

Practical Guidance for Recruiting Service Users and Carer Representatives

The following is recommended best practice in recruitment of service user and carer representatives.

It is recognised that process flexibility will vary between big statutory organisations and smaller 3rd sector or private sector services. However, at present there is more involvement in recruitment processes, for instance in the NHS, than in most 3rd sector organisations. In the NHS service users and carers are frequently involved in the selection process of staff through being on interview panels and having influence over the interview questions asked of the candidates. However, there is lack of flexibility regarding how NHS jobs are advertised and how applications are made. This is currently done through an on-line process called 'Tracs'.

Who is recruiting the service users and carers has implications for how much other service users and carers can be involved in the recruitment process. This must be considered when deciding who will recruit people in to engagement and co-production roles.

Recruitment Process

Service user and carer involvement - having leadership in the recruitment process

It is appropriate that service users and carers should be choosing their representatives. People who are already involved as a service user or carer should therefore be invited to form a group to lead the recruitment process. The group could also include an independent adviser (person with recruitment experience) and a relevant person from the recruiting organisation.

Role Design

The leadership group will lead on role development using existing role profiles in this guidance (see Appendix 3) and modifying them for the specific role/organisation. The role description will describe how people will be protected from repercussions because of participating.

Information about role

Information for the public about the role needs to be easy to understand. Information provides details about the organisation including:

a) Purpose of the organisation

- b) How you can make a difference
- c) Culture
- d) Values
- e) What to expect
- f) How things are done
- g) Who's Who – in the organisation including other members
- h) Organisations engagement and recruitment strategies

This information will need to be made available through different channels e.g. group events, organisational websites (including the Forum's website) and newsletters, local Mental Health Partnership Boards, Welsh Government and their networks, GP surgeries and CMHTs, Libraries, other third sector provider venues.

Advertising

Advertising of the role will be through local and national networks depending on the type of role. The below are suggested for consideration:

- a) Local newspapers
- b) Local and/or hospital radio
- c) Public sector web sites
- d) Third sector web sites
- e) the Forum website
- f) Social media
- g) Organisational newsletters
- h) Local pharmacies, GP surgeries, Opticians
- i) Community Mental Health Teams/hubs/centres
- j) Drop in centres
- k) Food banks

Options for selection

Options for selection will depend on the formality and level of engagement of the role. Methods to consider from least to most formal are:

- a) Open invitation
- b) Self-selection/volunteering
- c) Informal chat – face to face, virtual platforms, etc
- d) Group events
- f) Expression of interest – can be verbal or written
- g) Formal invitation
- h) Informal interview
- i) CV's
- j) Application form
- k) Formal interview

Selection needs to be flexible to meet individual needs.

Appendix 1

Role Description for Service User and Carer Board Members

LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Appointment:	SERVICE USER OR CARER BOARD MEMBER
Accountable to:	Local Service Users & Carers
Support:	Members will be supported by a worker at the locally commissioned support organisation
Working with:	Local Service User & Carer Networks
Remuneration:	Hours worked can be paid at the Living Wage (currently £9.00 per hour) Travel & out of pocket expenses
Appointment term:	Open ended with three yearly reviews
Time commitment:	Participate in Local Mental Health Partnership Board Attend all reps meetings, other relevant sub-groups and committees Service user and carer groups

Introduction

The Local Mental Health Partnership Board oversees the delivery and implementation of the Welsh Government's strategy "Together for Mental Health – A Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales" and its Delivery Plan locally. The Board also reports local progress to the National Mental Health Partnership Board.

Role of the Board

The Local Partnership Board will provide leadership, influence and support to ensure successful delivery of the Strategy and its Delivery Plan. It is accountable to the National Mental Health Partnership Board and the Minister for Health and Social Services.

The Board has no statutory power. Its authority and influence come from the members who participate and influence change and their own accountability arrangements. Accountability for delivery of services remains with the relevant

statutory organizations and providers from other sectors and their performance management will be through existing mechanisms and **not** via the Local Partnership Board.

Accountability and Support

The Service User and Carer Board members are accountable to Service Users and Carers locally. The Service User and Carer board members will meet on a regular basis with Service Users and Carers in their area at local Service User and Carer involvement meetings and events.

The worker at the locally commissioned support organisation will ensure that Service User and Carer Board members are provided with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. People will be protected from any repercussions as a result of participating.

The successful candidates will agree to local and national procedures and policies.

Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest

Definition: A conflict of interest is when an individual's activities (be they financial or personal) might compromise discussion and/or decision making in a group or meeting.

Board Members will be expected to notify the Chair of the Local Mental Health Board when there is a potential conflict of interest relating to a specific item on the agenda.

Key responsibilities of Service User/Carer Board members:

A minimum of two Service User & two Carer Board members will be appointed to the Local Mental Health Partnership Board. Ideally each local authority would be represented. Two deputies will also be appointed who can shadow members at meetings & step in if members are unable to attend a meeting.

