

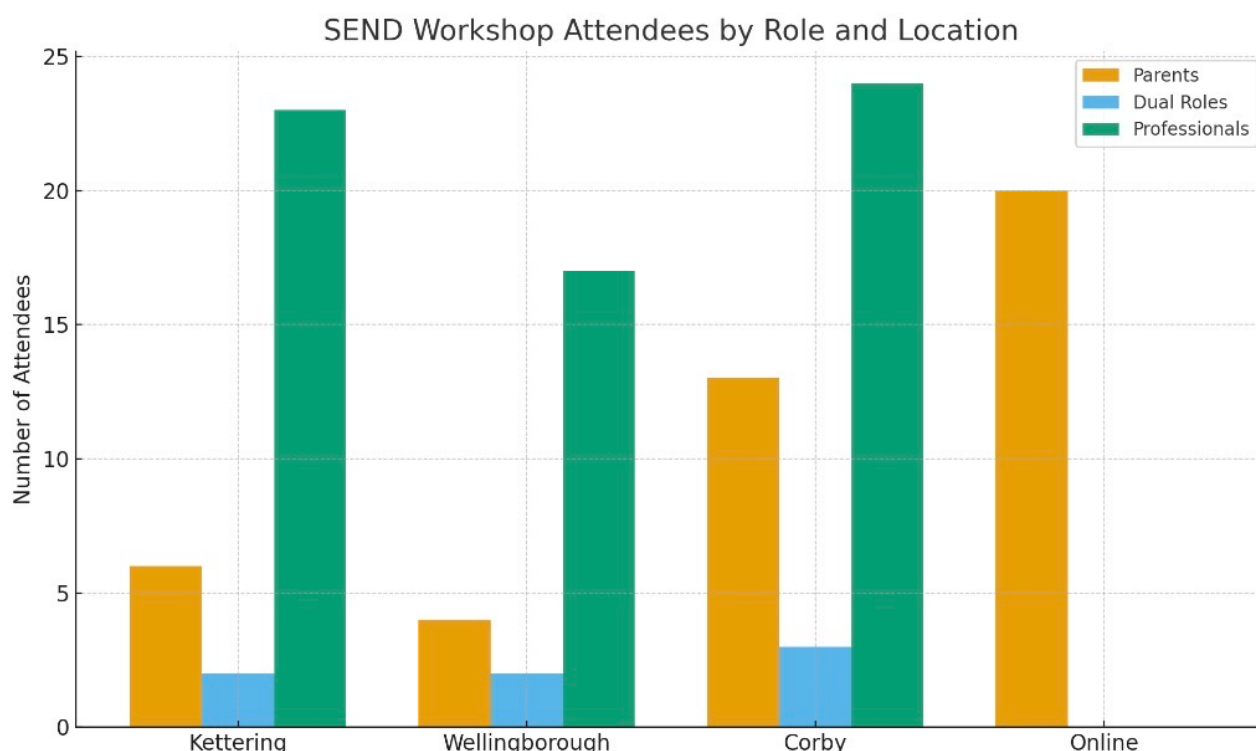


CO-PRODUCTION WORKSHOP FINDINGS

1. Introduction

Our November SEND Workshops brought parent carers, professionals, and voluntary organisations together to explore co-production in action and share the results of our annual survey.

BOOKINGS :



KETTERING 54 booked (30 parents) – 31 ATTENDEES

WELLINGBOROUGH 46 Booked (20 parents) 23 ATTENDEES

CORBY 56 BOOKED (21 parents booked) – 40 ATTENDEES

ONLINE 56 BOOKED (31 parents booked) – APPROX 20 PARENTS ATTENDED (not able to accurately recorded due to technical difficulties)

Our November SEND Workshops brought parent carers, professionals, and voluntary organisations together to explore co-production in action and share the results of our annual survey. The events were shaped by an inclusive ethos and a positive atmosphere, reflected in an excellent overall workshop rating of **4.64**, while the **Meet the Teams** sessions received a strong **4.5**. Attendance from a wide variety of professionals was especially important: SEND Advocates, Transport staff, personal assistants, support providers and other key SEND services joined parent carers, demonstrating a genuine willingness across the system to be visible, involved, and part of the solution. Families highlighted the value of face-to-face conversations, networking opportunities, and gaining a clearer picture of the different services available, noting that good conversations and the chance to speak directly with multiple teams were particular strengths.



Parent carers described the workshop content as informative, helpful and inclusive, with several expressing surprise and encouragement at some of the positive data shared, explaining that hearing the facts and figures helped them recognise improvements that can be hard to see day-to-day. Professionals likewise fed back how valuable it was to meet families in person, hear first-hand about the challenges they face, and reflect on how this insight will strengthen their own person-centred practice going forward.

2. Co-production Workshop

In total, **86 qualitative statements** were collected. These comments were analysed using thematic coding and keyword frequency methods. Five major themes emerged strongly across the dataset:

1. Authentic co-production (not performative)
2. Children and families at the centre
3. Communication, listening and shared understanding
4. Shared goals, partnership and working together
5. Issues, gaps, variation and accountability

These themes reflect both strengths within the current partnership and areas for improvement that can inform future strategy, governance, and joint working across agencies.

Overview of Themes

Theme 1: Authentic Co-production, Not Performative

Participants expressed a clear and consistent expectation that co-production must be meaningful, transparent, and genuinely influential. There was strong rejection of any practice that feels like “tokenism”, “box ticking”, or “performative engagement”.

