

Newcastle

Voices

Participation

Toolkit

Groundswell
Out of homelessness

Newcastle
City Council 

Groundswell

Groundswell is a registered charity, which exists to enable people experiencing homelessness to take more control of their lives, have a greater influence on services and have a full role in our community. Our vision is of an equal and inclusive society, where the solutions to homelessness come from the experiences of people who are homeless.

Groundswell's Research: Insight and Action

Generating insight: We aim to uncover the issues faced by homeless people and crucially, develop achievable solutions. All of our projects are delivered by and collaboratively run by people who have experience of homelessness themselves as peer researchers. "Formal" researchers can struggle to overcome some people's mistrust of authority figures, whereas the empathy and shared connection of peer researchers can get the real picture. Often peers can be the only ones who can engage "hard to reach" homeless people.

Participation: We involve people affected by the issues in all stages of the research process ensuring that we are asking the best possible questions and that means the findings are really owned by participants.

Solutions to homelessness: Groundswell believes in using innovative facilitation to bring together many different views - from lived experience, from policy makers, from academics and from the front-line - to analyse our grassroots insight to generate new solutions.

Foreword

The participation of people who use support services is key to improving the way that they work, and consequently improving the lives of people who use these services. This foreword has been written collaboratively by members of the Newcastle Voices project Steering Group. The Steering Group includes people who work for Newcastle City Council, local support services and people who have experience of using those services. As a steering group, we are committed to the embedding of service user participation in Newcastle. The following recommendations are endorsed by the individuals represented on the Steering Group and the wider organisations they represent.

The recommendations and toolkit have been formed by the Newcastle Voices research and have been shaped with input from people who work and use services in the city. The goals we have set ourselves are likely to be a challenge, and we recognise that change will not happen immediately. It is going to take time, resources and partnership working to make them happen.

By embracing active participation, we can be more transparent, democratic and accountable, not only changing how decisions are made but making better decisions.

**The Newcastle Voices Steering Group
September 2019**

Toolkit written by Martin Burrows, Groundswell, 2019

Contents

Foreword.....	2
Introduction	4
Background	4
Our Definition of ‘Active Participation’	5
The ‘Give’ and the ‘Get’	6
Newcastle Voices Recommendations.....	7
Recommendations for Newcastle City Council.....	7
Recommendations for support service providers	8
Newcastle Voices Toolkit: Mechanisms for participation	9
Research, monitoring and evaluation with service users.....	10
Human resources and staff development	13
Consultation, decision making and feedback	19
Training and development for service users	24
Useful Resources.....	25
Glossary.....	27

Introduction

This toolkit has been designed to encourage and support services in Newcastle and Newcastle City Council to move towards embedding active participation in their everyday work practice. The toolkit has been created as part of the Newcastle Voices project. The aims of the project are:

- To work with stakeholders across Newcastle to move service user representation toward meaningful participation at all levels of service design and delivery.
- To improve understanding to inform Newcastle's quarterly homelessness reviews. To ensure that the views of people with experience of homelessness and the risk of homelessness participate in local decision making about these areas.

This toolkit is based on the findings of the Newcastle Voices research. The definitions and suggestions in this document are inspired by the ideas we collected from research participants (both the Peer Research and the Participation Mapping), steering groups and a stakeholder workshop. It consists of two parts:

Newcastle Voices Recommendations. These recommendations were developed from the findings of the Newcastle Voices research, stakeholder meetings from the research and a feedback and planning event at the end of the research process.

The Newcastle Voices Toolkit offers guidance to commissioners and providers on potential mechanisms that can be used in creating meaningful service user participation in the review process and decision-making about homeless services in Newcastle.

At the end of this document there is a glossary and further resources that can be used as reference points to achieve the aims.

In this document the pronouns 'We' and 'Our' are utilised to represent all stakeholders involved in the development of this toolkit.

We also recognise that some people want to participate and some people don't and that the suggestions in the toolkit will not suit everyone. However, by embedding participation into services, it can ultimately result in better services for the people who use them. By starting this process and adopting our recommendations, we hope that it can mean that we more effectively tackle homelessness.

Background

The Newcastle Voices project was commissioned by Newcastle City Council and delivered by Groundswell to explore how people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the city can participate in the design, delivery and decision making in support services. This involved two elements; a mapping exercise to establish current involvement and participatory work within homelessness services in the city and identify existing areas of good practice, and a Peer-led research study. The research process worked with peer researchers to co-design and deliver a questionnaire with people experiencing homeless to find out how they would like to be involved in influencing decision making in the city.

Before the creation of this document, the first stage of the project included establishing a steering group of stakeholders from the city, mapping of participation activities in Newcastle and conducting peer-led research to explore the ideas and perceptions of people who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness. The findings of this report are shared in the [Newcastle Voices research report](#)¹.

By strengthening the active participation of people who are at risk of or have experience of homelessness in the design, commissioning and delivery of services in the city, through embedding a 'Culture of Active Participation' in services and creating the 'Structural Shifts' that make sure Active Participation is meaningful, consistent and truly shapes decision making.

Our Definition of 'Active Participation'

'Active Participation' in support services refers to the processes by which people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness can share ideas and perspectives and actively engage in decision making about issues that affect them. This is at all levels from personal support, through service delivery to strategy and policy making.

