

Creating a Together for Change Panel to Develop Coproduction in West Sussex

“Because Coproduction is not just a method - it’s a mindset. It’s about recognising that no one has all the answers, but that together, we can create something better!”

West Sussex Parent Carer Forum (WSPCF) are part of West Sussex County Council’s (WSCC) Multi-Agency Steering group. The group includes members from the Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB), Social Care, Commissioning, Early Help, Participation Team, Specialist Advisory Teaching Team, SENDIAS, Local Offer, Youth Voice and Participation Officer (SEND lead) and WSPCF.

The group works together to:

- Embed coproduction principles into all local area work
- Ensure that coproduction is considered for all aspects of our improvement work and impact is measured, and that the Steering Group has strategic oversight of the work
- Create opportunities for children and young people to be actively involved in coproduction, including through working groups, surveys, and communications.
- Create opportunities for parent carers to engage in active coproduction both at an individual and wider level and to participate in surveys, communications and working group
- Oversee the WSPCF Together for Change Panel

A new Coproduction Charter

A new [Coproduction Charter](#) was co-designed by WSPCF, Young Voices, and the Multi-Agency Steering group. WSCC are using the charter in staff training and guidance to help embed coproduction across the council.

The charter focuses on five key principles Collaboration, Learning, Empowerment, Innovation (to ensure diverse perspectives can lead to creative solutions) and Equal Footing (to address historical power imbalances, foster mutual respect). This ensures that all individuals have an equal say and influence in decision-making processes.

The Together for Change Panel

The Together for Change Panel was formed in 2024. Before this panel was created WSPCF reported that feedback was often gathered in silos, after the fact, or not at all. The panel has provided the Partnership with a ‘doing space’ where ideas are brought earlier, shaped live, and improved collaboratively. Parent carers and a mix of professionals attend including the DSCO, DCO, Health Rep, SEND and Inclusion Team Rep, Early Help Rep, Local Offer Officer.

A submission is work brought to the panel by a professional for discussion and development through coproduction with parent carers and around 67 submissions reviewed annually. Each panel is 2 ¼ hours long, with 4-5 submissions per panel. 16 panels are held across the year

Rowan Westwood, the Chief Executive Officer of WSPCF explains; *“We created the Together for Change Panel because we needed a space where coproduction could actually happen, not just be referenced. A space where professionals and parent carers could meet as equals, share ideas, challenge respectfully, and shape services together.”*

How the Panel rate their Involvement

The Star of Involvement Tool

The Star of Involvement is the tool now used for rating submissions to the panel. It was created by the panel to replace the traditional ladder of coproduction and was redesigned as a star in order to celebrate involvement at all stages on the star, so it reflects that all types of involvement are valuable.



Each submission to the Panel is scored by all attendees at the end of the session. It helps submitters understand where their work sits on the coproduction spectrum and helps them to understand how they can improve their level of involvement in any future work.

Why it matters:

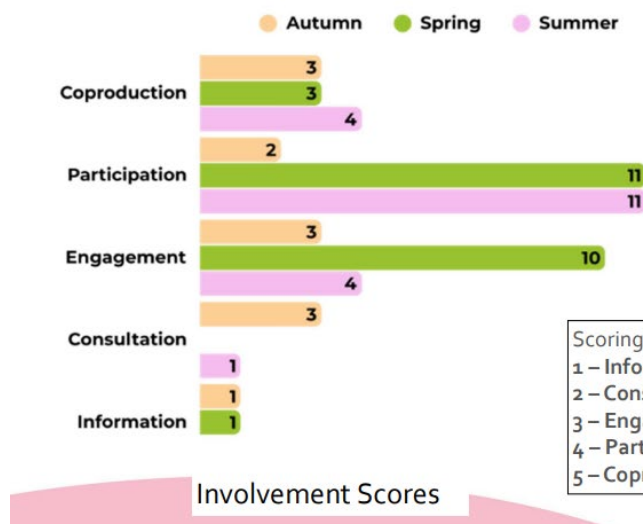
It's simple, visual, and empowering.

It helps everyone reflect on how co-produced their work really is.

It's a learning tool, not a judgement.

The diagram below shows the involvement scores in Year 1 (Sept 24 – July 25) and how they have improved each term.

Impact of the Panel – Year One

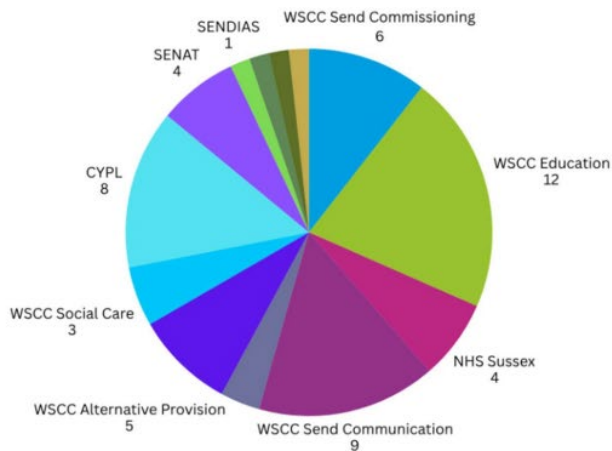


Involvement scores increased term by term:

- Autumn: 3.3
- Spring: 3.6
- Summer: 3.9

The diagram (below) shows where those submissions came from.

