

Service User Involvement Policy

This document is relevant to:	
Staff	✓
Volunteers	✓
Trustees	✓

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure there is a consistent approach to user involvement across Dorset Mind services, and to enable service users to have a key role in the service whilst making user involvement an integral component of organisational activity.

Policy

Dorset Mind will empower service users to take a full part in all areas of its work, including designing, developing and delivering services. Dorset Mind is committed to placing service users at the centre of its activities including recruiting and supporting service users to become trustees, supporting service users as volunteers, providing opportunities for service users to influence Dorset Mind's service development, eg planning, delivery, monitoring, evaluation, training and recruitment of staff and for service users to be listened to by Dorset Mind's Trustees and workers

Dorset Mind believes that service user involvement is important because services that reflect and take into account the experience, needs and wishes of their service users are more likely to be effective in promoting better mental health and the recovery of the service user; and that service users are best placed to determine how those needs should be met.

Dorset Mind is committed to offering opportunities for involvement at all stages in a person's contact with the organisation. Service user involvement may be related to their own individual support, with the organisation or making representations to other mental health organisations or bodies on Dorset Mind's behalf.

Dorset Mind is committed to ensuring meaningful service user involvement in all aspects of our work. This commitment requires all Board of Trustee members, staff and volunteers to encourage and support user involvement.

1. Definitions

A service user is defined, for the purpose of this policy as 'someone who has direct personal experience of mental distress'. This may or may not mean a current user or previous user of Dorset Mind, or of statutory mental health services.

2. Aims and Values

Dorset Mind believes that service user involvement is important because services that reflect and take into account the experience, needs and wishes of their service users are more likely to be effective in promoting better mental health and the recovery of the service user and that service users are the best persons to determine how those needs should be met.

This policy aims to have the following outcomes:

- promote the self-esteem of those who take part
- raise user expectations
- promote partnerships to improve service quality
- reduce conflict and exclusion
- facilitate development of skills and experience which is valued by users
- awake us to ideas and needs which we may not have thought of ourselves.

All service users should have the opportunity:

- to inform and influence Dorset Mind's service development, ie planning, delivery, monitoring, evaluation, training and recruitment of staff
- to make informed choices about the support they receive
- to be informed about their services and rights, including equal opportunities, complaints, health and safety etc
- to be listened to and supported by Dorset Mind's trustees, staff and volunteers.

3. Approach

Dorset Mind is committed to offer opportunities for involvement at all stages in a person's contact with the organisation. Service user involvement may be related to a person's individual support, the organisation or making representation to other mental health organisations or bodies.

4. Rights and Responsibilities

Whatever the level or extent of involvement, the commitment by Dorset Mind to the Service User Involvement Policy enhances the rights of users.

Dorset Mind is keen to ensure that this strengthening of relationships with users is balanced. This means that there may be increased responsibilities upon the user who is actively involved and these should be thoroughly discussed with them.

The relationship needs to be underpinned by mutual respect and openness of communication.

5. User Involvement in their Own Service

Staff / volunteers shall ensure that all users:

- are involved in defining what they want out of the services they are offered at Dorset Mind
- are involved in regular qualitative reviews of services

- are able to talk to someone other than their primary worker if they have a difficulty that cannot be resolved with the person concerned.
- are aware of the complaints policy and procedures available.

6. Recruitment and Selection

There will be user involvement in the recruitment of all service/group staff. Interview panels will include a service user who will be appropriately trained and supported. In addition, service users will review service/group related job descriptions.

7. Evaluation and Monitoring

Dorset Mind will work with service users to continually improve service quality. Dorset Mind will work with service users to improve techniques for monitoring each service, and support interested service users in being involved in offering feedback on Dorset Mind's services.

(Techniques for evaluation and monitoring may include: questionnaires, interviews, suggestion box, exit interviews and discussion meetings/forums.)

8. Governance

Dorset Mind will encourage and support service users who wish to become trustees. The support will include enhanced training and personal support, including opportunities to discuss the agenda before each meeting.

9. Strategic Planning

Users will be encouraged to take part in strategic and business planning events, policy making and activities that determine the vision and direction of Dorset Mind's development.

10. Involvement in Training of Staff

Service users may be able to access internal or external training opportunities to support them to develop skills and participate in services. A programme for delivery of training in service user involvement is to be developed.

11. New Service Development

All new services will be developed in partnership with their potential service users. No service will be approved for development without written evidence of service user consultation.

12. Users Becoming Staff or Volunteers

Dorset Mind believes that service users can bring unique understanding and empathy to staff and volunteer roles and encourages service users to apply for posts and opportunities. Every application is subject to the Equal Opportunities processes.

13. Specific Methods of Service User Involvement

Community Meeting: service user community meetings will be held regularly. The remit of the community meeting will be to consider any issues relating to the services provided by Dorset Mind and any other issues that service users wish to raise. This may include services provided by other service providers, which will be passed on as appropriate.

Trustees: Trustees will ensure that all service users are aware of the role of the Trustees and the support available for those interested in the role.

Service User Link Trustee: Dorset Mind will appoint a Trustee to the role of Service User Link Trustee whose remit is to visit all Dorset Mind services at least twice per annum to engage with service users directly. The Service User Link Trustee will raise any issues identified by these visits with the Board of Trustees at their next meeting and, importantly, to advise Trustees what barriers (or perceived barriers) there are to service user engagement in these areas. The Service User Link Trustee will also encourage service users to become involved in the governance, planning, service delivery and recruitment and selection processes.

Your Comment Forms: which when submitted to the Trustees will be acknowledged (if requested) and if necessary the service user contacted for further discussions.

Exit interviews: all users of the Befriending service will be given an opportunity to feedback their experience of the service following their exit from the service and, where possible, service users of all Dorset Mind services should be asked for summary feedback where there is a planned exit.

Trustee Meetings: any service user can request that they present to the Board during the first fifteen minutes of the meeting and any service user wishing to do so should inform the CEO of such a request and also an indication of the subject matter in order that such an item can be put on the meeting's agenda.

Annual General Meeting: every effort will be made to assist members to attend and participate in the annual general meeting.

Responsibilities

The Chair of Trustees is responsible for managing this policy and overseeing its implementation. The Chief Executive is responsible for implementing the policy within their areas of work, and for overseeing adherence by staff and volunteers. Every member of staff and volunteer should take personal responsibility for conforming to it.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- Governance Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Volunteer Procedure
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy

The equality impact of this policy has been considered and Dorset Mind believes that it complies with its commitment to equality as stated in its Equality Policy

Policy Ownership

Policy Name	Version	Doc ref
Service User Involvement Policy	2.0	Service User Involvement Policy

Policy Owner	Chair of Trustees
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Approval Status

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Consult the Dorset Mind website for the latest version of this policy.

Document Control

Reviewers

Name	Position
Chris Price	Chair of Trustees
Anna Windett	Chair of Trustee Quality Sub-Group
Mandy Nicholson	Service Delivery Manager

Change History

Issue	Date	Author	Reason
1.0	Jan 15	Jackie Lillywhite	
2.0	Nov 15	Chris Price	Reviewed and updated