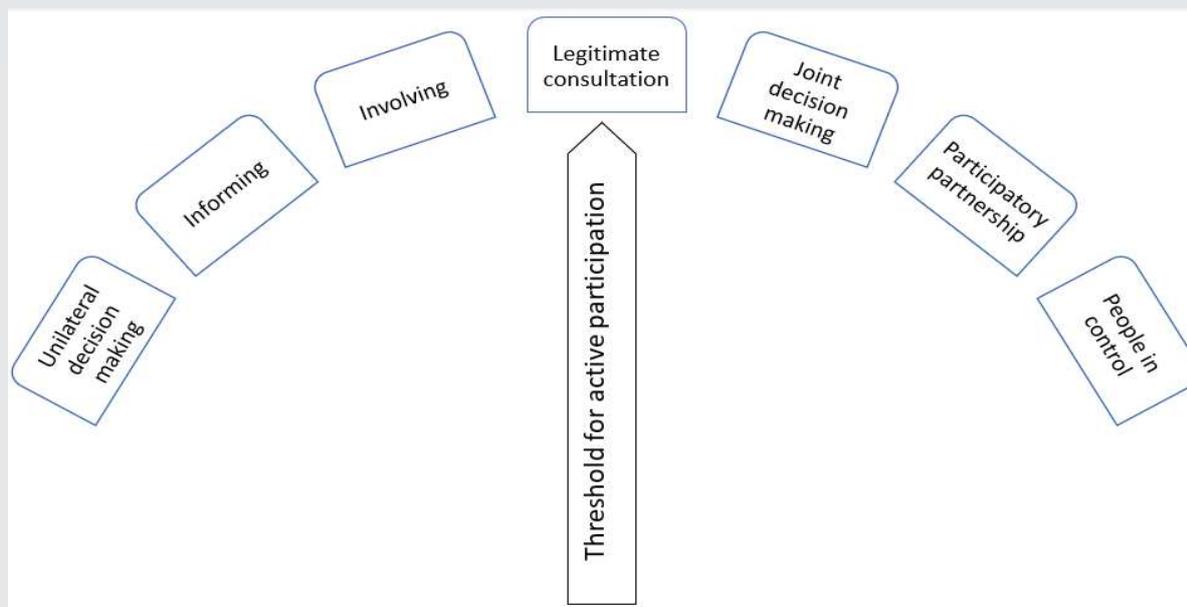
We recognise that participation encapsulates many different concepts, methodologies and practices and provide brief definitions of some of these in the glossary at the end of this document.

We believe there are different 'levels' of participation that allow increasing levels of control in decision making. The following diagram illustrates these different levels and is adapted from Amnesty International's definition of 'levels of participation'²:

¹ Available at:

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Housing%20and%20homelessness/Homelessness%20Prevention%20Trailblazer/Newcastle%20Voices%20Peer%20Research%20Report.pdf>

² Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/24000/act100232011en.pdf>



Level of Participation	Description
Unilateral Decision Making	Not informing, involving or consulting people before making a decision or designing a process.
Informing	Informing people of a decision or process. Information flows in only one direction.
Involving	Involving people in the implementation of a decision or process in which they did not take part, for example requesting rights holders to take action.
Legitimate Consultation	Prior to making a decision or designing a process, people are offered options and then enabled to assert their views in order that their views inform and influence the direction of the work.
Joint Decision Making	Processes are designed and decisions made together with people, and steps are taken to overcome the influence of power imbalance.
Participatory Partnership	A co-operative relationship with people where there is an agreement to share responsibility and leadership in the design and achievement of a goal.
People in Control	Supporting people to work independently, by building their capacity and advising them. Through progressive empowerment, stakeholders would be in a position to self-mobilise and initiate change.

We recognise that it is not always appropriate to aim for people in control. However, we aim for decisions being taken which will impact on people’s lives to always be across the threshold for active participation. There are examples where informing people is perfectly valid, particularly where a service has an infrequent or light touch engagement with its service users. The key is that there should be a discussion and plan for participation and a clear rationale on why one level is achieved.

The ‘Give’ and the ‘Get’

Throughout the Newcastle Voices project, we have been asked the question ‘what motivates people to participate?’ For us, it is only fair that if service users give their time

and energy to an activity, they should get something in return and what people ‘get’ should be proportional to what they ‘give’.

At Groundswell, it’s framed as a ‘Give a lot - Get a lot’ ethos, and it is central to the Groundswell understanding of participation. This ethos is embedded as a clear and consistent framework that enables people to make their contribution to Groundswell as staff, volunteers or clients, in a way that maximises the benefits to both the individual and the organisation.

The get is not always financial – opportunities for training, self-development, or to make a difference for others and the wider community are also key motivations. At the very least, the ‘give’ has to be adequate support and out-of-pocket expenses. People can only effectively contribute with a structured support system around them that matches the level of engagement that people give.