What we heard (examples from participant comments):

- “not performative or box ticking”
- “meaningful not performative”
- “open; honest; respectful; authentic; responsive... constructive”

What this means:

Stakeholders want co-production that:

- Has **real influence on decision-making**
- Shares power and responsibility
- Shows families **how their input shapes outcomes**
- Is grounded in honesty, transparency and mutual respect

This theme indicates a readiness for a more mature form of co-production where families are not only consulted but actively involved from the earliest stages of planning, design and review.

Theme 2: Children and Families at the Centre

Many contributions referenced the principles of the Children and Families Act 2014 and highlighted the importance of maintaining children, young people, and family experience at the heart of SEND work.



Representative comments:

- “Children and families at the centre”
- “Creating opportunities for engagement for services and families”
- “In Children & Families Act 2014”

What this means:

- Co-production is seen not as an administrative requirement but as a **core legal and moral principle**.
- Families expect services to demonstrate how decisions relate to **real-world outcomes** for children and young people, not organisational processes.
- Engagement must be woven into everyday work, not confined to events or high-level meetings.

This theme aligns with the national shift toward personalisation, choice, and lived experience-led reform.

Theme 3: Communication, Listening and Shared Understanding

Feedback emphasised the need for open, honest communication and evidence that professionals are not only listening but acting on what they hear. Participants also acknowledged that understanding constraints and pressures is part of building trust.

Representative comments:

- “Professionals listening to clients and acting on it”
- “Open; honest... authentic... non-judgemental”
- “Shared understanding of constraints”

What this means:

Successful co-production depends on:

- **Two-way dialogue**, not one-way updates
- Hearing and valuing lived experience
- Providing clear explanations of decisions
- Acknowledging limitations without reducing ambition
- Ensuring families understand *why* certain actions take time

This reinforces the need for consistent communication frameworks, plain-language updates, and visible follow-through.

Theme 4: Shared Goals, Values and Working Together

Participants frequently used language centred on unity, partnership, shared goals, and collective problem-solving. Co-production was described as a joint endeavour where everyone contributes a piece of the puzzle.

Representative comments:

- “Partnership is at the heart of it”
- “Solving the puzzle together”
- “Shared goals and ideas and values”



What this means:

- The SEND community wants a common purpose that transcends agency boundaries.
- Collaborative working must be proactive, not reactive, and based on **shared values**.
- Families and professionals recognise the need for alignment across education, health, and care.

This theme provides a strong foundation for developing a shared vision and co-production charter for the local area.

Theme 5: Issues, Gaps, Variation and Accountability

Many comments explicitly described challenges such as inconsistent service provision, postcode variation, and unclear accountability across agencies. Participants highlighted the gap between *what should happen* and *what is actually happening*.

Representative comments:

- “Issue – cross-country postcode lottery”
- “Issue accountability across agencies”
- “Issue: what should happen and what is happening are 2 separate things”

What this means:

- Families notice and are affected by **inconsistency**, which undermines confidence and fairness.
- A lack of clarity around accountability makes it difficult for families and frontline professionals to know where issues should be escalated.
- The system must be clearer about roles, responsibilities, and mechanisms for resolving issues.

This theme signals the need for systemic alignment, a transparent local offer, and improved joint oversight.

Word Frequency and Language Patterns

A review of the 25 most frequent meaningful words reveals strong clustering around co-production practice, collaboration, and values:

Most common terms included:

together, shared, services, families, goals, listening, understanding, communication, needs, children, support, authentic.

This linguistic pattern reinforces the thematic findings:

- “Together” and “shared” signal the desire for **collaborative partnership**.
- “Listening” and “communication” emphasise the importance of **dialogue and follow-through**.
- “Needs”, “families”, “children” reflect **child-centred expectations**.
- “Authentic” reflects strong concerns about **non-performative practice**.



What These Findings Tell Us About Local Co-production

The feedback presents a picture of a community that is:

- **Hopeful** – recognising the value of partnership and shared goals
- **Honest** – naming gaps and inconsistencies
- **Ready** – for a more structured, transparent, authentic co-production model

Stakeholders want a culture where:

- Lived experience matters
- Families feel safe, respected and equal
- Agencies work as one system
- Actions match words
- Co-production influences decisions at every stage

These findings align strongly with national expectations from the SEND & AP Improvement Plan (2023), the SEND Code of Practice (2015), and the Children and Families Act (2014).

Implications for Future Practice

The themes provide a clear set of actions to guide improvement:

1. Develop and adopt a Co-production Standards and assessment Framework

We need to develop a co-production framework and accompanying assessment tool to embed co-production as a way of working, rather than simply a procedural document.

This approach reflects the core values of authenticity, respect, transparency, shared purpose, and child and young person (CYP) centred practice. By building authenticity checks into the framework such as asking, “Can we evidence where parent voice changed the plan?”, we ensure that the voices of parents and CYP genuinely influence decision-making. The assessment tool will support this by measuring both the standard and impact of co-production in practice, providing clear evidence of its effectiveness and areas for improvement. Ultimately, this framework and tool will help embed co-production across the organisation, ensuring it becomes a lived, consistent approach that shapes planning, services, and outcomes for CYP and their families.

2. Create consistent feedback loops

Including a regular “**You Said – We Are Doing**” approach to demonstrate follow-through. How do we achieve this effectively?

3. Improve communication pathways

Through regular plain-language updates, visible decision-making rationale, and agreed multi-agency communication standards.



Summary

The findings from the November 25 Workshop demonstrate a strong appetite for **genuine co-production that is grounded in shared values, clear communication, and transparency**. Families and professionals are aligned in the belief that effective co-production should place children and young people at the centre, reflect lived experience meaningfully, and be used to improve services in real and tangible ways.

This analysis should inform the 2025–26 SEND partnership work programme, shape the development of a Co-production Framework, and support ongoing improvement across education, health and care in North Northamptonshire.