

Co-production Network Newsletter

Welcome!



We hope you enjoy reading the winter edition of the Co-production Network (CPN) newsletter.

It has been another busy time for the CPN and our volunteers. They continue to be proactively involved in many community events to engage and support the residents of Slough. The CPN has continued to work together to support the development of local adult social care strategies as well as approaches to help to keep the people of Slough safe.

As we approach the end of the year, the CPN would like to wish our partners and communities a happy and peaceful festive season as well as a healthy year ahead.

How to contact us

For more information about our work please visit: [Slough Borough Council ASC Co-production Network](#)

Useful links

[Community equipment recycling](#)
[Social Care](#)

[Slough Community Directory - Activities and services to keep Slough residents fit and healthy \(sloughhealth.org\)](#)

Minor Illness: Slough Urgent Care Centre in Priors Close is open 8am-8pm seven days a week, providing same day treatment for patients who do not require treatment in the emergency department. More info: [New Urgent Care Centre in Slough | NHS Frimley Health Foundation Trust](#)

Adult & Children social Care: For social care emergencies outside of Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, please call the Emergency Duty Team on 01344 351999 email: EDT@bracknell-forest.gov.uk or dial 999.



Adult Social Care Strategy Updates

Update on our Carers Strategy

As we reported in the Autumn Newsletter, the year one update to the Carers Strategy, was presented to Cabinet on 21 October. The report was very well-received, having updated on a range of positive activities and outcomes achieved by the Carers Task & Finish Groups and overseen by the Carers Steering Group.

Some highlights include:

- fully sponsored event at Ditton Manor
- establishment of a Carers Forum
- successful bid for funding to support Carers with understanding how technology-enabled care can support Carers and the people they support, involving working as part of an East Berkshire Consortium within the Frimley Integrated Care System (ICS)

- working with Hope College to set up an unpaid male carers group in Slough, a gap identified in our Carers Strategy, male carers will meet regularly at a café in central Slough
- in addition, the ASCOF/SACE (national reporting) data shows that there has been significant improvements made.

Many thanks to all involved in supporting carers and helping make progress in achieving some of the strategy's goals.

The Older People's Steering Group is expanding, and Vanessa will be handing the Carers Lead to Diana Balsom, our Commissioner for Prevention. Thank you to Vanessa for all your work to date and welcome to Diana!

You can find the one-year update here: [Carers Strategy Appendix 1 year update on carers strategy.pdf](#)

Supported the Slough Safeguarding Partnership Board (SSPB)

The CPN were asked for their support from the SSPB to help in planning to support learning amongst agencies in Slough including Thames Valley Police, Slough Borough Council, ambulance and fire and rescue service, GP's, and the voluntary sector so they know how best to help people, living in Slough, to keep themselves safe from abuse or harm.

Some of the volunteers participated in meetings to support the work.

Barbara Jacobson, Safeguarding Partnership Adults Lead said: "Being able to consult with the group (CPN) and obtain the voice of the community, is central to work in the safeguarding partnership, it was so important to hear from members of the CPN, and listen to their thoughts and ideas."

Older People one year Cabinet Report update!

The one-year update on the Older People Strategy was presented to cabinet on Monday 18 November. This provides a comprehensive overview of the work which the Older People Steering Group has been doing to implement the strategy. The delivery arm is through a series of Older People Task and Finish Groups e.g. Dementia, End of Life, Social Isolation and Loneliness to name but a few. The work all flows from

the Older People Strategy 2023-25. The Older People Steering Group is co-chaired by Vanessa Pugh (Interim Commissioner for Older People) and Marcia Wright (expert by experience and co-production volunteer). You can find the one-year update here:

[Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 18 November, 2024, 6.30pm](#)

Cabinet meetings are also livestreamed and so you can tune in on the night.



(L-R) Marcia Wright and Vanessa Pugh

Adult Social Care Mental Health Commissioning Strategy Development

Slough Borough Council, in collaboration with NHS partners and stakeholders, has been developing an ASC Mental Health Commissioning Strategy. As part of this process, officers held two Engagement Sessions with the Slough Co-production Network (CPN) in October to gather feedback on mental health services, support, and provision for adults in Slough. This invaluable input, combined with responses from the online mental health strategy survey - completed by many CPN members - provided critical insights that have been instrumental in shaping the strategy.

