User Involvement Policy

There are many different ways to involve service users in our organisation and work. This policy is designed to support the staff in engaging service users in participation models of user involvement. Participation models provide opportunities for service users to participate alongside, and on an equal footing, with professionals to make decisions about a range of issues. Participation models of user involvement are characterised by significant or on-going time commitments, specialist skills or requirements and/or a commitment to undertake training and development. These protocols draw upon work undertaken by our partners in order to ensure consistency and best practice.

Examples of user participation are

- User representation on decision making groups
- User led activities
- Recruitment and selection of staff
- Mystery shopping
- Access to Training

We have adopted the PCT model of User involvement and consultation which is a very thorough and although we do not have the significant resources of the PCT to invest we commit ourselves to the following good practice method:

Ensuring effective user participation– guidance for good practice
This is a list of issues to consider when involving service users in meetings, projects and working groups. It looks like a lengthy list – don't be put off – many are simple to implement and will make a lot of difference to the service users you are working with:

- Do identify a lead person for the project, who will act as the main point of contact for the service user
- Do allow sufficient time to engage users in the project
- Do provide a minimum of two weeks notice for any meetings or events (preferably 4 weeks)
- Do provide service users with adequate information about the role and the responsibilities of the task
- Do provide opportunities for service uses to meet informally with the project lead to: a)Inform them of the project b) Allow them to raise any concerns
- Do ensure a minimum of two service users can participate in meetings/projects. This to ensure the service user is not isolated, they can have mutual support and users remain represented if one service user cannot attend
- Do ensure meetings are held at appropriate time for Service Users[1]
- Do ensure venues are accessible to all participants
- Do provide a map and clear travel instructions including how to access the venue when they arrive at the site
- Do check service user requirements[2]

---

[1] For example, those who work will find it difficult to participate in user involvement if all the activity takes place inside normal office hours, older people may not feel comfortable attending meetings after dark and those living with chronic conditions can meetings first in the morning difficult to attend.
[2] Venues need to be accessible to those with disabilities Respond to user needs e.g. for a particular kind of chair

- Do send out papers a minimum of a week in advance –preferably by post/delivery. Service user may not have access to email and lengthy documents can be expensive to print out
- Do let service users know what you expect to be done with any paperwork you send out
- Do negotiate ground rules for the meeting e.g. questions to be taken through the chair or one-person-speaks at a time
- Do respond to enquiries from service users within reasonable time limits. They understand we are busy people, but they are giving us their time and commitment and we need to respect that
- Do make the purpose of the meeting explicit.
- Do avoid jargon (e.g. cost pressures) and acronyms (e.g. PCT and BME) to encourage full user participation. The Chair and project lead need to ensure this happens
- Do develop a system for providing regular and timely feedback to service users. It takes time for organisational change to occur and service users need to know the outcomes of their involvement and/or when a decision is likely to be made
- Do provide catering for meetings involving service users and check catering requirements
- Do ensure that service users participating in decision making groups are able to participate in the The Dalgarno Trust service user 'payment' scheme
- Do contact service users regularly to remind them about meetings and to ensure that everything is working smoothly

Rewards & Training

It is important to recognise that user participation is on the whole a voluntary activity, and people are giving freely of their time. In recognition & support of this The Dalgarno Trust will initiate an Awards & Incentives scheme as well as being able to provide lunch & travel fares where necessary.

Signed   Conta Rowan Hamilton
_____
                                              Director

Date   feb 2018
_____

Review Date __feb 2019_____