

AWP Service User and Carer Involvement – a NED’s overview.

Introduction

- In 2011 Commissioners, Service User and Carer groups expressed concerns about how AWP was “not listening” to them. (E.g. EAP and CRISIS Teams) I went and listened to a number of Service User and Carer Groups in Bristol and Swindon and found that we were not listening nor did we know what their needs were nor were we dealing with their services issues. (My main focus was on our community services)
- AWP commissioned NSUN to undertake a review of AWP’s Service User Involvement. The AWP Board ran a workshop in March 2012 which included a review of my findings. As a result of these two reports the AWP Board set up a Service User and Carers Steering Group. Its purpose is to oversee the development of engagement and service change and improvement within AWP which will be guided by the principle of co-production – change and development through effective partnerships with service users, carers and staff.
- In 2012 the Audit Committee requested that Internal Audit review how the trust interacts with service users and carers and its report was published in October 2012
- CQC’s Essential Standards for Quality and Safety is “Respecting and involving people who use services”. The Trust must be able to evidence that these requirements are complied with consistently and on an ongoing basis on every site it operates from. NICE make similar recommendations specifically for Mental Health Trusts.

Findings and key recommendations

1. NSUN report on AWP’s Approach to Involvement December 2011 made many recommendations. One key recommendation / option was that the trust “made major changes by rethinking involvement and participation and adopt wholly a co-production culture and of ways of operating. This would be a whole systems approach which would be more adventurous, take strong leadership, but which could yield the biggest and more sustainable results” The board agreed to make major changes.
2. At the March 2012 workshop my key findings were that the “Improving Patient Experience Process” was not “joined up” Also that board reports based on scorecards and infrequent surveys do not give a complete picture of service performance as experienced by service users as studying numbers is not a substitute for talking to service users + carers + staff. What was missing was service user and carers experiences mainly of our community services. The other service I was able to review was SDAS and I did find evidence that they do use patient and service user experience to improve clinical effectiveness and the development their services. (E.g. Young offenders DVD + EBD BSDAS pilot using Peer Mentors + ACER ward DVD produced by ex patients)

My key recommendation is that we need a joined up process that captures service issues and service user and carer needs which are reviewed by the SBU's (Now local areas teams) and feed into the IPE board reports. That this needs to be a two way process so board and SBU actions are feed back to the service user and carer groups.

3. Internal Audit report 16th October 2012.

Their main findings were:-

- **The significant issue for Service User and Carer Involvement, however, is the lack of understanding at Board level of what is actually being done to involve Service Users and Carers in service delivery. (Page 16)**

- **The Trust does not have a current strategy for engagement with Service Users and Carers and has therefore not defined its overall objectives for interaction and involvement activity.** We have noted that in the recently released Fit for Future Action Plan the Trust has stated that it will aim to put Service Users at the heart of everything it does, and the Trust should ensure that it prepares a Community Engagement and Involvement Strategy that identifies how it will enable the delivery of this objective

- This indicates that information from Service User and Carer groups is not being fed into the trend analysis and our audit has found that this is due to a lack of an effective system and reporting tool to feed information from local groups and meetings to the Engagement and Responsiveness Team to inform trend analysis. (Page 11)

- However, the IPE report is produced for presentation to the Board of the Trust. This report is therefore not circulated to operational staff and will, in the main, be seen by senior staff only.(Page 12)

- The report makes 9 recommendations, 3 rated high plus 5 medium and 1 low. For the recommendations go to page 5 ref 3.1a

Summary

- We need a Service User and Carer Involvement Process that is joined up and is put in place ASAP. I suggest that this be first designed for our Community Services.

- That an Engagement and Involvement Strategy be developed ASAP which then needs to be approved by the AWP Board and communicated throughout the trust.

- That we take a look at the whole process and structure of our Engagement and Responsive approach to service users and carers and consider a structure that better reflects our local area and specialist services strategy and is "Fit for the Future"

Peter Greensmith January 2013.