Newcastle Voices Recommendations

The following section illustrates the recommendations from the Newcastle Voices research, which have been created with engagement from the steering group and a feedback and planning event. We recognise the ambition of the recommendations and realise that making changes to structures and culture takes time. We have worked with the project’s steering group to set target dates for achieving these goals that we hope are realistic and achievable. The recommendations are:

Recommendations for Newcastle City Council	Date to achieve recommendation
R1. Begin embedding service user participation in Newcastle City Council’s quarterly reviews.	October 2019
R2. Agree a common definition of Active Participation in Newcastle.	November 2019
R3. In revisions of relevant strategy, have participation as a central part of the process and embed Active Participation as a core goal. This includes Newcastle’s next iteration of their homelessness strategy.	December 2019
R4. Create direct channels with service users and engage with them in their own environment.	January 2020
R5. Develop guidance documents and training for local organisations that describe expectations in relation to Active Participation.	February 2020
R6. Explore the embedding of Active Participation as a social value within commissioning processes and include in the service specifications to reflect the definitions and standards.	September 2021
R7. Create a set of participation standards for all contracts which are co-produced with service users.	September 2021
R8. Ensure that there are sufficient resources allocated within all contracts to enable Active Participation in services in a consistent and high-quality manner.	September 2021

R9. Embed participatory monitoring approaches in contract monitoring methodology, including indicators in monitoring frameworks and participation in monitoring activities.	September 2021
R10. Develop structures for representative Active Participation in decision-making across services that inform decisions made on an on-going basis, including in the commissioning and tendering process.	September 2021
R11. Actively encourage the recruitment of people with lived experience of using support services by creating a recruitment and ongoing staff support policy that places value on having lived experience that is relevant to a service.	September 2021

Recommendations for support service providers	Date to achieve recommendation
R12. Train service users regularly on their rights, entitlements, how to self-advocate and how to complain/raise concerns to create influence.	October 2019
R13. Create paid and volunteer roles that are specifically for people with lived experience of homelessness, including peer roles.	November 2019
R14. Begin embedding Active Participation as a responsibility in all job descriptions and include personal experience of homelessness as 'desirable' in person specifications when recruiting for new roles.	December 2019
R15. Where appropriate, involve service users in recruitment processes.	December 2019
R16. Ensure that staff are adequately trained to understand Newcastle's Active Participation definition and standards and include this in staff induction.	December 2019
R17. In revisions of the organisation's strategy, policies and planning documents, ensure that Active Participation is a core goal/value.	December 2019
R18. Involve service users not only in the gathering of feedback after a project/service but also in the initial development and design of services.	December 2019
R19. Carry out a peer-led audit of Active Participation within local organisations and services against a set of standards ³ .	December 2019
R20. Embed Active Participation at a Governance level in organisations delivering support services, for example by having places on the board for service users.	September 2021
R21. Assess performance of staff and projects in relation to Active Participation through monitoring and performance structures including KPIs.	September 2021
R22. Develop structures for representative Active Participation in decision-making across services that inform decisions made on an ongoing basis.	September 2021

An action plan for delivering the above recommendations has been created with the input of the Newcastle Voices steering group.

The steering group have agreed to communicate these recommendations and the commitment to deliver them with all stakeholders, including people who use services.

Newcastle Voices Toolkit: Mechanisms for participation

The following toolkit is based on suggestions, commitments and good practice from all those who participated in this project. We recognise that participation needs cultural and structural changes to be embedded into support services and commissioning of support services, the following tools are practical ways to create structural change, which we hope will lead to cultural change.

The mechanisms are divided up under the headings *Research, monitoring and evaluation with service users; Human resources and staff development; Consultation, decision-making and feedback; Training and development for service users.*

Each of the mechanisms are linked to the Newcastle Voices recommendations in order to show which might be used to achieve the listed recommendations.

Lacking Resource?

We recognise that to 'do participation', you need to have appropriate resources and that often the funding environment can make this a challenge⁴. However, we also see that 'lacking resources' is too often used as an excuse for non-participation. We therefore encourage people to use this toolkit in a way that allows for enough staff time and budget to be assigned to it. We feel it is better to 'do participation' well on a small scale than to do it badly and risk damaging relationships with people who use the services.

⁴ At the time of publishing this toolkit (2019) Newcastle City Council estimated £327m reduction in resources by 2022.

Research, monitoring and evaluation with service users

Conducting research and effectively monitoring projects is key to ensuring that services that are there to support people are meeting their needs and can adapt easily. Through the collection of targeted and routine monitoring data, it can help to inform the decisions made. Participatory research and monitoring comprise of a range of methodological approaches and techniques, all with the objective of handing power from the researcher to research participants, who are often community members or community-based organisations. The following are some examples of how these could be put into action.

I. 'Peer' Research

<p>What is it?</p>	<p>Peer research involves working with people with lived experience of the topic being investigated throughout the research process. Ideally, this involves participation throughout the research process, including setting the research questions, designing research tools, collecting data, analysis, report writing, developing recommendations, dissemination and creating change.</p>
<p>Which Recommendation does this support?</p>	<p>This mechanism is useful in collating the evidence to shape strategy (R4) and policy (R9, R17) and in auditing participation (R18) and to inform decision making (R22).</p>
<p>Why do it?</p>	<p>Conducting research with service users can provide a valuable avenue to understand the needs, desires and perspectives of participants. Speaking to service users can help gather information that can be used to create a valid picture of needs as well as an evidence base for help with the process of making informed decisions. Service users will know how best to frame questions in order to get the most honest responses, and service users tend to be less defensive when the person asking them questions has shared life experience.</p>
<p>Resources Needed</p>	<p>Any research project requires forward planning, and it may be that resources decide the size and scale of the project. Be conscious that peer research can take time and creative thinking in order to make the research process accessible, and this can take additional time to plan and facilitate.</p>
<p>Important things to consider</p>	<p>It's important to consider how much control can and will be shared when going into a project. Treating service users as sources of either information or data collection labour can be a disempowering process for participants. There is also a need to ensure that sufficient levels of training and support are provided throughout the process. Balancing what people give as participants and researchers, and what they receive back is key.</p>
<p>Examples, Guides and Toolkits</p>	<p>Revolving Doors have published a literature review on the application of Peer Research with populations facing severe and multiple disadvantage: http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/file/1849/download?token=Yi0tjhmo</p> <p>They have also produced a handbook for staff for running a peer research project in the community: http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/NOMS%20Toolkit%20Peer%20Research.pdf</p> <p>Voice of Young People in Care have produced 'A Guide to Peer Research with Young People': https://research.hscni.net/sites/default/files/More%20than%20we%20expected!%20A%20guide%20to%20peer%20research%20with%20young%20people.pdf</p>

