



Co-Production & Customer Involvement Strategy 2026 - 2029

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Approved Board	Awaiting Approval- 15 th June 2026
Review Date	June 2027 (annually)
Version	2.0



1. Context & Purpose

1.1 Look Ahead first published the Customer Involvement and Co-Production Strategy back in 2019. This is the second publication and continues the work undertaken over the past six years.

1.2 The Customer Involvement and Co-Production strategy sets out our approach to customer involvement and co-production, in line with our values:

- Excellence and Innovation - We are committed to excellence in everything we do. We want our services to be the best they can be and our staff to be proud of the work they do. We are not afraid to try new things or do things differently so we can keep on improving and meeting our customers' needs. We strive for consistent high-quality across everything we do.
- Caring and Compassionate - We believe in the importance of showing care and compassion to everyone we work with: customers, colleagues and partners. We are mindful of people's experiences, backgrounds and needs and treat people as individuals with dignity and respect. We know that care and compassion helps to build connections, demonstrate empathy and improve service and customer outcomes.
- Partnership and One-Team - Our organisation is stronger, and our services better, when we work in partnership, both internally and externally. Partnership working between our staff, customers and local communities informs and influences everything we do. Whether in our care and support services or our central teams, we work together as one-team towards our common mission and goals.
- Inclusive and Trusted - We recognise, respect and celebrate differences across all Look Ahead staff, customers and partners. We believe differences in backgrounds, experiences and perspectives makes our organisation stronger, and our services better. We are trustworthy, behave with integrity and transparency and keep our promises.

2. Principles

2.1 Co-production in its purest form is an equal relationship between people who use services and the people responsible for delivering services. They work together from design to delivery, sharing strategic decision making, policy, as well as decisions about the best way to deliver services (National Co-Production Advisory Group (NCAG)).

2.2. Customers told us that good co-production means working with people, not for them. They described it as being genuinely listened to, treated with respect, and involved as equal partners from the start, not asked for views once decisions have already been made.

2.3 Good co-production feels approachable, flexible and welcoming, with space for people to share their lived experience and see it taken seriously. Customers said it works best when ideas lead to real action, feedback doesn't disappear, and they can clearly see how their voice has influenced services, decisions or opportunities.

2.4 Above all, co-production means creating the right support and matching people to opportunities that suit their interests, confidence and circumstances, so involvement feels meaningful rather than tokenistic.

2.5. The overarching strategy is underpinned by co-production values as set out in the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE) Co-Production guidance:

- Equality – Everyone has assets and something to contribute, if provided the opportunity.
- Diversity - Barriers to involvement must be recognised and proactively removed to obtain inclusion for all.
- Accessibility – Opportunities must be accessible, and customers should participate in ways that suit them best.
- Reciprocity – There should be clear responsibilities and reward/getting something back.



What co-production means to our involved customers and volunteers

3. Co-Production: the journey so far

3.1. Since the first Customer Involvement and Co-Production Strategy was published in 2019 Look Ahead has made significant progress in how customers are involved, heard and able to influence decisions. What began as a focus on awareness, consultation and participation has developed into a more structured and embedded approach to co-production across governance, quality, recruitment and service delivery.

3.2. Clear organisational mechanisms are now in place, including established customer panels, co-produced communications such as Heads Up and the Customer Annual Report, and improved transparency around performance and decision-making. Customer involvement has strengthened in recruitment, with a clear KPI, supporting tools and training, and customers are now consistently involved in senior and Board level appointments. Practical co-production initiatives have expanded significantly beyond the scope originally envisaged in 2019, including Experts by Experience training, Peer Support Volunteers and the Quality Checkers programme, supported by a dedicated co-production team that has widened participation and strengthened day-to-day practice in services. Progress has also been made in reducing barriers to involvement, with broader representation of customers, including people with learning disabilities, and more flexible ways to get involved.

3.3. However, feedback from customers and learning from delivery highlight that challenges remain. Awareness of opportunities is not yet consistent at service level; feedback loops do not always clearly demonstrate impact and consultation activity requires better coordination. Further work is also needed to strengthen co-production within learning disability services, increase the representation of young people and unsupported tenants, and improve the training and development offer for customers. The focus of this strategy is therefore on consolidating progress, strengthening consistency and quality, and ensuring co-production remains meaningful, inclusive and sustainable across the organisation.

