



# Involving the people we support in recruitment

## Good Practice Guide

## Introduction

Placing the people we support at the centre of the services we deliver, and designing services that meet their needs, is a fundamental aspect of the ethos of Turning Point Scotland (TPS). Therefore involving the people we support when we are recruiting new staff can be crucial to ensuring that the 'right' people are employed within services. The 'right' people have the skills, qualities and characteristics that those who will be in receipt of their support have identified as being important.

This guide has been put together as a direct response to requests from two groups of people: service users and service managers. Many of the people we support have indicated that they would like to be more involved in choosing the staff that support them, and service managers have highlighted a need for guidelines to refer to when involving service users in the recruitment process.

We hope that this guide will help you with practical ways in which you can involve people at various levels of recruitment and selection. Please use it as a prompt when you are developing the best way of involving service users in the recruitment of staff for your service, and tailor the ideas to suit your needs and situation.

### **Purpose of this good practice guide**

This guide aims to give you the confidence to involve the people you support in the process of recruiting new staff. We hope that it will offer you a new way of approaching recruitment and selection and expand your service user involvement.

### **The TPS recruitment and selection process**

This guide only suggests how to include the people you support in recruitment. It does not replace the TPS recruitment and selection processes, which still apply. Please discuss with HR for advice.

## Why involve service users or potential service users in the recruitment of staff?

There are a number of benefits to involving service users in the recruitment and selection of staff.

### Benefits to organisation

- Services will be more effective, as they are delivered by people who will be well received by service users.
- The benefits for the relationship between service users and service providers – they develop a positive attitude towards involvement and working together.
- Service users take ownership of the services they receive and become more respectful and appreciative of them.
- People who have experience of using services are ideally placed to have a say on what kind of person and skills are necessary for the job.

### Benefits to service users and community

- Service users will benefit from being involved in decision making by developing a greater sense of citizenship and social responsibility, as well as ownership of the services that they use.
- Those that take part have the opportunity to develop confidence, self esteem, and new skills such as communication, listening skills and decision making skills.
- Service users receive a better quality of service, as they have been involved through having a say on how it is delivered.
- A more effective service benefits the wider community as a whole through more targeted and relevant service delivery.
- It has been reported that people benefit from finding out more about the recruitment process as it helps them when they apply for jobs.

## The national context

A range of publications discuss the importance of involving people who use services in the development and delivery of services. Some of these include:

### The Code of Guidance on Homelessness 2005

Chapter 3, paragraph 3.15 states:

“Agencies should explore different ways in which people using their services can be involved in the design, delivery and management of these services.”

The full document can be seen at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/53814/0012265.pdf>

### Charter for involvement

The Charter for Involvement is unique in Scotland as it was written and developed by people who use services for service providers to make involvement better for everyone. There are 13 statements in the Charter showing how people who use support services want to be involved in the service they get, in the organizations that provide their services and the wider community. One of the statements says:

“We want to be involved in choosing our support workers, other staff, our volunteers, our advocates and people we trust to talk to.”

The Charter can be seen at:

<http://arcuk.org.uk/scotland/files/2011/02/Charter-for-Involvement.pdf>

The Care Inspectorate has set out guidelines for ‘Involving people who use care services, and their families, friends and supporters’. These can be seen at:

[http://www.scswis.com/index2.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_view&gid=350&Itemid=378](http://www.scswis.com/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=350&Itemid=378)

## The principles of involving service users in decision making

The successful implementation of the National Quality Standards recognises that effective and efficient services require the active participation of service users in the design, planning, delivery and evaluation of services.

Compliance with the National Quality Standards requires that user involvement be evidenced to different extents, at different levels and through employing a combination of methods.

The principles for involving people who use services in decision making that have been applied in the production of these guidelines are set out below. An explanation of what the principle means, and how we will apply it in involving people we support in recruitment is also detailed. It is good practice to make sure people who want to get involved in recruitment are made aware of the principles and their application by sharing the following table with them.