2. Mystery Shopping

<p>What is it?</p>	<p>Mystery shopping (research) involves trained ‘shoppers’ who act as researchers and report back objectively on their experiences. Mystery Shopping in support services is a tool to assess the quality of service, organisation and management; reviewing how staff perform against pre-determined standards during an interaction. This could be delivered by people who have experience of homelessness themselves.</p>
<p>Which Recommendation does this support?</p>	<p>This could be used as a mechanism for feeding into quarterly reviews (R1) and as a tool as part of monitoring processes (R9).</p>
<p>Why do it?</p>	<p>Mystery Shopping will help to understand what the user experience is for a service. It allows an insight into the processes that a service user will go through and the way that staff may enact policies and procedures (or not). Any service with a public-facing customer service element to their work may benefit from this approach.</p> <p>It may be that this is delivered in-house or contracted to a research agency. For example, Shelter offers a Mystery Shopping service for housing options services.</p>
<p>Resources Needed</p>	<p>Costs of employing or supporting volunteers for mystery shoppers, using a specialist firm or training volunteers.</p> <p>Staff time in designing the project, analysing the results and, if appropriate, training volunteers.</p>
<p>Important things to consider</p>	<p>It’s important to make sure that those who act as the ‘shoppers’ are well trained and have decent backstories. It’s also important to consider whether you inform frontline staff or not that the process is taking place.</p>
<p>Examples, Guides and Toolkits</p>	<p>Crisis’ Turned Away project involved mystery shoppers visiting local authority housing option teams: https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/housing-models-and-access/turned-away-2014/</p> <p>HealthWatch, Newcastle has undertaken mystery shopping as part of a project to encourage feedback from patients: https://www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/gp_comments_complaints.pdf</p> <p>The Market Research Society provides guidelines on delivering mystery shopping research: http://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/2013-01-14%20Mystery%20Shopping%20Research%20Guidelines.pdf</p>

3. Participatory Evaluation

What is it?	Participatory evaluation is an approach that involves the stakeholders of a programme or policy in the evaluation process. This participation can occur at any stage of the evaluation process, from the evaluation design to the data collection and analysis and the reporting of the study.
Which Recommendation does this support?	Participatory Monitoring can be a step as part of quarterly reviews (R4) and in contract and programme monitoring (R9, R21, R19).
Why do it?	Involving service users in monitoring and evaluation means that the voices of those whose lives should have been improved by the service are included in assessing it. It also ensures a relevant evaluation focus by identifying relevant evaluation questions, gaining explanations of causality, which ultimately leads to better insight and when applied, better performance. It can also demystify the evaluation process and help build understandings of why data is recorded: making service users see that they are more than a number.
Resources Needed	Investing in service user's capacity and their ownership of evaluation results will require time, commitment, capacities to deal with power differences during data collection, analysis and decision making, and resources to enable such a process.
Important things to consider	It is important to consider the purpose of involving service users and how to do this in order to maximise the effectiveness of the approach. As a starting point, input into evaluation frameworks and the creation of KPIs. Solid planning to make existing processes accessible, or to adapt and change data capture in response to service user feedback. As always, training and support are key throughout the process.
Examples, Guides and Toolkits	UNICEF has a toolkit on Participatory Approaches to impact evaluation that aims to involve children who are involved in global programmes and policies in the evaluation process. It has some excellent insights into how this process can be delivered: https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/brief_5_participatoryapproaches_eng.pdf

Human resources and staff development

4. Involving service users in the recruitment of staff

What is it?	Service users are involved in the recruitment, training and induction of staff. This might include sitting on an interview panel during the recruitment process. This does not need to be restricted to frontline staff, and can be used to recruit senior staff or trustees to ensure that they represent the values of the individuals the service supports.
Which Recommendation does this support?	This is linked to the recruitment of staff recommendation (R15), in forwarding recruiting people with lived experience into roles (R4).
Why do it?	This allows service users to identify the type of person they'd like to support them and to assess who would be suitable for supporting individuals who use their service. This is particularly useful for services with a customer service or service-user facing role. By finding the right people initially who perform well and are more likely to stay, this can improve the quality of care for individuals, save recruitment costs and time and improve staff retention.
Resources Needed	This mainly involves staff time to support preparation and debriefing for the recruitment process.
Important things to consider	It's important that people joining panels have been trained and informed that information shared in the interview is confidential. Service users need to be well briefed on the interview questions and the systems for making decisions. Be clear and honest about how much influence people have. It's important to establish the boundaries of involvement to avoid disappointment or disagreements later in the process. Decide how much weight the views of people who need care and support will have in recruiting new workers. If, for example, managers make the final decision but the views of service users are taken into account, everyone needs to be clear about this from the start of the process.
Examples, Guides and Toolkits	Skills for Care has a guide to help social care employers include the people they support in the recruitment and retention process: https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Recruitment-and-retention/Values-and-behaviours-based-recruitment/How-to-involve-people-who-use-care-in-recruitment-and-retention.pdf

