



# GET INVOLVED

A shared approach to  
adult social care in  
Solihull

May 2022

## Introduction

People's everyday experiences of adult social care services can be used to make them better, so we want individuals, groups and communities to get involved. Not just to talk and listen to but so that everyone who wants to can play a more active role in helping shape the future of adult social care services in Solihull.

Adult social care is support to those with physical or learning disabilities, or physical or mental conditions to promote their independence, resilience, ability to make choices and wellbeing. This can be in different settings such as a care home or provided at home. It includes day activities, care breaks, changes to houses to make them easier to live in and financial help. In this plan we will set out how such involvement will lead to better results for local people.

## Involvement

Solihull Council's vision is:

*'Where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and more prosperous through growth that creates opportunities for all'*

This sits alongside our adult social care vision of:

*'Making a difference in the right way, every day'*

Better involvement of local people in how we work is one of our priorities. Involving local people and groups in designing and improving services gives us all a deeper understanding of how well our services are working and what needs to improve.

We already ensure that people are part of our service development work through focus groups, workshops, surveys and interviews. Participation from NHS and other partners and voluntary organisations has also been part of our activities. The Workforce Plan, Carers Strategy, Day Opportunities Strategy, Mental Health contract tender process, Solihull Home First and the Home Assistance Policy are some of our recent projects that have benefitted from involvement. We also have an active Carers Partnership Board. We are looking to widen our activities further with a Learning and Disability Partnership, an Autism Partnership Board and a Citizens' Panel.

We set out our yearly activities in the Local Account. The Local Account is an annual report which describes what Solihull's Adult Care and Support Directorate is doing to help improve the lives of people living with care and support needs and how well it is performing, along with areas where we are seeking to improve further

We already work together as a respectful, diverse, compassionate, and inclusive group of staff and managers – and by bringing in voices and knowledge from outside the Council we can build on that history to make the joint work we do even stronger.

Involvement brings:

- Meaningful and positive aims and outcomes
- People and partners becoming more valued in planning, development and delivery
- More understanding, skills and views added to our work
- A wider sense of ownership

Our aims include:

- To set out a clear involvement and co-production approach
- Recruit a panel that can be invited to participate in different involvement activities
- Being realistic as to how we involve. For example, not saying 'equal partners' when it is important to recognise the contributors will be involved in different ways at different times. 'Contributors' recognises the differing but invaluable roles everyone can play.
- Clarity on the 'rules of engagement', so people find it easy to understand how to contribute and get involved.
- Tiered involvement that depends on what the aims of the engagement are, including co-production

### How we will involve

Involvement Method	Appropriate For	Volume of Residents Engaged	Commitment from Residents
<b>Simple Surveys</b>	Broad brush understanding of simple questions. Some limited contextual feedback.	High	Low – one off and usually 10-15 minutes to complete
<b>Consultation Exercises</b>	Large scale engagement in policy change. Formal consultations will normally consist of a document to read and then specific questions on that document. This should still be at the point where things could change.	Medium – likely to be focused at those impacted by the specific change	Low – 2-3 hours to read and comment
<b>Focus Groups</b>	Getting more detailed understanding of a small number of specific questions.	Low – 6-10 per group	Low – one-off 1-2 hour meeting
<b>Working Groups</b>	Using a small pool of individuals to focus on a specific question or issue as a task and finish group.	Low – 3-6 per group	Medium – dependent on the topic this may be monthly / fortnightly meetings over a period of up to 6 months, plus some work between.
<b>Co-production</b>	Policy and service development where we want people to work with us on the design.	Low – max of 3 per policy / service	High – Service design to implementation can take over a year – need to be able to give that level of commitment.

### Who we will involve

We will have a large group of participants with a range of experience and knowledge who can come on board at the right stage, quickly.

The participants will be widespread not just in terms of the population but also in representing autism, carers, people with mental ill health, disabled people, people with learning disabilities, older people and more.

We will recruit these through a campaign and word-of-mouth amongst existing contacts.

Understanding their role, the sometimes-complex nature of decision-making and council roles, the extent of involvement and how contributions will be used is important and so needs to be explained clearly from the start, to prevent misunderstandings or challenges later.

We will engage people on topics relevant to their life experience, as indicated by them – for example those with experience as carers will be engaged when seeking to make changes, or to understand the effectiveness of services and the advice given to support their role.

Our existing voluntary and NHS partners, who have their own involvement panels, will also be invited where required and can help us source some expert membership.

## Supporting involvement

- Giving the right training in terms of role and expectations
- Ensuring the right support is available
- Making everything accessible
- Deciding at the start how we will work together towards a successful outcome
- Having clear terms of involvement and making sure everyone uses them
- Guarantee everyone is respected and has an equal say
- Having a clear set of values, aims and objectives around an involvement activity
- Everyone understanding how local government decision-making works – and that the elected members have the final say based on officers' recommendations
- Giving feedback to show how being involved has helped now and can do so in future – show how what people do and say makes them feel included
- Plain English throughout, different language formats, large print and if using acronyms, explain them
- And most of all – make it welcoming and enjoyable

To understand the roles of everyone involved, we have come up with some simple rules:

### THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

RESIDENTS ON THE PANEL WILL:

- BRING THEIR LIVED EXPERIENCES AND KNOWLEDGE
- BE ENCOURAGED TO GIVE FEEDBACK, SUGGESTIONS AND TO WORK TO DEVELOP PLANS
- WORK ALONGSIDE OFFICERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO HELP SHAPE PRACTICE

THE COUNCIL WILL:

- SEEK TIMELY ENGAGEMENT AND BE CLEAR ABOUT PURPOSE, OUTCOMES SOUGHT, AND WHAT WE WILL DO WITH THE INFORMATION WE GET
- ADVISE ON ANY PARAMETERS THAT NEED TO GOVERN THE WORK
- BE THE ULTIMATE DECISION MAKER AS THE ACCOUNTABLE BODY

## Outcomes of involvement

Greater involvement will improve adult social care services and help people stay independent and healthy as long as possible.

Involvement makes the best use of people's knowledge and expertise, delivers better results for people who use services, builds stronger communities and a greater sense of citizenship. For organisations it strengthens partnerships and helps them with their own services and gets better value for public funds by spending more wisely on the right services.

We will share with everyone involved how they made a difference – moving from 'you said – we did' to 'we said – we did' – leading to shared pride in a new way of working together. We will stick to the values of being ambitious, open, honest and keeping our promises.

### What Happens Next

If you are interested in getting more involved, please contact [getinvolved@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:getinvolved@solihull.gov.uk) and we will arrange some time to meet you.