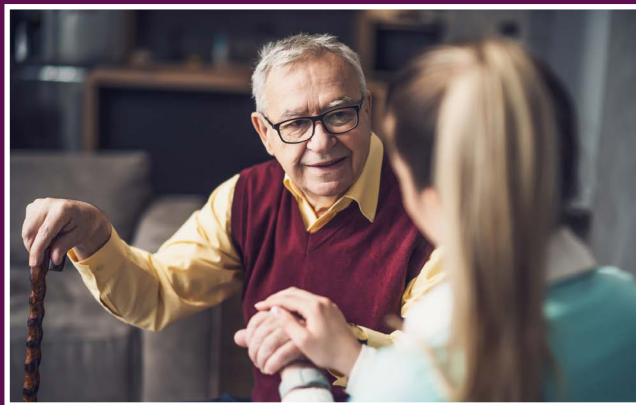




Engaging for Better Services

Key Highlights - Adult Social Care Engagement Report 2024-25





Key Highlights from our Engagement in 2024-25

We are committed to putting the voice of people who draw on services at the centre of everything we do and understand the important role coproduction plays in helping us to understand the needs and aspirations of individuals and specific communities. Including the voice of people with lived experience is a key part of our commissioning cycle.

This report is intended to provide an overview and key highlights of the coproduction and engagement taking place with our adult social care stakeholders, people who draw on services and borough residents during 2024–25.

We have included examples to showcase the sorts of engagement that the directorate undertakes, both to report back to those involved, and we hope, to encourage more residents and people who draw on services to become involved in the future.

Health and Social Care Co-production Group

Highlights

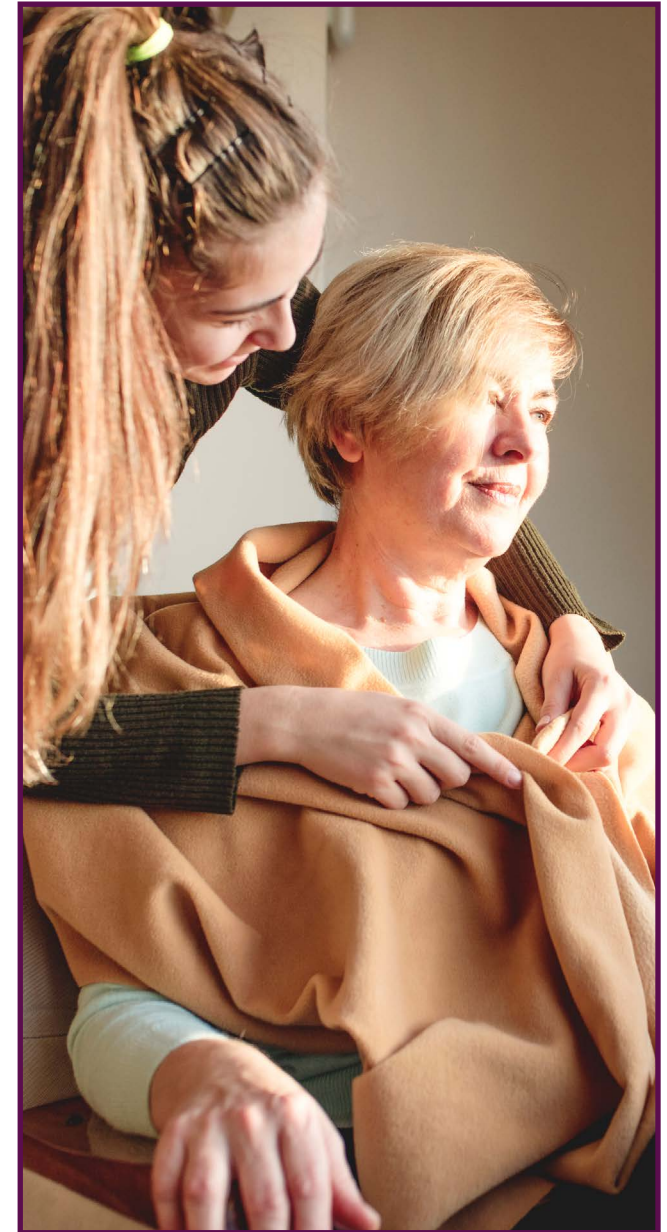
- Group has met 4 times in 2024-25.
- We have welcomed 7 new members.
- Members are working together to produce a Richmond Co-production Charter.
- Members bring knowledge and experience from other community groups and board memberships; including the Parent Carer Forum, Learning Disability Partnership Board, Carers Strategy Reference Group, and Ruils Transport and Mobility Forum and Your Say Group.