4. Our Strategy

4.1. This strategy aims to build on the strong foundation established by the previous iterations, adopting a practical approach to co-production in strategic decision-making and service design. It acknowledges that customers may wish to participate and have an impact at various levels within the organisation. Therefore, a diverse range of engagement opportunities will be offered, ensuring that everyone can contribute in a manner that best suits their interests and capacities.

4.2. Feedback from customers directly informed the focus and priorities of this refreshed strategy. Customers told us that good co-production must be visible, accessible and action-focused, with clearer communication about opportunities and stronger feedback loops showing where their views go and what changes as a result. They emphasised the importance of being involved earlier, seeing ideas followed through, and having confidence that co-production is not tokenistic. Customers also highlighted practical barriers such as travel, health, confidence and language, and asked for better matching of people to involvement opportunities that suit their interests and circumstances. They called for clearer pathways, progression opportunities and a wider range of roles, including ambassadorial opportunities.

4.3. In response, this strategy places greater emphasis on awareness and education at service level, transparent governance and reporting, clearer routes into involvement and progression, and targeted action to reduce barriers and widen participation across all levels of the co-production ladder.

4.4. The strategy and objectives are aligned with NCAG's Co-production ladder which sets out 7 levels of involvement below:

7	Co-production	Equal relationship between customer and organisation: Co-design, deliver, and make decisions about policy and service delivery.
6	Empowerment	Celebrating and rewarding customer involvement, successes, ideas and influence.
5	Co-design	Customers involved in designing services based on their experiences and ideas. Customers have a genuine influence but are not involved in seeing it through.
4	Engagement	Customers are given opportunities to express their views and influence some decisions.
3	Consultation	Customers are asked their opinions via surveys and meetings, but they do not have the power to influence or affect change.
2	Informing	Customers receive information about the service and how they work. What decisions have been made and why.
1	Educating	Customers are helped to understand the service design and delivery and gain relevant knowledge.
0	Coercion	Customers attend events about the service as passive recipients

5. Strategic Objectives

5.1. By April 2029, we aim to:

Embed Meaningful Co-Production in Service Design, Business Development and Delivery

- Create structured opportunities for customers to influence service design and organisational development, including early involvement in planning, co-design and decision-making at service and organisational level.

Strengthen Customer Involvement in Recruitment:

Maintain the aspiration of 80% customer involvement across all recruitment levels.

Improve Awareness, Transparency and Accountability for Customer Voice

- Ensure customers can easily find, access and understand co-production opportunities, and clearly see how their involvement influences decisions, improvement and organisational change through consistent communication, transparent governance and clear feedback loops.

Champion and Empower Customers Through Recognition, Support and Progression

- Champion customer voice by recognising lived experience, celebrating achievements and providing proportionate support, training and progression opportunities to enable meaningful involvement and leadership.

Reduce Barriers and Widen Participation Across the Co-Production Ladder

- Identify and address barriers to involvement so that co-production opportunities are accessible, inclusive and representative of the diversity of customers across Look Ahead.

6. Strategy Delivery 2026 - 2029

6.1. Education - promote and publish involvement and co-production opportunities using a diverse range of channels.

By April 2029, customers and staff will understand how and where to get involved in co-production, with clear, supported routes into meaningful involvement.

We will do this by:

- Updating job descriptions, onboarding, and induction materials to reflect roles and responsibilities in promoting and delivering the strategy and setting the culture by January 2027.
- Maintaining a Customer Communication Plan that provides up-to-date information and a programme of customer engagement activities throughout the life of this strategy.
- Developing and refreshing co-production communications materials across a range of channels, including online, printed and service-based communication, to raise awareness of involvement opportunities by August 2027.
- Developing a self-assessment tool to support customers to be matched to relevant co-production and volunteering opportunities by September 2027.

6.2. Informing - Keep customers updated on service changes, performance, outcomes and decisions that impact them

By April 2029, clear, accessible information enables customers to understand performance, influence improvement and hold the organisation to account.

We will do this by:

- Sharing updates from Customer Voice Groups quarterly via the website and Heads Up magazine.
- Updating the 'You Said, We Did' section of the website quarterly with changes made as a result of customer feedback.
- Refreshing the 'Our Performance' section of the website quarterly to share key performance information with customers.
- Sharing Tenant and Landlord Panel and Customer Incidents Panel minutes and action logs on the website by September 2026.
- Co-producing a special 'Customer Annual Report' edition of Heads Up with customers annually.
- Designing and displaying Quality Audit outcome posters in services following each audit by September 2026.
- Sharing TSM results annually via a dedicated page on the website and Heads Up annual report.
- Creating a Customer Feedback Flowchart and Governance Map and publishing this for staff and customers by December 2026.
- Adding a publications segment to the customer hub on the website to make policies and other key documents easily accessible to tenants by February 2027.

