



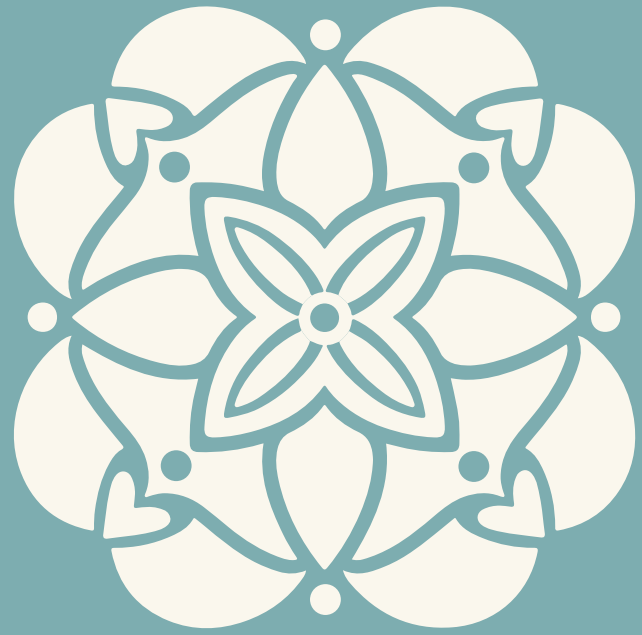
**Camden and Islington
Trauma-informed network**

OUR STORY SO FAR

**Our learning from setting up
a trauma-informed network**

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Camden and Islington Trauma-informed network

1. INTRODUCTION

Camden and Islington Trauma-Informed Network is the collective effort of people with lived experience and those in roles across sectors. We formed in June 2021 with a shared interest to connect the disparate trauma-informed approaches across the system and create a shared language and approach. We advocate for trauma-informed approaches that are rooted in the wider system. We do this by bringing people together and connecting conversations because we believe that we are stronger together and need representation of the many, not the few.

This document is a record of our learning from setting up the network, mostly online and during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a map of the stages we moved through from inception and over our first year working together. As part of our commitment to learn about the process, we partnered with UCL whose research will produce a plan of action for the next steps for the network.

[Available here.](#)

We are sharing our story to support others who might be interested in getting started but feel overwhelmed by the task and unsure where to start. We have been there! This document is our encouragement to you to get started.

2. KEY MESSAGES

HONOUR THE PERSON AND THE SUBJECT

At the core of this work is a response that is intended to counter a person's most painful life experiences, take sufficient care to understand and keep learning about trauma. Being trauma-informed is not about mechanically applying a set of principles, it is about building relationships and communities that interrupt the aspects of trauma that inhibit a person's full engagement with the life they want to live.

A WHOLE-SYSTEM APPROACH

An equitable partnership, co-produced & place-based - bring people together who use, design, and deliver a range of services across sectors. Actively seek out people who are not typically included and listen to their recommendations about what is needed locally, as well as ambitions and hopes for change. Equitable membership does not simply occur, established processes may need to change or be created from scratch to welcome new ways of working. We need to be compassionate and understanding towards one another, value differences, slow down, plan and resource where we can. Power needs to be openly considered and shared in a way that feels comfortable for co-producers, not assumed by those representing roles.

LEARN THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Reflect on the process and ask ourselves and others: How are we doing? What do we not know? How can we be trauma-informed together, not just talk about it? What is trauma and what do I/you mean by trauma-informed? Who is missing and why? How do we influence real change and not simply talk about it? What does change look like? Know that change takes time, there is value in small, incremental steps but this will not feel helpful to people at the sharp end of using and delivering services, they need to be part of the conversation.

FIND YOUR COMMON PURPOSE

Developing a common purpose together can support relationship building, there is strength in being part of a group where you know more together than you do individually. There will be recognition of individual differences while aligning to a collective agreement about why you are doing this work, what you want the network to do and how you will achieve those goals. A shared common purpose does not mean that every written word represents a total agreement, individual differences should be valued and need a place to co-exist. Knowing about our individual differences, viewpoints, interests and ways of approaching this work can enhance a strength-based approach.

Developing a common purpose can support relationship building and a feeling that being part of a group you know more together than you do alone.

3. TIMELINE

Our Learning Process



4. OUR COMMON PURPOSE

WHY CREATE A COMMON PURPOSE?

Embarking on this joint process can help you to set out **why** you are doing this work, **what** you want the network to be and **how** you will achieve your goals. It helps you to see your individual differences and interests while agreeing a values led, shared focus. This is particularly helpful for a network as people join with different experiences and vantage points of the system. People care about and take ownership of what they create, so this activity also has the benefit of learning through doing and being part of a shared endeavour that people feel committed to.

Our common purpose was developed between July 2021 - March 2022. The network's working group started the process which was then built on at the network's December 2021 learning event with our 50+ attendees. We came to

see that **“each contribution spoke to a person’s individual lived experience and their unique worldview - the responses highlighted how we all have our own journey and contact with systems and our own experience of trauma which ultimately shape our beliefs around how we should approach trauma as a collective.”**

Octavia Aronne the MEAM Network.

The views, words and sentiments expressed through those activities have entirely shaped our common purpose which also houses our understanding of trauma and the principle we intend to enact through our activities.



FULL PROCESS DOCUMENT



OUR UNDERSTANDING OF TRAUMA

We believe that through the power of community we can create the conditions for connection, healing and change needed to become more trauma-informed across our system. We advocate for a trauma-informed system where we are supportive, grounded and real. Being trauma-informed is how we are with one another, it relates to our felt experience and is not something that is 'done to' people or a target to be 'met'. It requires compassionate hearts, curious minds, a desire to connect and support from the environment.

WHAT IS TRAUMA? **The Body Keeps the Score**

As a network, we recognise that because trauma relates to our most painful life experiences, it is not possible to capture the depth of its meaning in a single description or diagnosis. We aim to honour this by using our learning events to consider and share different approaches that people have felt helped by. We will treat this subject with respect and care and we will not exploit people's pain.

“The core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others. Recovery, therefore, is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections. Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation.” Herman

“Trauma is the result of the most powerful human drives the human body can produce. It demands respect.”

—
Peter Levine

“Our true nature is to be connected. In fact, if that wasn't our true nature, there would be no human beings. The human species – or any species – could not evolve without being grounded in their bodies. You couldn't have a bunch of intellectuals walking around out there in the wild, wondering in an abstract sense about the meaning of life, when there's a saber-toothed tiger lurking behind the next bush.”