Margaret Dangoor, chair says:

"It is very encouraging that the council are investing in dedicated support to grow the group and are committed to, and focused on, community participation in co-production. Effective public involvement takes time and long-term commitment and effort. It is positive to see the group is moving forward and recent meetings have been lively and involving."

Mary McNulty, former carer and long-standing group member, on involvement in the AI Calling project:

"I really value being part of the group and am glad to have been involved in this project. It is really important to have people who might receive the bot calls involved early, to help think through how people might react to a bot and raise queries to help improve the scripting. The facilitator was helpful, and I had confidence that the team had already thought through many of the potential issues before they came to us. Please do continue to ask us to get involved!"



People with Lived Experience on Boards

- Learning Disabilities Partnership Board
- Transitions Improvement Board
- Parent Carer Forum
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Carers Strategy Reference Group
- Mental Health Project Insight Board

Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

Prisca Cox has long been an active member of groups engaging with the local authority as her daughter has grown up, from the Parent Carers Forum, the Post 16 Maze group at Ruils (a charity supporting disabled people to live independently) and now to the Board. She told us:

"It has been really helpful to me to have regular insight and updates on the services available over the years as council members and budgets change; and to better understand the challenges that the local authority faces. I like to be able to disseminate this information to support other parents in my group of friends and to also bring their challenges to the Board. It is equally as helpful for the Board to hear about our 'on the ground' lived experience of both caring for our growing offspring and providing feedback on the services that they draw on. I see this as a part of holding those providers to account in their services. The agendas are useful and well thought through and it is really encouraging that the Board also has 3 members with learning disabilities who are assisted by Mencap to bring to each meeting agenda items that are of importance to them."

Health and Wellbeing Board

Sara Challice, a former carer, member of the Richmond Health and Wellbeing Board and champion of Carers told us:

"It is vital that boards also include residents with lived experience of services; and I truly feel that there should be a carer representative on ALL Health and Wellbeing boards. I see our role as educational, as well as 'fresh eyes' on proposals. Until you have been a carer, it is hard to understand the emotional and physical cost we endure, and the impact it has on your life. I share my personal experience, and the challenges of other

carers, to help inform board members, as well as those bringing the reports and papers to the meetings. This helps to improve local support and services. Prior to the meetings, I collaborate with the CEO of the Carers Centre and commissioners, to ensure all questions are noted, and ready for the board. Due to limited time during the meetings, and often having many questions, I will follow up with the relevant party of the papers, and ensure they receive all questions, copying in others, to ensure answers are received on the questions raised. This has often included having external meetings to provide more insight. During my time as the Carer Representative, I have noticed positive changes, and an improvement in the consideration for carers."

Transitions Improvement Board

Sue Robson, a parent and carer, who also runs the Bright Futures – SEND Transitions service at Ruils (a charity supporting disabled people to live independently) told us:

"It is great to have parents on the Board who have been through the processes the Board is designed to improve and holds accountability for. The specific challenges of our disabled and special needs 16–25 years olds are real and it is very encouraging that, since the board was set up, we have seen much greater recognition by the council, and other charity partners, that these challenges are a thing. It is clear that all the partners on the Board are committed to getting the process right and I welcome the honesty of partners on what they have achieved and the opportunity to help set priorities. I come to the Board as a parent who has not long completed this journey, to ask the questions that other parents share with me and to pay forward some of what I gained through the support of other parents and professionals along the way. In turn, having that important overview of the whole transitions process enables me to support others."

