

# Decisions Made Together: Inclusion and Experience

Working together for a Healthier Gwent for the right care and support,  
in the right place, at the right time



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## Citizens are at the heart of everything we do!

The Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the region and improve how health and care services are delivered, by ensuring people get the right support at the right time, to suit their needs.

We believe that the work we do should be led by people living and working in the communities of Gwent and we want to create a space where we can have meaningful conversations with people, so we can work together to improve care and support.

The Regional Partnership Board has a statutory duty to develop a Gwent Population Needs Assessment (PNA) that identifies the health and social care needs of our communities, and we develop and monitor the aligning Area Plan, which outlines the actions we will take to improve health and social care support. These documents can be found on our website [Home - Gwentrbp](#)

We want to hear the voices and experiences of our citizens, so we can work together, to improve the quality and delivery of health and social care services across Gwent. We are committed to understanding the needs of our different communities and collaborating with people to build on existing practices, as well as seeking opportunities for innovation and change.

## What is Engagement, Communication and Coproduction?

**Engagement** is the active participation of stakeholders in the development of services and as partners. This group includes citizens, service users, workforce, voluntary sector, community representatives and the wider public.

**Communication** is a two-way process. It is about listening to, hearing what people are saying, and using this to shape and continuously improve.

**Coproduction** means working together. By combining efforts, everyone contributes to make things better for everyone else. Co-production enables people providing and people receiving services to share power and responsibility, and to work together in equal, reciprocal, and caring relationships.

## Our commitment to coproduction means:

- **Recognising people as assets and that they have a positive contribution to make to the design and operation of health and social care provision.**

- Supporting and empowering people to get involved with the design, delivery, and evaluation of provision.
- Empowering people to take responsibility for, and contribute to, their own well-being.
- Ensuring that practitioners work in partnership with people to achieve personal outcomes, at an individual and service level.

## Highlights of the Event

On May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, we held an exciting and thought-provoking event in Newport, focusing on people's stories and the small things that can make a big impact in people's lives. The event highlighted the importance of making decisions together and the importance of co-production, in the delivery of care and support.

Over **180** attendees joined us for the event, with a shared commitment to working together to improve health, social care, and housing support across the Gwent region.

Multi agency partners and citizens were invited, and we had guest speakers, including people who have received health and social care support for themselves or as a carer. Personal experiences were shared, highlighting where support had gone well and been helpful, but also where support and processes need to be improved, to help inform and shape future services and make a more positive impact to people's lives.



There were a variety of engaging presentations, workshops, and networking opportunities, including **30** partner information stands from across various sectors. We also discussed as part of the workshops, how we can further develop and create an inclusive environment that values diversity and promotes collaboration, to improve health and social care in Gwent.

University of South Wales students were also invited to attend and record elements of the event, as an opportunity to provide work experience and create content to include in their portfolios alongside Tom Damsell Imagery.



**“It is more constructive to talk about what we want to create, not prevent, we want wellbeing, flourishing lives, gloriously ordinary lives. A focus on people living well!” – Gwent Citizen Network Champion**

## Overview of the Event



Over **180** people attended the ***RPB Decisions Made Together: Inclusion and Experience event***. Attendees included community members, people receiving support

and their carers. We also had leads from Local Authorities, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, and Third Sector. The event highlighted the importance of citizen voice, and coproduction in the creation and delivery of services. It also showcased examples of the inspirational work taking place across Gwent through successful coproduction and how outcomes for those involved in their care and support had been improved. The event also focused on how we can improve our coproduction practices, and what citizens feel is needed to further embed this approach in everything we do, providing us with invaluable insight and direction for our next steps.

The agenda included a mix of presentations, guest speakers, workshops, and live Q&A panels from across a range of backgrounds, and services. Guest speakers included:

- **Opening Story: Why? The Opportunities and Challenges of Co-Produced Care:** Trevor Palmer – Gwent Citizen Network Member
- **The Head, Heart, and Hands of Co-Production:** Nick Andrews – Research and Practice Development Officer, Developing Evidence Enriched Practice
- **Improving Dementia Care in Gwent:** Sonya Foley, Dementia Standards Programme Lead and Dementia Experts by Experience
- **Peer Mentor Service:** Hannah Feehan – Adult Psychology Peer Mentor, Dr Jess Woolley – Peer Development Lead, Dr Shelley Mccann – Adult Psychology Peer Lead and Jen Sadler – Peer Development Team Lead
- **Co-production in Practice: Empowering Communities:** Ceri Reed – Parents Voice in Wales CIC and Dr Kavitha Pasunuru – Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Assistant Divisional Director Family and Therapies
- **Housing Support Grant (HSG):** Shelley Jones – HSG Lead, Caerphilly Council
- **Our Future, Our Voice: Babies, Children and Young People of Gwent:** Professor Tracy Daszkiewicz – Director of Public Health
- **Coproducing Advocacy in Gwent:** Chris Hooper – Facilitation and Engagement Officer and David Davies – Contract Monitoring Officer, Blaenau Gwent Council
- **Closing Remarks:** Lorraine Morgan – Gwent Citizen Network Champion



**“As a Citizen Champion of the Gwent Citizen Network, I have attended most of the RPB meetings, and I have seen a significant shift in how care and support services are being redesigned.”**

**Lorraine Morgan**

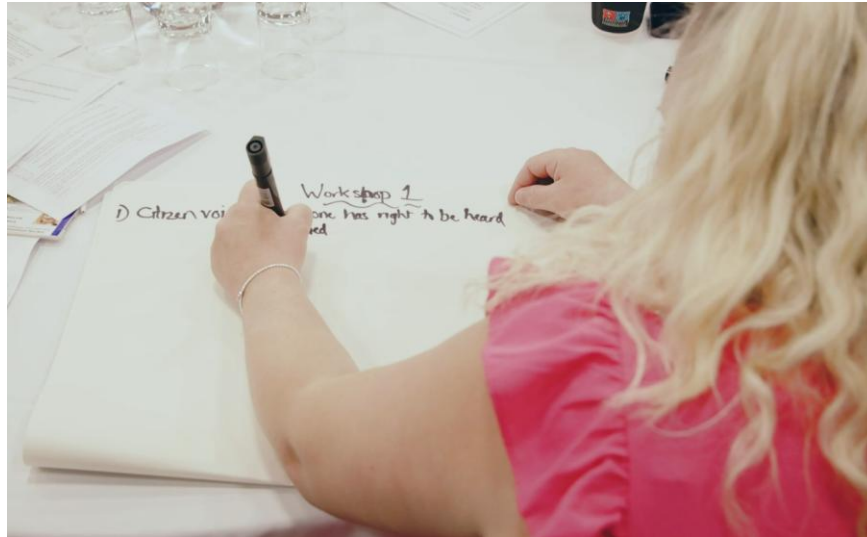
## **Workshops and Key Themes**

An important part of the event was to gain insight into what members of the community, partners and key leads felt we could do to further embed co-productive practices, into the work of the RPB and its partners. We asked a simple set of questions during a morning workshop to provide us with a starting point to set the scene for the remainder of the day. We revisited the key themes raised during the morning, within an afternoon workshop, exploring how to build on good practice and achieve our priorities to improve health and social care.

Attendees were invited to answer the following questions as part of the workshop:

- 1. What does 'citizen voice' mean to you and how can we ensure it is respected and heard by others?**
- 2. How can we develop better, more positive relationships between practitioners and the people they work with?**
- 3. What are the challenges to coproducing care and support, what does good look?**





Key themes from the responses included:

### **Relationships and Continuity:**

- Build trust and confidence and maintain relationships.
- Encourage ownership and resilience.
- Respect differing values and understand cultural differences.
- Provide a greater knowledge of support services.

### **Accessibility, Inclusivity, Diversity and Trust:**

- Reflect the diverse community we live in through participation and engagement.
- Practice empathetic and active listening.
- Use a range of different communication methods, remove barriers, and use plain language.
- Recognise the impact of early intervention.

### **Empowering and Valuing Voices:**

- Empower citizens to have a voice and view them as experts.
- Involve citizens and ensure they feel valued, promote reciprocity.
- Avoid making assumptions and be curious.
- Enable direct communication with decision-makers.
- Foster collaborative, non-judgmental, and informed approaches.

### **Leadership and Culture Change:**



- Change organisational terminology.
- Provide meaningful feedback.
- Ensure top-down commitment.
- Move away from tokenistic models and integrate co-production principles into day-to-day work and standard practice.
- Remove the layers of red tape for responsible decision-makers.
- Equate citizen voice with investment.
- Celebrate achievements, reflect on mistakes, embrace change.

