

Name of Policy: User & Carer Involvement Handbook Section & Code: General Policies Status: Approved September 2015 Approved by: The Board, reviewed by service leads, trustees and service users Review date: September 2018	 Richmond Borough
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USER & CARER INVOLVEMENT POLICY

1. A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

For the purposes of this policy, by ‘users’ we mean people who use any of RB Mind’s services, including Carers in Mind. The policy does not cover user engagement beyond the work of RB Mind. We recognise that some people may reject the term ‘user’, preferring terms such as recipient, client or survivor and agree that people should be able to define themselves using words which are acceptable to them.

2. APPROACH

2.1. Meaningful engagement

RB Mind is committed to meaningful engagement and involvement with its service users and recognises that without the knowledge or expertise of service users, services are likely to lose their relevance and effectiveness. We value the insight and ideas that service users can bring to enhance the way RB Mind works and actively encourage service users to be involved with our engagement activities.

We also recognise that at times RB Mind may be in a position to share information that will affect or be of interest to service users and that as a local organisation we can represent service user views and influence decision making. RB Mind will endeavour to share this information through the various channels of user engagement in the organisation, including the service users’ forum, newsletters and service level meetings.

We therefore regard the involvement and engagement process as two-way and continuous, whereby service users and RB Mind exchange information and RB Mind represents the collective views of its service users. Furthermore, we recognise the importance of feeding back to our service users the outcome of any engagement procedure and being transparent about what we do with this information.

2.2. Development opportunities

This policy is designed to provide service users with an opportunity to develop their skills as part of their recovery. RB Mind believes in empowering service users to make decisions about the services they use and throughout all of its activities and services RB Mind will remain mindful of the potential to provide opportunities for service users to develop and grow as part of their recovery.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of every worker, volunteer, service user and committee member to ensure that this policy is put into practice. It is therefore everyone's duty to publicise the policy, ensure that everyone has a copy of the policy and that the policy is explained to people to ensure that they understand its content and implications.

4. SCOPE

Service user involvement may be related to a person's individual support, the organisation or making representation to other mental health organisations or bodies on RB Mind's behalf. We aspire to offer opportunities for involvement at all stages in a person's contact with the organisation and recognise that providing engagement opportunities can be part of an individual's development and recovery.

4.1. Service User Opportunities

These may include;

- The opportunities to have a say in and make informed choices about the individual support they receive and the activities in which he or she participates (e.g. via support planning, goal setting, reviews, key work meetings etc.)
- Access to information about services and rights, including complaints, boundaries, data protection, Health and Safety etc.
- Being listened to and supported by staff/volunteers who work in an anti-discriminatory manner.
- Influencing RB Mind's service development, such as service planning and design.
- Attending service user forums, community meetings, networks and focus groups. Each service will develop their own involvement mechanism according to the needs of their users (with the option for confidential feedback). Users of all service are invited to access the service user forum.
- Consultation on business planning, strategy development and service improvement exercises.
- Recruitment of paid staff and volunteers which may include
 - decisions regarding job descriptions, role descriptions and person specifications

- Wording and placement of advertisements
- Short-listing of applications
- Interviewing of applicants
- RB Mind welcomes applications from people with lived experience of mental health and with the relevant skills and experience to apply for paid jobs with the organisation, to become a Trustee or a member of a committee. Similarly, applications are welcome to become a supporter of the board.

5. RIGHT TO CHALLENGE

If a service user or group of service users feel that decisions are being made without their consultation or that they are not being properly involved in the decision making process they have the right to use this as grounds for making a complaint.