



social care
institute for excellence

Collaborating and innovating in social care to improve lives

Impact Report July 2025

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social care
institute for excellence

“

SCIE is an invaluable resource. I have broadened my knowledge in both children and adult services.

Local authority stakeholder

”

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Our impact is your impact



At the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), we know that meaningful change happens when people with lived experience lead, and when collaboration and innovation work hand in hand. This year, our commitment to that has been more important than ever.

It has been a year of new opportunities and challenges, where the value of co-production has been reaffirmed. Across our offers of consultancy, insights, training, and resources, our purpose has remained clear: to collaborate and innovate in social care to improve lives.

We also pause to honour John Evans, a founding member of SCIE's Co-production Network and a pioneer of the disability rights movement. His passion for equity and inclusion continues to inspire our work. We recognise the power of our significantly broad reach across the sector, enabling us to use our deep experience of bringing partners together to better social care. This year has seen nearly 4 million visits to our website, and our sector contacts number nearly 380,000, with around 130,000 subscribing to our ever-popular SCIELine newsletter. We share our insights with around 86,000 followers on social media, in a year which has seen us launch a new account on BlueSky.

More importantly, trust in SCIE remains strong. As part of our drive to ensure we're clear on our impact and service delivery from our customers' point of view, we ran our first Insight Improvement Survey, which told us that more than 90% of respondents think that we understand and care about making a difference, while nearly 85% said our guidance helped them see the bigger picture. The large majority said they trusted us because we reinvest our income to improve social care.

Continued on next page →

Forewords

We have continued to work with partners to drive innovation:



Through the DHSC's Accelerating Reform Fund, our consultancy work supported local areas to scale up much-needed solutions for unpaid carers, demonstrating the potential to deliver against the Government's 10-Year Health Plan's three shifts.



Our Ignite: 'Commissioning for the future' training programme has strengthened leadership across adult social care commissioning.



We launched practical new resources, including toolkits for housing, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, and tackling inequalities for people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

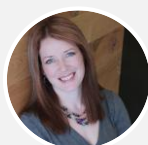
At a national level, SCIE's voice has grown stronger. This year, we launched the CareTech Charter at political party conferences, provoking much discussion around promoting digital innovation in social care. Our Chief Executive, Kathryn Marsden OBE, also contributed evidence to the Health and Social Care Select Committee, ensuring that the voices of people who draw on care and support are heard in policymaking.

Throughout everything, co-production remains our golden thread – not a separate activity, but the foundation for everything we do. As we look ahead, we remain committed to championing inclusion, innovation, and collaboration, and to ensuring that people with lived experience are always at the centre of shaping the future of social care. With the independent commission into adult social care moving forward in its efforts to design a better system for the future, we look forward to working with Baroness Casey and partners across the sector – crucially people who draw on care and support and their family carers – to create sustainable solutions to transform social care.

We thank all our partners, stakeholders, and supporters who continue to walk this journey with us.



Rt Hon Paul Burstow
Chair, SCIE Board of Trustees



Kathryn Marsden OBE
Chief Executive, SCIE

Co-production Network view

“

I'd like to start by celebrating the memory of John Evans, who passed away in January of this year. John was actively involved in the SCIE Co-production Network from the start and he is a former Chair of the Co-production Steering Group. As well as being a rightly celebrated disability activist, John was a lovely person. I'll miss him greatly but I'm glad that I had the opportunity to know and work alongside him for almost 30 years.

The Steering Group has continued to work with SCIE staff over the past year to develop the organisation's Co-production Strategy and it seems like we're reaching the point when the new approach can be enacted. I'm pleased to say that all of the people with lived experience involved in the group have been able to contribute and the fact that this is so reflects well on the SCIE staff who are co-ordinating the process.

I'm particularly pleased to reflect that steering group members and other people with lived experience have been able to make a telling contribution to a wide range of SCIE projects and activities over the course of the year. As well as continuing to be involved in recruitment and selection, we have played leading roles in SCIE's work around the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF), we are heavily involved in the ongoing project to develop a Co-production Diagnostic Toolkit, we have participated in numerous local authority initiatives, and we are working with members of the National Co-production Advisory Group and a diverse group of SCIE staff to ensure that the forthcoming Co-production Week is as impactful as possible.

