



Service User
Involvement and Activity
Plan
26.6.17

1. Introduction

Blue Triangle as an organisation believe that our Service Users' should have the 'right to be involved' in decisions and actions which affect them, and also be able to influence what activities they want to be take part in. This plan describes the framework we intend to work within in order to enable our Service Users to achieve this.

We will outline our commitment to empowering Service Users by involving them in decisions and processes that affect them. It's not just about what we do but also how we actually do it. Even though the majority of people Blue Triangle work with are homeless and require support to enable them to move out of homelessness and onto settled accommodation, we recognise many of these people also have useful skills and abilities that should be utilised.

Historically as an organisation we have been committed to delivering a variety of Service User involvement processes and activities. We now want to take this further and initiate a structured plan to shape how we achieve this.

Our aim is to involve Service Users meaningfully, and create a platform where they feel they can challenge us if we fail to fulfil our commitment in the varying levels of involvement detailed within the framework of this plan. Whilst we recognise the importance of a needs led approach to engaging with Service Users, it is our intention to combine the needs led approach with a more innovative strength based approach. The needs led approach identifies Service Users problems and focuses on trying to

fix them where the strength based approach focuses on identifying the Service Users strengths, skills and abilities and builds on these as the starting point. The objective will be to focus on what they do have as opposed what they don't have and trying to fix it. It's not an either or, it's a both and ...

2. Vision

Our vision is to support Service Users to identify and build on what they already have by helping them to realise they have unique skills individual to them which will enable them to realise their current situation does not define who they are or where they can go. Our model will have Service User involvement and activity at the core of our services and our aim is to ensure Service Users are:

- meaningfully involved;
- more in control;
- more able to build resilience
- more connected
- enabled to make meaningful decisions

3. Outcomes

The implementation of this Service User Involvement and Activity Plan will achieve the following outcomes:

1. Service User Involvement and Activity framework developed and embedded in practice across the organisation;
2. Staff Awareness of Service User involvement and activities is increased;

3. Range, quality and quantity of involvement and activities is increased;
4. Policies, procedures and systems relating to service user involvement and activities will be fully integrated;
5. Monitoring framework will be developed and embedded across the organisation;
6. Evaluation framework will be developed and embedded across the organisation

4. Why is Service User Involvement and Activity Important?

Firstly it is important to understand the difference between “involvement” and “activity”. The following definitions are taken from a paper written by GHN (Glasgow Homelessness Network) in 2007, and aptly describe the meaning.

‘Definition of Service User Involvement

Service User involvement is a way of enabling people to participate in the decision and actions which affect them.

In practice this means:

- Recognising that people affected by homelessness have the right to have their opinions and perspectives heard;
- Creating the structures to allow their perspective to be heard;
- Acting on what is being said;
- Feeding back to people on the impact that their involvement has had.

Involvement is a way of ensuring that we value the experiences and promote the involvement of people who have unique insight into the services we run and the policies we make. By taking account of this experience, the quality and effectiveness of services and policies can continually improve.

Definition of Service User Activity

Service User activity refers to activities in which Service Users can participate, lead on, or facilitate. These activities can be delivered by staff; facilitated by staff either within projects or within the community; led and delivered by Service Users for other Services Users; or facilitated by Service Users for other Service Users.

In practice this means various activities but could include:

- Taking part in cooking sessions led by staff or external agency;
- Taking part in group sessions led by staff or external agency;
- Taking part in some sporting activity led by staff or external agency;
- Joining community clubs led by external agencies;
- Service User leading on cooking sessions (possibly have a particular expertise or favourite dish they would like to share)
- Service User teaching other Service Users a particular skill they may have that they are willing to share (could be teaching a musical instrument, some form of arts or crafts, etc.)
- Service User leading their own group session within project facilitated by staff;
- Service User running their own community based group. ‘

Blue Triangle also believe, as quoted by GHN that people should become involved and participate because “**they want to** “, not because “**they are told to**”.

