



User Voice or See Me
User involvement

8

Text Relay



User Voice can help you to:

- Voice your opinions on mental health services,
- join a user group or user forum,
- help other users to become more involved, and
- represent others like yourself.

Why was User Voice set up?

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust is committed to empowering mental health service users. It is now government policy that service users should be able to influence the kind of mental health services that are provided and the ways in which they are provided.

User Voice was created in 1996 to support and encourage better user representation throughout the mental health trust. The project also works with primary care, social care and voluntary sector providers.

The project has grown to include almost all parts of the trust's services. The project has links to other user involvement providers in Birmingham and Solihull, and also carers' organisations.

The workers seek to ensure that the views of service users can always be aired through suitable channels and confidentially, when required. The project will constantly review its methods to ensure that the trust is able to receive and act upon the wishes of its users.

How does User Voice work?

User Voice is a project funded by Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust. Full-time and part-time workers are currently employed to cover all adult mental health services including forensic, specialty, older adult and addiction services. All workers in the team have experienced mental ill-health themselves or worked and cared for those affected. Their language skills include British Sign Language (BSL), French, German, Hindi, Mirpuri, Punjabi and Urdu. The workers travel from local bases to meet users and staff across the trust area.

User Voice is has links with statutory agencies including:

- Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS),
- Independent Complaints Advisory Service (ICAS) and
- Local Involvement Network (LINK).

Complaints department

Telephone: 0121 301 1084

Community engagement

Telephone: 0121 301 1060

Communications team

Telephone: 0121 301 1296

Email: comms.team@bsmhft.nhs.uk

Membership

Join our trust as a member and receive our Trust Talk magazine regularly

Telephone: 0121 301 1229

Email: membership.ft@bsmhft.nhs.uk

Web: www.bsmhft.nhs.uk

If you have any queries regarding this leaflet, please call the patient and public involvement lead at trust headquarters on 0121 301 1111.

This leaflet is available in other formats including easy read, large print, Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu.

Please ask a member of staff for a copy or contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0800 953 0045 or email pals@bsmhft.nhs.uk or leaflets@bsmhft.nhs.uk.

User Voice has informal links with a wide number of user groups and organisations across the Birmingham and wider Midlands area, including groups serving African and Caribbean, Asian, Chinese, gay and lesbian, homeless, Irish, older, refugee, women and younger users.

The workers can refer users to individual advocacy services and information providers. The project also promotes user involvement through training, education, monitoring and auditing, research, volunteering, employment, networking and mental health promotion events.

User Voice is known as **See Me** in our Youth, Addictions, Secure and Complex Care Services.

What exactly does User Voice do?

- It establishes communication networks between those using services and those providing them,
- facilitates regular user forums where users can bring issues of concern,
- encourages and develops user led group meetings across the trust area,
- provides a focus for user involvement - through committees, working groups, conferences and events,
- represents users' views to the trust and other providers across Birmingham and Solihull, and
- ensures access to information regarding user involvement opportunities in a wide range of services and at all levels.

How do our meetings work?

Getting your views known is a powerful way to influence the way you are treated by others.

Through the process of group advocacy, like-minded individuals are able to meet. Their opinions can then be heard and acted upon for the benefit of many others.

User Voice organises meetings in many different ways to ensure users have a chance to get involved. Some meetings are held on inpatient wards; others at local trust resource centres; many at places where users choose to meet. Sometimes users need to meet just with other users, but often trust staff get involved too.

What about the trust's staff?

The trust asks all staff for their co-operation in supporting User Voice. The User Involvement Strategy ensures a robust framework. Members of staff do attend User Voice meetings, at the invitation of users. User Voice seeks to improve communication between staff and users of the services. It is hoped that a mutual understanding of the issues involved will lead to a better mental health service and a more fulfilling role for everyone.

Senior trust managers and directors are often encouraged to attend meetings to explain trust policies and listen to users views. Proposals for major changes are referred to our meetings for users' input at the earliest stage.

Is it just for moans and groans?

User Voice can refer individuals to the appropriate channels for any complaint.

The projects works closely with the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) - for information and advice and local individual advocacy providers, such as Building Community Advocacy and Voice Advocacy - to ensure individual support for users.

User Voice works to help develop topics of common interest. At any meeting decisions can be made about topics of collective interest. Ways to take collective issues forward are constantly being developed to ensure that the trust can benefit from the valuable insight and commitment of its service users.

User Voice workers and their user representatives attend all levels of committees in the trust to represent users' views.

Contact User Voice

Telephone: 0800 694 0212

Email: user.voice@bsmhft.nhs.uk

User Voice workers in all three divisions:

- Adults of Working Age
- Mental Health Services for Older People
- Youth, Addictions, Secure and Complex Care

Heart of Birmingham base	0121 685 6040
South base	0121 678 3479
Older adults base	0800 954 2511
Specialities base	0121 301 2009, text: 07985 882527
Forensic base, Reaside men's	0121 678 3229
Ardenleigh women's	0121 678 4457
Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) base	0121 678 4457
Substance misuse service base	0121 301 1625
Solihull base	0121 678 4722
Early intervention base	0121 678 4457

You can leave a message on any issue, we will return your call.

Other useful contacts

PALS

Telephone : 0800 953 0045

Fax : 0121 678 4456

Email : pals@bsmhft.nhs.uk

Building Community Advocacy

Telephone : 0121 440 2029

Voice Advocacy

Telephone: 0121 212 8423

North Birmingham Advocacy

Telephone: 0121 525 5685

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)

Telephone: 0121 212 8457