Co-production does not stand still and we experience difficulties along the way. There is no room for complacency, but the current signs indicate that people with lived experience will continue to play a major role in helping SCIE to support people who access care and support, to shape the services they receive and make the world a better and more inclusive place to live in.

”



Patrick Wood
Chair, SCIE Co-production Steering Group



Our impact is your impact, and we are delighted to share this and other insights with you.

Who we are and what we do

We are an independent social care charity working with a wide range of partners and people with lived experience, to improve people's lives.



Purpose

We collaborate and innovate in social care to improve lives.



Vision

A society which enables people who draw on social care to live fulfilling lives.

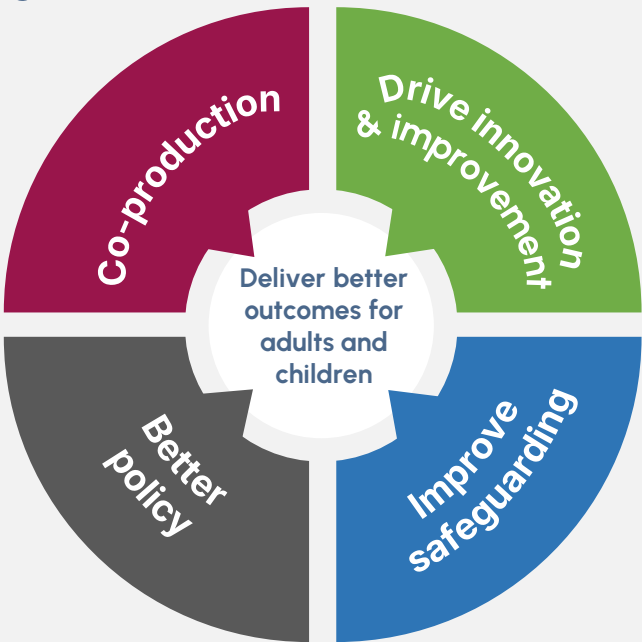


Mission

To support best practice, shape policy and raise awareness of the importance of social care, working together.

Our strategic objectives

- 1 Embed co-production and the voice of people with lived experience in the design and delivery of care and support services, policy and research.
- 2 Drive innovation and improvement in social care.
- 3 Influence and support implementation and delivery of better policy.
- 4 Improve safeguarding skills, knowledge and practice.



Who we are and what we do

Our four main offers are:



SCIE Consultancy

Your not-for-profit partner, working with you to identify and implement improvements.



SCIE Insights

Research, evidence and policy insights to drive improvements and innovation.



SCIE Training

Bespoke online or face-to-face learning and development including safeguarding, co-production, and strengths-based approaches.



SCIE Resources

Guidance and tools to support best practice, co-production and innovation.

From over 20 years' experience, we bring a wealth of trusted, evidence-based expertise to work collaboratively to help transform care. Our staff – former practitioners in social care, researchers, experts in training – bring immense depth of expertise and passion for the cause, based on frontline work, using the best available knowledge and evidence about what works in practice.

We translate this into expert advice, guidance and resources, that we share through support, partnerships and collaboration across social care, health and housing. As we are not-for-profit, our income goes towards improving social care.

Our Impact

We measure our impact across our consultancy, insights, training and resources offers in a number of ways. Here is a snapshot of our impact:

93.8%

of respondents said that using SCIE services had given them a clearer understanding of best practice

89.3%

of respondents said that using SCIE services had improved their confidence and skills on relevant topic/s

80.3%

of respondents said that using SCIE services had helped them improve their services or practice

Sector reach

Through our consultancy, insights, training, and resources we support all those who work in social care, from local authorities to care providers, government departments and NHS bodies to a wide range of social care practitioners.



