

Kent and Medway Learning Disability and Autism Strategy *'From 1000 silos of awesome to a shared vision and strategy'*.

Key Learning

- Start coproduction with open questions.
- Involve everyone who's life might be impacted in any way - day to day or work life.
- Having an external organisation ask the questions can help people share confidently and support with independent oversight, especially if there are tensions between different groups.
- Be honest about the remit and clear about what can be done.
- Take an iterative approach. Listen, write, check and adjust. Keep involving people as the work is implemented. Coproduction isn't a one-off.

Who was involved

The upcoming formation of the Integrated Care System and Board presented an opportunity. The local system lead for learning disabilities, was aware that there were pockets of good work going on around the area. For instance, some work would be taking place in one locality and not another, some in social care but not health, and some in children's but not adults. Nobody was taking or leading a system wide approach.

Consultation had happened, but true coproduction was not felt as really happening, especially by the people with lived experience.

NDTi, (a not-for-profit organisation working on development and change to increase social inclusion for excluded groups) were invited to support the development of a vision and strategy, bringing expertise in including different voices, and creating positive change. It was essential that there was buy-in from across all parts of the system. Everyone needed to feel they had a part to play and were heard.

Project summary

A strategic group was brought together with people in roles relating to all the dimensions and groups needed for an all-age, integrated, system wide learning disability and autism strategy. They helped to gather the documentary evidence of all the different projects and work relating to these groups of people from across the area.

What followed was a significant period of listening to people - those with lived experience as well as those in working roles, across health, social care and different types of roles and settings.

The questions that were asked at this point were key:

- What makes a good life for you?
- What helps you achieve this?
- What gets in the way?

At the same time as the engagement, a neurodiversity board was formed, alongside the strategy group. This group of people with lived experience of learning disabilities, autism and both, were key to checking the strategy as it was developed, and essential to be part of the ICS going forward, to oversee the implementation of the plans. They all have strong leadership skills, understand the system, and have paid roles to ensure that leadership includes the voice of lived experience.

The challenges and solutions

After theming the findings and the messages from all the different groups, NDTi pulled together a list of outcomes that matter to people, and a set of actions that can enable those things. This was developed in a Vision for Change, with outcomes and mechanism and signs of change.

The Outcome

It was noticed that some things shone out as core principles for implementing the strategy. These included:

- Coproduction
- Inclusion and diversity
- Strong leadership

These were the threads that needed to be woven through any action plan coming from the strategy.