—
Dr. Gabor Maté

Trauma can result from a single overwhelming experience or multiple and cumulative. It can occur from a direct experience or through observing and hearing about distressing events. It can be experienced by an individual or groups of people and it can show up in services, whole systems and passed down through generations of families. It can be developmental, vicarious, complex and post-traumatic. Trauma can emerge from an experience that should not have happened (such as violence and abuse), or from the absence of something that should have happened (such as being loved, held in affection and being kept safe).

[Bessel Van Der Kolk](#) and others have helped us to understand how trauma is stored in our bodies “...trauma is not just an event that took place sometime in the past; it is also that imprint left by that experience on our mind, brain and body”. Our personal trauma imprint can impact how we view ourselves and others, and how we trust and relate to one another.

TRAUMA- INFORMED

The importance of making connections

Trauma often brings about disconnection from our mind and body, our community and our very sense of self, so being trauma-informed is about (re)creating connections. Working in a trauma-informed way is about understanding how our history, life experiences and pain may have shaped how we cope, react and relate to one another. Instead of categorising, labelling and blaming a person, (what's wrong with you?), we are curious and compassionate 'what happened and how did you adapt?'. Support is non-judgmental and genuinely cares to understand you.

If trauma is about an experience of overwhelm, something unthinkable and difficult to name or put into words, terror, a lack of felt safety, power and control.

Trauma-informed principles aim to contradict and interrupt those experiences.

“Trauma is not what happens to you. Trauma is what happens inside you, as a result of what happens to you.”

—
Dr. Gabor Maté



5. LEARNING FROM CO- PRODUCTION

Before we get to the details of how we set up the network, we wanted to highlight the importance of co-production which has been a fundamental aim from the network's inception and is weaved throughout the work. We highlight it here to represent our commitment to this way of learning, and to ensure the reader has a clear process to refer to from the beginning. FLIC have created a co-production toolkit, a detailed guide to support your own co-production.

For us, equitable involvement of co-producers has required a continuous consideration of, and responsiveness to, their needs alongside our learning about what we need in place to support this collaboration in a safe and choice-based way. Our learning is based on recommendations from co-producers about the existing gaps in our approach, reflections from the lived experience lead and observations from FLIC.

Having a dedicated person in a funded role to act as a constant ally with co-producers, has been fundamental. Co-producers also had space, away from main network meetings to reflect on the experience and challenges of being part of the network. Our concern that this was counter to the ethos of co-production has not been confirmed by the co-producers.



LEARNING FROM CO-PRODUCERS

* Having authentic opportunities to develop the network, **choice and flexible** ways of contributing (e.g special interest sub-groups).

* Meeting in places that feel **safe and comfortable**. Initial welcome conversations by phone, over a coffee, in a smaller group, etc.

* Time to **build relationships** with the whole group that do not centre professional roles (e.g. levelling ice-breakers and introductions).

* **Clarity** knowing what to expect from being part of the process.

* A more proportionate ratio of experts by experience.

* A strength-based environment - being **seen as a whole person**. Opportunities to identify personal qualities and interests, building on lived experience and developing new skills.



LEARNING FROM THE CO-PRODUCTION LEAD

- * Time to build relationships and **work flexibly** around the needs of co-producers, such as meeting in person and one-to-one, and having less formal group get-togethers.
- * Creating recruitment information about the network, adapting materials to ensure clarity and **friendly, welcoming and accessible language**.
- * Regular **reflection** with peers and a community involved in similar work to learn and problem-solve.
- * **Understanding and responding to people's needs** - Is the person stably housed? Do they have a support system? How do they respond in distress and might their usual ways of coping lead to greater risk that needs to be considered?
- * **Being sensitive** - keeping in mind the emotive nature of the topic, carefully planning how to introduce the term trauma and trauma-informed and being available for follow-up conversations. Sourcing additional learning where this is felt to be helpful.

LEARNING FOR LEADERSHIP

- * **Resourcing the commitment to co-production** - A clear and consistent process for reimbursement (time and travel) and recognition, including a Personal Development budget.
- * **Leadership training** that includes practical application tools.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Together, we have been navigating a new and uncertain experience. We all feel safe with certainty and the need for learning to emerge from a place of not yet knowing involves a degree of discomfort. Co-producers expressed a sense of unfairness at being asked to simply 'do' co-production and they have posed important questions that needed to be responded to, such as: What does the group believe in? How authentic is the work? What are the values? What will I learn? Will it be useful and worth my time? What's the point? What

are we working towards? How should I introduce myself? Will I be understood? (my viewpoint, my ideas, my background and experiences).

At times, it seemed as though co-producers did not trust that they were needed, welcome and brought an important perspective to the work that could not take place without them. We intend to jointly develop clear processes to respond to their recommendations to the group and consider the answers to these questions together.

6. OUR STORY

CAMDEN AND ISLINGTON TRAUMA-INFORMED NETWORK



FLIC

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund for eight years, Fulfilling Lives in Islington and Camden - **FLIC**, is one of twelve [Fulfilling Lives programmes](#). Since 2014, FLIC has been supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantage and improving their experience and outcomes from services. FLIC influences

system change by collaborating with partners to learn about, trial and fund new ways of working. FLIC's experience showed how we need a multi-layered approach with people using, designing and delivering services working together to influence culture change.

WHY A NETWORK?

Hatching ideas and connecting conversations.

"I remember really clearly, the discussion at the Camden multiple disadvantage forum (probably nearly three years ago), we talked about how many of us were working or aspiring to be trauma-informed but everyone defined 'trauma-informed' differently. It was there that hatched the idea of a role and a network to act as a resource; a real source of expertise and learning in Camden and Islington. The aim was to facilitate partnership discussions, connect different parts of the system, share and work to make it co-productive and inclusive."

Alison Bearn, FLIC programme lead (2021).

"Moving away from pockets of good work and linking together more."

