

Project Dewi Evaluation Report

Embedding Co-production & Involvement in Welsh Public Services Boards

Prepared for: The National Lottery Community Fund / Co-production Network for Wales

Date: December 2025

Commissioned by: Practice Solutions – Deb Austin Associate

Project Dewi National Evaluation Report – Year 5 Position

Embedding Co-production and Involvement in Public Services Boards

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Executive summary

Project Dewi has supported Public Services Boards (PSBs) across Wales since 2021 to embed co-production and inclusive involvement. Now in its fifth and final year, the project has been a catalyst of cultural change, challenged traditional governance, and built capacity for relational, people-led public services.

This evaluation draws on interviews, survey feedback, national and regional reflections, strategic documentation, and visual synthesis from the Co-production Network for Wales' review of Project Dewi, which has been developed into a series of infographics. It captures both the lived experience of individuals and systemic learning from across Wales.

Key findings:

- Co-production is increasingly recognised as a strategic lever for transformation.
- Cultural shifts are emerging, though unevenly embedded.
- Structural barriers persist, particularly around leadership, accountability, and system design.
- Project Dewi has created infrastructure for learning, but sustainability remains a concern.
- **“Co-production isn't a method—it's a mindset. Dewi helped us see that.” – PSB Officer, North Wales**

Introduction and context

Project Dewi is a five-year initiative led by the [Co-production Network for Wales](#) and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. It's designed to embed co-production and meaningful involvement within Public Services Boards (PSBs) across Wales, helping them shift from consultation to genuine collaboration with communities.

Purpose and approach

- Started on Saint David's Day (1 March 2021), the project supports PSBs to meet their duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- It focuses on building capacity, confidence, and culture change within PSBs through hands-on support from the co-production team and their consultants.
- The aim is to create sustainable relationships between public bodies and communities, enabling co-produced solutions to local challenges.

Structure and delivery

- Two strands:
 - Consultancy support: Direct work with Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB, and with the PSB clusters in North Wales (Wrexham & Flintshire, Conwy & Denbighshire, Gwynedd & Anglesey) and West Wales (Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire).
 - Shared Learning Network: A series of one off learning events, bulletins, and resources for all PSBs.
- Activities include:
 - Co-designing well-being plan consultations and workshops.
 - Training and mentoring in co-production values.
 - Engaging seldom-heard voices (e.g. children in Ceredigion).
 - Supporting PSBs to move from engagement to involvement.

Resources and impact

- Offers a rich library of tools, from lived experience group setup guides to co-production slide decks.
- Has contributed to initiatives like the Newborough Community Hackathon and youth engagement in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.
- Demonstrates how participatory approaches can foster trust, shift behaviours, and deliver long-term change.

This report compiled in year 5 of the project provides an evaluation of the whole lifespan of Project Dewi, capturing progress, challenges, and key learning points (from inception to completion). The project has aimed to embed co-production principles across PSBs supporting a shift towards more inclusive and participatory decision making. Over the past 5 years the Co-production Network for Wales have worked closely with PSBs, facilitating engagement, sharing knowledge, and adapting approaches to meet the evolving needs of partners.

Project Dewi was designed to operationalise the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 duty on involvement for public services through co-production. It aimed to:

- Build capacity for inclusive involvement
- Support PSBs to adopt relational governance
- Create sustainable cultural change across Wales

The evaluation integrates:

- Previously developed national evaluation reports
- Anonymised interviews
- Microsoft online forms (MS forms) survey responses
- Regional reports and thematic reflections
- Strategic documents and maturity matrix tools
- Four national infographics capturing stakeholder insight and systemic challenges

Methodology

Evaluating the impact of co-production within Public Services Boards (PSBs) requires a methodology that reflects the complexity, nuance, and relational nature of the work itself. The evaluation of Project Dewi was designed not only to measure outcomes, but to capture the lived experience of those involved including officers, facilitators, third sector partners, and community members across and three PSBs and nationally across Wales.

This report outlines the multi-method approach used to assess progress, challenges, and learning. It combines structured stakeholder mapping, qualitative interviews, survey analysis, workshop insights, and visual synthesis from Project Dewi's national infographics. The methodology was intentionally participatory, enabling contributors to reflect on both what has changed and what remains difficult to shift.

Rather than relying solely on traditional performance metrics, the evaluation considers relational indicators: trust, confidence, shared purpose, and cultural movement. These dimensions are critical to understanding how co-production is being embedded or resisted within PSB structures. The approach also recognises the importance of context, regional variation, leadership style, and organisational readiness, all of which shaped the findings.

What follows is a breakdown of the tools, sources, and analytical frameworks used to generate the insights presented in this report.

Mixed methods approach:

- Mayfield stakeholder mapping
- MS Forms survey
- Semi-structured interviews
- Facilitated Co-production Network for Wales team meeting
- Document and infographic review

Thematic framework

To make sense of the complex and evolving landscape of co-production within PSBs, this evaluation is structured around a thematic framework that reflects both strategic priorities and lived realities. The themes were not pre-imposed but emerged organically through stakeholder interviews, survey responses, national dialogue, and visual synthesis from the Co-production Network for Wales team review of Project Dewi.

Each theme represents a distinct but interconnected dimension of system change from shifts in organisational culture and leadership practice, to the challenges of measuring success in relational work. Together, they offer a lens through which to assess not only what has changed, but how, why, and where progress remains fragile or stalled.

The framework also enables comparative analysis across regions and sectors, highlighting patterns of innovation, resistance, and adaptation. It is designed to be both diagnostic and developmental, supporting reflection, learning, and strategic planning for future phases of work and wider public service reform.

Thematic framework:

1. Organisational change & effectiveness
2. Stakeholder engagement & collaboration
3. Cultural shifts & values
4. Learning & adaptability
5. Measuring success & future improvements
6. Systemic barriers and strategic alignment
7. Future ambition and climate for co-production

1. Organisational change & effectiveness

Co-production, when meaningfully embedded, has the potential to reshape not only service delivery but the very architecture of decision-making within public bodies. Project Dewi has acted as a catalyst for cultural and governance shifts within Public Services Boards (PSBs). It has introduced practices that challenge hierarchical norms, cultivated relational spaces, and built officer confidence, helping co-production move closer to the mainstream. While progress remains uneven and structural barriers persist, evidence shows emerging changes in organisational culture and leadership behaviours. Drawing on interviews, regional reflections, and visual insights, the analysis highlights both the momentum generated and the structural inertia that continues to constrain progress. Findings indicate a system in transition: officers feel increasingly empowered, but strategic buy-in and accountability mechanisms remain uneven, and voices from the third sector and lived experience are still often unheard.