6.3. Consultation - Proactively engage and consult customers on a range of topics and performance against our customer promises.

By April 2029, consultation activity is purposeful and proportionate, with customer insight clearly influencing service priorities, performance improvement and organisational decision making. Successful delivery of our customer insight strategy.

We will do this by:

- Conducting annual TSM surveys and developing action plans with the Tenant and Landlord Panel, including benchmarking performance by April 2029.
- Conducting bi-annual surveys of customers living in properties managed by other landlords and support only customers, with action plans and results shared with the Tenant and Landlord Panel by April 2029.

- Conducting annual surveys of customers living in CQC registered services and creating organisational and service-specific action plans.
- Conducting annual surveys of customers living in OFSTED registered services and creating organisational and service-specific action plans.
- Creating an annual survey calendar to sequence surveys and prevent overlap and 'survey fatigue'.

6.4. Engagement - Provide a range of options to empower and enable customers express their views and opinions.

By April 2029, customers influence service delivery and improvement through a range of engagement opportunities that lead to visible change.

We will do this by:

- Consulting customers during each Quality Audit and feeding insights into customer intelligence reporting.
- Embedding complaints case management satisfaction surveys by April 2027.
- Embedding repairs satisfaction surveys by April 2027.
- Conducting annual surveys of customers and volunteers involved in co-production and volunteering opportunities.

6.5. Co-Design - Develop opportunities to involve customers in the design and delivery of services, performance, and staff recruitment and development.

By April 2029, customers actively shape services, policies and business development, influencing decisions from design through to delivery.

We will do this by:

- Holding Tenant and Landlord Panel meetings four times a year.
- Holding Customer Incidents Panel meetings at least three times a year.
- Engaging BOSS Builders in developing and rolling out the new support approach and system by August 2026.
- Reviewing and refreshing the customer question bank in line with Look Ahead's values and recent involvement in recruitment by April 2029.
- Working with customers to review and re-establish the Quality Checkers programme by June 2026.

- Maintaining a commitment to 80% of recruitment having customer involvement and reducing reliance on the question bank through more creative approaches by April 2029.
- Establishing a new Customer Policy Group to review and consult on policies regularly by June 2026.
- Ensuring customer voice is present in all service design, tender and bid activity by April 2029.
- Running structured customer feedback sessions each year to inform service design, bids and improvement by April 2029.

6.6. Empowerment - Champion and empower our customers, recognising their skills and celebrating their achievements and success.

By April 2029, customers feel recognised, supported and encouraged to grow through involvement opportunities that reflect their aspirations.

We will do this by:

- Reviewing the customer reward policy on a bi-annual basis.
- Developing and delivering a customer support and training package for involvement in audits, recruitment, forums, and panels by April 2028.
- Exploring training partnerships with external and corporate partners to enhance training and skills opportunities by April 2028.
- Sharing customer stories regularly via the website and Heads Up magazine.
- Establishing a coaching and mentoring offer for panel co-chairs and emerging customer leaders by April 2029.
- Exploring apprenticeship, trainee and internal employment opportunities for people with lived experience by April 2029.
- Formalising progression pathways across co-production, volunteering, paid project roles and employment by April 2029.
- Creating new Ambassador roles where customers can represent lived experience locally and organisationally by October 2027.
- Ensuring that customers voices are present in all fundraising applications and projects by April 2029.
- Holding a customer celebration event by April 2029.

6.7. Co-Production - Cultivate and engender practical co-production initiatives at a strategic, service design and operational levels.

By April 2029, co production is demonstrably embedded within core organisational processes and service delivery.

We will do this by:

- Enabling customers to deliver or co-deliver 'Experts by Experience' training.
- Training and placing Peer Support Volunteers to work in services.
- Digitalising assessment, support, risk planning, and outcomes via the Better Outcomes Support and Services project.
- Utilising Nourish to capture and report on local co-production and engagement activity by April 2029.
- Involving Customer Quality Checkers in audits alongside the quality and H&S teams.
- Establishing a Co-Production Impact Log for all panels and activities to demonstrate where customers have directly influenced decisions, improvements or outcomes by April 2027.
- Piloting local co-production plans aligned with organisational objectives and developing service-specific goals at a local level by April 2027.
- Recruiting a customer co-chair for the Tenant and Landlord Panel by September 2027.
- Producing twice-yearly impact reports to share key insights from customers across co-production and engagement.
- Providing annual reporting to customers, SLT and Board on the progress of this strategy.