3.9m
website visits



129k
subscribers to our newsletter SCIELine



>8.5k
training delegates across all courses



5.5k
e-Learning course delegates



86.3k
social media followers



378k
sector contacts

Our achievements

Reflections on our achievements

Across the year we have been involved in numerous projects that highlight not only the impact of our work but also demonstrate our commitment to partnership and collaboration and the use of co-production throughout our work. In the following pages we spotlight key projects and their outcomes based on our consultancy, insights, training, and resources.

Before that, we wanted to reflect on what you have told us in our first ever Insight Improvement survey and to highlight two projects in more detail that demonstrate our mission and vision in action.

Highlights include:

Our new Insight Improvement survey

In January 2025 we launched our Insight Improvement Survey to gather valuable insights from across social care to shape our services, ensuring we help you improve social care and people's lives as effectively as possible. We are very grateful to have had over 2,000 responses, providing important learning for our future work



90.4%

respondents said that SCIE understands and cares about the need to make a difference to the lives of people who draw on care

84.8%

said our guidance helps them see the bigger picture of their work

84.7%

agreed that our collaboration with a wide range of social care partners brings useful experience and connections

“ SCIE staff are knowledgeable and experienced in social care ”

82.6% respondents either strongly agreed or agreed

“ I trust SCIE because they reinvest their funding to improve social care rather than make profit ”

70.9% respondents either strongly agreed or agreed

Our insights

Reflections on the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF) programme

What we did

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)'s ARF aims to improve the quality and accessibility of adult social care across England, by supporting innovation and scaling, and kickstarting a change in services to support unpaid carers.



SCIE has provided hands-on support to the ARF projects. We have been working with local areas to transform care by helping to identify issues and challenges, galvanising co-production and ensuring people who need care and unpaid carers are at the heart of projects.

We have also been encouraging local authorities to benefit from **valuable shared learnings and peer-to-peer support by facilitating communities of practice** across similar themes.

The ARF is a learning programme, so SCIE has an essential role in gathering evidence to understand how to successfully tackle the barriers to scaling up innovation in social care, alongside the ARF's national evaluation partner, Ipsos.

Reflecting on the past 12 months gives us an opportunity to review what we have learnt, what has worked best and most effectively. Some of the common challenges and requirements for future working have been identified on the following page.

Our insights



Co-production and stakeholder engagement – the need to improve understanding of what meaningful co-production and effective stakeholder engagement is and how to embed it in design onwards.



Procurement practices – feedback indicated that some ICS areas managed procurement smoothly, while others faced significant challenges, highlighting the need for more streamlined and consistent procurement practices.



Project planning and strategic leadership – increasing both hard (specific technical knowledge and training) and soft (leadership, communication, and time management) project management skills is essential.



Digital interoperability Issues – integrating new digital solutions with existing systems posed significant challenges. Ensuring interoperability and managing data migration from legacy systems is critical to avoid data loss or corruption.



Sustainability and impact evaluation – helping projects develop clear theories of change and impact frameworks is a priority to ensure success.



Collaboration and partnership building – promoting collaboration across local authorities and ICS consortia is vital in reducing duplication and enhancing learning.

What's next?

The ARF was a one-of-a-kind, government fund to kick start and scale up innovations in social care with a particular focus around supporting unpaid carers.

The learnings emerging from SCIE's work, and the evaluation learnings that will be made public in Ipsos' findings, will be invaluable to the wider sector in helping understand what works and what doesn't work in supporting innovation in social care. Evidence and learning on unpaid carers and innovation at this scale in adult social care provides huge potential so we urge that all learnings are used to drive forward future improvement.

Our insights

“ SCIE has really listened to the concerns of LAs and the guidance has been responsive and prompt to that feedback. ”

SCIE stakeholder

“ SCIE’s involvement has been invaluable in ensuring the success of this initiative. ”

ARF project lead

“ What the [ARF] did was offer us an opportunity to work out of our typical systems, where there may be more restrictions to being innovative. ”

Service Director for Adult Social Care,
Cambridgeshire Council

We are looking forward to continuing to support the momentum created by the ARF over the coming months.