Examples of this include:

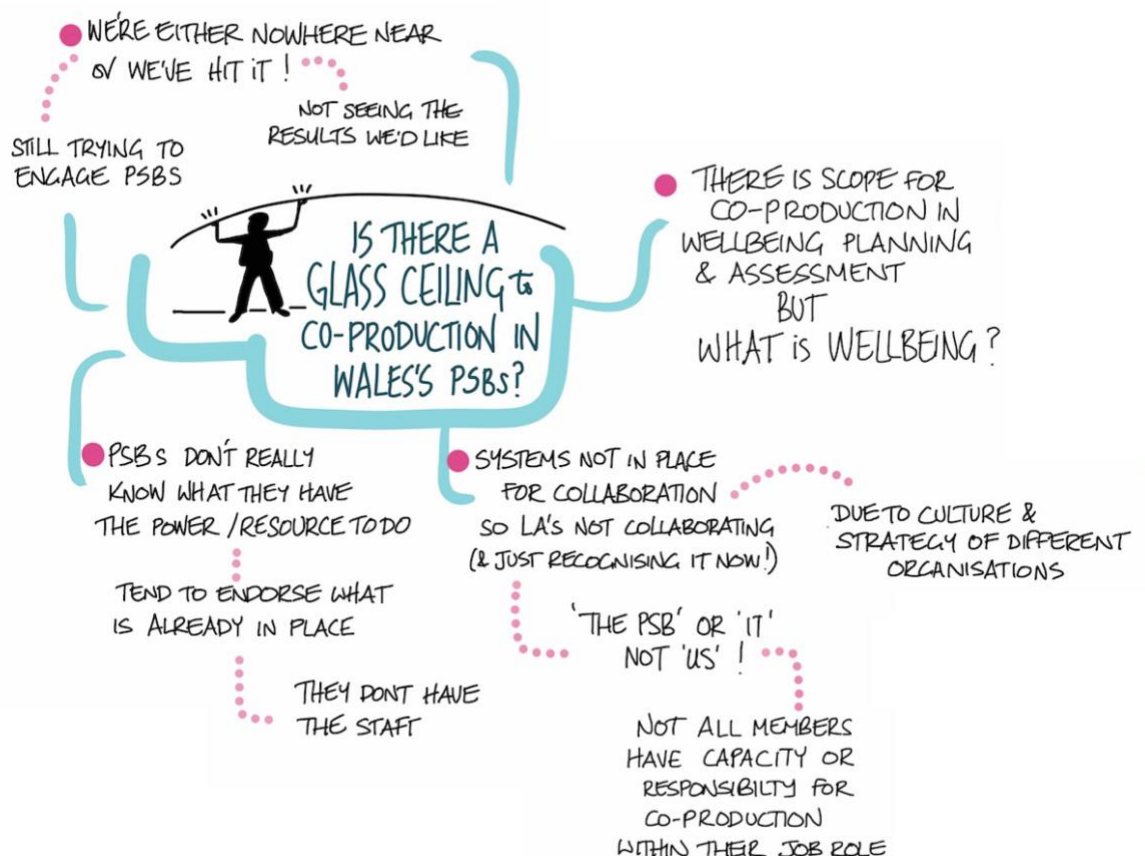
Project Dewi has been a catalyst to rethink the PSB space, flow, and agenda-setting. Traditional board formats gave way to dynamic, inclusive workshops. Emotional tone tracking (via mentimeter.com), split agendas, and redesigned room layouts supported more reflective practice.

**“We’ve stopped asking ‘what are we doing?’ and started asking ‘how are we doing it together?’”
– PSB Officer, Bridgend**

Infographic themes reinforce this shift:

- “Not a prevailing culture but there are pockets of good practice.”
- “We have struggled to make structural shifts.”

While officers feel empowered, hierarchical structures remain a barrier. The glass ceiling of co-production—where involvement is permitted at delivery level but not strategic level—was repeatedly noted.

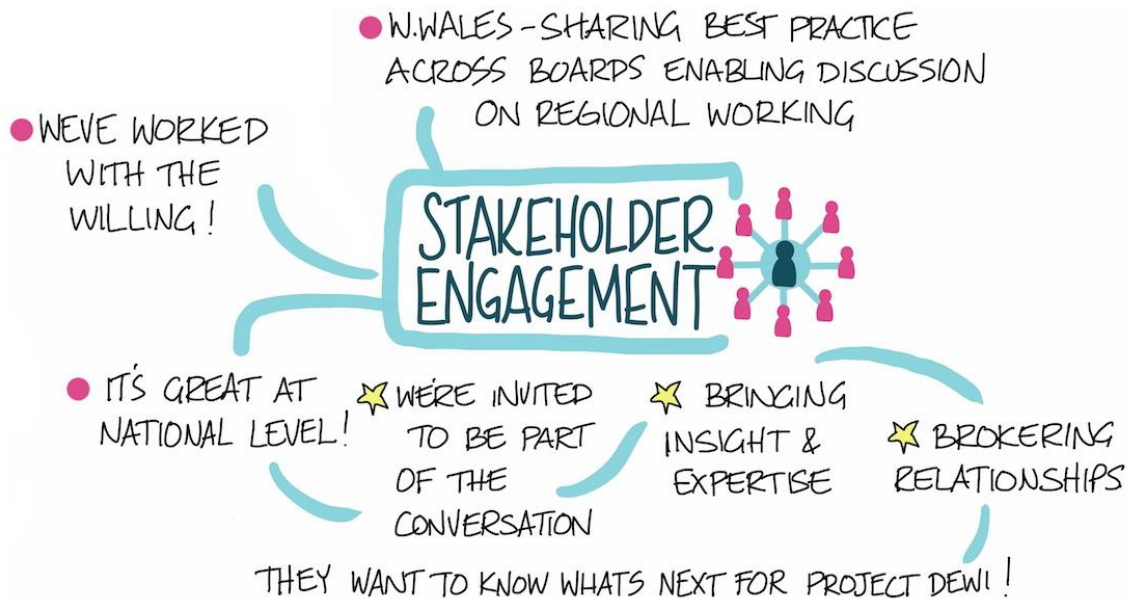


2. Stakeholder engagement & collaboration

At the heart of co-production lies the principle of shared power between services bodies and communities, professionals and citizens, strategy and lived experience. Stakeholder engagement and collaboration are not peripheral to Project Dewi's mission; they are its engine. This section explores how relationships have evolved across Public Services Boards (PSBs), what forms of collaboration have emerged, and where tensions continue to inhibit equal participation.

