

Attracting, Inspiring, and Developing People

Attracting new talent will mean reaching out to more people in different walks of life and to people with varied life experiences.

Part of the process is to build a reputation within the organisation or partnership, for constructive co-working with service users and carers. This will require attention to the organisational culture which needs to reflect co-productive values, a commitment to co-production in all decision-making, and a genuine desire to hear from service users and carers, an interest in their views and experiences and a determination to enable change informed by these.

Training of all staff across the organisation in co-production ethos and skills will help to embed the culture change required.

In addition to local third sector supported regular discussion groups it is helpful to have other events such as; 'meet the reps' meetings, where the reps can describe their role and feedback on their achievements; listening events where staff make themselves available to meet service users and carers, possibly on particular topics or services, or on what people want from service transformation; and drop in events to gather opinions more informally.

Constructive use of people's time is important. As a result, it is essential to be able to demonstrate and communicate that they will be heard and that they will be able to make a positive difference.

People are inspired to contribute through engagement by the achievements of people who have been involved in the past. It is therefore critical to make sure that such achievements become more widely acknowledged, shared and promoted. Where people with lived/living experience and carers are engaged in paid roles they become role models for the possibilities for others, making recovery real.

Greater clarity is needed regarding what is expected of service users and carers when they give their time to engagement activities and any support and rewards that are available for this, if needed. Rewards should include a 'home allowance' to cover electricity, broadband usage and other expenses, where people are expected to work from home.

The benefits of getting involved need to be promoted. These include a clearly established impact on recovery, skills development, increased self-worth and confidence and opportunities for making connections with like-minded people.

The experience of engagement also needs to be fun and interesting, with a welcoming culture and openness to new ideas and genuine interest in experiences. Some people come with particular special interests which, if nurtured will spur them on to achieve more. It is helpful in providing individual support, to review people's overall range of activities and skills to see where there are opportunities to build on their skills and to make engagement more accessible for them by better matching their interests and abilities to the available activities.

Sharing best practice can also inspire people. It would be helpful to encourage people to promote what they are doing well. One way to do this might be through developing an award for examples of co-production best practice.

People are inspired by other people who have similar interests and experiences to themselves, forming a community or 'movement' for change. People enjoy using their talents and doing what they are good at. Talent spotting would be helpful and then keeping tabs on who is good at what and sharing out the work according to who has the skills to make a contribution.

Encouraging new ways to engage people e.g. through the arts, through informal discussion during therapeutic activities, through staff delivering services signposting to opportunities, and/or listening to feedback on the service as they go along.

For people in engagement roles or aspiring to become representatives training can be a big incentive, reward, development opportunity and can inspire more contribution – especially if it is led by service users and carers who have already had success in the work. A combination of training and opportunities to practice new skills can be used to build on people's strengths.

New posts for Peer engagement workers (who would be service users or carers) could be developed to work within large organisations such as the NHS or social care. These people would network with service users and carers to develop their skills and confidence and to build opportunities for their involvement. They would also work on creating a culture within the organisation of applying engagement at all levels in all aspects of the service, from co-production of care and treatment plans, all the way up to developing strategy at board level.