

16 MAY 2019

Service user/ carer involvement in the work of the RPB

Summary of report and key issues

1. Legislation requires active involvement of citizens in the planning and delivery of care and support. RPBs are required to have service user and carer representatives on their membership.
2. In West Wales the RPB membership exceeds legislative requirements and currently includes two service user and carer representatives.
3. User and carer representatives have identified a number of obstacles to effective participation in the work of the RPB and developed a number of recommendations for improvement.
4. A recently commissioned evaluation of user and carer involvement in the work of the West Wales RPB identified good practice but made a number of recommendations for further improvement.
5. This report sets out the two sets of recommendations for consideration by the Board.

Recommendations

That the Board:

1. Notes the contents of the report
2. Considers the recommended areas for improvement and agrees appropriate action

Background

1. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act emphasises the need to give citizens a genuine voice in the planning and delivery of care and support. Regulations require inclusion of at least one service user and one carer representative on the membership of RPBs.
2. Users and carers have been directly represented on the West Wales RPB since September 2016. Representation exceeds legislative requirements with two service users and three carers currently sitting on the Board.

3. Considerable investment has been made in supporting user and carer representatives through an induction process and briefing sessions to discuss agenda items prior to RPB meetings. However, concerns were expressed by representatives at the 25 March meeting of the RPB regarding some of the barriers to their effective contribution. These included:
 - Lack of opportunities for shaping agendas and bringing user and carer experience into the discussion
 - Lack of carer representation on programme groups sitting underneath the RPB, for example the Regional Carers' Development Group
4. In the light of the above, it was agreed that user and carer representatives would prepare an options paper setting out ideas for improvement for consideration by the Board.
5. In December 2018 the WWCP commissioned Practice Solutions to undertake an evaluation of service user and carer involvement in the work of the West Wales RPB. Funded through the Social Care Wales Facilitation Grant, the evaluation (attached as Appendix 1) sought to ascertain:
 - The nature, quality and extent of service user and carer involvement in the business of the regional partnership
 - The results of this engagement and its outcome
 - How processes and methods of engagement could be improved for the future
6. The evaluation identified a number of good practice examples in relation to the West Wales RPB and its support for user and carer involvement and suggests it is 'already ahead of its peers' in a number of respects. Positives include:
 - Open recruitment to user and carer positions on the RPB
 - Exceeding the minimum representation requirements
 - The induction process
 - Ongoing support in terms of briefing sessions prior to meetings
 - Provision of summaries for all reports
 - Payment of expenses and additional support for individuals where needed
 - Work to strengthen citizen engagement and participation more generally
7. However, the evaluation includes 11 recommendations for improvement, a number of which align with those identified by the user and carer representatives. Both sets of recommendations are set out below:

Areas for improvement

UC1 Implement a comprehensive induction process that could include both a range of guidance for user and carer members and for paid board members, which would cover their responsibilities to user and carer reps.

Linked recommendations from the evaluation:

E9 Co-produce the next set of recruitment materials for future representatives with the existing members and involve existing members in the recruitment process

E10 Consider having overlapping appointments to the RPB so that existing user and carer representatives can support those newly recruited as their own terms are drawing to a close

UC2 A training needs analysis (TNA) should be undertaken to understand what is actually required to carry out the role effectively, exploring the training provided by WG and WCVA for those recruited to public bodies. The TNA should include an analysis of the RPB's perception of the role of the user and carer reps and depending on findings, should utilise the expertise of the user and carer reps to shape and evolve the role to allow for more active participation.

UC3 Existing representatives could support and train new user and carer members

UC4 User and carer members should be encouraged to develop a list of priorities and objectives for their tenure on the RPB, with the RPB recognising that they are there to address these issues.

Linked recommendations from the evaluation

E1 Continue to increase opportunities for participation by the user/ carer representatives in workstreams and groups that support the board along with other service users and carers so that they can be more involved in shaping the direction that business takes while these matters are at more formative stages

UC5 The RPB should recognise and consider that user and carer members bring knowledge which is informed by their experience, which could have a negative influence on their approach. New members could be encouraged to write down what has frustrated them to date and present to the RPB to get it off their chest.

Linked recommendations from the evaluation:

E4 Offer coaching to support user/carers representatives in their role using county coaching networks (This could be a standard offer as new representatives are recruited)

UC6 There should be a duty on RPB members to receive papers from user and carer reps and involve them in the development of relevant papers.

Linked recommendations from the evaluation:

E2 Promote attendance by the relevant officer leads at the pre-briefing sessions when matters within their area of responsibility will be discussed by the RPB

E5 Arrange for the user/ carer representatives to contribute towards the section in the Board's annual report on user and carer involvement, including plans for further development

E7 Co-produce with the user/ carer representatives:

- A template for the covering notes to RPB papers to ensure that it captures the key information they require
- A protocol on the use of more everyday language in RPB papers
- An up to date version of the glossary of terms

E8 Provide technical briefings that are generally accessible on matters that frequently come before the Board and where more detailed knowledge is required (e.g. ICF and the Transformation Fund)

UC7 A forward plan on WWCP website of key decisions that the RPB will be expected to undertake in the coming year, whether those decisions could include input from user and carer reps and who to contact to discuss prior to an item appearing on the agenda.

Linked recommendations from the evaluation

E6 Provide opportunities for user/ carer representatives to nominate business for inclusion in the RPB agendas

UC8 There is no uniform feedback process currently. The RPB could explore a fully accessible satisfaction survey app based on the Hywel Dda text messaging service at the Prince Phillip MIU or ABMU feedback pad at Gorseinon Hospital (to provide instant performance feedback which could indicate how well specific services are perceived on a quarterly basis and hold them to account).

Additional recommendation from the evaluation

E3 When the RPB's plans are further developed, to provide the user/ carer representatives with a briefing and a mapping document tracking the various public engagement arrangements that impact upon the RPB's work and how these relate to each other

E11 Consider paying honoraria to the user/ carer representatives in recognition of their commitment