Some academic research suggests an empowered person is one who has control over the decisions which impact on their life, and personal empowerment is driven by an individual’s belief in their capability to influence events. Empowerment is where individuals exercise their rights and achieve their potential and aspirations.

Boyle, D., Coote, A., Sherwood, C., & Slay, J. (2010) among other things highlight the significant importance of the relationship between ‘providers’ and ‘servicer users’, these relationships need to be productive to ensure effective outcomes are achieved with and for Service Users.

Blue Triangle recognise our Service Users require support to address the issues that have led them into homelessness or have developed as a result of becoming homeless. By working with Service Users and supporting them through their journey out of homelessness we will encourage our Service Users to get involved and participate in activities both within the organisation and within our communities preparing them for sustainable independence. This will enable Service Users to:

- Enable them to have fun and enjoy their lives;
- Provide appropriate encouragement and support to improve the quality of their lives;

- Assist them to develop connections with others and within communities.

5. Model of Approach - Involvement and Activity

Empowering Environments

Before any involvement or activities take place, projects will be supported to create empowering environments. Creating empowering environments for Service Users is the “foundation laying” of effective Service User involvement. The following key elements of an empowering environment must be in place before it is decided which type of involvement is facilitated.

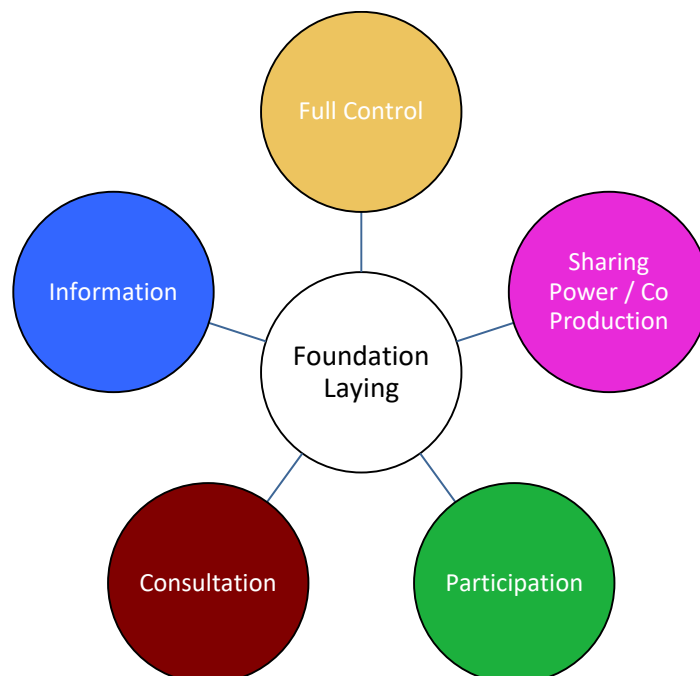
- Service Users have contributed to their own needs assessment;
- Service Users have received a welcome and induction;
- Staff are friendly, welcoming and non-judgemental;
- Service Users receive personal, social, emotional and motivational support;
- Service Users’ personal learning and development is encouraged;
- Service Users’ confidentiality is respected;
- Service Users have access to advice and information, that is jargon free and accessible; and
- Service Users are able to develop, or retain, their social networks.

Involvement Spectrum

We will develop a model which will promote 5 areas of involvement detailed in the 'Involvement Spectrum' diagram below. No area is better than the other and all areas can be combined in different contexts or circumstances. Staff will be trained so they develop an understanding of what this means and how it operates in practice.

The diagram shows the varying areas of involvement and clearly demonstrates the importance in laying the foundation first, which is key to achieving success across the involvement spectrum.

Involvement Spectrum



Full Control: Service Users control the decision making.

Sharing Power /

Co-production Shared decisions and responsibility, including governance level. Service Users can have influence and determine outcomes.

Participation: Encouraging people to take part in shaping services, policies or perceptions. Service Users can make suggestions and influence outcomes.