From the feedback, officers identified seven key priorities reflecting the needs of the

community and aspirations for mental health in Slough.

These priorities are:

- early intervention and prevention
- improving access to mental health services
- integration of mental health with physical and social care
- effective crisis support
- support for vulnerable and diverse populations
- developing a skilled and compassionate workforce
- enhancing mental health awareness and reducing stigma.

The outcomes of the engagement sessions were shared at the Co-production Network meeting on 12 November, highlighting progress made.

The strategy is going to be discussed at the next Health and Social Care Partnership Board meeting on 10 December, before being presented to Cabinet at a later date. The CPN insights and feedback have been integral to shaping the strategy and have informed the development of the action plan.

Thank you to the CPN for their continued engagement and support in shaping Slough's mental health services. Their involvement has been invaluable, and we look forward to working together as we finalise this important strategy to meet the needs of all our residents.

Mayowa Kushimo, Mental Health Commissioner has been leading on this work.

Question time for Older People

On 26 November there was a chance for older residents to ask those burning questions of an expert panel held at Kingsway United Reformed Church.

This successful event was jointly hosted by the Slough's Older People's Steering Group and Slough 50plus Forum with the Mayor joining the event. The Co-production Network helped to co-design this event as volunteers to meet the interests of older people.

The event reflects the strategic priorities set out for older people, supporting them to live as independently as possible in the community. This is set out in Slough Borough Council's Older People Strategy 2023/26.

Advice and information stalls provided guidance on benefits, income, health and wellbeing.

Panel members included:

- Rob Deeks, Chief Executive, Together as One - who chaired the event
- Cllr Dexter Smith - Leader of the Council
- Andrea Rodin - Head of Service Long Term Services & Principal Social Worker
- Mike Wooldridge - Frimley Health and Care ICS
- Dr Leidon Shapo - Adults Public Health Lead (interim)
- Vicki Atherton - Operations Manager, Slough CVS
- Jane Senior, Director of Commissioning and
- Sonia Khan, Director of Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement, Slough Borough Council.



Autism community coffee group

On 27 November, SBC proudly supported an autism community coffee group event, welcoming 22 attendees who identify as autistic or as carers of autistic individuals. The gathering was a hub of creativity and collaboration, with many ideas shared on making Slough an Autism-friendly town.

The event was not just about sharing ideas but also about building a supportive community where everyone feels valued and heard.

The enthusiasm and commitment shown by all participants was truly



inspiring. We look forward to a 2025 filled with neuro-friendly activities that will continue to foster inclusivity and understanding in our town.

A special thank you to Neil Farrell, Simon Kibble, and Sue Benford from the Autism Steering Group who

organised and facilitated the discussions, although they might need a coffee break themselves after all their hard work (see attached pic for proof)! Together, we can make a difference and create a welcoming environment for everyone.

Celebration time!

We are thrilled that two of our volunteers were recognised at the One Slough Awards hosted by Slough Council for Voluntary Services at the Copthorne Hotel on 15 November.

Zhora Jeffries won **Volunteer of the Year - improving the lives of Older People** category for her work in supporting the Cippenham Carers Group. This award is very well deserved as Zhora has worked tirelessly to ensure unpaid carers in Slough connect for vital peer support, as well as a place to access information and support.

We are also delighted that Joycelyn Jones, who is part of the Afro Caribbean Heritage Society received a highly commended **Group of the Year Award for Supporting Children and Young People**. This is a great achievement for Joycelyn and members of the group



Celebrating Carers Rights Day 2024

To mark national Carers Rights Day on 21 November, Slough Carers Support hosted an event at Elite Banqueting Suite in Slough. The theme for this year was 'recognising your rights'.

The aim for the event was to:

- help unpaid carers understand their rights
- highlight key resources and support available to them.

Carers from several carers groups across Slough were involved in planning the event including agreeing information and advice that they would find most useful to support them in their caring roles. Carers and Carers Leads also took a proactive role prior to and on the day including decorating the venue and preparing/serving food.

We were delighted that over 100 carers attended the event alongside representatives from statutory and voluntary and community sector groups.

Fourteen local organisations were on hand providing advice and information on range of areas including benefits advice, carers assessments, health and well-being support and local carers support groups.

The event kicked off with a welcome from David Coleman-Groom, Executive Director (interim) People - Adults from Slough Borough Council followed by talks from SBC's Debt and Welfare team and the Carers Lead from the Community Mental Health Team. The Mayor of Slough was also in attendance.

