



Service User Engagement

every day better

70%

Over 70% of mental health professionals think that service user engagement has a positive impact on care.

“

Individuals in our care deserve to be treated as the unique people they are. That is what I do - that is what I care about above everything else.”

Sophia Feurtado
Service User Engagement Manager
Exemplar Health Care

Our service users are individual people, with individual needs. Central to everything we do is a commitment to responding to those individual needs, and empowering people to become partners in managing their care, so we care for them in the way they want.

At Exemplar we want our service users to feel they have control of their own destiny, decisions about their care, and to be truly involved in the running of their homes.

Every service user is involved in co-producing their own care plans and making decisions about their day-to-day care. They are also actively involved in the design of our services, influencing not only the way our homes deliver care now but also helping to shape service delivery in our new homes. We listen to what is most important to people and make sure their care plan and the services around that, reflect this.

This person-centred approach involves really listening to people, finding out what they want and need, and involving them in decisions about their lives. It's part of our 'no decision about me without me' approach.

Co-producing plans and services

Our joint approach allows us to explore alternate points of view and address any challenges, opening up new ideas and opportunities that we'd otherwise not consider. We work as a team - sharing challenges, identifying problems and solving them together. By putting our service users at the heart of everything we do, by listening and acting on what they tell us, we can ensure they have a real voice in shaping our standards and service delivery ensuring continuous improvement.



Family, friends and carers

At Exemplar we recognise that carers, family members, friends and partners can provide valuable practical and emotional support and we greatly value the significant role loved ones play in the recovery and wellbeing of service users. Whether it be our 'open door policy' approach to loved ones dropping in and talking to our home managers and other team members, or the more formal processes in place for surveys and regular relative meetings, listening to loved ones is very important to us.

We welcome opportunities to take in the views of family, friends and carers and work together with them and service users to ensure we are meeting each individual's needs and desires, whilst also providing the right treatment, care and support.

Our service user council

Our Service User Council is made up of a team of Service User Ambassadors, who meet regularly with Exemplar employees and senior managers, including our dedicated Service User Engagement Manager.

The council actively influence, change and improve our services working together to make every day better for themselves and their fellow service users.

Through the council, the service users:

- **Are consulted on ideas for changes to services**
- **Put forward their own ideas for improvements**
- **Feedback on any concerns**

Case study

Exemplar's service user team, led by Sophia Feurtado, Dignity in Care award winner, help to transform the lives of our service users, promoting dignity at all times. The Service User Council provides a platform for our service users to speak up, be heard and creates a platform for change.

Every two months, Ambassadors, from Exemplar homes across the UK, meet and are joined by their support worker, Sophia and her team, as well as group directors.

At a recent meeting, Ian, a service user at Parkside in Tipton, raised the point that some Exemplar homes had policies about holidays and weekends away for residents while others didn't. Keen to ensure that every service user across Exemplar should have the opportunity to enjoy a holiday, Ian proposed a new policy. Chief Executive Euan Craig, who attended the meeting, put Ian's proposal to the Exemplar board members – one holiday policy for all homes and equal access to holidays for everyone.

As a result a new holiday policy has been developed and extended

to all homes. It contains relevant information for Exemplar employees, service users and families ensuring that every service user across Exemplar can enjoy a holiday of their choice, whatever their needs.

The Service User Council continues to provide a space for service users to meet one another, explore other homes and work together to make every day better for themselves, and their fellow service users.

Ambassadors say being part of the council makes them feel more valued, as part of the Exemplar team and most importantly, develop their skills within different areas.

“

I get involved with many different things which are good for the soul and good for the brain. We need to be active, involved and included.”

Ian
Service user, Parkside

Influencing how homes are run

We encourage and empower service users to take an active role in the running of their home and in addressing decisions that directly affect them. They can:

- Act as Service User Ambassadors – sharing ideas about their home, working on projects at both a service and strategic level
- Be part of our Service User Council – having a direct link to our board of directors
- Be involved in recruitment and appraisal – helping interview and assess employees
- Contribute to important aspects of managing homes – by being involved in health and safety and clinical governance meetings.

Service users have also been involved in writing service guides for new service users – explaining our homes from a service user perspective, and filming for Exemplar induction videos – a vital opportunity for them to set expectations for new employees.



Make a referral or enquire about a placement

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