Network attendee
October 2021

Envisaging a trauma-informed system, a borough-based systems vision for Camden and Islington

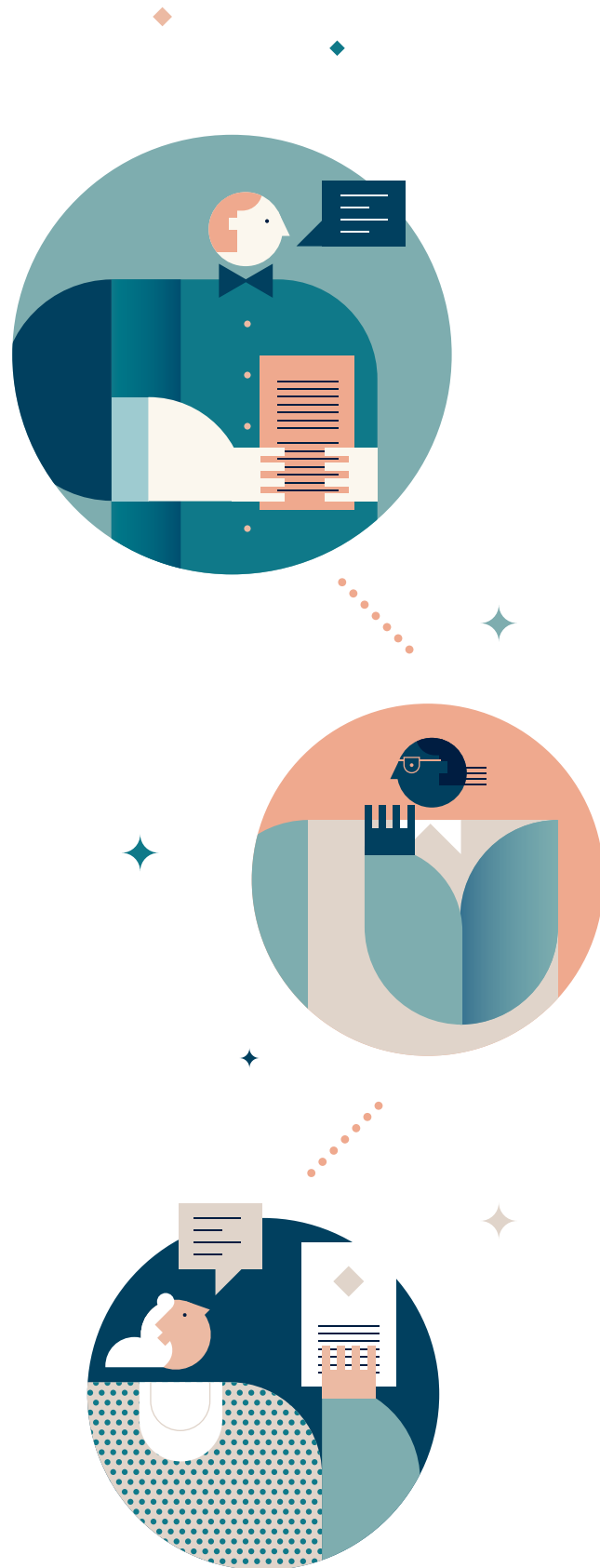
In November 2020, FLIC and the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coalition held an event for local leads: 'Envisaging a trauma-informed system, A borough-based systems vision for Camden and Islington'. Commonly, trauma-informed learning is focused on frontline professionals who return to a system and service that is not designed to incorporate new ways of working. This challenge is added to with no agreement between services about terminology (e.g. informed or aware), and a principles based approach with no agreed minimum standards locally. In this call to action event, we advocated for a trauma-informed approach that is rooted in the wider system with strategic commitment and support; a co-produced and cross-sector trauma-informed network. The idea received support and encouragement with attendees wanting to get involved.

Scoping and exploring, responding to the system and noting opposition

Based on the support from the November event, FLIC board members agreed to fund a role tasked with connecting different parts of the system. We started by meeting with dozens of people across both boroughs from different roles and sectors to identify the range of trauma-informed approaches and gauge support for a network. While some agencies felt confident and established in their approach, the majority agreed they would benefit from collaborating with others to strengthen their own approach and felt the network could act as a supportive community of practice. This positive response from the system further enabled us to continue and we saw this as a desire from the system to (re)connect and learn together.

These conversations enabled us to more realistically test the feasibility of a working group who would drive the network and continue when FLIC ended in May 2022. There was some interest and a firm commitment from [Body and Soul](#).

Opposition must surely exist but it was harder to detect and is perhaps expressed by those missing from network events. This can be addressed in the network's next phase of development.



LEARNING

RESEARCH, LISTEN AND COLLABORATE

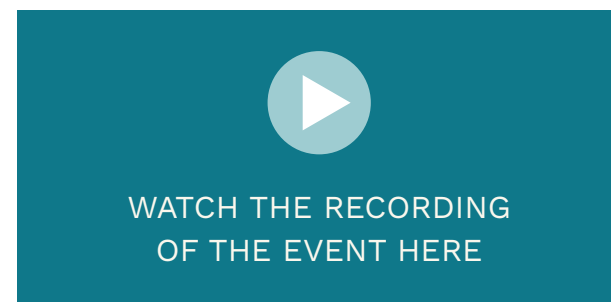
Our achievements have only been made possible through collaborating with passionate members who are invested in this way of working. We needed this sturdy support to get going but to continue to grow and have impact we will need to engage with those less engaged across the system.

In this phase of the work we benefitted greatly from talking to a range of people from different areas, all working towards a similar aim but with different starting points and showing us there is no one right way. We are thankful to [West Yorkshire](#) who shared their local influencing presentations with us, Cornwall's trauma-informed network for sharing their survey and Southend for talking us through their model.

It was helpful to read the comprehensive [Public health mapping of London based approaches](#), we were surprised to see a gap in system wide approaches in London. Does this suggest there is room for other borough based networks? We hope so.

7. LAUNCHING THE NETWORK AND OUR LEARNING EVENTS

Based on everything that had gone before, in June 2021 with just one other organisation - Body and Soul, committed to being part of a working group, we launched the network.



We had a high level of initial engagement that has remained strong. 130 people registered, people joined us with lived experience, from university research departments, accommodation and homelessness settings, those working operationally and strategically, clinicians, colleagues from substance misuse, mental health and criminal justice, all

with a shared interest to learn about trauma-informed approaches. We took this as a positive sign that we were meeting a receptive system with a readiness for change.