An important part of the event was carers spending time together relaxing, enjoying the delicious buffet lunch and entertainment in comfortable surroundings. Entertainment was provided by Dhol Player Karan, from the Dhol Show, with his loud and vibrant drumbeats enticing carers onto the dance floor! This was followed by Sunita from Amina Khayyam Dance

Company, performing her beautiful kathak dance. Finally, a winner from Slough's Got Talent, Roy Armentano, performed his captivating prayer for the carers, helping give them strength to support them on their caring journey and hope for the future.

Thank you to everyone for their support in making this event so successful.

Bella, a carer from the Cippenham Carers Group said: "It was a great networking event, very informative, amazing food, attention to detail really showed in how smoothly everything went. Went above and beyond expectation. Well, done to the organisers!"



World Mental Health Day



In October some of our members were delighted to attend the World Mental Day event in Slough. It was a fantastic thought-provoking event to raise awareness about mental health and hear about the wonderful work that is taking place in Slough.

The event marked Slough Mental Health Service's 10th annual celebration and co-produced with Volunteer Peer Mentors and people using mental health services in

Slough. It was such a big milestone to celebrate.

Two of our co-production volunteers, Jordan and Shahnaz are also peer mentors for Hope College and were part of the team organising the event.

Shahnaz had this to say about the event: "I was asked by our lovely Hope College Peer Mentor Co-ordinator, Vickie, if I could be a helper at the World Mental Health Day event. My role was to welcome guests and escort them to the

immersive rooms, where plays were being held. I thoroughly enjoyed helping. I was very happy to escort the Co-production Network members as I am a member there too.

"It is important for the co-production group to appreciate what people with mental health face, as it affects all areas of our lives. The plays facilitated that understanding in a most spectacular but sensitive way."

Winter Blues

The CPN are keen to promote the range of local services and support that are available for residents, particularly during the winter period as we know this can be a challenging time.

To help with this, volunteers coproduced a winter blues leaflet with useful information. This is available here: [Winter blues advice leaflet - Slough Borough Council](#)



Meet our members!

In each of our newsletters, we will be introducing you to some of our valued members.

Dolly



My name is Dolly Bhaskaran, I have been a member of the Co-production Network for the last nine months. I was a carer for my husband, and I worked as a nurse in the NHS for many years.

I am passionate about adult social care and like to help people. I joined the Co-production Network because it can be a deeply rewarding experience for several reasons:

- co-production emphasizes equal partnerships between professionals and people with lived experiences
- being part of the network allows me to connect with like-minded individuals who value collaboration and mutual support
- we have a collective voice and can influence the decision making process
- we get a lot of information, resources and training which helps me in my personal development.

After retirement I started a self-care group for the local community called **Living in Harmony** focusing on empowering people to manage their own health and wellbeing, promote self-care and support each other.

Jordan



I have been part of the Slough Co-production Network for some months, now, but I am still a relatively new member.

As such, I learn a lot from my colleagues, and I appreciate that we all have an equal say and that what we each bring to the table is valuable towards real change in Slough.

I also work within a co-productive context as a Volunteer Peer Mentor for the Community Mental Health Team in Slough, and I have another voluntary role within the NHS Mental Health Services.

Vickie

*Hope College
Peer Mentor Co-ordinator*

We've been co-producing Mental Health Services in Slough for over a decade, and our team of dedicated Volunteer Peer Mentors continues to grow!

Volunteer Peer Mentors are the foundation of everything we do. Their experience of mental illness and recovery helps shape, develop, and deliver our service, and provides service users with encouragement and a vision for a more positive future.

Volunteer Peer Mentors have amazing ideas! Their creativity contributes to our annual World Mental Health Day celebration and their hard work and passion ensures the smooth running of Hope College Open Mornings.

The most wonderful thing about co-production, is how it enables people to grow. Slough's unique Co-production Pathway forms part of on-going treatment and offers people an opportunity to focus on their strengths, giving a sense of ownership, meaning, and belonging. The Co-production Network role builds on this by providing Volunteer Peer Mentors with an opportunity to use their skills and experience within the wider community if they would like to.

Slough's Mental Health Service is proud to work in partnership with the Co-production Network and the volunteers who give their time and energy free of charge to make Slough a better place to live.