Impact of the Panel – Year One



What came to panel?

- Each panel is 2 ¼ hours long
- 16 panels held across the year
- 67 submissions reviewed in total

Submissions for 24-25 Academic year

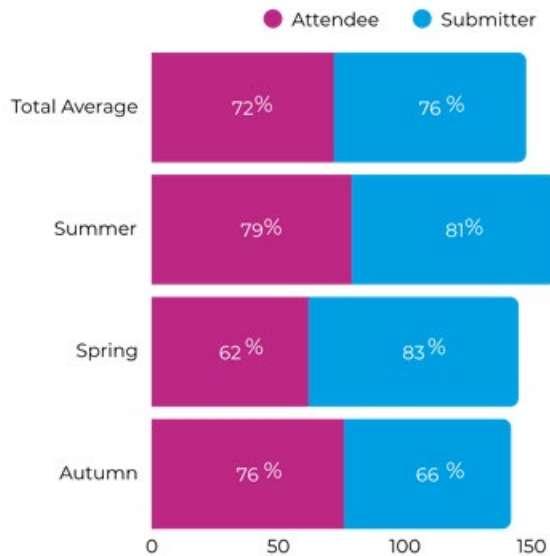
Impact of the Panel – Year One



Term	Group	Total People	Feedback Completed	Capture Rate
Autumn	Attendees	17	13	76%
Autumn	Submitters	12	8	66%
Spring	Attendees	37	23	62%
Spring	Submitters	18	15	83%
Summer	Attendees	53	41	77%
Summer	Submitters	22	18	81%

Feedback scores:

- Attendees: 9.7/10 average usefulness
- Submitters: 9.3/10 average usefulness
- 100% of respondents would attend or submit again and recommend to others



Feedback from both attendees and submitters has been overwhelmingly positive about the Panel.

One parent carer said; *“It’s great to be part of the panel and have my voice heard in shaping change for the future.” “Seeing my input genuinely shape discussions and outcomes.”*

One professional attendee said; *“Excellent to hear more about issues I don’t have personal experience with, which helps me in my role.”*

Submitters said; *“The perspective of the parent carer really influenced my decision... this shows the power and importance of the parent/carers voice.”*

“You can’t get this type of feedback anywhere else.”

“Always useful to get different ideas that I can act on to improve the piece of work.”

Why it Works

Over the past year, the Together for Change Panel has made a real difference to how local services work. The panel ensures that lived experience is central to development and improvement helping work move from “good enough” to work that truly makes an impact. It has resulted in

- Better Materials and clearer communication
- Honest Reflection and Professional Growth
- Stronger influence on future planning and decision making
- Improved systems and better collaboration between teams

WSPCF say there are a number of things which ensures the Panel works well.

These include;

- Live scoring using the Star of Involvement so everyone can see progress straight away
- Online booking system for submitters
- Clear agendas and schedules shared in advance so people know what to expect
- Immediate feedback after each session, with clear actions tracked and followed up.
- A dedicated page on the PCF’s website for the [Together For Change Panel](#) where the PCF share updates, progress and impact

A professional observer from Surrey County Council said *“It’s just it’s so lovely to observe. How constructive and calm and positive the discussions were today. I haven’t experienced anything else where it’s been like this. And you know, having the participation and engagement happening live in the session rather than saying ‘we need to go away and do that separately’, it’s so fruitful. It just makes sense.”*

Rowan from WSPCF said; *“The panel is more than a discussion space, it drives meaningful change, ensuring projects are coproduced, accessible, and responsive to the needs of SEND families across West Sussex.*

Plans for the Future

WSPCF feels positive about the Panel’s continuing to develop and embed coproduction in West Sussex.

The newly established Sussex Parent Carer Forum Collaborative (consisting of WSPCF, Brighton & Hove Parent Carer Council and East Sussex PCF) - [Sussex Parent Carer Forum Collaborative - West Sussex Parent Carer Forum](#)) are now currently trialling a Pan Sussex 'Together for Change' Panel using funding from NHS Sussex to create a space for collaborative working on Sussex-wide Health work.

All three Sussex PCFs attend along with LA and NHS professionals. Work so far includes creating a Sussex Wide Hospital Passport, engagement around a survey for Sight Checks in Special Schools and reviewing of both Annual Health Check and Right to Choose information shared with families. This Panel is still in it’s trial phase, so no reporting is ready to share at present.

The forum’s Together for Change Panel Coordinator is part- funded through the forum’s Department for Education’s Parent Participation Grant and the rest of the work is funded through the forum’s Partnership Agreement with the LA (paying 90%) and the ICB (paying 10%).

You can read more about the [Together for Change Panel](#) on West Sussex Parent Carer Forum’s website.

You can view slides from a recent [presentation](#) (Working towards Coproduction in West Sussex) about the Panel .