Principle	For service users, this means:	At TPS we will:
<b>Information</b>	<p>Information that is easy for everyone to understand.</p> <p>People working with you who know what is going on and are up front and clear.</p>	<p>Ensure everyone has enough information to get properly involved.</p> <p>Let you know what difference you being involved will make.</p> <p>Inform you about who is going to listen and make changes.</p>
<b>It's your choice</b>	<p>You choose if you want to get involved or not.</p> <p>You choose to work on things that are important to you.</p> <p>You choose what you do and how you do it.</p>	<p>Give you enough information and time to decide if this is something you want to do.</p>

<p><b>No discrimination</b></p>	<p>People are all different but you all have the same right to have a say about the things that matter to you.</p> <p>We want everyone to feel welcome and be able to get involved if they want to be.</p>	<p>Challenge any discrimination.</p> <p>Get in touch with people in lots of different situations.</p> <p>Get you involved in things you want to do.</p>
<p><b>Respect</b></p>	<p>Everyone has a chance to have a say, your opinions are important and we will respect them.</p>	<p>Listen to your ideas, views and experiences.</p> <p>Take you seriously and treat you fairly.</p> <p>Work with you to do something about the things you tell us are important.</p> <p>Work with you to help change things for the better.</p>
<p><b>You get something out of it</b></p>	<p>We want you to enjoy and benefit from taking part.</p> <p>We know that you have other things to do in your lives as well!</p> <p>Making sure that participating is a positive not a negative experience.</p>	<p>Work in safe, fun and enjoyable ways.</p> <p>Make the most of what you know.</p> <p>Do positive things that build your confidence.</p> <p>Meet in friendly places that are easy to use.</p> <p>Value and respect what you have to offer.</p>

<b>Feedback</b>	It's really important that you know what difference you have made and how your ideas have been used.	<p>Keep you up to date with what is happening.</p> <p>Give feedback as soon as possible and in ways that are for everyone to understand.</p>
<b>Improving how we work</b>	We want to learn and get better at the way we work with you	<p>Look at the way we work with you and how to improve it.</p> <p>Ask you what has gone well and what needs to change.</p> <p>Make sure your views make a difference.</p>

## **Working with people who use services requires a little more planning, and it is worth considering the following issues beforehand**

### **Adult protection**

All staff within Turning Point Scotland are registered with the PVG scheme (protection of vulnerable groups) at the commencement of employment and reviewed every 3 years. Due to adult protection legislation it is in the best interest of service users who are involved in the recruitment process that they are not left alone with prospective candidates. Existing staff that have already been registered with the PVG scheme must be present when service users are engaging with prospective candidates.

### **Access**

This principle applies to all service users who are involved. It is important to ensure that it is made as easy as possible for those involved to attend and to take part in the process. This means that careful consideration should be given to venues, transport, and ensuring that all materials used are appropriate and user friendly. We hope that this toolkit will support you with this.

### **Incentives/thanking those who have taken part**

This does not have to be financial, although it is a good idea to reimburse travel and any other costs. Additional ways that involvement might be acknowledged include:

- providing a record of training
- presenting a certificate
- giving a token payment or gift
- providing a character reference



## **Genuine/meaningful involvement**

Having a discussion at the very beginning of the process around the decision making process will avoid any misunderstanding and disappointment from the service users who are involved. They should feel valued and as though their input has had a meaningful impact on the selection decision.

We want people who use our services to input in the decision making process. However, only employees of TPS are bound to the terms of their contract not to discuss or share personal or confidential information. People who use our services are not. Therefore it is important that candidate's details are not disclosed. This includes name, address and any identifying information. Special attention must be taken when dealing with internal applicants to ensure their identity is not disclosed.

## Frequently asked questions and concerns

**Q** How can the people we support appreciate what the job entails and what skills are needed?

**A** Involving service users or potential service users in recruitment does not take away from the importance of professional opinion and the need for expertise and knowledge of the job. Decisions can be taken together. The perspective given from service users will provide an extra dimension, which always makes a valid contribution to the selection decision.