Over the past five years, Project Dewi has worked with "those willing" individuals and organisations ready to challenge traditional hierarchies and embrace relational ways of working. In some regions, this has led to vibrant partnerships, reverse mentoring initiatives, and the elevation of quieter voices. In others, engagement has remained transactional, with co-production confined to delivery level activities and strategic conversations dominated by legacy governance norms.

The evaluation reveals a mixed picture. PSB officers and third sector partners describe growing trust and confidence between them, especially where informal coaching and shared learning by PSB leadership have taken root. Yet many also report frustration including gatekeeping, lack of responsiveness, and a persistent glass ceiling that limits co-production's reach. As one interviewee put it, "Co-production builds trust. Trust builds co-production. But someone must open the door first."



Infographic insights reinforce these dynamics. They highlight the messy partnership landscape, the absence of clear legislative expectations, and the need for PSBs to better define and communicate what well-being means in practice. They also underscore the importance of involving people who are curious, committed, and ready to learn not just those selected to tick a box.

The analysis considers these findings through the lens of lived experience, regional variation, and national strategic reflection. It highlights not only how stakeholders have responded to co-production introduced by Project Dewi, but also how systems must adapt to sustain it.

The key findings include:

Co-production has strengthened relationships, but implementation varies. Third sector and education voices are slightly more active. Youth engagement is promising but lacks sustained commitment.

“I’ve asked several times about the asset mapping at the PSB. No response.” – Interviewee

Infographic insights:

- “We’ve worked with those willing!”
- “Bringing expertise from outside the organisation.”
- “Co-production builds trust. Trust builds co-production.”

However, gatekeeping, inconsistent responsiveness, and lack of shared accountability persist, largely as a result of the focus being on the willing, which has hindered some of the trust building required for consistent stakeholder engagement. The messy partnership landscape and unclear legislative expectations complicate alignment this sits beyond Project Dewi.

3. Cultural shifts & values

Co-production is not simply a technical process; it is a cultural proposition. It asks organisations to reimagine how power is held, how decisions are made, and whose voices are heard. Within Public Services Boards (PSBs), Project Dewi has acted as both mirror and catalyst: reflecting entrenched norms while nudging systems toward more inclusive, values-led practice.

Project Dewi’s work has focused on cultivating values such as trust, openness, and shared purpose within PSBs, while identifying areas of resistance that hinder progress. Insights from interviews, regional and national reflections, and visual infographics reveal the emotional and relational dimensions of this cultural shift, highlighting both emerging good practice and persistent structural inertia. From vulnerable conversations that prompt genuine listening, to the emergence of relational leadership styles, the findings of this evaluation reveal a system in flux: one where pockets of good practice coexist with deep structural inertia.



Infographic insights reinforce this complexity. They highlight that co-production is often seen as a method rather than a mindset, and that it is rarely embedded in PSB structures or strategic priorities. They also underscore the importance of understanding well-being, not just as a policy goal, but as a lived experience shaped by culture, relationships, and inclusion.

“Co-production is enhancing leadership and engagement across sectors” – Interviewee

Yet cultural change is fragile. It depends on leadership continuity, organisational humility, and the willingness to learn from failure.

The key findings include:

Co-production is fostering relational leadership and deeper engagement. Vulnerable conversations are prompting genuine listening. There are some examples for agencies modelling this inclusive practice back in their own respective organisations.

“Co-production is a doorway to systemic change; it's how we bring the strategy to life.” – Future Generations Team

Infographic reflections:

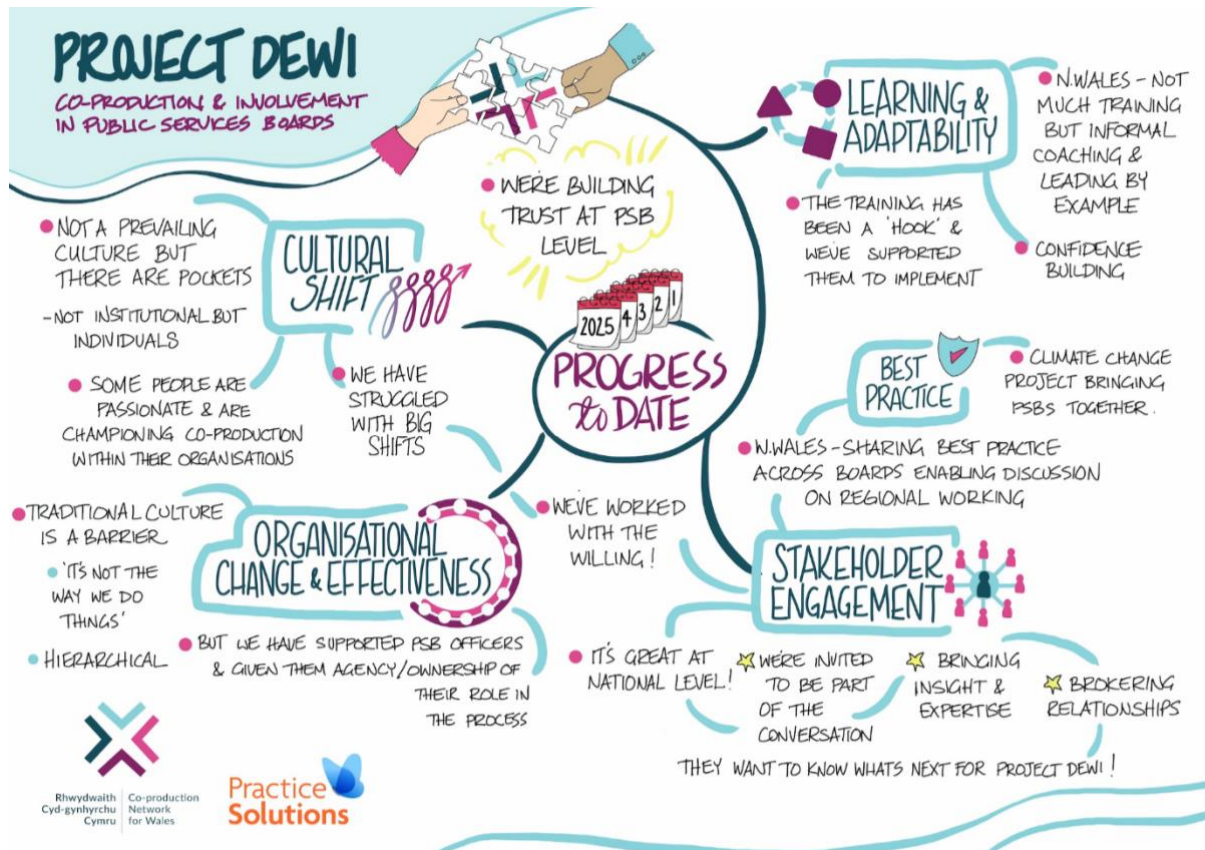
- “Co-production is often seen as a method, not a mindset.”
- “PSBs need to be clearer on what well-being is and how it’s achieved.”
- “We’re building trust at PSB level.”

