

Practice guide

SEND & Alternative Provision

Co-production - The Changemakers, Bury

Background, purpose and rationale

The Changemakers is a youth voice group for young people with additional needs and disabilities aged 11-25. It was created as a working group to feed into Bury's SEND Improvement and Assurance Board following a 2024 Area SEND Ofsted/ Care Quality Commission inspection.

The Changemakers meet fortnightly during term time and have reward trips during the school holidays. Their primary role is to hold the SEND Improvement and Assurance board accountable and assist in Bury's improvement journey, and they do so by reading monthly reports, attending board meetings, and providing regular feedback to the board through the SEND Ambassador and Inclusion Advocate. Members of the board are also invited to attend Changemakers meetings.

The Changemakers sit alongside Bury's formal statutory democratic youth approach to voice, Youth Cabinet, and members of both groups are invited to attend Full Cabinet meetings with elected members. Changemakers are encouraged to attend Youth Cabinet, to participate and share their views on wider issues and systems/structures affecting young people. This ensures a wide variety of participation and engagement and that the voices of our young people with SEND are heard.

What we did to improve children's experiences

We made sure that SEND voices were heard by developing SEND voice networks, making sure there were SEND voices in our co-production approaches and raising the profile of co-production across the partnership. In doing so, the voices of our service users are heard and embedded in practice, policy and strategy to drive improvement and better meet need. The Changemakers is an example of this current practice to specifically impact and feed into the SEND Improvement and Assurance Board to making a difference and bring young people to the table.

Recent and current projects:

- Circles of influence is an annual youth-led conference designed by young people, for young people. Professionals that attend are asked to make pledges to the young people on the day
- We have a co-production promise which involves being equal partners, informing young people of the offer, creating good relationships and provide skills and training.

- Recruitment and selection toolkit: A cohort of over 30 young people have been trained in R&S, including some of our Changemakers, and they have created a variety of different approaches to ensure meaningful involvement in R&S processes
- Training was delivered by young people to professionals on how to meaningfully engage and to truly listen to them
- Changemakers are currently involved in the process of developing training for school staff
- We created the co-production kite mark which is a way to encourage co-production and involvement of young people within services; they're awarded bronze, silver or gold
- Bury Changemakers contributed to the creation of our 2025-2028 SEND strategy over a few months, which was then taken to a group of young people in our co-production day.
- 'You said, we are doing,' is a document that keeps track of young people's questions

What was the impact?

- All our SEND groups complete quarterly health and wellbeing check-ins, as well as a 'how am I feeling' check-in at the start and end of each session. These are used to determine topics that may need covering in sessions as well as how their attendance in group may be affecting their health and wellbeing.
- Anonymous surveys are sent out once a quarter. Young people co-produce the termly scheme of work and sessions to ensure need and wants are met and appropriate topic/issues included for discussion.
- Increased profile of co-production, specifically for SEND young people, across the board and the wider partnership. This ultimately improves the lives of young people by enabling them to feel involved and listened to for the first time.

Resources

[PPT Slides](#)

Contact us for resources as the outcome has been a process involving young people to co-produce with them. We can share the approach taken, for other areas to do similarly in their Local Areas, however, the outcomes within their infrastructure and with their young people may be different.

Find out more

youthparticipation@bury.gov.uk

Scout Stirling: s.stirling@bury.gov.uk