Service User and Carer Board Members will be required to play an individual and collective role on the Local Mental Health Partnership Board, the National Service User and Carer forum and local Service User and Carer meetings and events. We advise that board members state when they are giving an individual or a group perspective on agenda items or in discussions.

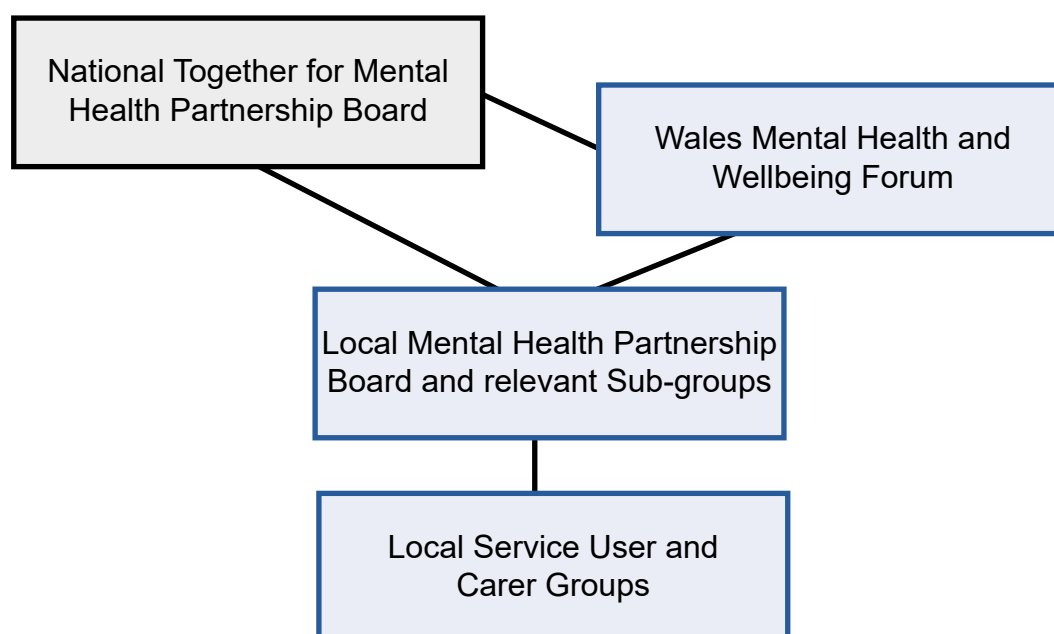
The key responsibilities are:

1. Attending Local Mental Health Partnership Board meetings and sub committees, as necessary.
2. Attending the National Service User and Carer forum to provide a local perspective at a national level.
3. Attend a range of agreed Service User and Carer-focused meetings and events to feedback about what is happening at a local and national level and to gather Service User and Carer views.
4. To have regular meetings and liaise with the member of staff delegated to support the representative based at the locally commissioned supporting organisation to ensure consistency of overall objectives of Service User and Carer activity.

The duties outlined above are not exhaustive but serve as a guide to the current and major responsibilities of the role. Therefore, responsibilities associated with this role will inevitably vary and develop. In view of this the role description may be reviewed and may need to be altered. Such changes will be in consultation with the role holders.

Current Structure for Local Mental Health Partnership Board

Below is a diagram to show how Service User & Carer board members are a crucial link between local groups, the Local Mental health Partnership Board and the Wales Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum.



The National Mental Health Partnership Board is attended by Service Users and Carers who undergo a separate recruitment process to represent the voices of Service Users and Carers at a national level across Wales.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

- A Service User, ex-Service User or a Carer or ex-Carer
- Has used mental health services or cared for someone who has used mental health services in the last 5 years
- Able to make a time commitment for attending LMHPB and forum meetings
- Is able to work alone and/or as part of a team
- Treating all people with dignity, tolerance and respect

Desirable Criteria

- Is able to establish strong links with Service User /Carer groups
- Able to contribute to the Local Mental Health Partnership Board, Sub-groups, Wales Mental Health and Wellbeing forum & local Service User/Carer meetings and events
- Is able to represent the views of other Service Users /Carers
- Can keep abreast of local and national mental health issues
- Welsh speaker
- Has experience of committee or similar work
- Can communicate with a range of different people (Service Users, Carers, Mental Health Workers and Senior Managers).
- Report writing skills
- Can communicate both verbally and in writing.
- Has IT skills or is willing to learn
- Undertake training and development as required
- Has an understanding of how & when to be assertive
- Has an understanding of how & when to be challenging, in a constructive manner
- Communicate effectively during meetings following an agenda and staying on topic/point
- Is able to attend up to 3 National meetings per year (which take place in different areas across Wales)
- Inspiring, influencing and representing others