



University  
of Dundee

# School of Health Sciences'

## Service User and Carer

## Involvement Strategy.

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## **Introduction**

By incorporating the perspectives of service users and carers into the nursing curricula, we provide our students with a comprehensive and enriching educational experience. This document is guided by the philosophy of 'professional democracy', whereby all stakeholders involved in nurse education have an equal say in decision-making processes. The lived experience of people accessing healthcare services and those who care for them, are an essential element of our nursing curricula. This document will serve as a foundation for the school to achieve this philosophy. We recognise the need to align this document with the school's pedagogy, for successful embedding across all our school programmes. Whilst elements of the strategy emphasise actions for the pre-registration programme, its principles are applicable to all other programmes, including post-qualifying modules.

The content found within this document has all been co-created over a four-month period, by people with lived experience, academics, organisations, and nursing students. There are details about this process at the end of this document.

## **Where are we now?**

A recent mapping exercise identified that the recruitment of service users and carers within the school currently takes an ad-hoc approach. This process relies on the personal relationships academic staff have with service users or carers they already know, or their ability to actively establish new connections with them, specifically for academic purposes.

There are notable instances of service user and carer involvement in the curriculum, with pockets of excellent work. Academics involved in these initiatives consistently report the value and impact of such involvement. These activities typically involve direct teaching to students, about specific service user and/or carers healthcare experiences. Currently, there is a lack of evidence indicating service user or carer involvement in recruitment, assessment, or curriculum review processes.

In the service user strategy, there is a strong emphasis on integrating lived experience narratives into academic programs and aligning them with the underlying pedagogy. To ensure widespread acceptance and support across various programs, efforts are directed towards garnering buy-in from faculty and staff.

The school already recognises the value of narrative pedagogy; an educational approach that places a strong emphasis on using stories as a central component of the learning process. It is grounded in the belief that storytelling can be a powerful tool for fostering deeper understanding, critical thinking, and meaningful connections to the subject matter being taught. There are opportunities to integrate lived experience narratives into our academic programmes and aligning them with the underlying pedagogy.

## **How does this connect to the University?**

Our strategy philosophy connects to the University of Dundee's core values: valuing people, working together, integrity, making a difference, and excellence. These values serve as a guiding framework that informs how we interact, collaborate, and communicate with service users and carers. These values were adopted to create a culture of empowerment and accountability, and to create meaningful outcomes.

### **Where would we like to be?**

Our aim is to implement comprehensive processes tailored to different academic activities, such as recruitment, teaching, assessment, and curricula review, to ensure meaningful involvement of service users across our programmes. By moving away from individual staff-service user relationships, we can safeguard the continuity of lived experience involvement, even during staff transitions, *and* ensures the targeted inclusion of diverse experiences. This approach fosters broader participation, allowing service users and carers to engage flexibly in the curriculum as part of their healthcare journey, free from any sense of obligation. We will cultivate strong relationships and partnerships with individuals and organisations, including third-party groups, schools, and local authorities, to establish accountable and collaborative connections in pursuit of our shared philosophy.

### **Who would we like to involve?**

We hope to target a diverse range of people, with a range of healthcare experiences and from different cultural backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of our students and their potential patients. Doing so recognises the value of inclusive representation, whilst ensuring that a wide range of perspectives are adequately considered. There are a range of existing resources available to support this. As illustration, the following document provides an overview of the health needs of LGBTQ+ people and how nurse education might represent these: [Job 00130 - Queens University Belfast - LGBTQ+ Health Report - Final Version.pdf \(qub.ac.uk\)](https://qub.ac.uk/job/00130-queens-university-belfast-lgbtq-health-report-final-version.pdf)

This strategy encourages our school's programmes to embed diverse service user and carer experiences into our education, using such resources alongside individual and targeted partnerships.

## **What actions will support us to achieve this?**

### Outreach and Engagement:

We have identified a range of outreach and engagement opportunities. These options include coproduction with charities, local third sector organisations, active involvement on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook, meaningful participation in online forums and recovery groups, leveraging community networks and partnerships, targeted advertisements in local healthcare provisions, engagement with schools (including those catering to students with special educational needs), and utilising the power of word-of-mouth referrals. To facilitate direct and meaningful stakeholder engagement, we will develop a dedicated marketing landing page on the university website too.

