

Co-production Newsletter

15 November 2021

Issue number 1

Rethink
Mental
Illness.

Co-producing service changes for better mental health support

Hello

The NHS is working together with Norfolk and Suffolk councils, charities and community organisations to improve key mental health services so people's needs are better met. There is new funding and national direction (known as the [NHS Long Term Plan](#)) for this joined-up work, focusing on key priorities for what needs to change for the better.

Rethink Mental Illness is the charity for people severely affected by mental illness. The Norfolk and Waveney Health and Care Partnership has commissioned Rethink's co-production team to bring the views, skills and experience of people living with mental health needs and carers together with those of people whose jobs are to plan and deliver services – so they can work together.

What is co-production?

Co-production is when people with lived experience of mental health challenges work in partnership with staff in organisations that provide services. The term 'expert by experience' is often used to recognise the expertise that comes from living with mental health challenges about what helps and doesn't help. Activities include co-design of services, co-delivery of services through peer support roles, co-delivery of training such as at the [Recovery College](#), and co-evaluation of how effective services are at meeting people's needs.

Why are we co-producing?

Lived expertise working together with professional expertise means that service changes are more effective. Co-producing also has wellbeing benefits for all those involved, enabling connections and skills, opportunities to work together as a community of interest around mental health, and roles for people with lived experience, including carers.

NHS

Norfolk and Waveney
Clinical Commissioning Group

in good health

The Norfolk and Waveney Health and Care Partnership



"Being listened to on an equal footing by professionals reminds me that my opinions have value too. My lived expertise in mental health was gained in a hard way, but I am glad it can be put to good use." Expert by Experience Leader

How we're co-producing and how to get involved

We are already working with people with lived experience as equal partners to share decisions about how to achieve key service goals. These are the strategic co-production roles in the Reference Group. The community co-production roles are where people with lived experience will be out and about in the community having conversations with others.

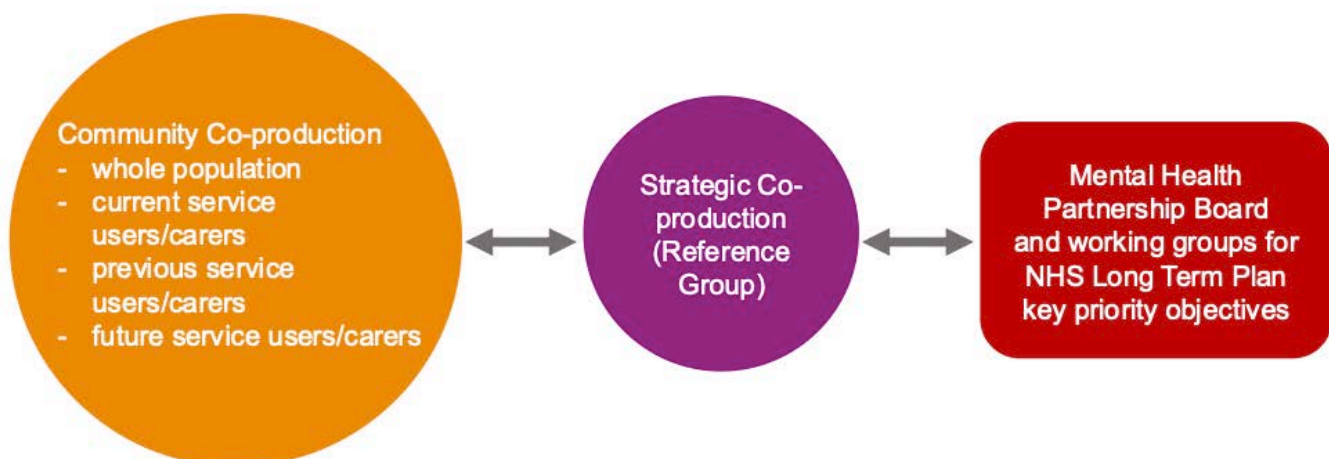
It is very important that the views and ideas of a wide range of people with lived experience are brought into the decision making process about changes – so they will be as effective as possible. There are many conversations to be had to understand what helps and doesn't help. They can be one-to-one rather than in a group if that works better for you.

Having a conversation, does not necessarily mean you will need to share your story if you do not feel that you want to. We can start by letting you know about existing plans for change and provision. Then you can respond to those plans, adding your ideas based on your own lived experience of needing help or of using services. Or based on your experience of supporting someone else to use services.

NHS Long Term Plan

The priorities for positive mental health service change are:

- help around suicide prevention and for people bereaved by suicide
- joined up services around people, with more choice and control, so people can live as well as possible in their community, including help with challenges such as housing and money – with particular focus on needs around disordered eating, complex emotional needs or 'personality disorder'
- getting help as a young person (age 18-25)
- quicker access to effective help close to where you live, including around mental and emotional distress, and if you need to be in hospital
- more support with physical health
- more support to find employment
- more support to prevent stress and challenges causing more serious challenges



New roles

You may be interested in a community listening or leader role, or in joining a working group. We'll let you know about opportunities to join the lived experience reference group in future newsletters.

As well as lived experience roles, we are recruiting two **Community Co-production Officers**. They will be supporting Expert by Experience Leaders to have conversations about changes, listening to needs and ideas, and sharing co-production updates and ways to get involved.

We are also recruiting a **Co-production Manager** to support, enable and empower people to be involved and co-produce.

Please follow the links for detail about how to apply. And please share these opportunities with others.

Connect with us!

You can send us a message to say you are interested in having an initial conversation about co-production plans and activity by emailing NandWcooproduction@rethink.org. Please let us know the best way to contact you. We'll be able to share a phone number when our Community Co-production Officers are here. Thank you.

