Local Action Plan: Breckland

Welcome. This Local Action Plan for co-production outlines actions to be taken across Breckland to ensure that people with experience of homelessness are fully involved in co-producing solutions to homelessness in Breckland.

No Homelessness in Norfolk

No Homelessness in Norfolk is the ambitious vision shared by the Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership and the Norfolk Homelessness Solutions Forum. The Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership brings together system leaders from across public and voluntary sectors including housing, health, police, probation, adult and children's social services, the Department for Work and Pensions and all Norfolk Local Authorities. The Partnership is supported by the Norfolk Homelessness Solutions Forum, an operational group led by Shelter.

A key principle of No Homelessness in Norfolk is that true positive change will only come about by incorporating the expertise of front-facing colleagues and experts by experience (people who have lived experience of homelessness). This principle underpins the Norfolk Homelessness Charter[1] and the Norfolk Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2022-2025.[2]

This charter forms a pledge concerning the rights of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We believe that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have a right to:

- Have their voice heard and to participate in decisions that affect them
- A safe and secure home with the appropriate level support they need to live a good life
- Respect at all times and a good standard of service from all partner agencies
- Equality of access to information and our services

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[1] https://www.hopestead.org/app/uploads/2022/03/NSHP-Charter.pdf
[2] https://www.hopestead.org/app/uploads/2022/03/NSHP_Strategy_5.11.20211.pdf

Groundswell works with people with experience of homelessness, offering opportunities to contribute to society and create solutions to homelessness. Participation is at our core because the experience of homelessness is crucial in making decisions that affect lives and ultimately help people to move out of homelessness. In September and October 2022, we held Speakout! events in Cromer, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn, Norwich and Thetford. We met around 100 people to discuss how to embed co-production and participation in each area. People with experience of homelessness joined us, along with people from local authorities, homelessness support services and a range of other statutory and voluntary sector organisations, including the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board, the police and housing associations.

Co-production

Co-production is a way of working together to create positive change, including designing, delivering or improving services. It is an approach that seeks to maximise the involvement of people who have experienced a problem in describing and solving it.

> **Social Care Institute for Excellence features of successful co-production**
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> The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) presents some key features that successful co-produced projects have in common.[3] These include:
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> - Understanding, defining and valuing the skills and abilities of people who access care and support.
>
> - Breaking down barriers between those who provide and those who receive support.
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> - Ensuring that all people involved in co-production have shared goals.
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> - Ensuring that all people involved in co-production get something back from the work they put it.
>
> - Ensuring that participation covers all aspects of a service, from planning and design to its actual delivery.

Choose a safe place to come together, where people feel comfortable [Thetford]

It's not one size fits all [Thetford]

Break bread together – sharing a meal brings people together in good spirits [Thetford]

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[3] Social Care Institute for Excellence (2022) *Co-production: what is and how to do it*. Found at https://www.scie.org.uk/co-production/what-how

Local context

- There are relatively few people sleeping rough in Breckland. Many of those who do are from other countries, and many live in encampments in Thetford Forest. Many of the people sleeping rough in Breckland are involved with transient work through agencies but live on such low incomes they cannot afford secure tenancies.

- There are far greater numbers of people living in temporary accommodation or social housing, who may not be accessing homelessness services tailored towards people with experience of rough sleeping.

- Breckland Council does not hold its own 'stock' of housing – Housing Associations hold all the social housing. Affordability of private rented accommodation is a big issue in Breckland, and there are limited 'move-on' options.

- There are key stakeholders in Breckland who may not be familiar with working with people with experience of homelessness, such as the Forestry Commission.

Actions suggested at Speakout! in Thetford

Train and support peer navigators to work with Housing Options users, either directly or via audio, film or written materials.

- Allows people to share what they know to help others using the same services.

- Service users feel more confident in accessing services

- A peer navigator model means that service users are supported through a service or system, preventing non-compliance and improving uptake.

- Could be applied in other settings, as well as Housing Options. E.g. within police stations, or through health peer advocacy to support people to access healthcare.