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**Q** What if we can't agree on who is the best candidate for the job?

**A** On the most part, service users and professionals tend to agree on the best candidate. However in the event that a consensus is not reached, the Chair of the panel will have the final say. This should be explained to the service users at the beginning of the process.

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**Q** What can service users tell us that we don't already know?

**A** Service users give a valuable extra dimension that professionals may not be able to appreciate. For example, a straight forward interview may not establish how well a candidate is able to develop a good rapport with people. Neither would it help those recruiting know whether the candidate is able to adjust their language and style according to those they are communicating with. Involving service users provides a clearer all round picture of a candidate.

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**Q** Is all the effort and time required worth it in the end?

**A** We hope that this guide will mean that less effort is required! Whilst we appreciate that recruitment and selection is already a time consuming and long winded process, involving service users in the process does support services to

make the best choice and therefore saves time in the long run. The benefits (already mentioned in this guide) far outweigh the effort, time and cost.

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**Q Could involving service users in the process potentially cause problems once a person is in post?**

**A** There may be times when services feel that it would be inappropriate to involve current service users in the recruitment and selection of staff as it may undermine the successful candidate as they take up the post. If this is the case, there are other options. Former service users may be happy to help, or service users from other services might want to get involved. It should be noted that many services have successfully involved current service users in the recruitment process, see some of the examples at the end of this guide.

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**Q Are we taking things too far by involving service users in recruitment and selection? Do they really want this kind of responsibility?**

**A** Who is appointed to work with them is clearly a decision which affects the lives of the people we support. If they are offered the right kind of support and training, service users are mostly happy to be involved.

We should also remember the element of choice, and be flexible so that they can be involved in a way and at a level that they feel comfortable with.

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**Q Should prospective candidates be informed in advance that service users will be involved in the recruitment and selection process?**

**A** There is no obligation to inform prospective candidates of service user involvement in the recruitment process. However, you have the opportunity to include a statement saying that TPS support the involvement of people who use services in their recruitment and selection process in the job advert. Some services that operate pre-recruitment open days/evenings include this statement in the letter of invitation.

## Which service users to involve?

An ideal scenario would be to involve existing service users who are best placed to understand what kind of candidate is needed for the job. Service users are the people who ought to be influencing that decision, as the outcome will affect them and their peers directly.

It may not always be appropriate however to involve existing service users. This being the case, another option could be to involve people who receive a similar service either elsewhere in Turning Point Scotland or from another provider. They would have the necessary knowledge and experience without being directly involved with the successful candidate when in post. The organisation could also involve potential service users.

The TPS inclusion coordinator is available to offer advice and support.

## Involving service users at various stages in the recruitment and selection process

Every situation is different, and this guide aims to provide information on a number of ways in which people we support can be involved in recruitment and selection at various stages. For example, a service may want to involve service users from the very beginning in adding a specific requirement in the advert, or later on in the recruitment process through taking part in an interviewing panel. Any requirements included in the advert must be discussed with the Operations Manager and have regard to the equality act.

Suggestions for involving service users at various stages:

### Stage 1

Service users involved in identifying the need for a new/different post within a service, and are involved from the outset in discussing what the need is.

### Stage 2

Service users informed of a job description and consulted on the person specification for an existing post or new post identified within the service, and from there on in the recruitment and selection process. The standard TPS job descriptions and person specifications should be used in this process.

### Stage 3

Service users involved in the short-listing process and from there on in the recruitment and selection process (this will be particularly relevant in relation to people being supported through personalisation). Remember a service user should not be shown a candidate's personal information. You may have a discussion surrounding the personal statement or what type of work they have done before. A candidate's personal information should not be shared.

## Stage 4

Service users involved in the 'interviewing' (or alternative) and selection stage of the process. (See the section on designing the interview/selection process).

*At all stages the process will be most effective if service users receive training and support to take part in the process.*

## Designing the interview/selection process

All recruitment will be carried out using the TPS recruitment and selection policies and procedures.

