Evening Seminar

Improving Rehabilitation Through Collaboration: Involving Service Users in Probation

Gail Bland | NE & Yorks Team Leader | User Voice
Karen Townend | Head of Operations | West Yorks CRC

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Background to the Academy

- **The Academy’s mission** is to bring people together to share knowledge, skills and practice and to promote excellence in social justice commissioning.
- The Academy was **created in 2007** and now has over **3600 cross sector members**.
- **Services** are designed to support the development of social justice commissioning and include nationwide events, eLearning, commissioning themed learning groups and a website offering commissioning information.
Rehabilitation Through Collaboration: Involving Service Users in Probation

Gail Bland - North East & Yorkshire Engagement Team Lead
OUR WORK SO FAR.

Service Users representing the voice of nearly 1 in 3 people in prison and on probation

Projects from Northumberland to The Isle of Wight

Over 50 staff in 6 regional teams
THE PROBLEM: US v THEM.

SOCIETY FEELS FRUSTRATED WITH THOSE WHO RE-OFFEND

- Repeating cycles of behaviour
- Not engaging with rehabilitation services

PEOPLE WITH CONVICTIONS FEEL MARGINALISED BY SOCIETY

- Rehabilitation services which are often inaccessible and unhelpful
- A system that doesn’t value their input

WHATEVER THE TRUTH, WE WON’T REDUCE CRIME UNLESS WE DEAL WITH THIS DIVISION
Rehabilitation only happens when everyone in the criminal justice system shares responsibility for transforming the ‘us vs. them’ division into real collaboration.
Our role is to improve rehabilitation through collaboration.

At User Voice we know that the criminal justice system needs to be improved. It is not delivering what it can deliver. We are optimistic that change is possible and we know that we have the experience and insight to contribute to making it better.

At User Voice we know that rehabilitation is possible and people with convictions can turn their lives into an active force for good in society. Rehabilitation is the goal of all our work, a process which goes deeper than reducing offending, although that is an outcome.

At User Voice we build the structures that enable productive collaboration between service users and service providers. We are able to do this because our work is led and delivered by ex-offenders. This gives us the special ability to gain the trust of, access to, and insight from people within the criminal justice system.
In order to achieve this we do the following:

• User Voice Councils
• User Voice consultations
• User Voice peer support
As a result of all of this, User Voice has a number of strengths that make us unique.

- **Total focus** – this is all we do so we know all the nuances and the risks

- **Breadth of perspective** – we have unique access:
  - from the hardest to reach groups to Government
  - from adults to young people
  - from the furthest North to South of the country

- **An inspiring team** – skilled professionals, most with first-hand experience of the criminal justice system, who can engage with both sides of the divide

- **Powerful approach** – refined over 7 years, our work brings about change in systems and individuals with the evidence to prove it
There are two sides to User Voice’s impact:

1. Improving Services – with service user insight and experience, services can become more effective and accessible for hard-to-reach groups.

2. Promoting active citizenship – as service users engage with improving the services they access, they develop the skills and behaviours to become contributing members of society.
For individuals:
• 84% improvement in self confidence
• 76% less likely to reoffend
• 60% more likely not to use drugs/alcohol

For services:
• 10% reduction in breaches
• Prison adjudication cost saving of £535,999
• 40% reduction in the use of force
"I have been extremely impressed with the work undertaken by User Voice at HMP Birmingham in developing a Prison Council.

I am committed to continuing to work with the Prison Council, as I believe wholeheartedly that the structure that User Voice have introduced will continue to provide long term benefits for the prison."

Peter Small, Director, HMP Birmingham

"There is a role for User Voice to support offenders to change. The work that has been going on in the Councils has worked I think because you have got ex-offenders who are operating to make that work.

As we go forward User Voice has a real place. I think User Voice will be extremely valuable to all of us as we work together to reduce reoffending."

Michael Spurr, Chief Executive, NOMS

"For any organisation to move forward, it needs to understand the views and experiences of it’s service users.

We wanted to take our existing offender feedback practices to another level, to gain a more in depth insight into the experience of being supervised by Northumbria Probation and to establish an ongoing dialogue which we could use to review existing services and develop future ones."

Nick Hall, Chief Executive, Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US.
Improving Rehabilitation Through Collaboration: Involving Service Users in Probation

Karen Townend (Head of Operations: WY CRC)
Background

- Government introduced ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’
- Broad mix of public, private & third sector
- Aim to tackle high re-offending rates
- Extended community supervision to all low-medium risk offenders
- New Through-the-Gate approach
- WY has a strong history of Service User Involvement
Our Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs)

- WY CRC is Responsible for 8900 offenders (service users)
- 263 staff over 5 districts
Our approach - Interchange

**Co-design**
Interact
Assess & implement the sentence plan.
Review & evaluate.
Enforce & refer

**Assess**
Intervene
Interventions used to support change and deliver the sentence

**Intervene**
Activities designed to engage service users with their community & access its resources

**Integrate**

**Better Outcomes**
Skill portfolio
Record of achievement
Community integration

**Deliver**
Ongoing dynamic assessment
WY Service User Council

- Open Space event
- First Council meeting: March 2016
- Chaired by the CEO and attended by Head of Operations, Network Developer, Business and Project Manager to ensure proposals are followed through.
- Members have been or are on probation or licence

Main aims:
- CRC continuous improvement through Service User feedback
- Structured forum to ensure service users have a voice
- To establish greater involvement of Service User council members in policy making and staff training both locally and Pan CRC
- Share good news stories
Council Proposals:

- More Consistency of Offender Manager/Case Manager
- An insight to staff training on Motivation and Engagement
- Training for staff in specific issues, i.e. homelessness and mental health. Delivered by people with lived experience
- Developing a pre-release information pack - designed by Service user
- Explaining the Interchange Model to Service Users
- Working Group to Explore Training/Employment Opportunities
- Peer mentoring to commence prior to release from prison
Future ambitions:

- Greater involvement of the council in future policy making.
- Service User involvement in the development and delivery of training
- Council Member attendance at the Equality and Diversity Strategic Group to support improved services for minority groups.
- Development of a route for service users into employment
Top 3 Tips

1. Think about service users rights at the very beginning of any commissioning exercise so that it can be properly resourced - involvement isn't free!

2. Ask service users how they want to be involved

3. Look at the detail of how service users are involved, are they speaking independently or through the agenda of a provider?
Any Questions?