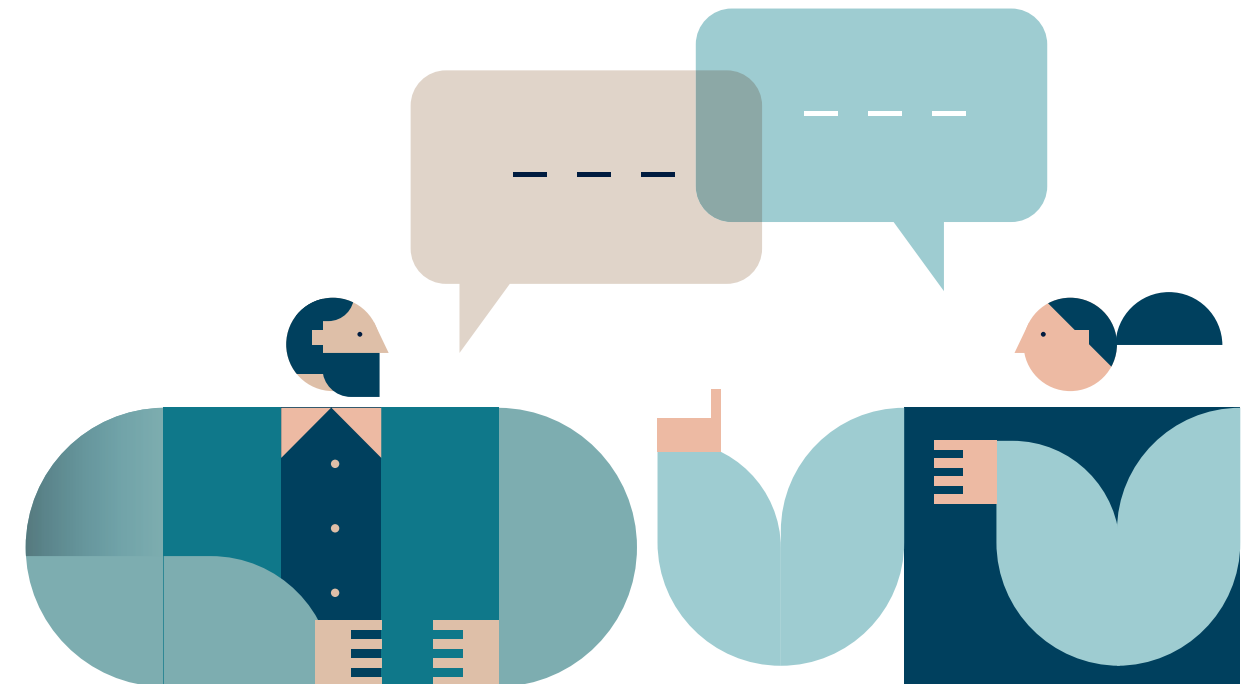
We felt closely aligned with [Plymouth's](#) city wide approach, their values and the care they took to co-produce their work. Their approach was about not pushing trauma onto another group but understanding it is common. We invited Anna Moss from Plymouth to inspire people to imagine what was possible when working together around a common purpose.

Furthering the case for a network approach, Safia Cragg from [MEAM](#) helped us to think about how to make the most impact on the culture of a system by [adopting a systems lens to complex social problems](#). Safia set out key steps, such as **strengthening relationships**

across the system, recognising and experimenting with power - who is/is not invited into the conversation about change? And agreeing a set of underlying values to ground the work and act as a guide.

FLIC summarised our learning about what's needed for a fairer system for people experiencing multiple disadvantage - **collaboration and moving away from disconnected pockets of good practice** - and the plan for a Trauma-Informed Network, a collaborative, co-produced and cross sector, values led network centering people (relationships), place (the local system) and real world impact supported by strategic leads.

Strengthening relationships across the system, recognising and experimenting with power



OUR LEARNING EVENTS

After the network launch, we had our first working group meeting. For clarity, we will take you through the rest of our learning events and then we will come back to the working group - the driving force of our work.

As a network, we hold bi-monthly network learning events where we aim to create a supportive environment to learn together, promote positive practice and advocate for trauma-informed approaches across all services. We welcome a range of speakers and spend time working together to shape the network. We learn in this way to recognise and celebrate difference and the need for a range of perspectives and approaches.

In our first learning event, we felt it was important to explore different perspectives on trauma, and begin the process of jointly creating our common purpose as a network.

OCTOBER 2021



84 people registered for the event.

Learning together

Body and Soul talked about their innovative trauma-informed organisation - they use the neuroscience of relationships and safety to counteract the effects of trauma and adversity - leading with love. We welcomed this approach which is different to many other types of approaches.

Working together

We started developing our Common Purpose in smaller facilitated breakout rooms.

We also asked if people would like to view the documentary Resilience and discuss the film together at the learning event in December.

We summarised our key findings from the surveys to ensure there was a feedback loop for the people who took part.

Learning

- ◆ Equitable approaches and choice based activities
- ◆ We invited attendees to shape events by choosing their preferred topic of interest and speakers.
- ◆ We gathered a vast amount of information from the common purpose activity and underestimated the need to create an equitable process for co-producers to be able to review it so the co-production lead facilitated a session for the group to review the content together.

DECEMBER 2021



We capped attendees at **50 local people**. We intentionally kept the groups small to support conversation.

Learning together

In this event, we welcomed the opportunity to learn from an expert by experience alongside a clinician, both of whom represented the rich variety of interests we want to represent for attendees.

Nell Hardy, from [Response. Ability. Theatre](#). Nell is a theatre director, writer and woman with lived experience of using services. Nell gave us a live experience of what to expect from her communication workshops for experts by experience and services. We were excited to welcome Nell, as a woman with lived experience to have balanced representation of speakers.

[Jo Stubley](#), working group member and lead clinician for the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation trust's Trauma Service delivered a talk on Early Relational Trauma.

Working together

The co-producers designed an activity for us to discuss co-production and power using the Ladder of Participation.

“It is difficult to support people experiencing multiple disadvantage to be involved in the network, without prioritising people’s safety and providing choice around involvement. Co-production and trauma-informed working go hand in hand.” Bex Oldham, Co-production lead.

Learning

- ◆ Pace yourself, big topics require ample time for discussion.
- ◆ We did too much! The power activity was a difficult subject to start discussing and although we carefully planned the session, we would have benefitted from allowing more time for this difficult matter to be digested.
- ◆ We did not manage to have a proportionate representation of experts by experience working alongside those in roles which left people feeling unsafe. This was a real oversight from us and we are thankful to those who have spoken up to ensure this was known to us.
- ◆ Power is a difficult subject to start talking about openly, this was the start of a conversation and we would benefit from more group discussions and learning events on the topic. Perhaps we would have benefitted from an introductory talk on the subject?
- ◆ We learnt that we needed a more democratic process for inviting speakers and clarity around their expectations to ensure network member safety (e.g. trigger warnings, invitational language and genuine choice about involvement in activities).

Calling an approach trauma-informed does not equate with safety!



FEBRUARY 2022



77 people registered for the event.

