

Whether in health, social care, education, criminal justice; it is critically important to understand, learn from and build upon the experiences of those who have been through the system. In some cases, such as the Care Act, the need to do this is even legally-binding. But how do organisations make sure that they are doing this in an organised, logical and effective way?

One way is through **collaborative pairs**. A collaborative pair is made up of a professional from the organisation and a person with lived experience. This could be a patient or pupil, for example. The person with lived experience will be able to bring their voice to the

project, and by being part of an equal partnership with the professional, they can start to influence and co-design the future of the service together. They also have a critical role to play in gathering further feedback and opinion from other service users, and as someone who has been through the same journey, they are ideally-placed to foster trust and openness.

This 4-meeting process explains our approach to establishing a solid relationship between the collaborative pair, before they begin work on the project itself.

1st meeting



1. Meet up - virtually or in person. This is an opportunity to share the background of the project, and to talk about why we're here
2. Develop each member's One Page Profile, or update and share one if it's already available, and use this as catalyst for conversation

2nd meeting



3. Review each other's One Page Profiles, as a reminder of what you discussed last session
4. Talk about communication - how each of you prefers to give and receive communication so you can be at your best when working together
5. Discuss your experiences of giving and receiving feedback, and complete the feedback template as part of a naturally-flowing conversation
6. Start to work through a storytelling process to truly understand the experience of the partner. You may consider working with a professional facilitator at this stage.

3rd meeting



7. Both the professional and the partner give feedback on the story from their perspectives. Following this, they work together to create a 30-second 'elevator pitch' and a 10-minute version.

4th meeting



8. Together, the pair agree their action plan on how to get involved in the project.