Engaging with Carers

Carers Online Assessment Pilot

An AI-powered assessment and support solution for carers delivered through the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF), led by Richmond and Wandsworth on behalf of 6 SW London boroughs.

- The aim of the ARF fund is to address barriers to adopting innovative practices, build capability and capacity in adult social care.
- The discovery phase featured in depth interviews with carers recruited through the 6 Carer Centres.
- The research found that unpaid carers do not think of themselves as 'carers' and often do not seek support until they reach 'crisis point'.

The **key insight** emerging about the support experience of carers finding themselves in this situation was:

When accessing support, carers value guided conversations; to help identify their needs; to help navigate support options; to acknowledge and empathise.

Carers told us:

- There is no one place to find all support information, local organisations and activities.
- Conversations bring out things you wouldn't think of yourself.
- Most people need help navigating support systems.
- Prompts make it easier to complete an assessment.
- Communication is a must – we must be able to ask questions and receive answers
- There is lots of support available [but it] needs discovery - I don't know what I don't know.

The importance of conversations led us to focus our exploration of online carers assessment solutions on artificial intelligence - specifically conversational AI.

To rapidly gain learning we selected a 6-month pilot in Richmond and Wandsworth to test how effective and acceptable AI-led self-service Carers Assessments are to unpaid carers seeking support.

Our pilot solution will combine:

- A conversation tool trained to lead assessments by prompting and guiding;
- A knowledge base of local and national support organisations and activities; and
- Immediate support recommendations based on each individual's caring role and circumstances.

The AI pilot solution is currently in development and carers who participated in the discovery research have been invited to help test the solution which their observations have helped to design.

Once the test findings are consolidated, for the next phase, we will make the service available to all unpaid carers in Richmond and Wandsworth for approx. 3 months. Learnings throughout will inform the wider project.

Engaging with Providers

Transforming Social Care programme: Market Sustainability and Commissioning

The benefits of engaging with Care Homes during this ongoing project have already been numerous, including highlighting:

- 1 Previously unrecognised social value being delivered by some homes including:
 - a) Offering training in dementia care to local families and carers.
 - b) Being strong influencers in building integration with the local community:
 - linking with nurseries, artists, musicians, schools, voluntary sector etc coming in to visit,
 - welcoming in local lonely people for a cup of tea, whenever they want,
 - inviting neighbours in for special events.
 - c) Offering use of bathrooms for local residents who are no longer able to use their own.
 - d) Provision of respite for those caring for loved ones with Dementia / multiple morbidities living locally, while their loved ones join in activities or lunch at the home.
 - e) Community creation - connecting with neighbours on a community WhatsApp group, offering support and seeking help when needed, e.g. when a care home resident escaped and was found by a community group member.
- 2 New commissioning opportunities in social value aspects of the witnessed best practices across other care homes in the borough; provision of respite; training in the community.
- 3 Highlighting issues and concerns not previously raised in Provider Forums.

Transforming Social Care programme: Workforce - Social Care Provider workforce

Structured workshops designed to capture the voice of the provider workforce were run. Sessions focused on idea generation, issue collation, and collective problem-solving:

1 Provider Forum - Workshop 1

Collaborative brainstorming session with care providers to identify 10 Tangible Actions that could be tackled together as a sector.

Helped prioritise shared challenges and build consensus on realistic, co-delivered solutions.

2 Provider Forum - Workshop 2

Focused specifically on the most pressing issues around recruitment and retention in both care home and domiciliary care settings.

Gathered provider views on root causes, existing barriers, and tested possible workforce solutions.

3 Provider Forum - Workshop 3

Aimed at exploring how to better promote social care as a career pathway.

Included discussions on improving the visibility of the sector, and the marketing of available training opportunities.

4 Provider Forum - Workshop 4

Engaged providers on building robust workforce development plans within their organisations.

