



Service User Involvement Policy

Introduction

Bath Mind believes that the individuals who use our services and their carers should have clear, ongoing opportunities to become involved at every level of our organisation. This belief extends to valuing the inclusion of individuals who have been past users of Bath Mind services as well as those who have been users of mental health services provided by other organisations.

We want to maintain a culture in which the experiences of those who live or have lived with mental distress inform our strategies, policies and activities.

The involvement of mental health service users is seen as an ongoing, two-way process and not a series of “one-off” exercises.

It is the responsibility of every worker and volunteer to play their part in putting this policy into practice by encouraging and supporting users of services to become involved.

Aims

There are two main aims underpinning our belief that service users should have a voice in shaping the direction and operation of Bath Mind –

1. To empower individuals and raise self-esteem
2. To support the development of high quality services that are reflective of and responsive to the needs of individuals who live with mental distress

Methods

Planning:

- **Individual support planning:** service users will be fully involved in creating and reviewing any plan for their support. Nothing will be included in a support plan without the agreement of the client.
- **Strategic planning:** service users will be offered a number of opportunities each year to contribute to organisational strategy. These arrangements will be flexible and may vary over time but might include questionnaires, discussion at meetings and planned contacts with trustees. Ideas and feedback received in these ways will be considered by trustees each year when reviewing the Strategic Plan.

Service Delivery:

- **Staff recruitment:** selection panels will include at least one representative of the recruiting service and/or a trustee who is a user of mental health services. Support

for participating service users will be provided as required and related expenses will be paid.

- **Voluntary work:** service users are encouraged to become involved in voluntary work delivering or providing practical support in all of our services, as well as in the core office. Training will be provided as required to support this involvement. Related necessary expenses will be paid.
- **Paid employment:** Bath Mind is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications for paid employment opportunities from users of mental health services. Users of services will also be encouraged to undertake occasional casual paid employment for the organisation which may be required from time to time.

Policy Development:

Users of services can become involved in the review and development of policies through the mechanisms described below for involvement with service monitoring & evaluation, the Membership Scheme and the Committee of Management.

Service Monitoring & Evaluation:

All users of Bath Mind services will be offered opportunities to provide feedback to inform the monitoring and evaluation of those services. These opportunities may take a variety of forms including individual support plan reviews, individual feedback forms, surveys, a clear and simple complaints procedure, discussions and meetings. The monitoring & evaluation of services will impact on policies, practices and procedures. All feedback will be considered within the context of striving for continuous service improvement.

Membership Scheme:

All users of Bath Mind services are encouraged to become members of Bath Mind with a greatly reduced membership fee. Membership provides a range of benefits including voting rights at the Annual General Meeting and other Extraordinary Meetings of Bath Mind. Votes and feedback from discussions at meetings will inform strategy, policies, practices and procedures. All feedback from members will be considered within the context of striving for continuous service improvement. Membership also entitles an individual to apply to become a trustee.

Committee of Management:

The Committee of Management seeks to maintain a membership of trustees that includes up to 50% who are users of mental health services. All trustees are provided with training and support as required to enable them to participate fully in the work of the committee. Related necessary expenses are paid. Becoming a trustee provides an opportunity to become fully involved in planning strategy, finance, policy and activity for Bath Mind.