trust and getting to know each other alongside developing the work.

What do engagement and co-production mean?

We use the terms **engagement** and **co-production** in this strategy.

We use **engagement** to mean any time that we hear from and include people with lived experience in understanding, shaping, and improving adult social care. Some people also call this **involvement**.

[Think Local Act Personal co-production advisory group](#) (a national group of people who access services, carers, and family members) describe **co-production** in this way:

“co-production involves people who use services being consulted, included and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them”

We worked with the steering group to decide what engagement and co-production mean for us. For us this means: **making sure that people with lived experience of adult social care are part of changes and improvements to services, that many different people’s voices are heard, and that power is shared more equally.**

This will be an ongoing process and we look forward to continuing the work together.

2. What do we do at the moment? How is it going?

In Barnet Council we have had a long-standing commitment to involving people in adult social care.

This section sets out **what we do already**, and how it is working. We know that there is plenty of information, feedback, and opportunities to get involved, but also **lots to build on** to make sure we understand the whole range of experiences, as well as looking at how we use the feedback.

2A. We work with individuals and families on their care and support

- In Barnet we work in a strength-based, person-centred way ensuring people's views are incorporated into assessments, care and support plans, safeguarding, mental capacity assessments and all other involvement with us.
- We have a quality assurance process to make sure that this is happening, where different people check the quality of work. This includes a quality assurance panel (where senior managers check for good quality), internal and external audits (where staff and other experts, inside and outside of Barnet Council, check for good quality), and observations.
- As part of the assessment and care and support planning process, people can give feedback directly to their social worker, other council staff, the team manager or through our formal compliments and complaints process. There is also the opportunity for people to give direct feedback as part of external audits.

2B. We work with people to understand and improve adult social care services

We already collect information and feedback from people who use services and carers which gives us an idea of people's experiences, what is working well and what could be improved. We always keep this information safe, and people can ask to see their own information.

This includes:

- A **People's Voice** group of over 200 people who are interested in giving their views and taking part, and a **Reward and Recognition policy** to make sure that we properly thank and recognise people for their time
- The Department of Health and Social Care's annual adult social care survey, and the carers survey (for family and informal carers) every 2 years (completed by every local authority)
- Compliments and complaints – we collect these to understand people's experiences, to learn and improve. A full report is published every year on the council's website.
- The Care Quality team speak to people who use different care services (like homecare or care homes) to understand their experiences and hold providers to account
- Engagement and co-production projects and working groups which specifically look at different parts of adult social care, find out about people's experiences and help us improve
- We also get a lot of other, less formal, feedback, for example residents talking to their social worker, community engagement, or working with voluntary and community groups

2C. We involve people in shaping new services and making changes to adult social care

We already have some ways of involving people in shaping new services or making changes to adult social care.

- We have an Involvement Board made up of 12 resident representatives who help us oversee bigger changes to social care and give their views. The board is elected every two years and is open to anyone with experiences of health and social care.
- Engagement and co-production projects often focus on larger changes, for example commissioning new services or helping to shape new strategies
- For larger scale changes we often have Boards made up of professionals to oversee those changes. Some of these Boards include a resident to give an important real-life perspective.
- We sometimes involve people with lived experience in recruiting new staff, for example being part of interview panels
- We work closely with user-led organisations such as Inclusion Barnet to ensure that we hear a wide range of views and to get expert input into changes

What are people's experiences of getting involved?

As part of developing this strategy, we spoke to members of the Involvement Board, and the wider People's Voice group of residents with lived experience who get involved. We found that:

- We have a range of people who get involved – who have been involved for different lengths of time, some who get involved only occasionally and others who get involved much more regularly
- People appreciated “regular meetings and opportunity to ask questions of concern” and said “it’s a great concept. I enjoy feeling that my views matter”
- When asked what would help them get involved more, they said:
 - Seeing a greater impact
 - Having a wider range of topics to engage on
 - Having different ways to have your say
- When asked what areas they are most interested in they said:
 - Helping to check the quality of adult social care
 - Recruiting new social care staff
 - Choosing new providers of care
- People said that the areas of improvement are:
 - More information about engagement opportunities, promoted more widely and with more notice given
 - More information and feedback about what happened next; the follow up and communication is important
 - More opportunities to meet with different staff members and professionals

Where are the gaps?

We know that we don't hear from everyone – especially those who don't currently access adult social care services but may do in the future.