### Accessible Information and Orientation:

It is essential that we provide comprehensive information regarding curriculum activities, objectives, and the expected commitments of service users and carers. This can be achieved through orientation sessions, providing clear explanations of the benefits and potential impact of their involvement, and creating accessible literature that caters to the diverse abilities.

### Application and Selection:

Our stakeholders understand the significance of language-use. The role "lived experience consultants" shapes perceptions which acknowledge the value and expertise that service user and carers bring. Our stakeholders have suggested involving an objective external reviewer in the recruitment process to ensure fairness and impartiality. This reviewer, ideally a trusted colleague from another school or institution, would bring expertise in recruitment processes and a thorough understanding of inclusivity principles. Their role would involve reviewing our recruitment processes, providing feedback, and confirming its alignment with best practices. By incorporating this external review, we aim to enhance transparency and equity.

### Assessment and Suitability:

To assess the suitability of each service user and carer for curriculum activities, individual discussions will be conducted. These informal meetings should explore the individuals' motivations, expectations, and readiness to participate. Our stakeholders recognise the importance of values based recruitment, aiming to align the perspectives and values of service users and carers with the core principles and ethos of the school. This ensures that individuals who wish to contribute to our curricula share our common understanding. As a short-term goal, we aim to actively recruit and collaborate with a core group of service users and carers, fostering a meaningful and sustained partnership.

### Training and Support:

Providing training and support to selected service users and carers is essential, to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for curriculum activities. Recognising the diverse expertise of service users and carers as professionals, we acknowledge the need for tailored approaches that consider individual needs and existing skillsets. There are various avenues available. These include participation in school learning and teaching days, access to university development workshops (focused on skills such as public speaking), and the opportunity to establish academic-service user mentorship programs. Additionally, the creation of template resources, accompanied by accessible literature, can guide service users and carers in developing effective learning materials.

Our stakeholders recognise the value of existing resources and the wealth of knowledge already available. These resources can support our school to address issues around resources and sustainability. Illustratively:

- i. <https://www.coproductionscotland.org.uk/>
- ii. [epicare practice guide final june 2013.pdf \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)
- iii. [Train-the-Trainer | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- iv. [Facilitation of Learning Programme | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- v. [service-user-involvement-in-the-design-and-delivery-of-education-and-trainingprogrammes.pdf \(hcpc-uk.org\)](#)

Further, it is important that we address the challenges posed by technology and digital access, as they can hinder the meaningful involvement of some service users and carers. By being mindful of this obstacle and incorporating appropriate measures in our training and support, we can ensure equitable access and participation for all individuals involved.

#### Flexibility:

We understand the significance of providing flexible involvement opportunities, to ensure the meaningful inclusion of service users and carers who may have existing work commitments or caring responsibilities. We expect to agree a level of involvement that will suit the circumstances of service users and carers, to ensure mutual needs are met.

#### Advocacy:

Independent advocacy services play a crucial role in supporting service users and carers. This may also extend to supporting people to engage in curriculum involvement. These services offer impartial support, guidance, and representation, empowering individuals to voice their needs, make informed decisions, and overcome any obstacles they may face. By establishing and nurturing a collaborative network with independent advocacy organisations, the school can ensure that service users and carers have access to the necessary support and resources.

#### Payment:

We value the involvement, expertise, and time contributed by service users and carers. To ensure recognition, we have recently implemented a streamlined payment process that is accessible to all staff within the school. Additionally, we offer the option of voucher payments, accommodating individual preferences. This approach aims to address any potential financial disadvantages that individuals may face from monetary payment.

#### Recognition:

We are deeply committed to ensuring service users and carers receive recognition for their involvement in our educational initiatives. This includes acknowledging and respecting their intellectual property rights. By implementing processes to support this, we affirm that lived experience contributions are indispensable partners in the development and delivery of our curriculum.

As a longer-term ambition, our stakeholders have suggested developing a pathway so that service users and carers can get academic recognition for their involvement in education learning, offer opportunities for academic advancement and professional growth.

#### Aftercare:

To prioritise the well-being and protection of service users and carers involved in the curriculum, it is essential to establish clear disclaimer processes. Additionally, we should proactively develop aftercare processes to address any potential emotional challenges or triggers that may arise from sharing lived experiences for educational purposes. We acknowledge the importance of offering regular support, debriefing sessions, and access to resources to ensure the well-being of individuals throughout their involvement.

