

Guidance on Developing a Strategy and Action Plan for the Recruitment of Service Users and Carers into Engagement Activities

Recruitment of service users and carers requires consideration of the personal experiences of people living with or caring for people with mental health conditions.

Below are check lists and suggested headings to provide guidance for creating a recruitment strategy that organisations might like to follow. This reflects best practice from around the world in how service users and carers are recruited to engage in activities.

2.1 Where is the organisation now?

2.1.1 Please consider the following check list of best practice in recruiting service users and carers. How close are you to this now?

2.1.2 Context/organisational culture

- a) Your organisation has a strong commitment to service user and carer co-production in all aspects of recruitment of service users and carers into engagement roles i.e. job description development, short listing, interviewing
- b) You have a budget for service user and carer recruitment
- c) Service users and carers involved in recruitment have training, if they need it, to improve the quality of selection processes
- d) You are actively creating opportunities within your service user and carer communities to build capacity for engagement
- e) You have a contact person within your organisation to take enquiries from prospective applicants or interested service users and carers who want to participate in any of your engagement activities

2.1.3 The characteristics of the service users and carers involved in engagement within your organisation are documented

- a) You have a wide range of voices and groups including minorities and those with protected characteristics engaged in your organisation
- b) The service users and carers involved in your organisation show good geographical representation
- c) The service users and carers involved in your organisation show commitment

2.1.4 Process quality

- a) The role of service users and carers being recruited into your organisation's engagement activities is clearly described and has been co-produced with service users and carers
- b) Within your organisation, you know the skills and knowledge service users and carers possess and you are aware of any gaps within their skills and knowledge which need to be filled by others coming into their respective roles
- c) Your organisation has an engagement strategy to ensure that the widest possible range of service users and carers are aware of the opportunities for engagement. The strategy uses a range of media and communication methods, and circulates information far and wide
- d) The information you provide about involvement opportunities is easy to read, clear and relevant
- e) You have a scoring system for evaluating service user and carer applications/assessments which is co-produced with service users and carers
- f) You give feedback on request, to unsuccessful applicants on why they were not chosen this time, and what action they can undertake to become more suitable when reapplying

2.2 Where does the organisation want to be?

- a) Your priorities to improve the recruitment of service users and carers for engagement within your organisation are co-produced and agreed with service users and carers
- b) You have collected information about the numbers of service user and carer representative roles you need, and the numbers of service users and carers served by your organisation
- c) Your goals for the next year/3 years/5 years (depending on the lifetime of your strategy) are:
 - Clear and understandable
 - Realistic
 - Co-produced and agreed with service users and carers
 - Deliverable within budget, within the time specified
 - Progress towards your goals is measured

2.3 How will the organisation get there?

- a) Service users and carers feel they have co-ownership of the process
- b) Recruitment tasks are identified in a co-productive way with service users and carers
- c) Where possible, tasks are delegated to service users and carers
- d) Where delegation occurs service users and carers are recognised and rewarded for their work (if they want to be)
- e) Support is provided to service users and carers
- f) Appropriate expertise is available to guide recruitment processes to be legal and fair
- g) Adequate time is devoted to developing the action plan
- h) The plan is divided into achievable steps or milestones with realistic time frames

2.4 Delivery of recruitment strategy

- a) The delivery of the strategy is delegated to named individuals who are accountable to the organisation's service users and carers through an action plan
- b) The action plan includes milestones and clear time scales for their completion
- c) The delivery of the strategy's action plan is open to scrutiny and approval by stakeholders including service users and carers
- d) Delivery milestones are monitored by decision-makers in co-production with service users and carers to ensure the plan is enacted to time and at an acceptable level of quality

2.5 Review and up-dating of recruitment strategy

- a) Recruitment processes are regularly reviewed and evaluated to better inform future strategies
- b) Evaluation processes are co-produced with service users and carers