Yet co-production is not a standing agenda item in many PSBs. Contributions remain symbolic. Cultural change is underway, but uneven. There is a risk that progress will not be maintained after Project Dewi ends.

4. Learning & adaptability

Co-production is not a static achievement it is a continuous process of learning, unlearning, and adapting. For Public Services Boards (PSBs) across Wales, Project Dewi has served as both a provocation and a support system: challenging conventional ways of working while offering practical tools and relational scaffolding to try something different. The analysis explores how PSBs and their partners have responded to that challenge, what they’ve learned, how they’ve adapted, and where the conditions for sustained change remain fragile.

From the outset, Project Dewi recognised that embedding co-production would require more than training sessions or toolkits. It would demand a shift in mindset, a tolerance for uncertainty, and a willingness to reflect on failure as a source of insight. Across the interviews and regional reflections, a consistent theme emerged: co-production is harder than it looks. It is counter-cultural to many public sector norms, particularly those rooted in control, certainty, and performance management. Yet where space has been created through Project Dewi for experimentation, officers have reported increased confidence, stronger relationships, and a renewed sense of purpose.



The national infographics reinforce this narrative. They highlight the importance of informal coaching, confidence building, and “blank-page thinking” within high-level parameters. They also point to the need for cultural permission to fail forward, and for systems that reward curiosity rather than compliance. As one stakeholder put it, “We need to co-produce the world we want to live in, but the system isn’t set up for that yet.”

Project Dewi has helped PSBs navigate complexity by creating conditions for adaptive learning. As a learning partner, Project Dewi has modelled co-agency, surfaced tensions, and held space for reflection in a system that often prioritises delivery over dialogue. These strategies enabled officers to learn from failure, adapt approaches, and strengthen relationships despite systemic barriers.

The key findings include:

- Co-production is harder than anticipated
- The system is not naturally configured to support it
- Blank page thinking within high-level parameters fosters innovation

“We need to co-produce the world we want to live in.” – Interviewee

Infographic themes include:

- “Confidence building.”
- “Not just training but informal coaching.”
- “Culture needs to shift to enable learning from failures.”

Barriers include silo working, professional defensiveness, and short-term planning cycles. Dedicated community-facing roles are essential.

5. Measuring success & indicators of progress

Measuring the impact of co-production within Public Services Boards (PSBs) presents a unique challenge: how do we quantify trust, shared purpose, and cultural change in systems traditionally governed by performance metrics and compliance frameworks?

The analysis considers how Project Dewi has prompted a rethinking of success, moving beyond transactional outputs to embrace relational indicators that reflect the true spirit of co-production.

From the outset, Project Dewi recognised that conventional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were insufficient. As one stakeholder noted, “If it can’t be counted, it doesn’t get measured”, a sentiment echoed across interviews and visual reflections. Yet the most meaningful outcomes of co-production are often qualitative: the confidence of participants, the shift in tone at a PSB meeting, the ripple effect of relational practice across organisations.



Project Dewi’s national infographics reinforce this insight. They highlight the limitations of traditional metrics and the need for indicators that allow citizen scrutiny, reflect lived experience, and capture the depth of involvement. They also emphasise the importance of alignment between what PSBs measure, what communities value, and what co-production actually delivers.

Emerging indicators of progress include:

- Diversity of voices in decision-making spaces
- Strength and sustainability of relationships
- Evidence of reverse mentoring and shared learning
- Uptake of co-production principles across partner organisations
- Confidence and trust levels among participants
- Visibility of lived experience in strategic planning

5.1. Indicators of progress

Project Dewi supported PSBs in adopting relational indicators, understanding the barriers to embedding them, and uncover opportunities to develop a more inclusive and reflective measurement framework. The work also reinforced the use of existing tools such as [S.20 Maturity Matrix – English PDF](#) and [WOW Checker](#) in supporting self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

Ultimately, measuring success in co-production is not about counting activity, it’s about capturing meaning. Project Dewi has helped shift that conversation, but further work is needed to embed these principles into the heart of public service governance.

5.2. Measuring impact

Measuring the impact of co-production within PSBs presents a unique challenge: how do we quantify trust, shared purpose, and cultural change in systems traditionally governed by performance metrics and compliance frameworks? Project Dewi prompted PSBs to rethink how success is measured—moving beyond transactional outputs to embrace relational indicators that reflect the true spirit of co-production.

5.3. Limitations of traditional metrics

- Over-reliance on activity counts: Number of meetings, attendees, or outputs often fail to reflect depth of engagement.
- Lack of relational indicators: Trust, confidence, and shared purpose are rarely measured.
- Disconnect from lived experience: KPIs often miss the emotional and cultural shifts that signal real change.

“Traditional KPIs don’t tell the whole story. A good indicator is one that allows citizen scrutiny.”
– Interviewee

5.4. Emerging indicators of progress

Based on stakeholder feedback and infographic synthesis, the following indicators are proposed:

Indicator Type	Description
Relational trust	Evidence of trust-building across PSB partners and communities
Voice diversity	Inclusion of third sector, and lived experience in decision-making
Ripple effect	Uptake of co-production principles across partner organisations
Confidence & ownership	Officer and participant confidence in leading co-production
Strategic alignment	Co-production embedded in PSB priorities and governance reviews
Citizen scrutiny	Mechanisms for public feedback and accountability

These indicators reflect a shift from transactional to transformational measurement. Infographic insights:

- “A good indicator is one that allows citizen scrutiny.”
- “Ripple effect – some people on the PSB are taking co-production back to their organisations.”
- “Co-production best placed to decide what success looks like.”

5.5. Visual dashboard concept

To support PSBs in tracking progress, a visual dashboard could be considered to include:

RAG Ratings for each indicator (Red, Amber, Green)

- **Narrative summaries** from officers and participants
- **Infographic snapshots** to capture qualitative insights
- **Quarterly reflection prompts** to support adaptive learning

This dashboard could be co-designed with PSBs and communities, ensuring relevance and ownership.