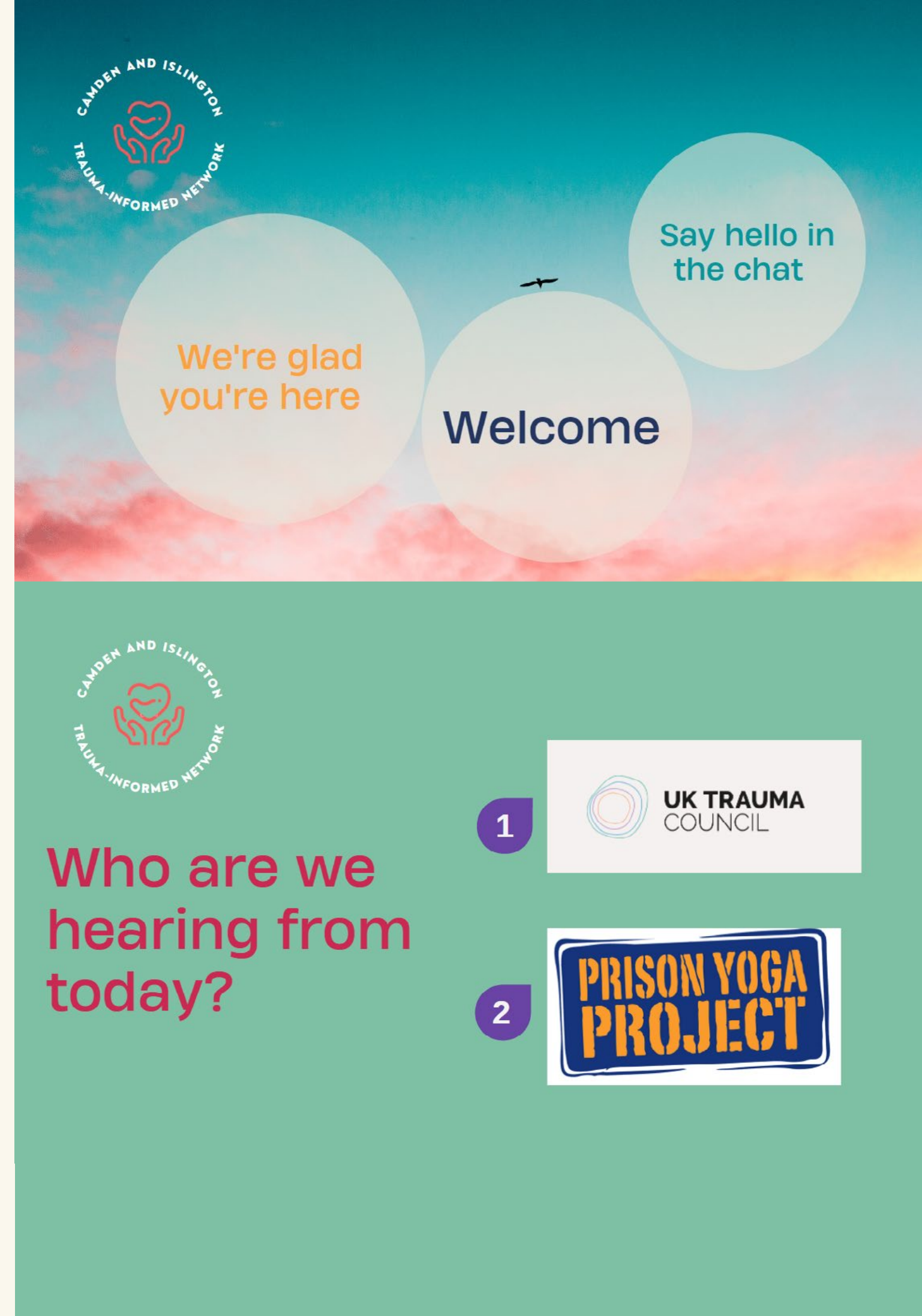
We heard from the [UK Trauma Council](#) and [Prison Yoga project](#). Two services, both in their own unique way, are committed to improving knowledge and awareness about trauma. We were glad to have some balance between body (yoga) and mind (research) with the network expressing an interest to learn about what Bessel Van Der Kolk means in his now famous statement [the Body Keeps the Score](#).

Learning Create a warm welcome to everyone

- ◆ We noticed a tendency to cram a lot into the learning events so we decided to slow down and have more time to experience the session. It was a well-received adjustment.
- ◆ We reflected that we needed to do more to ensure that experts by experience felt welcome at the events. The co-production lead, with the co-producers hosted a more

intentional welcome directed to new attendees and experts by experience. We also invited attendees to stay online after the event for a chat.

- ◆ We have started creating a template for hosting a trauma-informed event with clear, agreed processes for inviting speakers and prioritising safety.



8.

CONNECTING THE SYSTEM THE WORKING GROUP

The trauma-informed network is the collective effort of people with lived (and living) experience and professionals spanning roles across statutory and voluntary sector services. Our work and learning has only been made possible with the interest, effort and continued commitment of all members, particularly those on the working group who have all been navigating other commitments and life through a pandemic. The working group meet bi-monthly (and more frequently when planning activities), we reflect on our process, progress and plan ahead. **See 38 for our working group members.**

Forming

From our scoping and exploring conversations, some people sought to join the working group which was predominantly those with an existing deep commitment to this approach. We also approached amazing people who we knew we could learn from, those with a range of different experiences, lived and professional. It was important to have cross-sector representation (e.g. mental health and homelessness) and not being dominated by one voice, a collaborative approach where we could know more together as a collective. We simply asked people if they would like to be involved and many said yes! We took this as a further indication of the readiness to embrace this work.

The first working group meeting

June 2021

“...being open to new ideas without feeling overwhelmed. New and forming... it’s big...where to start!” **Network attendee 2021.**

In the first working group meeting we spent time getting to know one another, we agreed on the frequency of meetings and shared our uncertainties about the process alongside our ambitions and hopes for the work. Many of us felt a sense of overwhelm at the size of the task, this was important to feel and difficult not to get swallowed up by its potential enormity. We focused our attention on conducting workforce

and service user surveys to map the different trauma-informed approaches across the system, checking interest for the approach and understanding the overlap between different modalities (e.g. PIE, ACEs, Restorative Justice).

Workforce survey findings snapshot

We had 115 respondents from the workforce survey.

75%

more than three quarters of people had experienced trauma

97%

wanted to learn more about how trauma can impact people.

77%

strongly agreed that good relationships can support recovery, healing and increase engagement, 18% agree.