We can do more to ensure that we hear from a wider range of people from across the borough and from different groups.

3. Where we want to get to

What can we learn from research and other places?

We did a lot of research and spoke to organisations who are doing exciting and innovative work around engagement and co-production. This is important because it will help to us keep learning and improving. A few examples are below, and we will keep on exploring this area and using the ideas to improve.

We liked the Young Grantmakers scheme (Islington) where residents were trained to and agree grant funding. We also liked Camden's Community Researchers, where local residents are trained as expert researchers and hired for different projects.

Another interesting area was Art based projects: Creative Conversations (Shropshire) and Change Arts (Islington) which partnered with the Art sector to use and exhibit art as a form of engagement with communities.

We noted a joint engagement strategy across Health and Social Care in Lanarkshire. Other boroughs used a written commitment with shared principles to unify engagement work across local authorities and health services.

Where do we want to get to?

We spoke to many residents, staff, and partners to help understand where we want to get to.

We want to build on our current work and get to a place where power is shared more equally between professionals and a wide range of people with lived experience to help shape adult social care services.

This will be developed further in a detailed action plan.

These are the three main outcomes and the objectives to achieve them:

1 We will hear from more people about their experiences, and use this information to make positive change

- Give people more opportunities to feed back, including informally, when they interact with adult social care, for example as part of the assessment and care and support planning process.
- Make better use of the data and information we have, such as the annual service user survey and carers survey, and look at comments, compliments, and complaints.
- Work closely with care providers (like care homes, supported living and homecare agencies) to hear people's views
- Support care providers to be innovative and share best practice when it comes to engagement and making changes based on people's views

2 We will build our People's Voice community and provide more opportunities to be part of adult social care

Ensure there are opportunities for people with lived experience to be involved across adult social care, and that engagement and co-production is fully embedded.

We will work with a wide range of people to get involved through providing training, support, and adaptations. We will ensure there is greater involvement in different areas such as:

- Recruiting new social care staff
- Training social care staff
- Checking the quality of adult social care services, including as part of audits
- Commissioning new services, including:
 - Understanding the needs and requirements for new or recommissioned services
 - Writing the specification (what we need from) new or recommissioned services
 - Being part of choosing new providers that will meet the needs of people in Barnet
- We will also work with people with lived experience for those who want to take a greater role in:
 - Reaching out to people in the community to hear their views (for example, as community researchers), and establishing local initiatives
 - Researching and visiting other boroughs to look at what is working well and share learning

3 We will move beyond feedback to participation in adult social care, and ensure that people have a voice across a wider range of services

- Working with colleagues across the council and in health services to make sure that the voice of older people, disabled people, people with mental health challenges, learning disabilities, autistic people, people living with dementia and carers help to shape wider services and priorities.
- Linking in with the Council's new Community Participation Strategy to make sure we reach a wide range of people and groups

4. How can we make engagement and co-production a success?

This section is about **how we will work**, in adult social care and with our partners, to make sure engagement and co-production is meaningful and successful. This section links closely to the **charter** and our commitments to how we work with people.

As part of putting together this strategy and for this section in particular, we spoke to many people with experience of adult social care.

This section sets out what people said about how we can make engagement and co-production a success, and how we will put it into practice.

This is what we found out and the five key themes:

What people said...	Our ways of working
<p>1. Impact</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People said they would like to see more about the impact of engagement and co-production – what happened next 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the start of any engagement or co-production, we will be clear about what we are trying to achieve and how we will give feedback throughout the process This communication will be ongoing.
<p>2. Representation and diversity</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we visited community groups and care providers, we met with many more people and a wider range of people compared to meetings and events run by the council. • People said they appreciated us coming to them and would like to see us more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build relationships with community groups and care providers, so we can meet people where they feel most comfortable and where it is easier for them. • Work with care providers (like care homes, supported living, or homecare agencies) to reach people. Visit people in their own homes where appropriate for those who can't access the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People said they would like engagement to be representative and include a wide range of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will get a better understanding of our adult social care community and look at the gaps in who is not getting involved. • Make sure we are proactively engaging with residents so that engagement is more representative, diverse, and inclusive. • Proactively work with people with more complex needs or who access multiple services.
<p>3. Reciprocity: giving and receiving</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we met with people, they were often interested in hearing about adult social care and finding out more, as well as having their say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that we share useful information at least a week in advance, give people the information they need afterwards, and have the right professionals come along, as well as asking people for their views.
<p>4. Accessibility: Everyone is different</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People said we should continue to make our events and engagement accessible, and this will mean different things for different people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to be proactive in offering adaptations, interpreters, cover expenses using our Reward and Recognition policy and provide additional support so people can get involved. • Ensure that communication methods are accessible, for example by using more visual images, keeping meetings short • Continue to give people the option of online and in person meetings, 1:1 conversations, surveys, online, and other ways of getting involved. • Ensure that there are culturally and needs appropriate opportunities to give feedback, for example women-only groups