## **Collaboration and Communication:**

- Prioritise and improve regular two-way communication and accessibility between services, and the public.
- Do not shy away from difficult conversations; ask questions.
- Focus on improving, not proving, be open-minded and person-centred.
- Use mindful language and avoid jargon.
- Encourage professionals to collaborate and share ideas, fostering teamwork.
- Engage with young people.
- Address digital exclusion in moving services online.

## **Flexibility and Funding:**

- Recognise that one size does not fit all; flexibility is needed.
- Address time and funding challenges, especially for smaller organisations.
- Ensure the right people are involved.
- Drive the direction of services based on input from citizens.

During the second workshop we asked the following questions:

- 1. How can we continue to build on good practice?**
- 2. What do we need to do to achieve these priorities?**
- 3. What key actions do we leave this conference with today?**



### **Learning and a Commitment to Success:**

- Regularly monitor and review our progress.
- Continue supporting and engaging the community with an inclusive, diverse approach.
- Organise in-person events, drop-ins, and roadshows.
- Create forums and listening groups for residents, build wider networks and facilitate multi-agency discussions.
- Encourage a safe environment for experimentation, fostering open and honest conversations. Acknowledge mistakes and learn.
- Make co-production a key priority across organisations and allocate enough time for meaningful involvement.

### **Resource Optimisation and Integration:**

- Pool funding resources.
- Conduct more surveys.
- Link with and integrate social services and health resources for better outcomes.
- Seek commitment from key leads.
- Allocate funding based on citizen input, focus on outcomes that matter to individuals.
- Include co-production in core training.
- Use a single system across partners.
- Create community hubs providing a range of services.

### **Good Practice, Communication and Collaboration:**

- Improve communication and transparency across organisations and with the community. Share learning, promote, and champion best practice.

- Embrace joined-up thinking and shared outcomes.
- Accountability through action.
- Taking time to plan correctly.
- Promote peer support and co-production benefits and encourage all groups and organisations to adopt co-production strategies.
- Focus on outcome-driven approaches.
- Improve signposting and simplify processes, ensure the right help and support for individuals.

## **Empowerment, Representation and Citizen Voice:**

- Increase experts by experience involvement and include citizens on all strategic partnerships.
- Empower citizens to take ownership and lead.
- Pay experts by experience for their valuable insights and address transport barriers for involvement.
- Educate and inform the public through sharing the benefits of co-production and peer support.
- Focus on citizen needs in area planning and involve both citizens and front-line staff in decision-making.
- Build on local knowledge of available resources.
- Ensure citizen representatives reflect diverse communities.

**“I believe that carers' contributions and experiences to our region are embedded in how public services think about what is important for health and social care services in Gwent. So far, I have seen a significant shift in how public servants are now perceiving what we have to say and actively listening.”**

## **Feedback and Evaluation – How can we make our events better?**

We collected feedback at the event from attendees via an event evaluation form. We wanted to know what had gone well, and how we could improve future events. This was also an opportunity for us to garner interest from those attending not already involved in our Gwent Citizen Network and citizen led groups across the RPB, to join as members going forward and widen our community reach and coproduction involvement with citizens.

Event feedback is crucial for improving future events and ensuring attendee satisfaction. analysing feedback helps improve future events and ensures a better experience for attendees.



### Key messages attendees took away from the event:

**Co-Production:** Involving and empowering citizens in shaping services leads to better outcomes.

**Improved Communication and Signposting:** Organisations need to better communicate, internally and externally. Members of the community need to be better aware of services in their area.

**Meaningful Engagement:** Prioritise meaningful engagement with a wide range of community members.

**Collaboration and Support:** Encourage collaborative working and highlight the good work that takes place.

**Addressing Challenges and Person Centred:** Learning from both successes and challenges. The power of individualised care and personal interactions.