5.6. Tools for evaluation

Project Dewi has piloted several tools to support reflective measurement:

- **Future generations S.20 Maturity Matrix:** Enables PSBs to self-assess progress across five ways of working
- **WOW Checker:** Supports evaluation of well-being outcomes and co-production maturity
- **MS Forms Surveys and Mentimeter:** Captures participant feedback and emotional tone
- **Workshop Outputs:** Provides qualitative data on engagement and learning

These tools offer a blended approach—combining structure with flexibility, and metrics with meaning.

5.7. Strategic implications

Embedding these indicators requires:

- **Leadership buy-in:** Senior leaders must champion relational metrics
- **Governance reform:** Boards must integrate co-production into performance frameworks
- **Capacity building:** Officers need support to interpret and act on qualitative data
- **Policy alignment:** Welsh Government reporting must evolve to reflect relational outcomes

“Co-production builds involvement. Involvement builds co-production. But we need to show it works.” – Interviewee

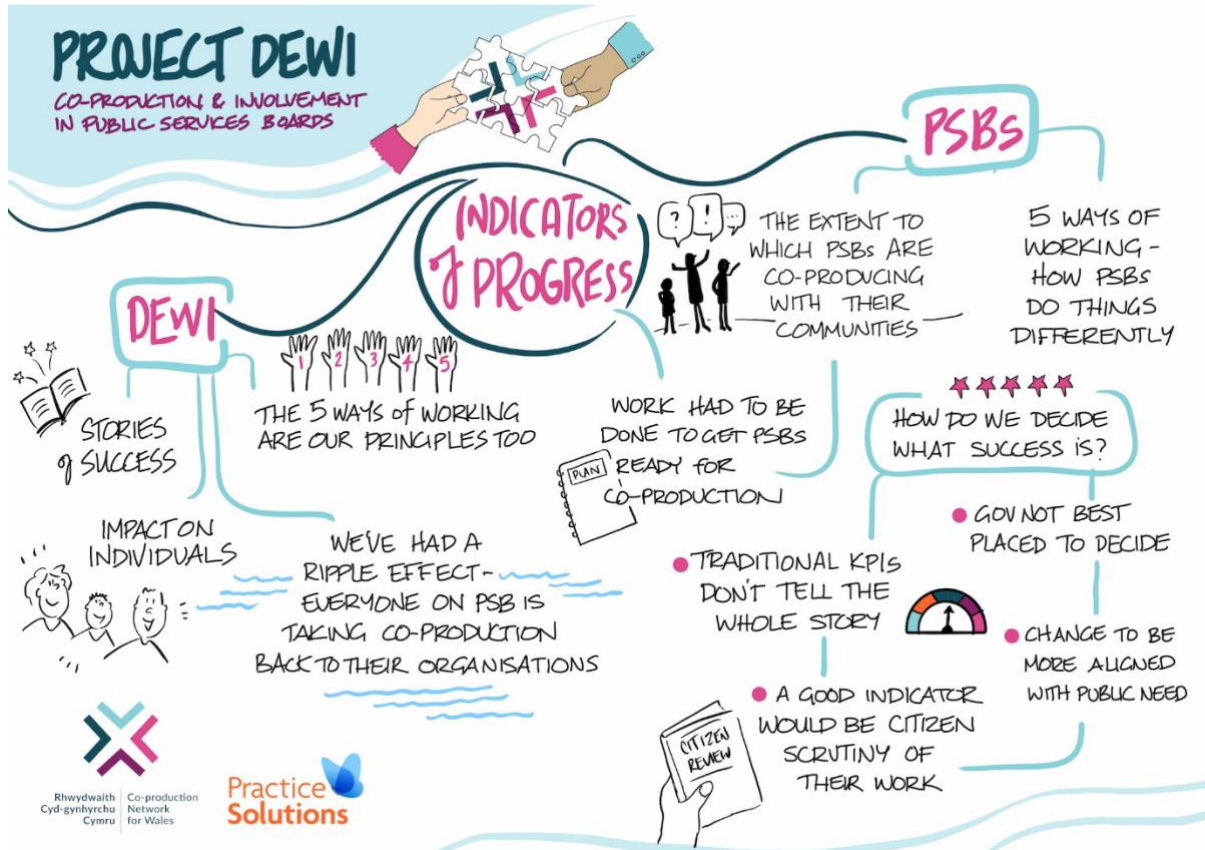
Traditional KPIs don't tell the whole story. Storytelling and lived experience are undervalued. Relationship building and voice diversity are emerging indicators.

6. Systemic barriers and strategic alignment

This section examines the nature of these systemic barriers, the policy and structural shifts needed to overcome them, and the opportunities to embed co-production more deeply within Wales's public service ecosystem. It also considers how Project Dewi's learning can inform future alignment between local practice and national ambition.

While Project Dewi has accelerated meaningful change across Public Services Boards (PSBs), it has also illuminated the deep structural and systemic barriers that continue to constrain co-production. These barriers are not simply operational, they are embedded in the architecture of public service governance, funding, accountability, and culture. Project Dewi's work revealed significant tensions between aspiration and reality, exposing a disconnect between national policy ambitions and the lived experience of officers tasked with implementing co-production.

Across interviews, workshops, and visual synthesis, a consistent narrative emerged: the system is not configured to support co-production. PSBs remain risk-averse, hierarchical, and often unclear about their strategic purpose. Legislation offers broad principles but lacks operational clarity, leaving officers to navigate a “messy partnership landscape” without consistent guidance or support. Fragmented leadership, short-term planning cycles, and siloed working further inhibit progress.



Infographic insights reinforce these challenges. They highlight the perception that PSBs are not proactive enough in support of the Project Dewi team, that co-production is not always aligned with strategic priorities, and that involvement is often under resourced or tokenistic. They also point to a critical gap in understanding and measuring well-being a concept central to the Future Generations Act but inconsistently interpreted across regions.

Yet amidst these barriers, there are signs of strategic alignment. Project Dewi’s work has begun to influence governance reviews, performance frameworks, and national conversations about relational practice. Welsh Government and Future Generations Commissioner teams are increasingly looking to the Co-production Network for Wales for solutions, recognising that co-production is not just a delivery tool, but a strategic lever for system reform.