6.8. Inclusion - Develop strategies to mitigate barriers to involvement and co-production at all levels of the involvement ladder.

By April 2029, customer involvement and co-production opportunities reflect the diversity of Look Ahead's customer base.

We will do this by:

- Working with the Managing Director of Learning Disability and Autism and customers to engage those with learning disabilities and create a targeted action plan by April 2027.
- Offering a range of survey formats, including face-to-face and Easy Read, to ensure broader participation by April 2029.
- Working with the Head of Services (YP) to develop specific strategies to engage young people and children in co-production by April 2027.
- Working with the Director of Housing and Customer Services to ensure unsupported customers voices are represented at an organisational level by April 2027.

7. Measuring success

7.1. Success will be measured through a set of key deliverables and performance indicators that demonstrate both the scale and impact of customer involvement and co-production.

These include:

- 80% of all staff recruitment to include meaningful customer involvement
- At least 40% of Quality Audits and/or Health & Safety checks each year to include a Customer Quality Checker
- 100% of Stage 1 complainants offered the opportunity to provide satisfaction feedback
- Feedback and reviews sought on at least 30% of completed repair jobs (separate to contractor surveys)
- 85% of agreed Peer Support Volunteer activity commitments fulfilled
- Recruitment and training of at least 10 active Customer Quality Checkers
- Appointment of a Tenant and Landlord Panel Co-Chair
- Co-production of four editions of Heads Up annually with the customer editorial group
- Annual publication of TSM results on the website, alongside a co-produced Customer Annual Report edition of Heads Up
- Quarterly refresh of website performance information, including KPI performance, "You Said, We Did" updates and panel activity
- A minimum of two customer business development focus groups held each year
- Delivery of at least four Experts by Experience (EBE) sessions annually
- Production and launch of a co-production and engagement governance impact map, showing how customer voice shapes the organisation
- Publication of an Easy Read version of the strategy and regular progress reports

8. Delivering the strategy

8.1. The Executive Director of Group Operations & Customer Experience and the Head of Co-Production & Customer Insight are responsible for overall delivery. This will be achieved in collaboration with directorate and business leads across the organisation.

8.2. Progress against the strategic action plan will be monitored and reported to Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Board to ensure oversight and accountability.

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8.4 Delivery of the strategy is dependent on a number of key factors, including:

- Availability of the co-production budget
- Delivery of the Better Outcomes Support and Services (BOSS) project
- Effective partnership working with external organisations

8.5. The strategy will be delivered alongside the Customer Insight Strategy to ensure a joined-up approach between insight, engagement and co-production.

9. Review and Monitoring

9.1. Our strategic action plan not exhaustive and will continue to evolve.

9.2. A formal review of the strategy will take place within 12 months of implementation to reflect learning from delivery, changes in the operating environment, and feedback from customers and colleagues.

9.3. Ongoing monitoring will ensure that the strategy remains responsive, with progress and impact regularly assessed and used to inform continuous improvement.

10. Detailed Strategic Actions

10.1. The strategic actions underpinning the strategy are a combination of existing approaches, improvements or new initiatives. They are indicated as follows: Existing – E | Improvement – I | New – N. It should be noted that some of the new initiatives have been developed ahead of the strategy refresh.

Objective	Action	Code
Education	Update job descriptions, onboarding, and induction materials to reflect roles and responsibilities in promoting and delivering the strategy and setting the culture.	E
	Maintain a Customer Communication Plan that provides up-to-date information and a programme of customer engagement activities	E

Objective	Action	Code
Education	Develop multiple education channels (online, printed materials, and through everyday service delivery) to raise awareness and understanding of involvement opportunities.	I
	Develop a self-assessment tool to support customers to be matched to relevant co-production and volunteering opportunities.	N
Informing	Share updates from Customer Voice Groups quarterly via the website and Heads Up magazine.	N
	Update the 'You Said, We Did' section of the website quarterly with changes made as a result of customer feedback.	E
	Refresh the 'Our Performance' section of the website quarterly to share key performance information with customers.	E
	Share Tenant and Landlord Panel and Customer Incidents Panel minutes and action logs on the website.	N
	Co-produce a special 'Customer Annual Report' edition of Heads Up with customers.	E
	Design and display Quality Audit outcome posters in services following each audit.	I
	Share TSM results annually via a dedicated page on the website and Heads Up annual report.	I

