

Bath and North East Somerset co-production review

Challenge

Bath and North East Somerset Council's (B&NES) Adult Social Care Directorate is committed to strengthening co-production and engagement with residents, carers, and communities. They wanted an external perspective to help reflect on their strengths, understand where they could go further, and support continued improvement.



B&NES invited the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to review their co-production practice and to help them create space for honest conversation, shared learning, and reflection beyond their local community of practice.

Project overview

In autumn 2026, B&NES worked with SCIE to shape the review approach. Early conversations focused on the scope of the work and the best ways to involve staff. This included developing a staff survey, agreeing starter questions for discussions, and sharing relevant documents with the SCIE team. From the outset, the review opened useful conversations about what co-production means and how it is experienced by staff in different roles.

Key project activity

B&NES staff from across adult social care and commissioning teams met with SCIE to talk about what co-production meant for them in practice. This included commissioning and operational staff at different levels of the organisation. They were encouraged to speak openly about strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. SCIE reviewed existing policies and procedures and shared a survey to gather wider feedback. SCIE then produced a draft report, which colleagues from both teams worked through together before the review was finalised in early 2026.

SCIE support

SCIE played an important role in supporting the review, bringing practical resources, independent insight and constructive challenge, while keeping the work collaborative and values-led, helping B&NES think through how co-production could be

strengthened in everyday practice. The approach was collaborative, supportive, and grounded in shared values.

“I really valued SCIE’s approach to the review. They brought openness, curiosity, and genuine support, creating space for an honest and thoughtful conversation about what co-production means in practice. My discussion with the lead reviewer felt like a meeting of shared values and a common commitment to working alongside people, residents, and communities. It was a positive and energising conversation, and one that could easily have continued for much longer than the time allowed.”

Natalia Lachkou, Assistant Director of Commissioning, Bath and North East Somerset Council

Emerging learning and insights

The review highlighted several strengths and areas for further development:

- a culture of openness and reflection
- an organisational commitment to co-production
- examples of strong practice already in place such as their commissioning model where people with lived experience are considered at each step
- an opportunity to bring learning together and strengthen how it is reflected in key documents
- opportunities to better understand and describe the impact of co-production
- opportunities to share good practice more widely and make the most of training and learning is clear through their regular Communities of Practice events which brings people from different teams, other partners and people with lived experience.



Emerging impact

The recommendations from the SCIE review now form an important part of the B&NES Co-production Development Plan for 2026–27. The review gave staff time to talk openly about co-production with a knowledgeable and supportive partner. It helped B&NES colleagues recognise strengths already in place, identify where practice could be strengthened, and feel encouraged to keep developing this work with residents, carers, and communities.



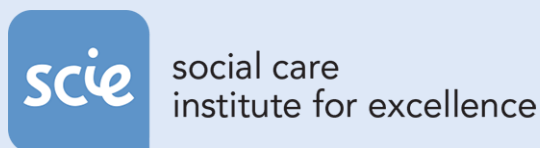


“The SCIE review gave B&NES a valuable opportunity to step back, reflect on our co-production practice and recognise the strengths already in place. It helped us think more clearly about where we can grow, how we can build on good practice, and how we can continue to strengthen co-production with residents, carers, and partners. The recommendations now give us a helpful focus for our future work.”

Callum Graham Robertson, Co-production Lead, Bath and North East Somerset Council

Contact SCIE

Co-production with people with lived experience of social care underpins and informs what we do, enabling us to recommend best practice in social care. To find out how SCIE can support you and your organisation contact us at consultancy@scie.org.uk.



About SCIE

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is an independent social care charity with deep experience of bringing partners and people with lived experience together to collaborate and innovate to improve people's lives (e.g. national government, DHSC, local authorities, care providers, academics, foundations). Working across social care, health and related services such as housing, for adults, children and families, we contribute to the development and implementation of better care, support and safeguarding at local and national level.

As we are not-for-profit, our income goes towards improving social care. We deliver four main offers, across all of which we support the DHSC annually:

- **SCIE Consultancy** – working with local and national organisations to identify and implement improvements
- **SCIE Insights** – research, evidence and policy insights to drive improvements and innovation, and influence national policy and practice
- **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.

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

Contact consultancy@scie.org.uk

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