5. Training involving people who use services

What is it?	Involving participants in the planning and delivery of training for staff and volunteers. This could be setting the learning objectives of training, planning the content and the delivery of training.
Which Recommendation does this support?	Involving service users in training for staff can assist in supporting staff with training and understanding of active participation (R5, R16) and in training other service users (R12).
Why do it?	It helps to bring a ‘human’ element to training and can mean that training is informed by real experiences of using a service. It can help to develop training and facilitation skills in service users and build confidence. Having an understanding of the challenges that homeless people face from their own perspective is useful for anyone who is involved in the delivery and commissioning of services whether they are ‘front line’, administrative staff or decision-makers.
Resources Needed	It is essential to allocate appropriate time and resource for the training of service users. Involving people throughout the design of the training will help to build confidence for people and should improve the content and delivery.
Important things to consider	Planning is key to ensuring that training sessions are delivered in an impactful and ethical way. It’s important to remember that service users have limits on which part of their stories they share and that these are agreed before the training. As with any training, building in mechanisms for evaluation is key for maintaining high standards.
Examples, Guides and Toolkits	The Social Care Institute for Excellence has an online guide for involving service users and carers in social work education. While this is primarily targeted at students, it has some useful pointers for consideration: https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide04/

6. Ringfenced roles for people who use services

What is it?	A set percentage as a target for recruitment. These should not just be 'peer roles' but across the whole of an organisation and potentially can allow the functions of an organisation (maintenance, finance, monitoring and evaluation etc.) to become a tool to move people out of homelessness.
Which Recommendation does this support?	This can support the recruitment of people with lived experience of using services into job roles (R11, R13).
Why do it?	This demonstrates a commitment to inclusive working to service users. It also has the potential to shift perceptions (and potentially, the working culture) of both staff and service users. This idea was very popular in the Newcastle Voices research.
Resources Needed	Ultimately, creating these roles will cost the same in terms of salary, pensions and national insurance as recruiting any role at the same level of employment. However, it is important to build-in additional funds for support and training to meet the needs of the employee.
Important things to consider	Employing people who have used support services in those services and the systems around them takes consideration. It's important to remember that the challenges that may have contributed to people becoming homeless may also be barriers to working in a constructive way. Making sure that HR policy and working practices recognise this is key.
Examples, Guides and Toolkits	There are many examples of organisations that are successfully creating job roles for service users, a good example of this is Getting Real Opportunities for Work (GROW) traineeships being delivered across the country. However, there is a lack of guidance materials available to support this. We understand that Homeless Link is currently creating guidance materials, which will be available soon.

7. Participation training for staff

What is it?	Providing training on what participation is and how to 'do it' is key to creating active participation in the City of Newcastle. In this instance, we believe the training should be designed based on the findings of the Newcastle Voices research and focused on the Newcastle context. We'd recommend delivering training with service users and staff at the same time, in the same room as a starting point to begin to embed service user involvement.
Which Recommendation does this support?	This will support embedding active participation in Newcastle (R2, R5, R16) and could be delivered alongside training and induction for service users (R12).
Why do it?	Training on participation is key to making sure that people who are involved in delivering service provision have the information and skills to embed participation. Investing the time to train people can also improve morale and develop relationships among staff and service users.
Resources Needed	Like any training, the content should be designed to meet the needs of the individual and their position within an organisation or system. The content should be specific to the organisation, it's structures and the wider approach. This takes time to design and deliver and may be best delivered by external organisations that can bring in expertise.
Important things to consider	It's important that the training is not purely theoretical/abstract, and that it has grounded examples and exercises that can add to the learning. That said, having an element of flexibility in the content so that it can be applied to the context of different services is also key. Allowing people time to reflect and apply the thinking to this context, and allowing people to set their own SMART participation goals can help there to be a legacy from the training.
Examples, Guides and Toolkits	There is a lack of open source training available on service user participation. The toolkits detailed in the Useful Resources section offer some useful frameworks and tips for delivery. There are also organisations offering bespoke or off-the-peg training on a commission basis.

