



ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

Some Thoughts on an 'Experts by Experience' Engagement Policy

It is widely recognised that actively engaging with people who use services and carers is vital to improving and transforming services to deliver more personalised care. The expertise found in the experiences of people who use our services and their cares is of crucial value to our work in adapting our services and processes to meet peoples' individual needs. We want to ensure that experts by experience are involved 'as a matter of course' and that their involvement with Shropshire Council is translated into action and produces real beneficial outcomes for people.

We want to develop these initial notes into a fully fledged Engagement Policy document, if you would like to expand on any of these points or fill some gaps, that would be very useful.

What do we mean by an "expert by experience"? Service users, people who look after or care for those who might use our services. Also, user and carer groups and organisations that support and represent the interests of people using our services.

We need an understanding/awareness of the different roles of paid experts by experience and non paid volunteer experts by experience?

How many "experts" have we got? 10? 50? 100? Do we know? What meetings are they attending?

Every Expert should have a Welcome Pack which should include, a welcome letter from Andy / Lee explaining the role of the Expert and how their experience is crucial in developing an effective care system. [Include a visual representation of structures – conveying being part of the system]. Could include/develop a suite of support sheets on best practice in involving experts for staff, and also ones for experts about what is involved in taking part and what they can expect from the process. Information about accessing and contributing to SharePoint should also be an in the Welcome pack along with other basic information such as an annual calendar of scheduled meetings, car parking, meeting etiquette and the expenses policy.

Identify people's areas of expertise (Carer for the elderly? Alzheimer's? Children? Autism?). – develop a short biography of each person and their skill set. We must value and promote expert's skills and promote what those skills are (helps experts and professionals to recognise the importance of them).

Invite experts to specific meetings where their expertise would be useful. Processes to support the use of experts by experience should be straightforward and simple to use and understand. (We need to be clear on which pieces of work are roles for 'paid experts by experience' ie being on a staff interview panel.)

What's the plan? Are there objectives for what experts are working towards? How is it decided what involvement experts will have?

What level of commitment is there for involvement and engagement with experts? What financial commitment is there for the wider Council 'Citizen engagement' – is there any budget for the development of 'experts by experience' volunteers and the work they carry out?

How will all 'experts' across Shropshire be communicated with, engaged and involved? Are there alternative ways to attend meetings, including Social Media. How will this be managed/monitored/responded to? Be clear about and manage expectations.

How will involvement be evaluated? How measure success?

Identify/develop a feedback plan and 2 way feedback process. Guidelines / code of conduct at meetings. Guidance on raising issues. Also meetings being inclusive ie taking into account communication needs, physical impairments etc. avoiding jargon.

Shropshire Council staff induction and training - used to inform staff about the role of experts and include best practice for inclusive meetings and facilitation skills, Co-production etc.

Protecting information, a confidentiality agreement should be drawn-up and signed.

Free training including safeguarding training should be made available.

What are the essential ingredients for effective involvement? - What makes a good/bad involvement experience?

Do 'xperts by experience want an alternative 'name' or a mission slogan? Or something a bit more attractive and catchy?

Which meetings should be 'expert led' with support/facilitation from paid employees?

Support to help involvement at all levels must be provided. User led groups can feedback on particular topics on the agenda. (Could experts/and professionals visit different user groups?)

Will expert involvement be part of the corporate plan and objectives? Involvement has to be meaningful. Experts to be involved before decisions are made, not as an afterthought.

Experts should be involved in commissioning processes from the start.

Experts should be involved in monitoring the quality of services.

Make sure we convey to the experts the results of what they have been engaged in. Produce an annual 'Experts Report' in the Local Account?

Mechanisms should be in place to reward experts for various types of involvement, at the very least a jointly agreed expenses policy should be made available.

Experts by experience on the mailing list of their relevant dept.

The experts should also get to know each other. Annual get-together (Christmas party). Along with all the other volunteers.

Experts should be issued with a pass/photo ID Badge "ASC Team".

Car parking - permits for Experts by Experience! Basic information such as, "where is the overflow car park?" Pre-notify short stay attendant.

J.H. September 2018.

