

Suffolk SEND Co-Production Charter 2026



Co-Production

Co-Production allows us all to work together to achieve a common goal. It also powers our approach to communication and engagement and means as a partnership we understand and support children and young people so they feel included, supported and fulfilled to live their best lives.

We are always looking to embed participation and co-production in the heart of everything we do. Building trusted relationships between families and SEND professionals means services based on inclusivity, mutual understanding and accessibility. Everyone should feel they belong in the SEND conversation and can make a real difference. We view co-production as a powerful, collaborative process where different stakeholders, including those with lived experience, work together as equal partners to improve outcomes.

During a workshop event we have identified six building blocks to help us shape an effective approach. This is also underpinned by the SENDIASS and Healthwatch commitment to co-production. This approach was developed through community engagement and its network of co-production ambassadors. This Charter sets out our commitment to Co-Production and what it means to us as a partnership in Suffolk matched to the six building blocks.

The Participation Ladder

The participation ladder shows the different ways parents can be involved in shaping SEND services. Co-production is the strongest form, where parents and professionals work together as equal partners to design and improve support. However, there are times when other approaches—like sharing feedback, filling in surveys, or taking part in consultations—are more suitable. These help us hear from a wider range of families or gather views on specific ideas. Using all parts of the ladder means we can involve parents in the right way at the right time.



Families and practitioners work jointly from the beginning on the development of decisions that are made in an equal relationship.


Families work together with practitioners in strategic and decision-making groups to decide what should happen

Families are asked what they think about particular developments or plans.

Families are provided with information from the services about what is happening.

Families do not know who to contact and have no working relationship with the services.


What does co-production mean to us in Suffolk?



All views are valuable

We strive to create equal partnerships, where both adults and children are heard and believe everyone deserves a chance to contribute


EQUALITY



We are not judgemental

We create positive and worthwhile opportunities to co-produce. We develop safe spaces, where there is trust that all will be valued

RESPECT



People feel rewarded

People should get something back for what they put in and have adequate time to respond. It should be recognised they belong and are making a difference

MUTUAL BENEFIT

- We consistently recognise that we share values and are equal partners
- We strive to create equal partnerships, where both adults and children can take part
- We avoid labels, titles and hierarchy
- We take the time to develop relationships first, before co-producing
- We hear when people challenge us and take responsibility
- We develop safe spaces, where there is trust that all will be valued and heard
- We are consistent, predictable and reliable in our approach
- We take time to listen, even when it challenges or is uncomfortable
- We listen with empathy and show understanding and compassion for feelings and responses
- We are always kind, compassionate and caring for one another
- We have agreed and clear boundaries
- We set out clear expectations from the start, built on trust
- We are continually honest, open and our decision-making has integrity
- We are working together to find a solution for everyone
- We keep authentic continuous dialogue going - not just to tick a box
- We create positive and worthwhile opportunities to co-produce
- We foster a sense of ownership, working together to build solutions
- We always 'make it real'
- We celebrate success
- We are innovative and creative
- We trust that something can and will change
- We develop solutions and outcomes that people who were engaged in the process recognise

What does co-production mean to us in Suffolk?



Language we all understand

We create a welcoming environment for everyone and use language and formats we can all understand and access

ACCESSIBILITY

- We are committed to 'making more than one version' to meet different needs
- We use words which are accessible and inclusive
- We are open, transparent and share a balanced perspective
- We use shared, agreed language and terminology
- We outline clear roles and responsibilities and are honest about finance, resource and time available



Opinions from many sources

We avoid labels, titles and hierarchy and encourage collaboration from a range of people from different backgrounds

DIVERSITY

- We improve knowledge, understanding a variety of perspectives, through collaboration
- We engage with groups that are currently under-represented
- We avoid labels, titles and hierarchy



Learn from our experience

We are always reviewing our approach and learn from our experiences through positive engagement and analytics

EVALUATION

- We make decisions only when people have been listened to and heard
- We will have clear, tangible outcomes from the engagement - we check we are doing it right
- We don't accept things staying the same if they aren't working – we look for ways to make things better
- We always follow up and involve all in this
- We always communicate what difference something has made and close the feedback loop
- We acknowledge where changes have been influential