

## WHAT IS SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT?

It is about using your experience to help improve things for yourself and others like you.

If you use mental health services the Service User Involvement Project recognises that you are the expert on how this feels. It helps make sure that local services listen to your views when they make decisions or plan changes.

There are many different ways to get involved; from helping to write leaflets, taking part in interviewing workers, or in research, evaluating services, to giving talks about your experiences. The Service User Involvement Development Officer, based at Interlink, can talk with you about which way suits you best.

She can refund your travel expenses, keep you informed, arrange training, link you in with other like-minded people, and help you to get across what you want to say effectively, in a way in which you feel comfortable.

*"I sat on an interview panel for new social workers. I knew which ones had the right attitude and would be easy for someone like me to talk to. The other members of the panel listened to me and took what I said seriously. I felt that I was equal."*

*"When I was taken into hospital I was this wild bearded man with a police officer on each arm. Now I walk in in my suit and sit in meetings with the staff and managers who ask me for my opinion"*

## Would you like to get involved?

**The Service User Involvement Officer promotes and supports service user involvement in the development and delivery of local mental health services.**

Contact:

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VOLUNTARY ACTION  
MERTHYR TYDFIL,  
GWYTHREDDU GWHRFODDOL,  
MERTHYR TYDFIL



Supporting voluntary action in Rhondda Cynon Taff  
Registered Charity No: 1069044

Merthyr Tydfil & Rhondda Cynon Taff

## Mental Health Service User Involvement Project



Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol  
Local Health Board  
Merthyr Tudful  
Merthyr Tydfil



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE  
RHONDDA CYNON TAF  
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

Cwm Taf

Ymddiriedolaeth GIG / NHS Trust



NHS  
WALES  
GIG  
CYMRU



Teaching | Addysgu  
Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol  
Local Health Board  
Rhondda Cynon Taf  
Rhondda Cynon Taff

## Here are some ways to get involved:

### ◆ SERVICE USER NETWORK

Join the Service User Network to receive (and contribute to) a free 'SUN' Newsletter. This will keep you informed about events, training or opportunities where you can put forward your views about what's happening in mental health locally.

### ◆ SERVICE USER FORUM (SURF)

If you want to use your experience to influence services to change for the better, or to get involved in any way – **SURF** is the place to come!

These are monthly meetings for anyone who uses local mental health services to get together and share your views. Any mental health matters that affect you all can be discussed and you can decide together what you want to do. Sometimes a speaker is invited. There is also a free buffet lunch.

### ◆ TAKE PART IN PLANNING

Mental health services need to know the views of the people who use them. You can represent service user views in meetings where the people who commission and manage local services plan what services are provided.

There are also some different groups that look at specific services develop. As a Service User Representative you can have a say in what services look like and how they can address the needs of service users - and make a real difference for yourself and others.

The Service User Involvement Officer can support you at meetings, and help you to find out the views of other service users on these services.

### ◆ COME TO 'LISTENING DAYS'

These are when mental health managers or commissioners come out to consult you.

They let you know about and give you the opportunity to say what you think about a specific mental health issue that affects you locally. Your views can then be fed back to the people who make the decisions.

### ◆ HELP RECRUIT MENTAL HEALTH STAFF

Would you like to take part in selecting the right people to get local jobs in mental health?

Come to free training in recruitment skills. You can then join the group of service users and carers who sit on interview panels to choose new mental health nurses, social workers, support workers and other mental health staff in the County Borough.

### ◆ VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

Service User & Carer Speakers Group. You are the expert in what it feels like to suffer from mental distress. Use this experience to help other people understand what it's like - and help to change attitudes!

This group supports you to give talks about things like your experience of using mental health services, mental ill health, stigma or to describe the support that helps you most.

This can inspire students and mental health workers, raise awareness about mental health and help to combat stigma in the community.