Please visit our [dedicated ARF webpage](#) for a wide range of case studies and ongoing updates on our activity and the support being provided.



Our Insights

Reflections on 'Ignite: Commissioning for the future' training programme

In recognition of the critical role adult social care commissioners play, and because of the diverse and complex set of responsibilities they undertake, the DHSC invested in **'Ignite: Commissioning for the future'**, the first national training programme with a practical focus aimed at senior local authority commissioners of adult social care.

A DHSC review into commissioning capabilities within the sector identified a significant gap around support to develop commissioners' strategic leadership abilities and a lack of peer learning opportunities. SCIE was commissioned, in partnership with EY and West Midlands ADASS, to design and deliver a 'Commissioning for the future' pilot training programme. Launched in Spring 2024, the pilot was for approximately 150 senior adult social care commissioners in England.

What we did

SCIE worked with EY and ADASS to design and deliver a 'first of its kind' national training programme to deliver transformational change in adult social care commissioning. The programme was designed to support commissioners to strengthen the use of strategic, preventative, and outcomes-based market shaping approaches.

SCIE supported with the design and delivery of the three learning modules and four masterclasses. We drew on our **extensive** knowledge of adult social care and commissioning, leveraging our networks to bring in aspirational people who could lead the discussion with senior commissioners.

This included experts from Community Catalysts, Think Local Act Personal and IMPACT (Improving Adult Care Together) to support the following masterclasses:

- 1 Equity, Diversion and Inclusion (EDI)
- 2 Co-production
- 3 Asset-based commissioning
- 4 Sustaining and scaling innovation



Impact and outcomes

A transformational training programme was developed, designed to lead the future direction in commissioning adult social care, and our wide-reaching communications ensured full take-up.

“

SCIE has been
absolutely invaluable with
the Ignite programme.

”

DHSC stakeholder

Spotlight on impact



SCIE Consultancy

Your not-for-profit partner, working with you to identify and implement improvements.

During 24/25 SCIE worked with over 20 clients across our local improvement, safeguarding and DHSC-funded work and launched partnerships with sector stakeholders including [Agilisys](#).

“ Using SCIE consultancy on our co-production improvement journey has ensured the principles are embedded in our approach to service re-design. ”

Head of Adult Services, local authority

Spotlighted project:

Sandwell Council – Digital Maturity Programme



Aims

- Enhance digital awareness: develop a deeper understanding of digital maturity within the authority and promote best digital practices.
- Identify digital opportunities: identify key digital opportunities for improvement.
- Champion digital working: foster a culture of digital working and explore the potential of new digital tools to improve service delivery.
- Share best practices: facilitate knowledge exchange and learning by sharing best practices and promoting successful digital initiatives.
- Drive improvement: support local development and implement digital strategies to drive improvement and transformation.

Activities

- We provided a 'critical friend' role in reviewing the Sandwell Draft Digital Strategy, offering constructive feedback and identifying opportunities for further development.
- We focused on identification of the supporting engagement, communications, support, training and guidance elements and approaches required to support the successful introduction and acceptance of new technology into team practice.
- Having identified potential barriers to digital adoption, we developed strategies to address resistance to change.
- We encouraged co-production and user involvement in shaping digital solutions to enhance buy-in and effectiveness.
- We created opportunities for Sandwell Digital Pioneers to engage in community of practice events with colleagues from other Digital Maturity Pathfinder Authorities and wider networks.
- We promoted knowledge-sharing and the exchange of best practices, lessons learned, and innovative approaches to digital adoption.
- To assess the effectiveness of engagement, training, and adoption strategies, we suggested qualitative and quantitative measures.



Impact and outcomes

With the support of SCIE, the tools are in place for the implementation and further development of the council's digital strategy which includes piloting key projects and establishing a staff champions group, which will provide a solid base for further innovation.

Feedback from our interviews and workshops provided valuable insights into how important culture change was to sustainable change.



Until today's session, I didn't know that 90% of these things [tech] existed.

Team member



For a while, there has been a feeling of disconnect between the strategy and how we support frontline practitioners to embed tech within their practice. Attending these (SCIE) workshops today has really helped me to understand the type of support that would enable them (staff) to confidently embed tech within the roles.