#### Safeguarding:

To ensure ethical and responsible service user and carer involvement, clear safety measures must be established, to protect the well-being of all involved. It is essential that the lived experience voice holds significant value and should not be seen as a tokenistic gesture. Students should be encouraged to view service users and carers as valuable teachers, appreciating the depth of knowledge, insights, experiences, and contributions they bring to the educational process. One approach to reinforce professional conduct is the development of educational videos specifically designed for nursing students. These videos can visually demonstrate expected behaviours, highlighting the importance of professionalism in their interactions with service users and carers. Additionally, our existing systems can be utilised to address any instances of misconduct or breaches of professionalism. By utilising our lapse in professionalism processes, we can promptly address and rectify any concerns.

#### Ongoing Evaluation and Feedback:

Implementing a system for ongoing evaluation and feedback is crucial to ensure the effectiveness and continuous improvement of service user and carer involvement. Regular check-ins, group discussions, or feedback surveys can provide valuable insights from both service users and carers, as well as academic staff and students, allowing us to assess the progress of our initiatives and identify areas for improvement.

#### Flexibility and Exit Options:

We must proactively consider and provide support for service users and carers who may wish to adjust their level of involvement or disengage from the curriculum. It is essential we offer exit strategies that respect individual autonomy and facilitate a supportive transition out of involvement. This ensures that individuals have the freedom to make choices that align with their readiness and well-being, while maintaining a nurturing and respectful environment throughout their journey.

#### Celebratory Recognition:

We should wholeheartedly acknowledge and celebrate the significant contributions of service users and carers, highlighting their valuable insights and the positive impact they have made on the curriculum *and* the learning experiences of our students. Public recognition, certificates, and special events hosted by the school or institution can be powerful ways to showcase and honour involvement.

### **Curricula opportunity activities**

#### **Recruitment of Nursing students**

By involving service users and carers in recruitment processes for the pre-registration programme, we aim to create valued-based processes which promotes a diverse and culturally sensitive nursing workforce. Our stakeholders have identified three options for service user and carer involvement in recruitment.

#### Devising interview questions:

To ensure a comprehensive and values-driven recruitment approach, authentic interview scenarios could be co-developed with service users and carers. These scenarios should reflect lived experiences, with emphasis on neurodiversity, ethnicity, gender, and actively address bias.

#### Participation in interview recruitment:

Introducing service users and carers as interviewers, offers a unique opportunity to bring valuable perspectives and lived experiences directly to candidates. Our stakeholders recognise the need for transparency in the goals of recruitment and processes involved, along with providing training in our interview processes. Our stakeholders recognise the challenge of facilitating meaningful service user and carer involvement with our current recruitment process, which should influence decision making, when appraising our options.

#### Recruitment days:

The active involvement of service users in recruitment opens days, whether through providing materials or attending in person, holds significant value for the recruitment process. Their presence and input can provide prospective students with authentic insights into the lived experiences of service users and carers, enhancing their understanding of the profession.

### **Teaching**

There are opportunities for service users and carers to actively participate in both the creation *and* delivery of educational resources. Our stakeholders see value in service users and carers co-creating resources such as authentic case scenarios, 'daily diaries', human libraries, and video narratives. Further, service users and carers have access to a wealth of valuable resources that we can readily signpost students to, including community organisations, support networks, and relevant literature.

Our stakeholders presented innovative suggestions to foster a dynamic two-way dialogue, when face-to-face delivery isn't possible. Interactive options included virtual Q&A sessions questions, or service users and carers monitoring educational discussion boards. While embracing technological advancements, it is equally crucial to develop and retain face-to-face touchpoints within the programme. We have also identified opportunities in the existing programme, which would facilitate the smooth integration of service user and carer involvement, i.e., 'Simulated Practice Learning'.

### **Assessing**

There are valuable opportunities to co-create assessment questions, to use lived experience case study narratives, or to develop video materials, from which students' understanding is assessed. Assessments which explore themes such as ethics, emotions, and reactions (e.g., how to provide compassionate person centred care, in a given scenario), present excellent avenues for incorporating lived experience, facilitating a comprehensive and empathetic evaluation of students' knowledge and skills. Academic staff would maintain responsibility for aligning the lived experience voice with the academic standards of assessments.