Case study

Groundswell's Homeless Health Peer Advocacy model. Through HHPA we can:

✓ Support a client to attend and understand appointments, and make choices about the next steps

✓ Give practical support in attending follow ups and hospital stays

✓ Support a client to find out information about health and health services

✓ Support a client to address their health issue

✓ Pay for travel including taxis if needed

Health peer advocacy also saves money by reducing unplanned care activity costs, reducing missed appointments and, potentially, by leading to better health and associated reduction in service use.

https://groundswell.org.uk/what-we-do/homeless-health-peer-advocacy/set-up-homeless-health-peer-advocacy-service-in-your-area/

Co-produce and deliver tenancy sustainment and pre-tenancy training

- People with experience of homelessness could help design and deliver training and services, and be trained to deliver these, as volunteer peer advocates or as paid employees.
- Could work with/alongside Your Own Place course already in use

People with experience of being homeless in the area could look at street count figures, and other local statistics, and provide contextual analysis

- Could bring additional context to top line statistics, allowing for more targeted and appropriate response
- Could inform how statistics are communicated to relevant stakeholders
- Could provide scrutiny and challenge to official interpretations of (sometimes unreliable or incomplete) figures
- Areas could extend this to more in-depth 'problem profiling' or needs audits, bringing an additional layer of analysis to that done by professionals
- Areas could usefully involve people with lived experience in developing data collection methodologies, where adaptation is permitted or new studies are feasible

Involve people with experience of homelessness in Breckland in designing local housing provision

- Could challenge any incorrect assumptions (e.g. currently assumed people want or need self-contained 1-bedroom flats, but this may not be the case)

Provide safe places for people to come together, share food, and have a conversation about what's needed

- Meet people where they already are, e.g. Chapter 15 drop in.

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Good practice and ideas from other places in Norfolk

Co-production across Norfolk

There are already several examples of co-production within homelessness services in Norfolk:

- St Martins and Shelter both employ dedicated staff to boost involvement. They are active in facilitating the Norwich Co-production Alliance Group, which hosts monthly meetings and is working towards further expansion.

- Shelter operates the Norwich Renters Collective, a network that unites renters from across Norwich in tackling high renting costs and unfit housing.[4]

- Great Yarmouth has a Co-production Group, a working group contributing towards the ambitions of the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance. Their research with people who have experienced homelessness has been aimed at understanding perceptions of existing services and to inform the development of their approach to embed co-production across Great Yarmouth's homelessness services.

- Your Own Place operate an Advisory Board (YOPAB) to help lived experience guide decision-making at Your Own Place.[5] They provide training to prepare participants for key roles in the board such as chair, finance and marketing. This year, Your Own Place has partnered with Sanctuary Housing to deliver workshops gathering residents' views, ideas and concerns to inform and influence Sanctuary's leaders and decision-makers.

- Several homelessness organisations, such as Purfleet Trust and Solo Housing, recruit employees with lived experience.

Attendees at Speakout! events in Cromer, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Norwich suggested:

Bridging knowledge gaps

✓ Support people with experience of homelessness to understand the mechanisms for influencing change in their local area. For example, provide training or information about things like data collection, commissioning practices, budgets and funding, and homelessness law. [*Norwich*]

✓ A peer council or co-production champions – a trained/supported group of users of homelessness services could gather feedback from users of their service or others, then come together to identify common themes and solutions. [*Cromer*]

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[4] https://campaigns.shelter.org.uk/join-norwich-renters-collective
[5] https://www.yourownplace.org.uk/our-services/yopab/

Bringing expertise from experience into formal processes

✓ Invite people with experience of homelessness onto a commissioning board when new services are commissioned and a scrutiny panel to monitor delivery. [*Great Yarmouth*]

✓ Requirements for strategic engagement with service users in Service Level Agreements (SLAs) [*Cromer*]

✓ Involve people with experience of homelessness in the recruitment process for new staff. [*King's Lynn & Norwich*]

Unique benefits of peer roles

✓ Train people with experience of homelessness to be ready to take on paid roles, both in the homelessness sector and other areas of work. [*Great Yarmouth*]

✓ Employ staff with experience of homelessness in front-facing roles. [*Cromer & King's Lynn*]

Community building to create change

✓ People with experience of homelessness come together to form groups and/or bring together existing or new service user groups to develop actions collectively. [*King's Lynn, Norwich & Cromer*]

✓ Co-production in partnership with the local neighbourhood, such as community lunches or neighbourhood clean-up events. [*Great Yarmouth & King's Lynn*]

✓ Involve people with experience of homelessness in local activities that align with their skills and interests, such as decorating and maintenance within local services. [*King's Lynn*]

✓ Organise Festivals of co-production to bring together people with experience of homelessness, and professionals, to share their ideas and best practice. [*Cromer & King's Lynn*]

Further resources

There are a lot of good quality resources to inspire and motivate people to keep working on co-production, and to keep developing new skills. We include a selection below and encourage you to keep searching for more. We do not endorse any paid-for services and you should undertake your own due diligence before buying any services, training or product.