Persistent challenges include:

- Lack of shared decision-making structures
- Inconsistent commitment from PSBs
- Risk aversion and reluctance to innovate
- Fragmented staff capacity and leadership turnover

Infographic themes include:

- “PSBs are risk-averse and need to be more ambitious.”

- “Co-production is not always aligned with strategic priorities.”
- “Legislation is not clear on what is expected.”

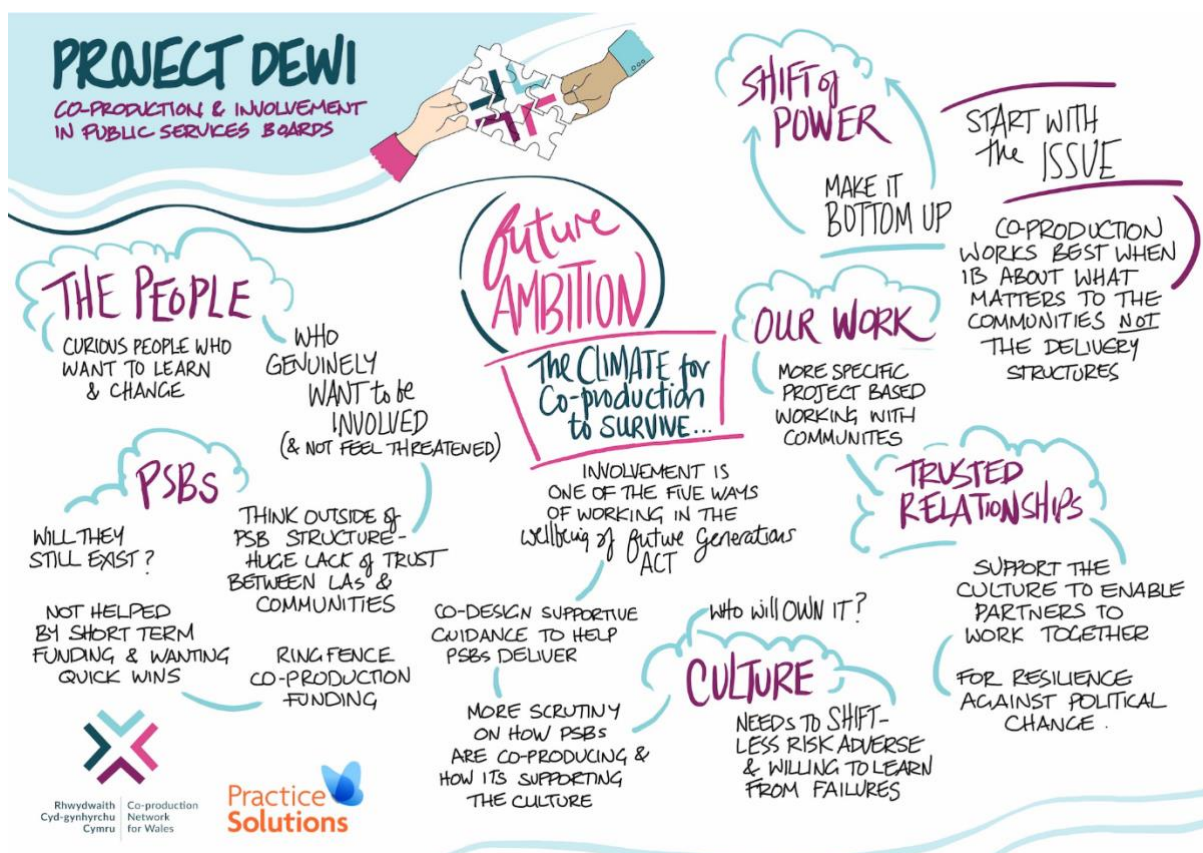
Project Dewi aligns with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, particularly its five ways of working, with co-production and involvement at the forefront. However, the implementation of the Act itself requires further scrutiny by Welsh Government and others to ensure its impact is maximised and to challenge limited reporting or tick-box approaches. This imperative goes beyond the scope of Project Dewi, but is nonetheless vital for embedding meaningful, sustainable change across systems.

7. Future ambition and climate for co-production

As Project Dewi concludes its fifth and final year, the question is no longer whether co-production can work within Public Services Boards (PSBs), but under what conditions it can thrive. Stakeholder reflections, visual synthesis, and strategic insights reveal the future ambition for co-production across Wales and provide evidence of the climate in which it must now evolve.

The ambition is clear: to move co-production from the periphery to the centre of public service governance, yet the climate remains mixed. While pockets of innovation and relational leadership are emerging, many PSBs remain structurally risk-averse, culturally cautious, and strategically fragmented.

Co-production is still too often seen as a delivery tool rather than a strategic lever, confined to community engagement exercises rather than embedded in decision-making.



Infographic insights reinforce this tension. They highlight the need for a bottom-up shift of power, where co-production begins with what matters to communities, not with predefined delivery structures. They also

emphasise the importance of involving curious individuals who want to learn and change, rather than selecting participants to meet institutional quotas. The climate for co-production to survive, let alone flourish, requires resilience against political change, clarity of purpose, and a culture that values learning from failure.

“Partnerships build co-production. But we need to be brave enough to let go.” – Interviewee

Evidence from interviews and infographics shows what a supportive climate for co-production looks like in practice: structural reform, cultural openness, and strong relational foundations. Stakeholders identified strategic choices for PSBs and national bodies, including embedding co-production in governance frameworks and investing in roles that sustain collaboration beyond short-term projects. Project Dewi and the Co-production Network for Wales have acted as catalysts for this ambition, helping Wales imagine not just better services, but a better way of working together.

The climate for co-production to survive and thrive requires:

- Curious individuals who want to learn and change
- Bottom-up approaches rooted in community priorities
- Trusted relationships and resilience against political culture
- Specific, project-based work rather than broad initiatives

Infographic reflections:

- “Start with the issue and make it bottom-up.”
- “Involvement is one of the five ways of working.”
- “They want to know what’s next for Project Dewi.”

“Seeds of transformation are being planted, but sustained effort and courageous leadership will be needed to realise systemic change.” – Interviewee

8. Budget overview

Financial stewardship has been a quiet strength of Project Dewi, enabling national impact through modest investment, and demonstrating that relational change does not always require large scale funding, but rather thoughtful allocation, strategic prioritisation, and trust in people led processes. This section provides an overview of how Project Dewi’s budget has been managed, highlighting key decisions, efficiencies, and reinvestments that supported delivery, learning, and sustainability.