### **Curriculum Review Processes**

To support service users and carers with unfamiliar curriculum review processes, stakeholders have identified several strategies, including comprehensive training sessions (e.g., short illustrative videos),



ongoing guidance and support throughout their involvement, establishing clear channels of communication to address any questions or concerns that may arise.

When involving service users and carers in curriculum activities, strategic planning is recommended, ensuring opportunities for lived experience input are identified in advance. Practical measures such as granting access to materials, providing clear guidelines with timelines, and ensuring a clear and unambiguous process are crucial. Additionally, a mentoring process and small working groups can contribute to the success of these initiatives.

### **Leadership Decision Making**

Achieving consistent service user and carer involvement requires a strong commitment from senior leadership; it necessitates a strategic and embedded approach within the school's systems, for longterm sustainability. For the success and visibility of a partnership philosophy, our stakeholders have suggested recruiting a person with lived experience (either service user or carer) onto the School Executive Group. This would ensure that the voices, perspectives, and needs of service users and carers are directly represented at the highest decision-making level, from which a culture of inclusivity, collaboration, and co-design, can be filtered into the school's practices.

### **Information distribution**

As part of our long-term vision, we recognise the powerful impact of service users co-presenting at events or conferences. There are several nursing-service user co-produced conferences in the UK, notable examples include: "Experts by Experience", "Voices of Service Users in Nursing", "Service User Involvement in Nursing Education" and "Engaging Service Users in Nursing Research". These conferences provide valuable platforms for service users and carers in the nursing field. We envision collaborative presentations where service users and carers can present alone or alongside academics, showcasing their invaluable work and contributions within the school. As we embark on new bodies of co-produced work, there are opportunities to pro-actively evaluate these, with the intention of presenting this partnership work in the future.

## **Challenges to achievement**

Recognising that developing new ways of working involves multiple views, ideas, and priorities, it is crucial to anticipate and address the challenges that may arise. Some of these challenges include:

### Resource challenges:

Limited time and availability of resources can pose obstacles to the effective engagement of service users in collaborative work. Our 'School Executive Group' are responsible for prioritising and allocating dedicated resources. We recognise the need to allocate adequate staff time, for establishing partnerships and working towards 'next step actions'.

### Progress Trajectory:

The challenge of wanting to see immediate progress in this work can be mitigated by setting out measurable, achievable goals both in the short and long term. By breaking down the overall objectives into smaller, actionable steps, it becomes possible to track progress and celebrate milestones along the way. Implementing regular progress assessments and evaluations allows for adjustments and improvements, based on feedback and data. It is important to maintain realistic

expectations while maintaining a sense of urgency and commitment to the long-term vision of this strategy.

Conflict:

We aim to create a safe space for true partnership working collaboratively is essential, recognising that diverse perspectives and experiences may lead to disagreements. We should embrace the value of constructive disagreement, emphasising the importance of respectful communication; it may be helpful to provide guidance on how to navigate differences in opinions. The university has established mediator services readily available, providing a recourse option that can be accessed if disputes do arise.

Field Specific Considerations:

Additional considerations may be necessary when involving specific groups of people, such as children and young individuals, who require special attention regarding age-appropriateness, working around school hours, and remuneration. Video involvement might be preferential, to mitigate some of these challenges. Exploring and connecting with other UK healthcare professional programmes may be a valuable initial step. Addressing the field specific considerations may be relevant to other aspects of our programmes, such as simulation, and exemplify an opportunity for joined working and enhanced impact.

Equity

We must be mindful of the diverse fields of nursing and multiple programmes offered across our two campuses. It is essential to ensure that our actions offer equitable opportunities for everyone involved. The use of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) may help to guide decisions relating to this strategy.

### **Next Step Actions**

Upon approval of this strategy by senior management, there are several actionable workstreams that can be quickly initiated. Our hope is for the senior management group to collaborate with the school's 'service user and carer lead', to organise priorities, allocate resources, and establish realistic timeframes for implementation.