It is helpful to be as clear as possible with the plan, we started with dates! We agreed on practicalities, such as individual capacity, what seemed to be a reasonable meeting frequency for members and where we would plan learning events. A crucial reflection from this first meeting, which came from co-production, was that we are all assuming that we agreed on what it means to be trauma-informed without describing what that means. We realised an important next step was coming back together to start to figure that out.

while we also reached a common agreement about why we were doing this work, what we wanted the network to do and how we could imagine achieving our goals. It was interesting to experience how creating the common purpose did not equate to total agreement but the process itself of discussing these differences was an important process where we learnt more about one another, the subject and the necessary balance between having an agreement that allows flexibility and learning to emerge.

Creating momentum - the second working group meeting

July 2021

In our **second working group planning meeting**, based on reflections from co-production that each of us may have very different ideas about the terms we use, the co-production lead facilitated an activity for us to start developing the group's Common Purpose, looking more closely at what each of us means (and maybe feels confused) in the terms trauma and trauma-informed. We noticed similarities, differences and had a place to build some commonality.

Alongside relationship building in a new and forming group, this activity highlighted our individual differences. For example, some people felt strongly opposed to an ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) model while others felt this validated their experience. These differences needed a place to coexist

Whether or not people have had formal training, people seem to intuitively know what we need and the types of approaches that nurture or stifle progress. Here is a snapshot of just some of the statements that emerged from this initial activity:

What is our Common Purpose and approach? Our Why? What? How?

- ◆ What we do starts here with us and the space we create in this network.
- ◆ It's about culture change.
- ◆ Reducing blame and stigma.
- ◆ How to be trauma-informed about practice that isn't? - i.e. compassionate to services doing their best.

What are our definitions?

- ◆ Asking not how well our clients are engaging with a service but how easy we are to engage with. Valuing a range of engagement styles not just a fixed view of 'good' or 'bad'.
- ◆ Embody, connect with humanity.

What does it look and feel like?

- ◆ Listening authentically, openness to failure and acceptance of relationship with services/people as not being linear.
- ◆ I matter - felt experience.
- ◆ Human connection - I just want to be treated like a human, by someone who acts like a human.

Common Purpose

What we want to do

We want to create a cross-sector, cross-borough network, a place to connect, share learning, promote best practice and advocate for a trauma informed approach. We want this network to act as a lever for capacity building across the system, modelling a supportive, community of practice.

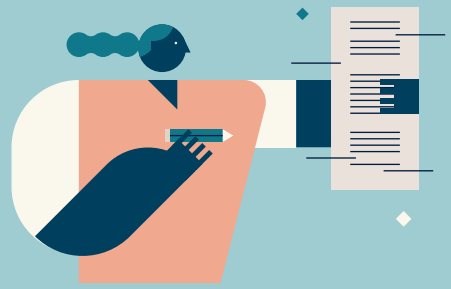
Why we want to do it

We want to see a culture change across our system, where an understanding of trauma is foundational across all services, not an optional add on. We want to be part of a system that can reflect on its processes, asking how well it's designed to accommodate people, not how good people are at accommodating services. We want to be part of a system committed to

not doing harm, enabling safety and facilitating human connection.

How we're going to do it

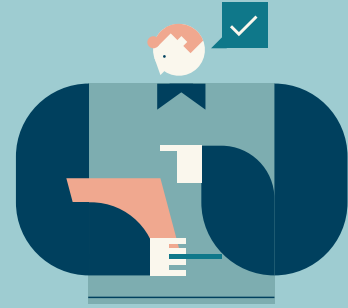
What we do starts with us and the space we create in this network. We want our work to be inclusive and co-produced with people using, delivering and commissioning services. Relationships require us to listen authentically, be open to failure and accept all people as complex. We value opportunities for connection (welcoming, non-judgmental, empathic, compassionate). Being Trauma-informed is not a badge to endorse a project, rather it is a deep understanding of people and an approach to engagement that requires reflection, conversation and compassion.



Learning

Providing structure with flexibility

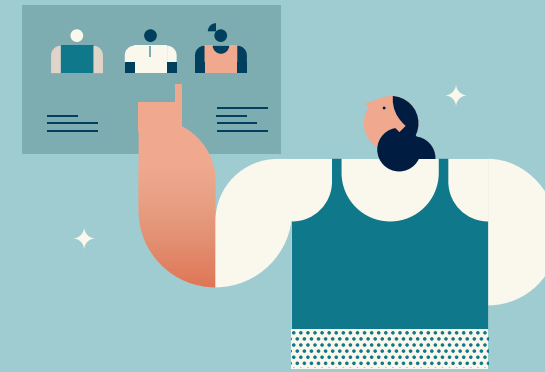
There is a delicate balance between facilitating activities that support an unfolding process. Too much structure stifles creativity, not enough structure and we move from complexity into chaos. There are likely to be a range of felt experiences within the group with some people wanting to ‘know’, as though someone somewhere knows the ‘answer’. While others will enjoy more free flowing discussions. How to accommodate all is an ongoing process.



Learning

Ongoing clarity for all members

People joined our working group at different times and members’ capacity naturally ebbs and flows which means involvement in activities is not equal across all members all of the time. It can be helpful for new (and existing) members to have a thorough induction (or recap) into the group’s key activities, such as the one above. We learned this because not having this clarity for people led to unnecessary confusion. A process document, such as this one, can be a useful accompaniment for new members, a place to acknowledge the work that has been done and notice what is missing.



Learning

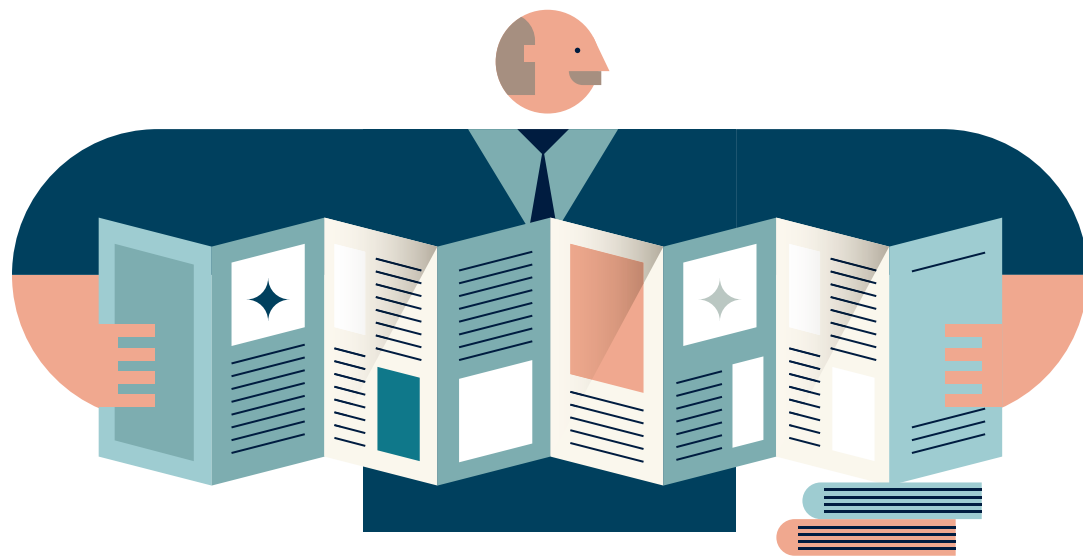
Intersectional representation, who is missing?

