

Reflection on the year

Anne – Cambridgeshire

When it came to my reflection of the year, I was asked to think about three questions. So to keep things simple, I'm going to deal with each one in order.

Firstly, what has it been like to be involved with the local and national MEAM over the last year?

It has been a breath of fresh air to be part of MEAM activities, both locally in Cambridge where I came from today and nationally. I have finally met some people who think like me, after many years in the ideological wilderness. I've found people at MEAM are passionate about human beings and go the extra mile to make a difference to the lives of those with multiple disadvantage like myself, through working towards systems change. It's been a privilege to be involved and I am grateful to the MEAM teams both locally and nationally for their generosity in enabling that through co-production. I feel as if the voice I had silenced by systems failures is being restored to me by inclusion.

Second, what has been good about the year?

Everything I have been involved in has been encouraging, inspiring and has given me hope to see real change. From the Cordis Bright evaluation, where I have learned so much about research, through being involved in MEAM's national policy work as an expert by experience, to the very exciting set up of the Cambridge co-production group that I am a member of. I was especially delighted to speak at a local commissioning meeting where I gave my story and hopefully helped my local area to obtain funding for a further three years.

Finally, what are your hopes and expectations for the event day?

I am hoping that today we will all learn more about how to successfully transform local systems, through collaboration, partnership and supporting areas to co-produce. I am expecting to enjoy myself, meet great new people and feel empowered to go on with my MEAM activities.