Blogs by people who have been involved in co-production

- '*I have something to offer, insight not everyone can claim to, and I now have a voice*.' My one chance: why including lived experience is so important, by Dena Pursell, Groundswell Care Navigator for Lambeth https://groundswell.org.uk/2021/my-one-chance/

- '*The impact of co-production: Learning from experience*' by Patrick Wood, Chair of the SCIE Co-production Network. Active in the mental health survivor movement since 1989. https://coproductionweek2017.blogspot.com/2022/06/the-impact-of-co-production-learning.html

- '*The importance of Co-Production*', John's blog, an 'Expert by Experience' working with Rethink Mental Illness in Norfolk and Waveney: https://www.rethink.org/news-and-stories/blogs/2022/07/the-importance-of-co-production/

Reports and toolkits

- Co-production Collective (2020) '*Co-pro stories: exploring lived experience of co-production*'. https://cpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.ucl.ac.uk/dist/c/605/files/2021/02/Co-Pro-Stories-Short-Final.pdf

- Groundswell (2021) '*Inspiring Change Manchester's coproduction journey*'. https://groundswell.org.uk/2021/learning-from-icms-coproduction-journey/

- Fulfilling Lives (2022) '*Coproduction: principles into practice*' https://www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd_category_id=324&wpfd_file_id=7278&token=c22fd2adc0cecd4d34b092ef6b4dc3be&preview=1

- National Voices (2022) '*Valuing Lived Experience – learning report*' https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/publications/our-publications/valuing-lived-experience-learning-report?mc_cid=b83ae3855c&mc_eid=8494e01efa

- Homeless Link (2018) '*Co-Production – working together to improve homelessness services*' https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/co-production-toolkit/, aimed specifically at people wanting to use a co-production approach for homelessness services.

- SHP (2022) Co-production toolkit for multiple disadvantage, itself co-produced by lived experience volunteers alongside commissioners and co-location partners.

- Involve's knowledge hub contains resources to support public participation in civil life: https://involve.org.uk/resources/knowledge-base

- Revolving Doors' *'Toolkit: developing a community of community practice'* is a guide for conducting peer research: https://revolving-doors.org.uk/publications/running-peer-research-project-offenders-community/

- The Fulfilling Lives final evaluation summarises achievements, findings and learning from all 12 co-produced Fulfilling Lives projects: https://www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/new-publication-programme-achievements-evaluation-findings-learning-and-resources/

- Fulfilling Lives (2021) 'Involving people with lived experience in the workforce': https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/insights/documents/Involving-people-with-lived-experience-in-the-workforce-2020.pdf

Websites and networks

- Making It Real Norfolk's Story book https://www.facebook.com/MakingitRealNorfolk

- Expert Link's network 'Conversations on co-production' https://expertlink.org.uk/co-production/

- UCL's Co-Production Collective, a community of people interested in co-production: https://www.coproductioncollective.co.uk/ There is a detailed accompanying resources library: https://resources.coproductioncollective.co.uk/

- Social Care Institute for Excellence 'Co-production: what it is and how to do it': https://www.scie.org.uk/co-production/what-how

- Ideas Alliance have extensive co-production resources, articles and guidance https://ideas-alliance.org.uk/

Short animations and films

- National Lottery Community Fund 'what is co-production?' https://twitter.com/i/status/1013761405231747072

- National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) principles for co-producing research https://twitter.com/NIHRinvolvement/status/1543872791740547073 (Full resource here: https://www.learningforinvolvement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Guidance-on-co-producing-a-research-project-2022.pdf)

Good practice examples

- Expert Citizen National INSIGHT Awards are a useful source of examples of successful co-production projects, from ways in which co-producers have gathered stories and insights to how they have led positive change https://expertcitizens.org.uk/insight/

- Shelter's GROW traineeships: https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/employing-people-with-lived-experience/

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Out of homelessness