Objective	Action	Code
Informing	Create a Customer Feedback Flowchart and Governance Map to show where different types of customer insight feed into. Publish this for staff and customers.	N
	Add a publications segment to the customer hub on the website to make policies and other key documents easily accessible to customers.	I
Consultation	Conduct annual TSM surveys and develop action plans with the Tenant and Landlord Panel. Benchmark performance against other organisations.	E
	Conduct bi-annual surveys of customers living in properties managed by other landlords and support only customers. Create action plans and share results with the Tenant and Landlord Panel.	I
	Conduct annual surveys of customers living in CQC registered services and create organisational and service-specific action plans.	I
	Conduct annual surveys of customers living in OFSTED registered services and create organisational and service-specific action plans.	N
	Create an annual survey calendar that sequences the above surveys to prevent overlap and 'survey fatigue'.	N

Objective	Action	Code
Engagement	Consult customers during each Quality Audit and feed insights into customer intelligence reporting.	I
	Embed complaints case management satisfaction surveys.	I
	Embed repairs satisfaction surveys.	I
	Conduct annual surveys of customers and volunteers who get involved in volunteering or co-production opportunities with the team.	N
Co-Design	Hold Tenant and Landlord Panel meetings four times annually.	E
	Hold Customer Incidents Panel meetings at least three times annually.	N
	Engage BOSS Builders in developing and rolling out the new support approach and system.	N
	Review and refresh the customer question bank in line with Look Ahead's new values and recent involvement in recruitment.	N
	Work with customers to review and re-establish the Quality Checkers programme.	N
	Maintain commitment to 80% of recruitment having customer involvement and reduce reliance on the question bank through creative approaches. Targeted approach for corporate teams with low performance.	E

Objective	Action	Code
Empowerment	Bi-annual review of the customer reward policy for customers.	N
	Develop and deliver a customer support and training package for involvement in audits, recruitment, forums, and panels.	I
	Explore training partnerships with external and corporate partners to support an enhanced training and skills offer to customers. To be piloted with volunteers and customers engaged in co-production activity.	N
	Share customer stories regularly via the website and Heads Up magazine to showcase achievements.	N
	Establish coaching and mentoring offer for panel co-chairs and emerging customer leaders (e.g., TALP reps, Quality Checkers).	N
	Explore apprenticeship, trainee and internal employment opportunities for people with lived experience.	N
	Formalise progression pathways to provide clear information on progression opportunities across co-production, volunteering, paid project roles and employment.	N
	Create new Ambassador roles where customers can represent lived experience locally and organisationally.	N

Objective	Action	Code
Empowerment	Ensure that customers voices are present in all fundraising applications and projects.	N
	Hold a customer event within the lifecycle of this strategy.	E
Co-Production	Enable customers to deliver or co-deliver 'Experts by Experience' training.	E
	Train and place Peer Support Volunteers to work in services.	E
	Digitalise assessment, support, risk planning, and outcomes via the Better Outcomes Support and Services project, working towards a customer portal for direct input via Nourish	N
	Utilise Nourish to capture and report on local co-production and engagement activity	N
	Involve Customer Quality Checkers in audits alongside the quality and H&S teams	I
	Establish a Co-Production Impact Log for all panels and activities to demonstrate where customers have directly influenced decisions, improvements or outcomes.	N
	Pilot local co-production plans aligned with organisational objectives and develop service-specific goals around co-production at a local level.	N

Objective	Action	Code
Co-Production	Recruit a customer co-chair for the Tenant and Landlord Panel.	N
	Produce twice yearly impact reports to share key insights from customers across co-production and engagement across teams.	N
	Annual reporting to customers, SLT, Board on the progress of this strategy	I
Inclusion	Work with the Managing Director of Learning Disability and Autism and customers to engage those with learning disabilities – create a specific action plan with Heads of Service to focus on this area.	I
	Offer a range of survey formats (including face-to-face and Easy Read) to ensure broader participation.	N
	Work with the Head of Services (YP) to develop specific strategies to engage young people and children in co-production both at a service and organisational level.	N
	Work with the Director of Housing and Customer Services to ensure unsupported customers voices are represented at an organisational level.	N