**Budgetary Efficiency:** Focus on prevention and effective spending. Co-production maximizes resources.

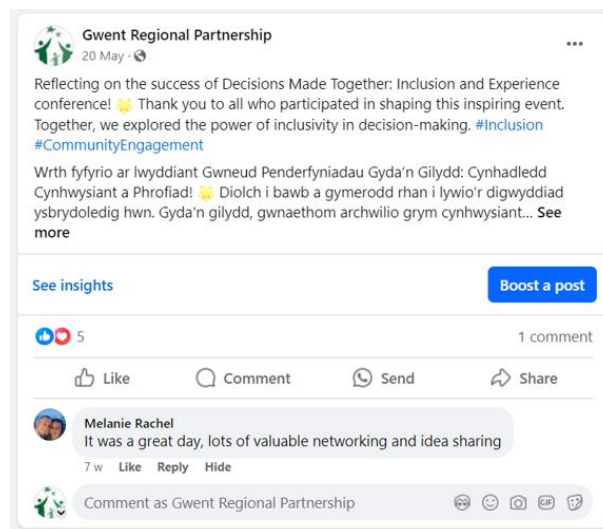
**Long-Term Impact:** Reflects on the continuity of challenges.

### How Can we Improve Future Events

1. **Event Timing and Duration:** Suggestions for a later start time to avoid traffic, shorter event duration, and more frequent breaks were mentioned.
2. **Attendee Engagement:** Attendees desired more opportunities for questions and comments after presentations, more interactive sessions, and more participant engagement activities such as graffiti walls or suggestion boxes.

3. **Communication:** There was some use of acronyms and jargon words which attendees felt should be avoided. The use of language interpreters was also suggested.
4. **Networking:** Attendees asked if we could share attendee information for future networking and asked for more time to look at our marketplace.
5. **Representation:** There was a call for more diverse attendance.
6. **Feedback and Follow-up:** Attendees wanted to be informed of actions taken following the event and desired updates on progress. They suggested a 'you said, we did' approach.
7. **Accessibility:** Suggestions were made for easy read information, and consideration for attendees with different needs such as Autism.
8. **Content:** Real-life experiences being shared was appreciated. Attendees felt that the event was informative and well organised.

**“Thank you for a thought provoking and enlightening day.” - Attendee**



**80% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the event.**

**95% of respondents would recommend the event to another person.**

## Recommendations and Next Steps

The following recommendations have been drawn from the workshops and feedback at the conference and will be highlighted at the Regional Partnership Board and strategic partnerships. This will shape the work we do moving forward and will also help us plan for future activities and events in Gwent.

1. Promote good practice of co-production, share knowledge and learning.
2. Prioritise impactful interactions and engagement with the public.
3. Ensure citizen representatives reflect diverse communities.
4. Address transport barriers for involvement and provide remuneration for involvement.
5. Continue to build on good practice and learn from both successes and challenges.
6. Improve, streamline, and maintain good regular communication and transparency across organisations and with the community.
7. Emphasise collective efforts and collaborative working.
8. Empower citizens to take ownership and lead.
9. Provide ongoing learning and training opportunities.
10. Regularly monitor and review our progress.



**We very much appreciate the help and expertise of everyone who took part in the event, and we would like to say a big thank you on behalf of the Regional Partnership Board for your valuable input.**

## **Get Involved!**

### **Gwent Citizen's Network**

The Citizens' Network is a group of people who live in Gwent who are asked to provide their views and are consulted on support provision across health and social care. This is an exciting opportunity to help shape local services and have your say about important decisions and issues in the local community. The commitment is low, you will simply be invited take part in virtual and in person meetings and online engagement such as surveys



or feedback on reports and assessments. You can choose which activities you want to take part in. Citizens' Network members also receive newsletters on a regular basis to keep them updated.

## **Making A Difference**

Understanding residents' views means that we are better able to target resources and develop services that meet the needs of local people. The purpose of the network is to find out what residents think about local issues and services and support them to get involved in the work of the Gwent RPB. This helps us do the right things and feeds directly into policy and decision-making processes. Feedback from the Network is reported to key leads and partners in the RPB including Local Authority councillors, to help them make better informed decisions to improve the lives of people across the region.

## **Other Ways to Share Your Views**

The Citizens' Network is just one method we use to better understand the views of residents across Gwent. We will continue to listen to people's views through a range of ways, including online consultation, paper surveys and through enabling public participation in meetings, events, and engagement opportunities.

## **Would you like to Join Us?**

To become a network member, you must be a resident of Gwent, and be over 16 years old. If you would like to join, please contact us at [CitizensPanel@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:CitizensPanel@torfaen.gov.uk)