5. Sharing power and empowering	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people said they feel worried about giving their views or don't feel confident to speak up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with people's existing support networks and in places that are familiar. We will give people different ways of having their say, and plenty of time. We will provide training and support for people to get involved We will take time to build trust and reassure that there will be no negative consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People haven't always heard of 'adult social care' but may be familiar with the kinds of support and services offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure to use Plain English, familiar words and avoid acronyms and jargon.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People said they would like more information in advance and more opportunities to give feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will be clearer in communicating our plans for the year and different ways people can get involved Send out any information and documents in advance Have a clear way for people to find out about opportunities and check for updates

Other ideas which came from the engagement team and from speaking to staff:

- More training and support for staff across adult social care to build their skills in co-production, and to be clear about what level of involvement is possible from the start
- Making better use of our online platform (Engage Barnet), and other online tools to reach more people
- Exploring whether we can open up our Reward and Recognition policy to give the option of investment into community initiatives

5. How do we work together with other organisations?

In Barnet there has been increased interest and momentum around engagement and co-production, and we want to make sure we are working together to learn from each other and give the best experience we can to residents.

This is an area the steering group were particularly passionate about. We know that people's experiences are not limited to one organisation or service, so we aim to work more closely to make sure that people's voices are heard and have a wide positive impact.

We will do this by:

Working locally with partners:

- Mapping what is already happening – which providers and organisations are doing engagement and co-production, and how people can get involved.
- Working closely with health services as part of the Barnet Borough Partnership and Integrated Care Board
- Working closely with voluntary and community organisations to understand people’s views, through the Barnet Together partnership, and especially Healthwatch and others who work with people who may access adult social care.
- Making use of different networks and partnerships to raise awareness of our engagement and co-production work and recruit people to get involved – this might be care providers, voluntary and community groups, social media, local media, businesses or others.

Looking outwards

- Empowering our residents to be an active part of London-wide and national involvement networks
- Keeping up to date with other councils to find out best practice and share learning
- Keep up to date with research and best practice from around the country and worldwide

6. How do we know it’s working?

We will co-produce an annual report which looks at what we’ve achieved over the year in engagement and co-production. The report will have a focus on the impact of people’s involvement.

At a minimum, our measures will include:

Numbers of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people getting involved (for example): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of people giving feedback as part of their assessment and care planning process ○ Number of people attending People’s Voice events and meetings ○ Number of people we speak to through visiting and engaging with other groups • People’s use of our online platform (Engage Barnet) to have their say (and our own use of the platform in giving people the opportunities to have their say)
Impact and reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of people getting involved and how representative this is • People’s feedback about their experiences of getting involved, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understanding of what is happening and how to get involved ○ Satisfaction with access to the engagement team and people’s representatives • Key findings from annual surveys, complaints and compliments, and other ongoing feedback • Analysis of how much of an impact people’s input is having on services

7. Conclusion and next steps

This strategy and the charter will be a ‘living document’ which we will keep coming back to and improving over time. Our next steps:

- We will develop a more detailed action plan with timescales, and start delivering this
- We will test out different ideas and improve them as we go
- We will work towards our first annual report (which will cover April 22 – March 23).
- We will promote the strategy and action plan, including in more accessible formats. We will encourage more people to get involved and hold us to account.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who has been involved in creating this strategy, especially people with lived experience of adult social care, who have given up their time and generously shared their experiences. We look forward to continuing that work together

Appendix: how did we develop the strategy and charter?