The evaluation found that Dewi’s financial model prioritised flexibility and responsiveness. Underspend was not seen as a failure to deliver, but as an opportunity to redirect resources toward emerging needs such as training, resource development, and regional facilitation. Reduced consultancy costs because of consultancy turnover, reflected increased internal capacity and the growing confidence of PSB officers to lead co-production locally. Strategic choices around staffing, commissioning, and partnership working enabled Project Dewi to maintain momentum while adapting to shifting priorities of PSBs and national stakeholders.

Stakeholders consistently noted that Project Dewi’s value extended beyond its budget line. The project’s relational approach of building trust, modelling co-agency, and supporting inclusive governance, was seen as a high return investment in cultural change. As one interviewee put it, “We’ve done a lot with a little. Dewi’s value isn’t just financial, it’s relational.”

However, the fact that Project Dewi work was offered free of charge to PSBs may have inadvertently contributed to its undervaluation in some areas. Without a direct financial stake, some PSBs struggled to prioritise or integrate co-production meaningfully into their strategic planning. This raises important questions about how value is recognised in relational work, and how funding models can reinforce commitment.

Key recommendation: PSBs should be encouraged to invest directly in co-production methodologies, aligning their financial contributions with the Well-being of Future Generations Act’s five ways of working. This would not only reinforce strategic ownership but also embed co-production as a core component of governance, planning, and service design.

9. Internal project risks

As Project Dewi has evolved from a pilot initiative to a nationally recognised programme, it has navigated a complex landscape of operational, relational, and strategic risks. Stakeholder feedback, delivery team reflections, and systemic analysis reveal that these risks were not merely logistical—they reflected deeper tensions in how co-production is understood, valued, and sustained within Welsh public services.

One of the most significant risks has been the unintended consequence of offering Project Dewi’s services free of charge to PSBs. While this approach removed financial barriers to participation, it may have contributed to a perception of lower strategic value in some regions. Without direct investment, co-production was sometimes deprioritised or treated as an optional enhancement rather than a core governance methodology aligned to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Another critical risk is the absence of mature, relational metrics to evaluate co-production. Despite growing recognition of its value, many PSBs continue to rely on transactional indicators such as attendance or activity counts, rather than measuring trust, confidence, shared purpose, or cultural movement. This limits the ability to demonstrate impact and undermines the strategic case for co-production.

Operationally, the project has faced challenges related to consultant turnover. While Project Dewi’s flexible delivery model enabled responsiveness, the lack of continuity in facilitation roles sometimes disrupted momentum and relationship-building. Stability of the Co-production Network for Wales’ staffing team has to some extent helped to mitigate some of this disruption. This was compounded by the absence of longer-term sustainable funding, which constrained strategic planning and limited the ability to embed co-production beyond the current funding cycle.

These risks are not insurmountable, but they require honest reflection, strategic mitigation, and a commitment to embedding co-production as a long-term, resourced priority. The following table outlines key internal risks and the mitigation strategies adopted during the project.

Risk	Mitigation
Transient consultant bank	Induction and long-term pathways
PSB deprioritisation	Aligning with current priorities
Risk aversion	Building confidence through presence
Inconsistent commitment	Flexible, tailored support

10. Recommendations

Project Dewi has demonstrated that co-production is not only possible within Public Services Boards (PSBs), it is essential to delivering the ambitions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. However, the evaluation also reveals that embedding co-production at scale requires more than enthusiasm and good practice. It demands structural reform, strategic investment, and a shift in how value is recognised and measured across the public service ecosystem.

Recommendations are grounded in five years of delivery, stakeholder feedback, and systemic analysis. They are designed to support PSBs, Co-production Network for Wales, and national partners to move from experimentation to embedded practice. The recommendations span governance, funding, evaluation, capacity-building, and strategic alignment, reflecting the multi-dimensional nature of co-production.

Several new recommendations have emerged from the learning:

Key recommendation: PSBs should be encouraged to invest directly in co-production methodologies, aligning their financial contributions with the Well-being of Future Generations Act's five ways of working. Offering Project Dewi free of charge to PSBs may have inadvertently contributed to its undervaluation. Future iterations should encourage direct financial investment from PSBs, reinforcing strategic ownership and aligning co-production with the five ways of working.

Relational metrics and evaluation reform: Co-production must be measured through mature, relational indicators, not just transactional outputs. PSBs should adopt tools that capture trust, confidence, shared purpose, and lived experience as core metrics of success.

Recommendation: Co-production Network for Wales look at designing this model.

Consultant continuity and capacity planning: High turnover among consultants disrupted momentum and relationship-building. Future delivery models should prioritise continuity, induction, and long-term pathways for co-production leads.

Recommendation: Co-production Network for Wales consider utilising staff team over consultancy led models on some aspect of work, in particular those that require longer term relational approaches.

Sustainable funding models: The absence of long-term funding remains a critical risk. Co-production must be resourced as a strategic function, not a discretionary project. Multi-year funding aligned to national well-being goals is essential.

Recommendation: Welsh Government, PSBs, and all bodies with a statutory duty to involve communities should prioritise direct investment in co-production as a core function of public service delivery, rather than relying on indirect or time-limited mechanisms such as lottery funding. This shift is essential to embed sustainable, equitable, and community-led approaches at scale.

Trust and relational maturity as strategic outcomes: Co-production is not just a delivery method; it is a trust building mechanism that accelerates relational maturity across systems. Future strategies should explicitly recognise trust and relationship depth as outcomes, not just enablers.

Recommendation: Welsh Government should work with the Co-production Network for Wales to embed trust and relational Maturity as explicit strategic outcomes in future public service frameworks. Co-production must be recognised not merely as a delivery method, but as a core mechanism for building trust and accelerating relational maturity across systems. This shift requires:

- **Reframing trust and relationship depth** as measurable outcomes in national strategies, not just enabling conditions.

- **Investing in long-term, values-led partnerships** that foster psychological safety, shared power, and sustained collaboration.
- **Aligning funding, evaluation, and workforce development** with the relational competencies needed to embed co-production at scale.

By positioning trust and relational maturity as strategic imperatives, Welsh Government can drive deeper system transformation and unlock the full potential of co-produced public services.

Addressing the strategic glass ceiling: A persistent barrier identified across regions is the “glass ceiling” of co-production, where involvement is welcomed at delivery level but excluded from strategic decision making. Key decision makers often sit outside the co-production process, limiting its influence and undermining its legitimacy. Future governance models must ensure that co-production is embedded at all levels, including executive and board level decision making.