Each service is different and as such, will involve service users in different ways. The first step when involving service users should be to ask them which way of being involved would best suit them. The following are some suggestions of ways that people can get involved:

- questions and tasks devised by service users based around the job description and person specification
- service users sit in on formal interview and ask questions if they choose to
- service users conduct a separate interview
- service users observe a presentation/task relating to the job either in a set up setting or in a real life setting
- observe candidates in their current job if the roles are similar or related
- service users take part in a task led by candidate
- informal chat in an informal setting to get to know candidates (topics for discussion agreed beforehand)
- candidate brings an object that best shows their personality and explains why they have chosen it
- candidate brings examples of past work (e.g. reports, posters, leaflets, etc)
- a small test on knowledge (can be useful if candidate needs to be I.T. literate to include tasks on the computer)
- a small test on common sense or judgement (e.g. ask candidates to place tasks in order of priority and why; give candidates a scenario and ask what they would do)

### Practicalities

Involving service users in the recruitment and selection process can add extra factors to consider whilst arranging an interview or other selection process. It is important that the process used, and the ways people are involved is recorded. This will be useful for both internal and external quality checks, and

will also help other TPS services develop their own local processes and improve service user involvement across the organisation. A template for this purpose has been added at the end of this guide.



## The decision making stage

It is sensible to agree with all those taking part in the selection process how a decision will be reached. This avoids confusion and disagreement.

Discuss beforehand that service users provide their input and opinion during the selection process and that the professionals take this into account and consider all aspects before coming to a final decision.

TPS have a corporate system which helps ensure a fair decision. Individuals taking part in the selection process score candidates separately. An average score is then worked out and the successful candidate is the person with the highest score. This system can also be used when service users are involved in the selection process.

*Please note that the professionals involved must still use the TPS selection system and paperwork and that all paperwork showing how a decision was made (including that of the service users) must be sent to HR.*

It is important to note that if a panel are unable to agree on a final decision, the Chair of the panel has the responsibility of making the final decision.



## Background checks and risk assessment guidance for managers 2014

1. Candidates are asked to declare background information on application form
2. If application indicates a conviction or similar and the person is shortlisted the **Background checks and record candidate declaration form** (BCRDF) is dispatched to the candidate for completion and bringing in to interview
3. All candidates are asked about criminal history and background information at interview and if they declare something at interview which is not in the application form the candidate should be given a BCRDF to record the information and the late declaration noted in the risk assessment.
4. The chairperson at interview reviews the BCRDF form and discusses it with the candidate indicating (as outlined in the form)
  - a) That the aim is to consider the relevance of the conviction/issue(s) to the post they are being considered for and part of that is to discuss the offence or issue to get an understanding of the context of it.
  - b) Although the interview chairperson records the information the Director of Operations is the sole authoriser.
  - c) If the application is ultimately unsuccessful on this occasion, the Declaration will be destroyed in a confidential manner and in accordance with our policy for the management of confidential information.
  - d) The information will be handled sensitively and in a confidential manner
  - e) They may contact you following the interview if they require any further information. A risk assessment may be undertaken.
5. The BCRDF is checked for completion, discussed and the form is signed off by the chairperson. It is to be retained securely with the application form and destroyed locally as sensitive information along with the form for unsuccessful candidates.
6. On the **Background Check Management Risk Assessment form**, the Chairperson completes as much of the Basic Information and Details section as possible following the interview.
7. The chairperson should be aware that if the individual is successful as preferred candidate, s/he will need to input further into the risk assessment process with the HR advisor and that this will be passed on as a recommendation to the Director of Operations for consideration. This form is also to be retained securely with the application form and destroyed locally as sensitive information along with the form for unsuccessful candidates.
8. The PVG or Disclosure Check is run and the Certificate content information compared to the BCRDF and Risk Assessment document by the nominated HR Advisor who will complete the detail of the Risk Assessment document in partnership with the interview Chairperson/service manager. This will then be provided to the Director of Operations.
9. The outcome of the risk assessment will be noted on the form and returned to HR to progress the appointment or end the process due to unsatisfactory background checks.