Sandwell stakeholder



Digital means more autonomy, this is more person-centred.



Sandwell stakeholder

Spotlight on impact



SCIE Insights

Research, evidence and policy insights to drive improvements and innovation.

We set a priority to speak with an authoritative voice on how we improve people's experiences and outcomes of social care, providing sector leadership and a strong policy perspective.

SCIE stands ready to work with the new Government and the Casey Commission and other political parties to help establish a long term and sustainable future that will be to the benefit of all citizens and the economy.

CARETECH CHARTER



Spotlighted project:

CareTech Charter launch at Political Party Conferences

SCIE, in partnership with Policy Connect, proudly launched the CareTech Charter across the political party conferences in the autumn of 2024.

Aims

- Support innovation to improve lives, asking MPs, Councillors and stakeholders to sign up to some practical recommendations to ensure digital technology is embedded in local and national infrastructure.

We hope this Charter will stand the test of time and serve as a guiding light for the government and a useful asset for opposition parties in catalysing positive change.

“ They [SCIE] bring us expertise of a wide range of partners including people with lived experience. When I was talking to them it was like I was speaking to all the people they had spoken to.



Policy maker

Activities

- We hosted panel discussions with Policy Connect at each party conference reflecting upon the vitality of innovation in driving the new Government's missions and creating a sustainable sector able to meet the needs of a 21st century population.
- The promotion of the CareTech Charter was central to each event.
- All panel discussions were well attended and gained engagement across all of SCIE's social media channels and externally through media exposure in the trade press.



Impact and outcomes

New Members of Parliament, including Ben Coleman, Anna Dixon, Freddie van Mierlo and Steff Aquarone, have participated in our panel discussions reflecting upon the vitality of innovation in driving the new government's missions and creating a sustainable sector able to meet the needs of a 21st century population.

Over 130 media mentions (including national media) have been secured since the launch of the CareTech Charter.

This has contributed to a growing profile for SCIE including the participation of our CEO, Kathryn Marsden OBE, in the Health and Social Care Committee in January 2025.

“

As [SCIE] research tends to be current, it enables us to identify best practice and how we can shape our services to ensure we are performing to a high standard for the people we support

”

Social worker,
local authority

Spotlight on impact



SCIE Training

Bespoke online or face-to-face learning and development including safeguarding, co-production, strengths-based approaches.

During 24/25 SCIE trained over 3,000 people across our safeguarding, co-production and strengths-based approaches training offers.

“ I am so pleased with the content that was covered today and the team have been really complimentary about the impact of it on them and how they will use it in their working day. ”

Insight Improvement
Survey feedback

“ The structure and content have been informative and provided a depth and breadth of information that will support all of our journeys in future work, in whatever way we choose to use the knowledge we have all gained. ”

Insight Improvement
Survey feedback

Spotlighted project:



Lancashire County Council – embedding strengths-based practice

Aims

- Create the right cultures and behaviours, consistently and across the county, that, along with structural and operational changes, will promote independence and community-based support and improve outcomes for residents across Lancashire.
- Support the workforce to develop the required knowledge, skills and capacity to embed a strengths-based approach into every part of adult social care.

Activities

- SCIE was commissioned to deliver a programme of leadership development and training to embed the culture change needed to address challenges within adult social care.
- Our training combined online facilitated sessions and in-person events.
- We provided tailored support across three cohorts including Strengths-Based Practice Champions, Social Work and Practice Teams and Wider Adult Social Care Teams and support functions.



Impact and outcomes

Over 800 adult social care professionals participated in the training.

We surveyed participants post training, and 100% of respondents said that the training met their expectations, their knowledge had improved, they felt able to apply what they had learned to practice and would recommend it to others.

Qualitative feedback provided insights into how important the engagement and commitment of the participants were, coupled with the identification of any corresponding barriers that needed to be addressed.



Fabulous, made me think about my practice.



Training delegate



Best SBA training ever.