**Creators:**

This document has been co-produced by a range of Stakeholders, including the following:

Lived Experience Voices:

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Student Voices:

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## Figures and Images

### Jam board Contributions

Between virtual meetings, our stakeholders contributed to shared documents. Everyone was encouraged to offer their insight and perspective to prompts. The following illustrates the same:

How should we involve / prepare service users and carers for teaching (design and / or to deliver)?



### Meeting One Activity:

The following images are illustrations of our Meeting One 'newspaper activity', to stimulate vision creation:

## Care with compassion- doing with and not to. . A human rights approach to care.



### Headline

**Care with compassion- doing with and not to.**  
A Human Rights approach to care.

### Subheading

Leading the way with best practice nursing, designed with dignity, fairness and respect, with and for those who use services.

### Report-

- **Co produced and Co-designed.**
- Everyone learning together to find the optimal way of working.
- Co-production is a meeting of minds that **expands the parameters of thinking**. It's a way of working where everyone's voice is heard.
- Designed with **compassion at the core**, the University of Dundee Short life working group has developed a strategy to support and enable health care practitioners to provide meaningful care to those who need it the most.

### Quotes-

- "I feel heard and I feel seen. They just knew how to help me." - say's one mum of a child with complex health and care needs
- "I was going through a horrendous time, I was worried about my child's future. I felt so powerless and painfully sad. I felt supported when I was at my lowest." - a parent carer
- "Working with people with lived experiences has really helped embed my learning. I have learned so much from their real life stories. I was able to draw from these stories and put the learning into practice, thinking about how I would feel if I was in their shoes. It just makes sense to design and work with those who have lived experience of care." - 4th year nursing student.

HEADLINE  
**SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP LEADS TO REAL CHANGE WITHIN CITY**

SUBHEADING  
Service users and carers work together with nursing students to ensure compassionate, person centred care.

SKETCH

REPORT

"People with lived experience have a wealth of knowledge and skills to offer."

"We are stronger together. A community takes cooperation to work towards a shared goal."

Changes have been made to create more empathetic, compassionate, cohesive, person centred services.

Nurses, students, service users, carers, charities, third sector organisations & government bodies need to work together to protect some of society's most vulnerable members.

Trauma informed approach respects service users & their families

Value based care values people's human rights



### Meeting Two Activity:

The following image is an illustration from our 'overcoming challenges' activity, in meeting two:

## How do we ensure we are targeting / recruiting a range of different SU/ carer's from different demographic backgrounds.

GOAL	REALITY	OPTIONS (Ideas!)	WILL (Actions)
<p>We want the programme to reflect and involve a range of different people's experience. Age, conditions ('rare' too).</p> <p>We also want SU and carers involved in the curriculum to be motivated for the 'right reasons'</p>	<p>Most SU&amp;C involvement is from an older demographic – retired / have more time available</p> <p>We often rely on academic's personal relationships with SU and carers</p> <p>In skills we are using students to reflect 'age appropriate' conditions. Also using actors / drama students. So not using SU / carers <u>FtF</u>.</p> <p>We have SU talking about their experiences to students / storytelling (not always helpful for the person or for the students). Not "learning" and potentially distressing.</p> <p>Not everyone who are SU&amp;C are motivated to contribute to the curriculum for the 'right reason'.</p>	<p>Lots of planning – give people notice so they can fit it into their 'real lives' (work, family etc). Flexibility and structured approach.</p> <p>Using SU and carers to develop scripts / resources for teaching – rather than asking for <u>FtF</u> teaching commitment.</p> <p>Talking heads of people's stories – a bank of resources.</p> <p>Education in the school about what meaningful SU and carer content is <u>i.e.</u> not just <u>FtF</u></p> <p>Obstacles – technology. Getting tech support with recording / editing of videos.</p> <p>Time available to create a bank of resources from different demographics. When will suit them</p> <p>Process / pre-interview / checks to ensure the ethos behind why a SU or carer is motivated to do this work. Declaration? Intention or attention?</p>	<p>Draft of what's happening now to offer insight for SEG. Describe where we're at.</p> <p>Offer a proposal of different way.</p> <p>Pitch the ideas? Service development proposal?</p> <p>Initial findings. Recommendations.</p> <p><u>Call to action!</u></p>

<https://learn.nes.nhs.uk/cot/50968> - learning for SU&C who want to teach into curriculum

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