We have a good representation of people across sectors but we are vastly disproportionately white and we have too few co-producers compared to those in professional roles. We currently lack intersectional representation and aims. We plan to address this through more intentional, directed recruitment.

9. NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCE SHARING

Having a network created opportunities to connect, and be strengthened by others doing similar work. For example, Camden's Integrated Early Years' service had an existing partnership with the [WAVE trust](#) and a Trauma-informed Communities volunteer training programme; they have also been strong advocates for Camden to become a trauma-informed borough before we even launched.

Thanks to our partnership with them, we had the opportunity for up to sixty people to attend a free online screening of the documentary [Resilience](#) - The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope. This was a fantastic demonstration of some of the benefits to be gained from learning across service boundaries, particularly when there's a shared, common purpose and a feeling of reciprocal learning.



NOVEMBER 2021
Resilience film screening

47

people signed up to view online.

6

experts by experience attended an in-person screening with a pre-screening context setting presentation, post-film chat and sharing a meal together.

Learning

Honour the subject and remember it always relates to lived experiences

Our co-production experience helped us to consider how to promote and facilitate the event in a safe way. For us, this meant holding an in person screening with a context setting presentation beforehand and a meal afterwards where we could have an informal conversation to share the experience. It was also important for us to anticipate a range of emotional responses, during and after the screening, and consider support needs.

10.

LEARNING & VISION

RESEARCH AND NEXT STEPS

As part of our commitment to learning, we partnered with UCL who conducted research to systematically identify the actions needed to support the development of the network. We elected to use a Delphi analysis because it is designed to equally represent the views of all those who take part, with no one voice or sector dominating. This research was part of asking ourselves what do we not know? and making use of an independent research partner to help us to know more. It was also a different route for a range of people to shape the network. It will provide us with a plan of action and inform our next steps.

Our research is available here



11. WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

The working group meets bi-monthly. The structure of these meetings is informed by our learning points that help us to identify gaps in process, feedback from co-producers, and never feels like enough time! We are happy to share our meeting agendas, please get in touch.

Annie Scarborough

Counselling Service Coordinator & Counsellor CGL

“Simply, I became involved to continue improving life for all of us in our local community and beyond. In CGL Camden’s counselling and family services, we see how often substance use is linked to trauma and re-traumatisation and I strongly believe that becoming trauma-informed can contribute greatly to healing in our community. A network is vital because we are stronger, smarter, more efficient and more supported together.”

Benaifer Bhandari

CEO Hopscotch Women’s Centre

“As CEO of Hopscotch Women’s Centre, we have unapologetically worked in a trauma-informed way for years and have found this to be the most respectful, efficient and sustainable way to reach those who have faced disadvantage. For Camden and Islington to become trauma-informed boroughs it would be a huge step towards empowering residents who deserve so much more.”

Beverley Latania

Head of Mental Health Social Work, Islington Adult Social Care

“I wanted to join the group to explore how social workers and social care can really embed the TIA into our work. To share the skills and knowledge we develop from this network and from others to a wider cohort of organisations and services in order to raise awareness but also to support them to sign up to the values and principles of trauma-informed care.”

Bex Oldham

Co-production lead FLIC

“My responsibility is to support people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage to be part of influencing systems to change. The co-producers I work alongside passionately advocate for this approach and want to learn more about it. Co-producing the network seemed like an amazing opportunity for people with lived experience to both learn and have a voice to shape the network. I have supported the co-producers to be involved in shaping the network’s activities in ways that are most comfortable for them.”

I have gained an understanding of the flexibility and creativity needed to support co-producers to be meaningfully and equally involved. ”

David Bell

Body and Soul

“ On what the team have nurtured at the C&I TI network, I cannot overstate the value and the joy of participating in a forum that genuinely privileges the voice of lived experience – and ‘lived’ not just during some acute moment of traumatic crisis, but a grinding, day-to-day, embodied perspective on what it is actually like to seek support and access services in Camden and Islington. I am hugely grateful for the networking element of the forum and for the opportunity for us all to learn together, through really well-curated sessions, which foreground crucial issues within this whole arena of trauma, and how we work with it and understand it.

Most important of all, though, this network has the potential to become a movement for change, and we must not let that opportunity slip through our fingers! Everyone in this group is trying to do something very difficult and very urgent – disrupting deeply entrenched power imbalances and injecting a bit of much-needed humanity and respect

into the way health and social care is done. That is not a quick or an easy ask. Meanwhile, for service providers, I feel like this is a really significant opportunity to make sure we check our power and our biases/assumptions, while also celebrate success where we find it. ”

Jo Stubbley

Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Clinical lead for the Trauma Service Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

“ Leading the Adult Tavistock Trauma Service continues to teach me the importance of needing to be trauma-informed in everything we do. This is in the context of a system (the NHS) that can and has been re-traumatising to many. Learning from the network has been so helpful and my wish to join up with other trauma-informed organisations grows. ”

Sarah Turley

Street population coordinator for Islington Council.

“ As frontline services, our focus is

on ‘doing’. I think it’s important to make time for critical thinking about whether our actions are helpful and effective for those we serve. The trauma-informed network is important for me, as it provides a space for reflection and critical thinking. It also provides an opportunity to connect with others, crucially including service users, where we can share ideas, learn and collaborate with each other, to identify and enable best practice.

I hope the TIN will help to create a consistent trauma-informed approach across all services in C&I, where all services will meet people with the same high level of care, compassion and respect, and that the network will support staff to work in this way.

I am passionate and deeply committed to addressing system gaps and barriers, to ensure equity of access for people experiencing homelessness. I bring my experience, knowledge and passion to the network. ”

Sally Strange

Co-producer / Expert by experience with special interests in research and strategy.