Training delegate



Without access to the information provided, I would have not gained the skills and knowledge required to meet the demands of my job and general professional development.



Social worker, local authority

Spotlight on impact



SCIE Resources

Guidance and tools to support best practice, co-production and innovation.

We have launched a wide range of resources over the last year including [co-production impact](#) and [housing toolkits](#), a Care Equity evidence hub prototype,

[Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards tools](#), and 'Get me to hospital' and '[Tackling inequalities in care for people with learning disabilities and autistic people](#)' guidance.

Spotlighted project:

Co-production impact tool

Aims

- Support groups and organisations to assess and report on the impacts of co-production.
- Help address a gap in co-production impact assessment.
- Be relevant and align with local authorities' needs.
- Ensure accessibility for the range of audiences.



This looks like a very useful resource to measure the impact for people of our developing Co-production strategy.

Director of Adult Services,
local authority



Activity

In April 2024 we published a new [co-production impact resource](#), building on the findings of recently published research projects including '[Developing our understanding of the difference co-production makes in social care](#)' and '[Findings from SCIE's Co-production Survey 2023](#)' which highlighted the need to better understand and report on the impacts of co-production.

We know that demonstrating longer-term impact from co-production and the benefit of investment in it is key to driving changes at a strategic level. We therefore included step-by-step guidance on how to best develop a tailored co-production impact framework.



Impact and outcomes

This resource has provided:

- an improved approach to impact assessment and guidance on developing co-production impact frameworks
- a tailored co-production impact framework that speaks to local needs
- a better understanding of co-production impact and outcomes.

“ Reporting impact has always been challenging in general and I think (this resource is) a great help, it will help to organise the process and collect what is needed. ”

Manager, charity supporting people with learning disabilities

“ The approach is very clear and accessible. ”

“ It feels like such a needed resource, and I think will prove really useful for lots of organisations—I know I’ve already shared it with a few people! ”

“ [A] go to website to understand best practice. ”

Quality Assurance Manager,
local authority

Work and partner with us

A person with lived experience who was involved with co-producing a Co-production Toolkit shared the following feedback:

“ I wanted to say thank you once again for all the training and development over the past months. I have thoroughly enjoyed it and will be putting it to good use! Farewell for now but not forever. – SCIE is the limit! ”

→ This report is just a small sample of our impact.

“ There are brilliant examples of good practice and innovation from around the country. Harnessing and scaling innovation and improvement is crucial to navigating the current challenges and future-proofing the sector. ”

Kathryn Marsden OBE, CEO, SCIE



Want to collaborate or partner with us?

As we are not-for-profit, our consultancy and training services offer exceptional value for money, and our income goes towards improving social care. We have deep experience of bringing partners together throughout social care to collaborate, innovate and improve lives (e.g. national government, DHSC, local authorities, care providers, academics, foundations).

With social value having a higher emphasis in procurement laws along with the need of collaboration, we are perfectly positioned to partner with you. As well as **commissioning us directly**, you could alternatively work with us via the following **frameworks**:



Crown
Commercial
Service

CCS G Cloud - for digital
focused projects



ESPO and MCF3 - via
our partnership with
PPL



CCS Research and
Insights - a framework
in which we partner with
SQW



Bloom - direct
awards

This list is correct at time of publication; however, we are actively increasing our framework presence.

If you're wondering how to engage with any of the areas explored above, and would like advice, guidance or simply an exploratory chat on these or any other challenges you face, and how we can support you, please contact us at sciebusdevelopmentteam@scie.org.uk

For up-to-date information on the social care sector, details of knowledge, guidance and training opportunities, sign up to our newsletter SCIELine.



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If you are interested in finding out more about our **charitable activities**, please visit our website:

www.scie.org.uk/support-us



social care
institute for excellence

Please get in touch to find out more:



sciebusdevelopmentteam@scie.org.uk



For up-to-date information on the social care sector, details of knowledge, guidance and training opportunities, sign up to our newsletter SCIELine:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/register/>



SCIE hosts Think Local Act Personal (TLAP):

<https://thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/about-us/>



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