8. 'Peer roles'

<p>What is it?</p>	<p>A 'peer' role is a voluntary or paid staff role that is specifically for people who have lived experience of an issue and which lived experience plays an essential part in delivering the job task. For example, this could be as a peer mentor or advocate where having shared experience is an essential quality for engaging people.</p>
<p>Which Recommendation does this support?</p>	<p>Creating peer roles could be used to support a monitoring function (R9, R19) in creating roles for service users (R11, R13) and in delivering training (R2, R5, R11, R12).</p>
<p>Why do it?</p>	<p>Peer roles can help to overcome the challenges that service users face in accessing support services: overcoming stigma, helping to build trust and providing an intermediary between 'professionals' and 'clients'. The roles can also be transformative for the individuals fulfilling the peer role, and provide role models (and inspiration) to the people they support.</p>
<p>Resources needed</p>	<p>Peer roles, even when delivered on a voluntary basis, are not cheap. To deliver roles safely it requires a considered recruitment process, effective induction and training and ongoing support. You also need to make sure there is enough reward either financially or personally for individuals taking up these roles.</p>
<p>Important things to consider</p>	<p>Peer roles should be focused on addressing a specific need or issue, and the way they are implemented should be designed and delivered in a co-produced way. It can take time to get it right, and it can be fraught with challenges – but ultimately, peer roles are effective at engaging particularly those that face challenges engaging with support services. Sufficient training, support and clear boundaries both personally for the peer and in what issue you wish to address are key.</p>
<p>Examples, Guides and Toolkits</p>	<p>Groundswell's <i>Homelessness and Health: Resources to Support Peer Activity</i> also provides useful guidance: https://groundswell.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Groundswell-HomelessHealth_PeerActivityToolkit_2012.pdf http://mypeer.org.au/ is a toolkit from Australia aimed at supporting agencies to implement and evaluate peer-based programmes for young people using good practice guidelines.</p>

Consultation, decision making and feedback

9. Service User Consultations

What is it?	Consultations are an opportunity to gather feedback on specific issues or planned changes. The mechanisms might be through using research methods, presenting information to service users for feedback at forums or panels.
Which Recommendation does this support?	Delivering consultations can feed into decision making and shaping strategy (R3) and policy (R9, R17), to inform decision making (R10, R8) and in the design of services (R18).
Why do it?	True consultation allows decision makers to have the information they need to make informed decisions. It shows a level of transparency and that the voice of service users matters. It is key that consultation is put into place when the council or service providers in instances where (significant) changes are to be made to service provision.
Resources Needed	The size and scale of the consultation will decide the required resources. Ample time dedicated to promoting and planning the process will reap rewards. Creative engagement techniques will also aid the process.
Important things to consider	It's important to allow a range of mechanisms for capturing information and being proactive in taking these tools to service users. For example, a meeting in the city hall is not the best way to gain a range of perspectives on an issue.
Examples, Guides and Toolkits	Involve has created an excellent guide called <i>Not another consultation! Making community engagement informal and fun</i> . Available here: https://www.involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/Not-Another-Consultation.pdf

10. 'Decision maker' visits to services

What is it?	This involves having scheduled visits to services to meet with service users. It is a way to share information and collect feedback directly by the decision-maker to service users. Delivering visits on a regular basis can bring the best results. This was a popular suggestion in the Newcastle Voices research and can be particularly useful for commissioners and policy-makers in the local council and senior managers in organisations providing services.
Which Recommendation does this support?	This idea supports the recommendation to have direct lines of communication with service users (R4) and in informing decision making (R10, R22).
Why do it?	Meeting service users in their own setting is a good way of getting your information across and collecting feedback. It allows for voices less heard to be engaged as those who might not attend through events. It's also relatively low cost as it can only take staff time and some refreshments. It also puts a face to decision-makers and can begin to build trust in the system among service users.
Resources needed	Time of the individual to visit services with preparation and time to provide feedback on queries raised.
Important things to consider	It can take some time to build trust, and there can be times that conversations are used to share grievances that may not be specific to the service.
Examples, Guides and Toolkits	There are not necessarily guidance materials on how best to achieve this – however, some facilitation skills training will aid this process.

II. Involvement in staff and trustee meetings

What is it?	This is a way of giving service users insight into and creating transparency around how organisations are run. At the board level, this could take the form of service users being represented on the board either on an informal basis or as full trustees. Processes could also be implemented to senior management meetings and other decision-making structures in an observational or engaged fashion. If in-person representation is not appropriate, then feeding back to service users through information sessions or the circulation of meeting minutes is a positive step.
Which Recommendation does this support?	This idea supports the recommendation to have direct lines of communication with service users (R22, R4) and in informing decision making (R10, R22).
Why do it?	It can sometimes feel that significant decisions are made behind closed doors that are not in the interest of the individuals that the decisions have an impact on. By creating participation in this way, it can add transparency, give insight into why decisions are made and build trust.
Resources Needed	If considering recruiting service users to work with the board, then putting appropriate training and support packages in place is crucial. If it is communicating decisions after meetings, then follow-up time to distribute information is the key resource.
Important things to consider	There may be information that is discussed in these meetings that cannot be shared with service users for legal or ethical reasons. Managing this can be a challenge, and therefore the reasons for this need to be clearly communicated.
Examples, Guides and Toolkits	The Charity Commission has a guide to 'users on the board: beneficiaries who become trustees': https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/475695/CC24.pdf