Encouraged best practice sharing and helped providers align their internal workforce strategy with broader sector ambitions.

Local and National User Surveys

The latest national user and carer survey data (2023-4) indicates that Richmond Council is top in London for:

- The proportion of people who use services who have control over their daily life (57th in England).
- Social care-related quality of life (56th in England)
- The percentage of carers who use services who find it easy to find information about support (10th in England).
- The percentage of carers who report they have been included or consulted in discussion about the person they care for (18th in England).

We also survey all residents who have contact with our frontline Social Work and Occupational Therapy teams.

This is what they tell us:

- 65% of people answering a survey tell us they are satisfied with the care and support they receive.
- 78% of respondents told us that they rated their interaction with us as good or very good overall.
- 72% of respondents told us that they now feel more independent as a result of their interaction with us.

Comments included:

First contact team: Excellent, empathetic, caring and gentle conversationalist.

Locality teams: A beautiful interaction with myself and both my parents. Explaining slowly to my mum.

Locality teams: I find everything about social care daunting because of what it means for my position in life, but everyone has been very sensitive to this when I have raised my concerns so I can't think of much to change.

Locality teams: Everything was handled amazingly.

Occupational therapy: This was the most comprehensive assessment of my lack of mobility conducted by someone with excellent communication skills.

Occupational therapy: You go above and beyond.

Reviews team: I now have peace of mind, assurances that my mother is getting the right care in the right place.

Reviews team: I couldn't have asked for a better care review experience.

Hospital team: Excellent service.

Local and National User Surveys

Unpaid Carers Surveys

71% of carers report they found it easy to find information about care and support themselves (top in London, 10th in England). Those who did not most often cited lack of time as an unpaid carer.

We continue to work with Richmond Carers Hub to increase opportunities for breaks from caring through peer support sessions, dementia carers café and other opportunities for social activities.

Comments from carers included:

- He was very helpful with lots of information and where to get help when required. Very satisfied.
- My experience was very good. The young lady who visited my husband and I was very nice and explained how things work and gave support to contact Age UK etc.

Safeguarding - Feedback Calls to those involved

- 99% of people said that the information was clear and easy to understand.
- 100% said that they felt safer following the process.

Comments included:

- Very positive outcome for mum, it was brilliant, issue identified, spoke to the home, spoke to family, explained process and gave me space to raise other issues. The home has actioned it and mum is now safer. It was brilliant.

We actively identify learning from the feedback

we receive and are taking action to ensure the safeguarding pathway is explained better. We also take time to reflect on the traumatic process more and provide further support to families to prepare them for the process.



What people using our services say

"Thank you so much for the time you have taken to put the things into place you have in order to confirm my dad can be transferred single handed. This means so much."

"I wanted to thank you again for all your efforts. I'm so very grateful for all your help, I was really at my wits end until you got involved."

"Thank you for your kind and easy going way of teaching, for your emotional and moral support, and for always treating me with such respect. You made learning these skills feel so simple and natural."

"This was the most comprehensive assessment of my lack of mobility conducted by someone with excellent communication skills."

"I'm full of gratitude for all the support you have provided in making sure Richard and his family have the best quality of life possible. It was always such a pleasure to see you, and nothing ever seemed like too much trouble."

"Excellent, empathetic, caring and gentle conversationalist"

Learning from Complaints

In Richmond Adult Social Care, we are committed to putting the voice of people who draw on services at the centre of everything we do and promoting a learning culture that uses feedback from people to gain and share valuable learning. Through our learning framework we incorporate feedback from complaints and compliments into our ways of working and embed learning from quality assurance activity and case file audits.

Over 2024 -25 there were no significant themes to the teams that had received complaints, but the most raised principal issue of complaint was 'delays'.