Consultation: Asking people what they think of a service or policy. Service Users have limited influence.

Information: Telling people about a service or policy. Service Users have no influence.

It has been recognised by many academics in the field of homelessness that the prevention and alleviation of homelessness can only be achieved with the active participation of people who hold unique insight and experiences that planners and providers usually don't. It is also recognised within this field that empowering Service Users is another key focus to achieve this. Blue Triangle like many others in this field want to ensure that our processes involve Service Users in a meaningful way throughout the organisation.

Blue Triangle also believe we can't "make" people empowered, but we can provide opportunities, resources and support that they need to enable them to be involved and gain some form of control of their lives;

therefore we can create what Glasgow Homelessness Network refers to as “empowering environments”.

There are 4 levels of involvement which are often referred to as the 4 Ps:

- Person
- Practice
- Policy/Planning
- Perception

Service user involvement should always have an impact at the PERSON level, but should also impact on one or more of the other 3 levels.

Activity Wheel

In addition to the levels of involvement we intend to encourage and support projects to deliver a variety of ‘activities’ from what we refer to as “the Activity Wheel”. The Activity wheel correlates with our Outcome Monitoring tool, Better Futures, linking closely with the 5 outcome areas of Accommodation, Health, Safety and Security, Social and Economic Wellbeing and Employment and Meaningful Activity

The Activity Wheel has 5 subject areas:

Activity Wheel



We will develop an organisational Involvement and Activity Menu (IAM), which will be similar to that of a food menu with options and choices. There will be the flexibility within the format for staff to personalise and adapt these 'menus' to suit the needs of the project and its Service Users.

6. Development Framework

This section details how the development of the Involvement Activity Plan will be taken forward.

Steering Group

A steering group has been established and terms of reference have been agreed. The group consists of a mix of senior managers, project and Assistant Project Managers and project workers who will assist to develop and format the IAP and take responsibility for implementing and monitoring the plan over the next 3 years to ensure that we meet our objectives and outcomes. The group will be chaired by the Area Managers responsible for Service User Involvement.

Meetings will take place bi-monthly and group members will be expected to undertake or contribute to various tasks during the development of the plan and where relevant other tasks will be passed to a task and finish group as detailed below.

Task and Finish Groups

Task and Finish Groups will be established to take forward work from the steering group to ensure other staff and service users are meaningfully involved in the development plan. This is an alternative model to short term working groups. The steering group will identify different staff members across the association to form a group

temporarily to lead on a piece of work according to the skills required. There is no need for any of the steering group to sit on the task and finish group but they may decide it is necessary / important. Rather than typing up extensive minutes each group that is set up will be given a terms of reference to work to and asked to complete the task, complete relevant form and present back to steering group by an agreed deadline. The focus is on completing actions or tasks rather than on writing minutes.

SUIA Information / Training Sessions

These sessions will be undertaken in a variety of ways depending on the content but will include sessions/events on areas such as new developments; practice change; new members; new groups; legislation; processes; training on new activities.

Some of these sessions will be specifically for staff and we expect to have no more than 4 per year. Project or Assistant Project Managers will identify suitable workers to attend these meetings and the worker will disseminate information from meetings to their respective projects. Every project should be represented at every meeting, responsibility will be rotated and shared between all staff. Project Managers are ultimately responsible ensuring their project is represented and information is disseminated after the meetings.

Sessions and events will be undertaken as and when required and will be taken forward as part of the Involvement and Activity Action Plan.

Some of these sessions will include staff and Service Users.

Action Plan

An Action Plan will be developed which will clearly lay out the tasks required to take forward this Involvement and Activity Plan to reach the desired outcomes.

Engaging Staff and Service Users

Staff and Service Users engagement is a key element in taking forward the development of the aforementioned 'Action Plan'. We recognise the importance of staff and service user's input into the process to ensure the ethos of the new model becomes embedded within the organisation. Various methods of approach will be developed to ensure engagement at various stages of the process is meaningful.