

S. U. News

The newsletter for Ealing Service Users

Service User Involvement and Representation

Companies and public services are constantly looking to provide better services for their customers in order to ensure their profitability or continued survival. If you are shopping on line or by phone it isn't long before you are asked to complete a feedback questionnaire. Although they might drive us mad, particularly if we've had a bad experience, customer surveys can be a valuable method of collecting the opinions of buyers/service users.

Professional experts are necessary to create the environment for excellence and Ealing has a history of attracting ground breaking clinicians such as John Connelly in the field of mental health and Max Glatt in addiction therapy. However, without the views of service users professionals who are undoubtedly dedicated to care quality can miss the point. In 2008 when Ealing Hospital received "good" and "excellent" ratings from nurses, doctors and service managers in certain disciplines it was also listed last out of the 165 trusts in England in a survey of patients' ratings of the level of care.

Prior to 2012 D&A service users in Ealing complained that services were disjointed, repetitious and failed to meet the aftercare needs of clients. In response the DAAT created a contract for an integrated service provider with clear responsibilities and treatment pathways but with the freedom to innovate. How well the three bidding organisations were rated through the tendering process was decided by a group, not just of professionals but of service users as well. The result is an integrated treatment service with much less paperwork an emphasis on aftercare i.e. the 131 Social Club and much greater service user involvement.

For the last eight years it has been a statutory duty for organisations responsible for the treatment of drug and alcohol problems to involve Service Users in planning, development, provision and decision making. In the next two issues of Service User News we attempt to explain what those duties are and in the next issue, how these duties are fulfilled in Ealing.

Who should be involving Service Users?

The requirement of Section 242 of the NHS Act 2006 primarily applies to organisations commissioning or providing treatments, in the case of Ealing this is the Drug and Alcohol Action Team [DAAT] (which is part of the Public Health Department of Ealing Council), the RISE consortium, and the West London Mental Health Trust in respect of dual diagnosis.

It does not apply to the National Probation Service or the London Community Rehabilitation Company, the Clinical Commissioning Group (the group of local GPs that now determine local health priorities and expenditure), SMART Recovery, AA,NA,MA,CA or Intuitive Recovery.

Who are Service Users?

Service Users are generally considered to be:

1. those who have used services previously;
2. those currently in treatment and;
3. those who may engage in the future.

Group three are probably the people most services would like to access in order to encourage them into services, group two are the easiest to access because of their attendance at service locations although not necessarily the most likely to contribute to all areas of Service User Involvement (SUI) because of their current addiction and related issues.

It is often group one that are most active in SUI, ex-clients who have completed treatment and

may be able to contribute much, but are not necessarily representative of the other groups. Service providers therefore particularly value the participation of groups two and three to determine where there are gaps in the service or communities that have unmet needs.



What involvement should there be?

1. Individual level Service User involvement

This level of involvement will allow current and potential Service Users to gain knowledge about their rights and responsibilities whilst in treatment or accessing support, the choices of types of treatment available and their own care plans.

2. Service level Service User Involvement

This level of User and Carer involvement will ensure that all local drug and alcohol treatment services fulfil their requirements set out in within the mandatory guidance, to consult with their service users on all aspects of their services. This includes consultation with Service Users before making any significant changes to the services.

3. Strategic level Service User Involvement

This entails participation in planning undertaken by the DAAT partnership. This involves participation and consultation at a wider strategic level of planning, for reviewing and developing of services.

In the next issue we look specifically at how service users are involved and represented in Ealing.

Service User Voice

The monthly Service User meeting for all Ealing RISE Service Users is held at the Social Café on the 2nd Tuesday of each month 2-30pm to 3-30pm (£5 voucher for attendees).

The next three dates for your diaries are:

- 9th September
- 14th October
- 11th November

Free Social Activities

18th September 4:30pm
Dinosaur crazy golf Northolt 16 places
Children welcome

Call Sean Kelly on 07858400543 for more details, to book a place and to get confirmation of dates and times.

About Your Newsletter

If you would like to provide articles on what's happening to drug and alcohol services in Ealing or help edit the newsletter please let us know, contact details below.

If you wish to be included on our e-mail mailing list, please e-mail "newsletter" to the e-mail address below, conversely if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, e-mail "stop" and we will remove you from our list.

Privacy Policy: At no time will your details be passed to a third party and if you wish to unsubscribe from the newsletter your details will be permanently removed from our database.

Thought for the week!

The talent for being happy is appreciating and liking what you have, instead of what you don't have.

Woody Allen

Courtesy of Steve Mc George

Ealing Service Users Newsletter

e-mail: info@surgealing.org.uk

write to : SURGEaling 131 Uxbridge Road, London W13 9AU

or visit : www.surgealing.org.uk