We spoke to and involved many different people in developing this strategy and charter. This is how we did it:

Steering group:

- A mixture of residents with lived experience, voluntary and community organisations and professionals from across the council, health, and social care
- This group met monthly to oversee the whole process, and we worked together throughout including:
 - Shaping the questions to use for engagement
 - Agreeing the structure of the strategy
 - Agreeing the scope of the charter
 - Reviewing early drafts of the strategy with less detail

- Individual conversations with residents to review the final draft strategy in detail and incorporate their comments

Expertise from across Barnet and beyond: We had early conversations with local and national experts in this area, and shared the plans and the draft strategy with key stakeholders such as Inclusion Barnet, Healthwatch Barnet, Barnet Mencap and colleagues across health and social care. They were positive about the work and added lots of important and helpful comments.

Engagement with People’s Voice and Involvement Board

- For those already involved, we asked for their views on what works well and what could be improved. We did this through:
 - An online survey to all of People’s Voice
 - A standalone event with workshops and discussions
 - A dedicated session for Involvement Board members (where we also reviewed the charter in more detail)
 - Opportunities for the Involvement Board to give feedback on the final draft strategy
- The findings from these surveys and conversations are mostly in sections 2, 3 and 4

Direct engagement with people who use adult social care and the wider community

We developed some questions to ask people about how they would like to get involved in adult social care, any barriers to having their say and how we might overcome these.

We visited and attended a variety of community events and groups, having in-depth conversations to find out more. The findings from this engagement can mostly be found in sections 2,3, and 4 of this strategy.

- Mencap ‘Have your say’ group
- Centre of excellence (Somali community)
- Hub connections event - Meridian wellbeing
- Barnet Asian Women’s Association
- Ansell Court – Assisted living facility
- Barnet Mencap autism service
- Silver Sunday – older people’s charity

We will continue reaching out to different groups and communities as we develop the action plan and build these relationships.

Grants to voluntary and community sector organisations

We promoted the opportunity to apply for up to £5000 to undertake engagement on this topic, to reach a wider range of people in the community.

We had four successful applications:

- Barnet Asian Women’s Association
- JDA (Jewish Deaf Association)
- Community Focus
- Barnet Mencap

This engagement has given us important insights and have also been a chance to try out a different way of working where organisations use their existing expertise, relationships and understanding of individuals to lead on engagement.

Charter for engagement and co-production in adult social care

Commitments from Barnet Council, adult social care (we) to people getting involved in engagement and co-production in adult social care (you):

- We will be **clear in our language** and what we are asking
- We will engage with you **in the places** you feel most comfortable, and in **the ways that work for you**
- We will be **open and transparent** in our approach including what can be changed or influenced, and what can't
- We will give feedback and **show the impact** of engagement and co-production
- We will involve you regularly, and **as early as possible** when looking at changes

- We will use the feedback and information **we already have**, while making sure that people's information stays confidential
- We will work closely with **community groups** to include a wide range of people
- We will focus on getting a **wide range of meaningful views** through a range of methods
- We will provide appropriate **support and information** for those sharing their experiences
- We will give people sufficient **time** to plan and prepare for any meetings or engagement
- We will **pay expenses** and reward you for your time, as set out in the Reward and Recognition policy
- We will make sure that there are **inclusive and accessible** ways to get involved, and adapt these to your needs
- We will give you **relevant information and training** to enable you to get involved
- We will work towards a **more equal relationship** between professionals and residents
- We will be open and acknowledge where there are **power imbalances**, and work to manage and mitigate these wherever possible
- We will engage with residents to find **lesser heard and under-represented** voices
- We will make sure **everyone** gets a chance to feed back on their experiences

What do we have in place to make this a reality?

It was important for the steering group to have a section in the charter about resources, and how can make it happen.

- We have a dedicated engagement and co-production team in Communities, Adults and Health, with a focus on:
 - Leading, co-ordinating and managing engagement and co-production across the whole service
 - Working closely with other staff including front line social care staff, commissioners, and others to build skills and knowledge of what makes good engagement and co-production
 - Holding colleagues to account to make sure that engagement and co-production sticks to the commitments of this charter
- We have an annual budget to cover Reward and Recognition payments, expenses, and adaptations to make sure engagement and co-production is accessible and inclusive.
- Social care staff (social workers, occupational therapists, assessment and enablement officers) are all trained in strength-based practice, which means that they will work with individuals to make sure their voices are heard as part of assessment and care and support planning

- There is a joint commissioning team who involve people as part of understanding needs, designing new services, and choosing providers
- We have a performance and systems team, who are specialists in analysing data, including surveys, feedback, compliments, and complaints, and who can also support with monitoring how we are doing
- There is also a Council-wide Consultation and Engagement Team, who offer us expertise and support

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