

NottAlone Website

Aim of the project: Expand the NottAlone website to create an all age, single point of access for mental health information.

Area: Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County.

Who was involved: Debs Dulake and Carrie Lambert-Smith.

Learning area: 'Closing the loop' in Co-production.

Contents:

- How the project has progressed.
- The importance of 'closing the loop'.



A 10 minute read.

Introduction from the Coproduction Team...

In this third series of case studies, we revisit the co-production projects from series one. We will:

- Explore how each project has progressed.
- Find out how those involved in the project were informed about the impact their contribution had.
- Reinforce the importance of 'closing the loop' in coproduction - a key mechanism for making all participants feel valued.

The Scope of the Work...

- Originally aimed at children and young people, the NottAlone website was expanded during 2023 - 2024 to provide an all-age, single point of access for mental health information and support.
- It was co-created over 18 months, with lived experience experts, peer support workers and health professionals.

The new website launched on World Mental Health Day, 10 October 2024, connecting local people with free mental health support, advice and services

The Co-Design Process...

The co-design process began with the project lead visiting [My Life Choices - Co-production Group](#) to gain insight, generate ideas, and identify lived experience experts interested in contributing. Debs Dulake, a member volunteered her time and experience and quickly became a vital conduit between the project team and the group.

Debs Dulake says that without the support of My Life Choices – including regular facilitated monthly meetings, support from the personalised care team, peer support and opportunities to build her confidence, skills and knowledge – she would not have been able to take part in, or contribute to, the NottAlone project. My Life Choices not only gave her the space to grow but also acted as a sounding board and source of insight; Debs consistently brought the project back to the group, shared updates, sought their views and incorporated their feedback, ensuring that the wider lived experience voice remained central throughout.

“I felt listened to and heard, I definitely felt like this was an equal partnership.”



Debs Dulake, My Life Choices member - Lived Experience Expert

To enable effective, confident co-design, two project groups were established. One comprised of people with lived experience and Peer Support workers. The other comprised of partners and professionals.

This approach ensured lived experience experts had a safe space to be their authentic selves, and talk openly about their experiences of using mental health services. The two groups:

- Had the same agenda, created based on content need.
- Received the output from the other group to inform their approach.
- Met monthly, two weeks apart, to co-design the website.

Debs was involved in all stages of the planning, procurement, design and testing of the evolving all-age website; working in equal partnership with the project lead, to embed her lived experience into the final version.

“Closing the loop in co-production is vital — it shows people with lived experience that their time, voice, and insight truly matter. When we share back what has been achieved with their input, we build trust, respect, and a genuine sense of partnership”.

Debbie Draper, Quality Improvement Lead, Co-production & Personalised Care

Closing the Loop...

Debs was integral to closing the loop, sharing the feedback and involvement of the website with My Life Choices and talking to BBC Nottingham about her involvement in developing the website.

“Your contribution to the development of the NottAlone website is a shining example of the impact that true co-production can have”.

Amanda Sullivan, Chief Executive

Her valued involvement was recognised with a bouquet of flowers from the project team, and a letter of appreciation from Amanda Sullivan, Chief Executive, NHS Nottingham & Nottinghamshire ICB, in response to Debs citizen story at the ICB Board meeting in May.

Debs story focused on her involvement in co-creating the website and is available to read on [page 40 of the ICB's May Board papers](#).

In addition, the NottAlone founders held a launch event on Tuesday 10 October 2024 (World Mental Health Day). This free evening event, held at Nottingham Central Library, was open to all and provided an opportunity to learn more about NottAlone and other local support services.

Impact of the NottAlone website...

The website is a well-used resource, with 1,479 new users to the site in March alone. Several user pathways, informed by a user's age and reason for visiting, enable use by anyone who is seeking mental health advice and guidance, either for themselves or someone else.

To access the resources, visit the [NottAlone website](#).