12. Service User Forums and 'speakouts'

<p>What is it?</p>	<p>These are meetings of service users and can be delivered as one-off sessions focusing on specific issues or as regular events that are scheduled. They often have an open membership allowing different people to attend. They ideally need a facilitator to lead the event who could be staff or a service user. In the late '90s, Groundswell ran a series of 'speakouts' that followed this model and brought together people affected by homelessness and key stakeholders to discuss homelessness.</p>
<p>Which Recommendation does this support?</p>	<p>Speakouts or forums could be used as a space for inputting into informing decision making and shaping strategy (R1) and policy (R9, R17), to inform decision making (R4, R10, R8) and in the design of services (R18).</p>
<p>Why do it?</p>	<p>Service users can raise issues that they want to discuss. This can be their own issues or issues raised by other service users who are not part of the forum. They can use the forum for consultation, for example, about plans to develop the service.</p>
<p>Resources Needed</p>	<p>Firstly, you need a suitable space to hold forums and meetings and the staff time to be able to plan, deliver and follow up the event. Catering the event will show that you are investing in the programme.</p>
<p>Important things to consider</p>	<p>Thinking about where you hold events, how accessible the location is, and what steps you take to publicise and encourage people to attend. Ask yourself the question, 'what's in it for me to come to a meeting like this?' The way an event is facilitated is also key as it will ensure that individuals have a chance to share their opinions and views - techniques that you might employ to facilitate events like <i>Open Space Technology</i> or <i>World Café</i> to name a few. Communicating the output of these events is absolutely key to show that people's participation is not wasted.</p>
<p>Examples, Guides and Toolkits</p>	<p>Groundswell's Speakout Toolkit is a useful (but slightly dated!) guide to running speakouts and forums: https://groundswell.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Groundswell-Speakout-Recipe-Book-2001-compressed.pdf Open Futures have an archive of their previous events which detail the different methods they have employed: https://openfutures.com/ The World Café has resources and publications to detail their approach: www.theworldcafe.com</p>

13. Service users' representatives and panels

<p>What is it?</p>	<p>Service user representatives are service users who represent service users' views and opinions in their local service or project or through local service user councils/panels. These should be taken on a voluntary basis and in some cases, can be elected roles.</p> <p>Councils/panels involve regular meetings of service users (typically with a staff member(s) from an organisation) to provide feedback from service users based on their experiences, which can then be used in service planning and review. Although there is no limit to the number of participants on a panel, typically members attend regularly and are recruited to be part of the panel. That said, changing the membership of the panel can be a positive thing. They may be based on a specific unifying characteristic or group, for example, people who have mental health issues or people from a migrant community. The panel may also support recruitment panels and arrange social events such as trips out.</p>
<p>Which Recommendation does this support?</p>	<p>As with speakouts and forums, this mechanism could be used as a space for inputting into informing decision making and shaping strategy (R1) and policy (R9, R17), to inform decision making (R4, R10, R22) and in the design of services (R18).</p>
<p>Why do it?</p>	<p>Running user panels or having user representatives, allows for regular and structured engagement with service users. This can mean that individuals who participate can develop the skills to engage with formal systems and can effectively give feedback and share experience. They can be effective for feeding into service planning and review.</p>
<p>Resources Needed</p>	<p>Staff time for recruitment of panel members or supporting representatives and follow-up administration. Facilitation of discussion meetings, either by in-house staff or external facilitators.</p> <p>Thinking about what the 'give' and the 'get' is for people who take up these roles is key to making sure that people receive something in return (expenses, training etc.) that is proportional to their input.</p>
<p>Important things to consider</p>	<p>It's important to consider how you recruit and make a panel accessible to people to ensure that it includes a wide range of people. However, they are unlikely to be completely representative of the population. This method is unlikely to lend itself to participation by people with literacy or language problems. Since panels are recruited from service users, they do not take into account the needs of people who have not yet accessed the service. Because of the flexibility of this tool, panels may be overused to the point where participants suffer from fatigue and service providers can come to rely on this as their only method for involving service users. There is a risk that over time, panel members will come to identify with the organisation and therefore become less critical.</p>
<p>Examples, Guides and Toolkits</p>	<p>There are many examples of good practice in this area. Please see the varied toolkits and sources in the Useful Resources section of this document.</p>

Training and development for service users

14. Service user inductions on rights and participation.

What is it?	All service users have inductions to services that inform them of their rights and ways to participate and feedback. These can be led by people who use services themselves. This could be all services but is particularly useful in residential projects where there can be a longer-term and more sustained relationship. The induction could be delivered by staff or by another service user.
Which Recommendation does this support?	This mechanism specifically supports the recommendation to train service users on their rights (R12). However, by delivering this mechanism, it is likely to improve participation in other structures.
Why do it?	It helps service users to be aware of their rights and to understand the structures that the organisation works within. It can demystify how the organisation works allowing service users to feel more in control of their situation.
Resources Needed	This should be built into the participant's entrance into a service and any existing 'welcome' processes. It could be a stand-alone module or should be well explained alongside other key elements of the service.
Important things to consider	Delivering the induction when someone is first entering the service may not be the correct time as capacity might be limited to take in information, particularly if it is at the point of a big transition (e.g. moving from street to accommodation). Be aware that sometimes, even staff may not be aware of the information that might be involved in these inductions.
Examples, Guides and Toolkits	Care about Rights has a training pack on rights based approaches: http://careaboutrights.scottishhumanrights.com/whatisahumanrightsbasedapproach.html

Useful Resources

The following resources are useful sources of information and guidance that cut across many of the above mechanisms for participation. They have also informed the creation of this toolkit:

NSUN 4PI National Involvement Standards. Available at:

<https://www.nsun.org.uk/FAQs/4pi-national-involvement-standards>

NHS England has created guidance on *Service User Involvement* and on *Patient and Public Participation*. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2015/10/ohc-paper-06.pdf>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/patient-and-public-participation-guidance.pdf>

The Scottish Health Council has created *The participation Toolkit*. Available at:

http://scottishhealthcouncil.org/patient_public_participation/participation_toolkit/the_participation_toolkit.aspx#.XSg5k-hKg2w

Revolving Doors has created two toolkits for improving involvement of offenders in a prison and a community setting. Available at:

<http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/NOMS%20Toolkit%20Peer%20Research.pdf>

<http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/NOMS%20Toolkit%20Service%20User%20Involvement%20with%20Offenders%20in%20the%20Community.pdf>

Revolving Doors has a guide to *Service User Involvement and Co-production*:

<http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/file/1857/download?token=cDW0pd6M>

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has produced research exploring how user involvement can be increased in voluntary organisations:

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/increasing-user-involvement-voluntary-organisations>

The University of Strathclyde and the Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice (CYCJ), have published a practical guide to service user involvement in community justice that can contribute to service innovation, and help recovery and support desistance from offending:

https://cycj.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Weaver_Lightowler_Moodie-2019-Inclusive_justice_Final.pdf

The NHS in the South Central Region has a *Patient and Public Engagement Toolkit for World Class Commissioning*:

<https://localdemocracyandhealth.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/ppe-toolit-south-central.pdf>

Turning Point Scotland has a good practice guide on *Service User Involvement*:

<http://www.turningpointscotland.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Service-User-Involvement-Good-Practice-Guide.pdf>

Shelter has a good practice guide on *Involving Users in Supported Housing* that includes many case studies of projects that have implemented involvement in their structures:
https://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/40082/Involving_users_in_supported_housing.pdf

Glossary

Active Participation. ‘Active Participation’ in support services refers to the processes by which people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness can share ideas and perspectives and actively engage in decision making about issues that affect them. This is at all levels from personal support, through service delivery to strategy and policy making.

Client Involvement: Where services create opportunities for their clients/service users to have a say in all aspects of those services. Client Involvement is a mind-set that says vulnerable people’s voices are absolutely essential at three different levels: to support people toward greater independence; to make services as effective as possible and to make the best strategic decisions.

Co-design: Co-design is a research and development process where professional designers empower, encourage and guide users to develop products, services, or organisational solutions for themselves.

Co-production: There is no single formula for co-production. Broadly, it is a way of bringing together all stakeholders (e.g. service users, funders, commissioners, service providers) to develop and implement shared solutions to an issue. There are some key features that are present in co-production initiatives. They:

- define people who use services as assets with skills
- break down the barriers between people who use services and professionals
- build on people’s existing capabilities
- include reciprocity (where people get something back for having done something for others) and mutuality (people working together to achieve their shared interests)
- work with peer and personal support networks alongside professional networks
- facilitate services by helping organisations to become agents for change rather than just being service providers.

Co-production is not just a word, it’s not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find a shared solution. In practice, it involves people who use services being consulted, included and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them.

Experts by Experience: Experts by Experience is a term used to describe people who have personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses health, mental health and/or social care services.

Lived Experience: Personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events rather than through observation or secondary information. For example, this could be experience of homelessness or using a support service to address a specific need like mental ill health.

Participation: In general terms, participation in services is the act of people who have experienced the problem you are trying to overcome taking part in the solutions to these

issues. Good participation supports people toward greater independence, makes services as effective as possible and helps make the best strategic decisions.

Peer: Someone who has shared experience with another person whether that is present or past. For example, it might be someone who is of the same age group, comes from similar educational backgrounds, and can be doing the same work as you. In the case of this project, it's homelessness that is a shared life experience.

Peer Advocacy: Peer advocacy is about someone who has shared experience, engaging with people and supporting them to meet their own objectives. It is based on empathy; often it can be easier to talk to a peer because of the shared experience and common understanding. Peer advocacy is person-centred – It is truly client-focused and led as a peer advocate can only act on the wishes of the client.

Peer Research: People who have experience of the thing being investigated are involved in elements of the research process, including deciding what should be investigated, how it should be investigated, undertaking the investigation, analysing the results, developing the recommendations and implementing changes.

Peer Support: Peer support occurs when people provide knowledge, experience, emotional, social or practical help to each other. It commonly refers to an initiative consisting of trained supporters and can take several forms such as peer mentoring, reflective listening or counselling. Peer support is also used to refer to initiatives where colleagues, members of self-help organisations and others meet, in person or online, as equals to give each other connection and support on a reciprocal basis.

Person-Centred Care: Is a way of thinking and doing things that sees the people using health and social services as equal partners in planning, developing and monitoring care to make sure it meets their needs.

Service User: A service user is someone who is receiving or using (or has received or used) primary or secondary mental health care services. When we use this term, we refer to the relationship where an individual receives support from a service. The term 'service user' can restrict identity as if an individual is a passive recipient of health and welfare services: seen to be someone who has things 'done to them' or who quietly accepts and receives a service. It can ignore all the other things an individual does, which makes up who they are as a person. This is not what Newcastle City Council means when we talk of 'service users'.

Service User Involvement. See 'client involvement'.

System Change: a way of addressing the root cause of social problems. Systems change alters the status quo by shifting the function or structure of an identified system with purposeful interventions.

