



## Service User Involvement Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

Cambridge House sees service user consultation and involvement as essential to the success of our services. Cambridge House is a truly user led organisation in which user involvement is at the core of everything we do.

We are committed to involving service users in all aspects of staff recruitment, project development, service delivery and quality assurance.

Cambridge House empowers service users to fully participate in all areas of its work including:

- Recruiting and supporting service users to become volunteers and members of staff.
- Empowering service users to play a full role in developing and delivering services.

### 2. Our delivery ethos – individualised and outcome focused

This user involvement policy enables us to secure individualised and outcome focused activities that are:

- i) **Safe:** Provide a safe space that is uplifting, respectful, empathetic, nurturing, warm, challenging and genuine.
- ii) **Authentic:** Build association and trust with users by ensuring they see themselves reflected throughout the structure of the organisation.
- iii) **Respectful:** Value our users' voice by involving them in all stages of project development, delivery and evaluation.
- iv) **Diverse:** Facilitate different service entry pathways to meet different levels of skill, capability and confidence.
- v) **Welcome:** Promote services in accessible, non-stigmatising and non-threatening ways.
- vi) **Positive:** Use strength-based approaches that focus on users' skills as their starting point, rather than shortfalls.
- vii) **Empowering:** Enhance users' ability to solve problems for themselves and build their self-sufficiency and resilience.
- viii) **Self-determined:** Build peer to peer and self-reflective approaches.
- ix) **System changing:** Capture the creativity and value the life experiences of users' so that they are empowered to contribute to democratic processes and hold decision-makers to account.
- x) **Wraparound: Support** users to identify barriers to them achieving their life goals, and facilitate access to the community-based, statutory or multiagency services they need to secure positive sustainable outcomes for themselves.

### **3. Aims and Scope**

This policy applies to trustees and volunteers, staff, interns and service users at Cambridge House.

A service user is defined, for the purpose of this policy as 'someone who has or is currently accessing health and social care support or has direct experience of one or more of our services'. A Service User does not therefore necessarily mean a current or previous user of specific Cambridge House services.

Cambridge House ensures its staff, volunteers and trustees reflect the local population as evidenced in the 2011 Census with a target of 46% of the above being from a black and minority ethnic background and 22% having a long term health condition or disability.

Cambridge House believes that service user involvement is important because services that reflect and take into account the experience, needs and wishes of their users are more likely to be effective and that service users are the best people to determine how those needs should be met.

This policy aims to have the following outcomes:

- Providing opportunity for service users
- Promoting self-esteem for service users
- Raising user expectations
- Promoting partnerships to improve service quality
- Increasing inclusion
- Finding new ways of delivering existing services and developing new ones

All Service Users should have the opportunity:

- To inform and influence service development, i.e. planning, delivery, monitoring, evaluation, training and recruitment of staff.
- To make informed choices about the support they receive.
- To be informed about their services and rights, including equal opportunities and complaints
- To be listened to and supported by Cambridge House trustees, staff and volunteers

## **5. Approach**

Cambridge House is committed to offer opportunities for involvement at all stages of the organisation.

### **User involvement in their own service**

Staff and Volunteers shall ensure that all users:

- Are involved in defining what they want out of the services they are involved in
- Are involved in regular service reviews
- Are able to talk to someone independently if they have a difficulty that cannot be resolved
- Are involved in Cambridge House's complaints procedure
- Are invited to apply to become a Board Member

### **Governance**

Cambridge House will encourage and support service users who wish to become trustees. The support will include enhanced training and personal support, including opportunities to discuss the agenda before each meeting.

### **Strategic Planning**

Users will be encouraged to take part in strategic and business planning events, policy making and activities that determine the vision and direction of the organisation.

### **Cambridge House Policies**

To ensure service user involvement is incorporated into every day work at Cambridge House, we are committed to ensure that all of our policies outline how we involve service users in that particular area. For example, our Recruitment Policy clearly indicates the level of training needed so that users feel supported and enabled to participate.

### **Training for Service Users**

We are committed to provide training for our service users to enable them to participate more actively. Training packs will be developed in consultation with service users and will be regularly reviewed.

### **Service User Coaching**

Service Users can access coaching from a member of staff to support them to develop skills and participate in services.

### **New Service Development**

All new services will be developed in partnership with their potential users. No service will be approved for development without evidence of service user consultation.

### **Users becoming Staff or Volunteers**

Cambridge House believes that service users can bring unique understanding and experience and encourages service users to apply for posts and opportunities.

## 6. User Engagement Strategy

Our user engagement strategy is predicated on us understanding the potential barriers to involving users with multiple disadvantages and complex interrelated needs, including challenges associated with:

- Making initial contact
- Working effectively with people who choose not to engage with services either because they:
  - a) Do not recognise that they need support
  - b) Feel wary about service involvement
  - c) Have had negative experiences
- Encouraging involvement without stigmatising
- Dealing with access and communication issues
- Recruiting appropriate staff and volunteers
- Ensuring sufficient time to build relationships
- Ensuring project design is appropriate
- Establishing effective partnerships with other agencies to promote reach and engagement

To address these challenges we use the following methods:

### Project design:

- Outreach strategies – we know the *street* and *work it* to build relationships with the support of service user ambassadors
- User friendly marketing and promotion – we ensure that language and visuals are appropriate, and use social networking and word of mouth to increase our reach
- Appropriate service delivery environment – we ensure that services are delivered with neutral, fun and casual spaces
- Offer what's wanted– we provide what users want, rather than what we think is needed, and we work to fill gaps in provision
- We use non-monetary incentives where helpful such as social events, trips and outings
- Relationship-based - we dedicate time to breaking down barriers and challenging misperceptions

### Partnership:

- We work with community, statutory and private sector partners to establish and coordinate a diversity of referral pathways, including community members and service users on reference/advisory groups
- We invite users onto focus and advisory groups to help determine their needs and design projects around them
- We build relationships with special interest VCS groups so that we extend our reach and impact

### Staffing:

- We train local people to work on projects
- We recruit staff and volunteers from culturally, socially and demographically diverse communities
- We invest in training and supervision of all our staff and volunteers
- We invest in high staff to user ratios