“ I wanted to join the TIN’s working group to ensure that there was service user representation within the network. I feel that it is important that service

user voices are heard because they are ostensibly the *raison d’être* for the network’s existence. What is the purpose of sharing learning, resources and practice if it is not ultimately positively impacting upon service users? Service users’ priorities for care and research can vary from what is deemed a priority by researchers and clinicians and I feel that this is another area in which I can help voice our community’s needs.

It is also valuable learning as I gain a deeper understanding of my own trauma and as I think of disseminating this information to other service users, to ensure that we are being respectful of each others’ traumatic experiences. I think it is important to understand, within the context of the co-production group, how trauma affects us all differently and how it can manifest as such different presentations. I am using this improved understanding to try and encourage more compassion towards my fellow co-producers. ”

Lawrence McDonnell

Co-producer with a special interest in learning and giving back

“ It’s simple really, being trauma-informed is about treating people the way you would want to be treated; put yourself in other people’s shoes and think that that’s you. Being listened to and understood by someone who was trauma-informed, helped me to make



important connections between some of the events in my early life and helped me to realise that I did nothing wrong; I was not broken but I was hard wired to think I was. The experience I had with my psychologist rubbed off on me and now it's my turn to give back. I want to help others the way I have been helped because it helps me too. You can't buy that anywhere. But sometimes I do feel very angry that I didn't have the right help sooner, people should talk more but you have to take great care with the whole process and take your time.

”

Liam Hall

Locality Leader, Camden's Integrated Early Years service (IEYS)

“ The Integrated Early Years Service is committed to delivering trauma-informed services and resources to families with children under 5 years old. One aspect of this work is to support a trauma-informed community. The aim being for people who live and work in Camden to have an understanding

of the causes of trauma either within the early years or across the life span: Promoting resilience and an empathic response within communities. Joining the Camden and Islington Trauma-Informed Network has enabled the IEYS to meet with a range of organisations to, discuss, explore and learn about trauma and its impact across the life span within a common aim, to raise awareness of, to reduce the causes of and the impact of trauma on people's lives. ”

Michelle Butterly

Mental Health Lead, FLIC

“ The Network is important because it aims to facilitate the creativity and openness to learning that we need to be trauma-informed, not as an end point but as a way of being together. Focusing on the system, we recognise and value the range of perspectives we need to positively influence the culture in any meaningful way. I'm thankful to be part of a collective who are so committed to doing better and not simply accepting the status quo. ”

Nicola Saunders

Psychotherapy Services manager SHP

“ Why does a network feel important to me? The network has provided a

place to think and reflect on working in a trauma-informed way to work with other practitioners.

I wanted to hear about other practitioners' experiences. Increased knowledge and meeting colleagues I would not usually meet.

What do I feel I contribute - I hope all of the above. Space for colleagues to think and reflect, share my experiences and knowledge. ”

Octavia Aronne

Systems Practice Manager, The MEAM Network

“ At MEAM, an integral part of our Approach is supporting areas to develop and embed trauma-informed practice. The Camden and Islington Trauma-Informed Network offers a space to bring people with a diverse range of lived and living experience, understanding and contact with trauma to share, learn, and collectively act towards change. Collaborating with FLIC and the Network partner members embodies our ethos of working together to create truly trauma informed systems and do more to improve care and compassion for communities and people experiencing multiple disadvantage. ”

12. CONCLUSION & THANK YOU

A special thanks to every member of the working group, for keeping going, believing in one another and sharing the qualities and skills that strengthen us as a group.

We exist because of traumatic life experiences and needing to do better by one another. Any celebration and recognition of the work contained here needs to honour that.

What we have jointly created as a network has been made possible through compassion, commitment, a desire to learn and grow and courage to join something new, forming and unknown.

Thanks also to other areas who have generously shared their work with

us. Plymouth encouraged us to just get started, we hope other areas feel encouraged to do the same. You are better together and know more as a collective than you do on your own. Change is slow and difficult but together we can achieve and know so much more.

The end of this guide is the beginning of the network's second year. We intend to grow and be strengthened by new members and new opportunities to influence the system.

We are thankful to everyone who has contributed to the network, by attending events, taking part in the research, reaching out and saying hello and caring enough to speak up and give feedback. We hope you have felt heard.

REFERENCES

- All FLIC resources, including the Co-production Toolkit and UCL research are available [here](#).
- Thanks to [Debbie Sorkin](#) and [Homeless Link](#) for their Systems Leadership training in 2021. And to [Fulfilling Lives Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham](#) and [Keren Treisman](#) for the trauma-informed organisational and leadership training April 2022, both of these free resources we are grateful to have attended.

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- [The Wisdom of Trauma](#)
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Useful Resources & Further Reading

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- [Haines, S](#) (2019). The Politics of Trauma: Somatics, Healing, and Social Justice. North Atlantic Books (2019)
- [The Knot: Poverty, Trauma and Multiple Disadvantage Responses](#)
A collection of essays exploring the knots between poverty, trauma and multiple disadvantage.
- Lankelly Chase, [System Behaviours](#)
- [MEAM](#)
The MEAM Approach helps local areas design and deliver better coordinated services for people experiencing multiple disadvantage.
- Myron's Maxims, The Art of Change Making: <https://www.leadershipcentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/The-Art-of-Change-Making.pdf>
- Plymouth [Trauma Informed Practice](#)
- Prison Yoga Project - [Prison Yoga](#)
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- Stubley, J & Young, L. (2021). Complex Trauma: The Tavistock Model (Tavistock Clinic Series) Routledge.
- Sweeny et al (2018) A paradigm shift: relationships in trauma-informed mental health services <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6088388/>

- Transforming Psychological Trauma, A Knowledge and Skills Framework for the Scottish Workforce <https://transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot/media/x54hw43l/nationaltraumatrainingframework.pdf>
- **UK Trauma Council**
The UK Trauma Council creates evidence-based resources to improve professionals and carers' understanding of the nature and impact of trauma.
- **WAVE Trust**
WAVE's vision is a safer world where levels of violence are reduced and children's physical health, mental health and life chances are maximised as they are not adversely impacted by early life trauma.
- **Winhall, Jan** (2021)
Treating Trauma and Addiction with the Felt Sense Polyvagal Model: A Bottom-Up Approach, Routledge.
- Young Minds, Addressing Trauma and Adversity: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/addressing-trauma-and-adversity/>
- **Resilience** - The Film
Resilience: The Biology of Stress and The Science of Hope is a one-hour documentary about how extreme or prolonged stressful experiences in childhood can affect brain development and impact health and social problems across the lifespan.



**Camden and Islington
Trauma-informed network**