Recommendation: Welsh Government, Public Services Boards, and the Co-production Network for Wales should take coordinated action to **dismantle the strategic glass ceiling** that limits co-production to operational levels. To realise the full value of co-production, future governance models must:

- Embed co-production at all tiers of decision-making, including executive, board, and strategic planning levels, not just at the point of service delivery.
- Ensure that key decision-makers are active participants in co-productive processes, not external observers, to enhance legitimacy, accountability, and shared ownership.
- Redesign governance structures and leadership development programmes to centre lived experience, relational intelligence, and shared power as core competencies.
- Mandate reporting on the depth and influence of co-production in strategic decisions, not just its presence in delivery mechanisms.

By elevating co-production to the heart of strategic governance, Wales can model a more inclusive, transparent, and trust-based approach to public service transformation.

These recommendations are not prescriptive, they are intended as a strategic scaffold to support reflection, planning, and action. They build on what has worked, respond to what has been difficult, and aim to create the conditions for co-production to thrive across Wales.

Strategic embedding

Recommendation: PSBs Ensure co-production is structurally embedded across governance systems, not as an optional practice, but as a core principle of public service design and delivery.

- Make co-production a standing agenda item in board, executive, and strategic planning meetings.
- Integrate co-production into governance frameworks, including Terms of Reference, risk registers, assurance processes, and strategic outcomes.
- Require annual reporting on co-production maturity, using tools like the S.20 Maturity Matrix and WOW Checker to benchmark progress.

Monitoring and evaluation

Recommendation: Welsh Government, PSBs and the Co-production Network for Wales adopt robust, transparent mechanisms to evaluate the depth, quality, and impact of co-production.

- Use RAG indicators and feedback loops to assess relational maturity, trust-building, and shared decision-making.
- Capture and share learning across regions and sectors, using storytelling, dashboards, and peer exchange.

- Align evaluation with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and embed co-production metrics into PSB performance frameworks.

Capacity building

Recommendation: Welsh Government and PSBs invest in the skills, roles, and relationships needed to embed co-production sustainably.

- Reinforce training with mentoring, peer support, and reflective practice, especially for senior leaders and board members.
- Fund and protect community facing roles that act as relational bridges between institutions and lived experience.
- Support the Co-production Network for Wales to develop a national competency framework for relational leadership and co-production.

Communication and accountability

Recommendation: Welsh Government and PSBs consider strengthening visibility, responsiveness, and public trust in co-production efforts.

- Welsh Government consider actively promoting Project Dewi and the Co-production Network for Wales more widely as a flagship model for relational accountability and community voice.
- Establish clear response protocols for how feedback, lived experience, and co-produced insights are acted upon.
- Create public-facing dashboards that show how co-production is influencing decisions and outcomes.

Systemic reform

Recommendation: PSBs Position co-production as a lever for long-term, equitable system change.

- Advocate for long-term planning and funding cycles that enable deep, sustained co-production, not short-term pilots.
- Align co-production strategies with public health, equity, and prevention goals, recognising relational depth as a determinant of well-being.
- Embed co-production into national transformation programmes.

11. Conclusion

Project Dewi has reached a pivotal moment, not as an endpoint, but as a launchpad for deeper, more systemic change across Welsh public services. Over five years, Project Dewi has seeded a new way of working: one rooted in trust, shared purpose, and the lived experience of communities. It has challenged traditional governance, supported relational leadership, and built capacity for co-production in spaces where it was previously marginal or misunderstood.

This evaluation confirms that co-production is not a supplementary tool, it is a strategic lever for transformation. It builds trust, accelerates relational maturity, and enables public services to respond more authentically to the needs and aspirations of the people they serve. Yet it also reveals the fragility of this progress. Co-production remains constrained by a persistent glass ceiling, with key decision makers often sitting outside the approach. It is undervalued when offered free of charge, under measured by transactional metrics, and under resourced by short-term funding cycles.

The climate for co-production to thrive requires more than goodwill, it demands structural reform, strategic investment, and cultural permission to fail forward, learn, and adapt. Project Dewi has shown what is possible when those conditions begin to align. The challenge now is to embed, scale, and sustain that momentum.

The core insights from this evaluation reaffirm the strategic case for co-production and set out the imperative for future action across PSBs and national partners. These findings emphasise the ongoing need to move beyond pilots and projects, and towards a public service system where co-production is not the exception, but the norm.

Project Dewi has laid the foundation for co-production across Wales. It has built trusted relationships, challenged institutional norms, and supported inclusive public service reform. Continued investment and strategic alignment are essential to embed co-production and realise the ambitions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

“Co-production is the most powerful approach to get this off the ground.” – Interviewee

A table summary of the strategic recommendations for embedding co-production across Wales

Theme	Recommendation summary	Key owners
Key strategic shift	Encourage PSBs to invest directly in co-production methodologies, aligning funding with the Well-being of Future Generations Act’s five ways of working.	PSBs, WG
Relational metrics & evaluation	Design relational indicators (trust, confidence, shared purpose) to measure co-production maturity beyond transactional outputs.	CPN (Co-production Network for Wales)
Consultant continuity	Prioritise continuity and long-term relational pathways by exploring staff-led models over consultancy-led delivery.	CPN
Sustainable funding models	Resource co-production as a strategic function via multi-year funding aligned to national well-being goals, not discretionary or lottery-based streams.	WG, PSBs, Statutory Bodies
Trust as strategic outcome	Embed trust and relational maturity as explicit outcomes in national frameworks. Reframe them as measurable, investable, and central to transformation.	WG, CPN
Strategic glass ceiling	Dismantle the barrier that limits co-production to delivery level. Embed it at executive, board, and strategic tiers, with leadership accountability and reporting.	WG, PSBs, CPN
Strategic embedding	Make co-production a standing agenda item. Integrate it into governance frameworks and require annual maturity reporting using tools like the S.20 Matrix and WOW Checker.	PSBs
Monitoring & evaluation	Use RAG indicators, feedback loops, and storytelling to assess relational maturity. Align evaluation with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and embed metrics into PSB performance frameworks.	WG, PSBs, CPN

Theme	Recommendation summary	Key owners
Capacity building	Invest in training, mentoring, and community-facing roles. Support CPN to develop a national competency framework for relational leadership.	WG, PSBs, CPN
Communication & accountability	Promote Project Dewi and CPN as flagship models. Establish response protocols and public dashboards to show how co-production influences decisions.	WG, PSBs
Systemic reform	Position co-production as a lever for long-term, equitable system change. Align with public health, equity, and prevention goals. Embed in national transformation programmes.	PSBs, WG

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