Example of action taken on delays in service:

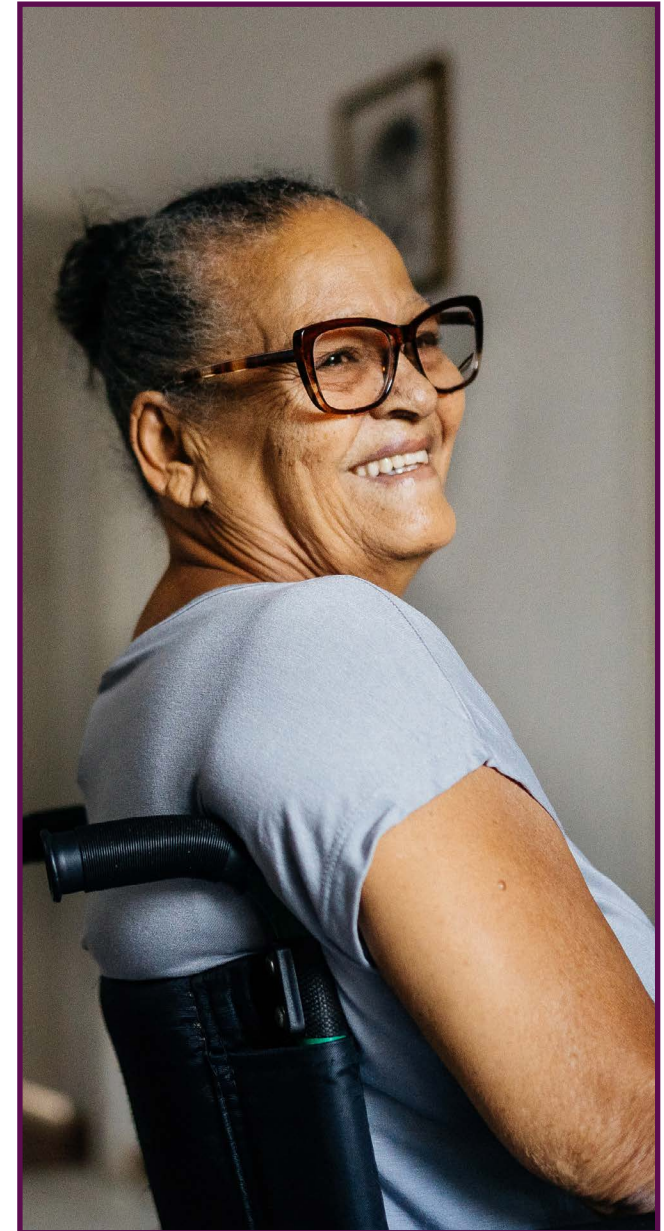
- Further training provided on risk and priority referrals to prevent delays.

Examples of action taken on communication:

- Team reminded of the needs of neurodivergent residents and the need to consider how they are communicated with
- Team reminded of the importance of openly sharing information relating to the Council's complaints process.
- Team reminded of the importance of professional communication and our commitment to deliver a high level of customer service irrespective of the situation.

Other examples of actions taken:

- Team provided with further training to review communication framework around Financial Assessments.
- Team reminded of the importance of clarifying, as early as possible, any issues around rent and benefits costs, to ensure it is part of all discussions when supporting young people to transition from Childrens to Adults Services.



What Has Been Achieved

- The Health and Social Care Co-Production group welcomed 7 new members, and together members are co-designing a Co-production Charter for Richmond.
- More Boards have welcomed people with lived experience as members. This increases our ability to include the voice of residents and carers in the work that we do and recognises the positive impact of including their skills and experience.
- Concentrated engagement with carers has opened an opportunity to provide a support service through further developing an early pilot project using conversational AI.
- The Market Sustainability and Commissioning workstream's engagement with care home providers has highlighted multiple previously unrecognised social value benefits to the local community, which can inform future contract specifications.
- The national user and carer survey showed that Richmond is top in London in several metrics including social care-related quality of life and the percentage of carers who report they have been included in discussions about the person they care for.
- In local surveys, 78% of respondents rated their interaction with Adult Social Care as good or very good and 72% of respondents reported feeling more independent as a result of their interaction with us.

