

Not Another Co-Production Festival 2023



Shropshire council staff and Making it Real Shropshire and Telford Board members, plus a rather large teddy bear,....

Over the last 10 months a number of Shropshire Council staff have been involved in the Not Another Co-Production Project West Midlands.

The project, working with **Ideas Alliance** and **People's Voice Media**, was to explore how to develop co-production in ways that benefit local people, professionals and organisations across England. To help move co-production from just a buzz word to a way of working.

This was done through co-production workshops, community reporting and regular 'Over a Brew' sessions, concluding with a community learning festival and a peer support network that connects people and creates a partnership of practice.

As the 10-month project came to an end, it was time to celebrate all the amazing work that had

been happening with partner organisations across the West Midlands.

The accessible and inclusive festival was held at the Cambridge Road Methodist Church in Kings Heath Birmingham. This was an opportunity for hands-on learning about co-production, and to hear stories and experiences showing the difference it can make to people.

The festival was co-produced with all the organisations that had been involved in the project and overseen by Cat Duncan-Rees and Isaac Samuels from the **Ideas Alliance**. The **Camerados** were on hand with their public living room - yes comfy sofas, chairs, bean bags and fairy lights!

Ideas Alliance are a social enterprise that wants public services to work in equal partnership with local people rather than to do for them, so better decisions are made and everyone can experience better outcomes.
<https://ideas-alliance.org.uk/>

People's Voice Media is a charity founded in 1995 and is committed to supporting people to improve their lives and bring about positive social change from the ground up.
<https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk/>

Camerados is a social movement - which really just means they think being a bit more human is a good idea. The Public Living Rooms are welcoming, no-agenda places for folk to sit down with a cuppa, have a chat and feel more human.
<https://camerados.org/>

There were a number of workshops for people to attend and have hands on experience of co-production including co-produced poetry, artwork, music, craftivism and storytelling.

A number of the Experts by Experience took willing participants through a Care Assessment as a 'walk in my shoes' exercise. Some very interesting comments were made!

The 'soap box' was very popular with many of the Experts and attendees taking the mic to talk about their experiences and how co-production could be embedded more in everyday life.

People were invited to take part in the 'Baking it Real' challenge. This was to bake cakes, flap jacks or something of their choice, but it had to include strawberries! Was this just a ploy to get cake at the festival? Maybe...

A number of Shropshire Council staff attended the festival along with Experts by Experience from Shropshire and Telford Making it Real boards and Enable.

Making it Real Shropshire were on hand to talk to people about what Making it Real is all about and how the framework can be used, not just in Adult Social Care. Displaying the six themes with the 'I' & 'we' statements sparked a lot of good healthy challenges and conversations.

There were also puzzles using comments from both Experts by Experience and professionals showing how Making it Real has built confidence and helps organisations develop co-production



'A fantastically engaging, colourful and thought-provoking day'

Ruth Davies IPS Employment Manager, Enable

'The festival was a day to challenge processes, attitudes and how coproduction can not only be of benefit to an organisation but the positive affects it can have on individuals who draw on the provided services. Hopefully, it's a step forward in the transformation of change'.

Katie Stone (Expert by Experience) Co-co Chair Shropshire Making it Real Board

The festival concluded with a 'chat show'. Issac Samuels talked to Experts by Experience about how co-production makes them feel, how it empowers and gives them a voice and allows them to challenge the 'system' for the better. Both Katie Stone and Rich Amos from Making it Real Shropshire Board joined Issac on the sofa to talk about their experiences.

Professionals were also invited to sit on the sofa with Issac to talk about the good, the bad and the ugly experiences of co-production within their organisation.

The festival was also a fantastic opportunity to network with Experts by Experience, professionals and the general public, really raising awareness of how important co-production is in many aspect of our lives.



Katie Stone and Rich Amos (Experts by experience and Shropshire Making it Real board members) chatting with Issac Samuels on the sofa.

'I attended the Not Another Co-production festival earlier this week and had very little idea what to expect. It was unlike anything which I have attended before. I think that for me the great joy of the day was the diversity within the room. There was such a celebration of lived experience and the wisdom this brings. The venue was filled with colour, comfy furniture, fairy lights, good food, interesting people to talk to and exceedingly large pants. I chose to attend three workshops - my favourite was the poetry. As a group we co-produced a poem which was far better than anything I could have created on my own. When thinking about co-production we talk about 'power shared equally' and this festival was a wonderful example of how to do this. I was very privileged to be able to attend'.

Tamsin Waterhouse - Principal Social Worker Adult Services -
Shropshire Council