



Client Involvement Strategy

St Mungo's
Ending homelessness
Rebuilding lives

1. Contents

2. Executive summary.....	2
3. Introduction	4
Defining Client Involvement.....	4
Why involve our clients?	4
4. Relevance to the Organisational Strategy	6
5. Our Vision for Client Involvement.....	8
6. Achievements in Client Involvement at St Mungo's.....	10
7. Our Core Challenge	14
8. Our Strategic Approach.....	15
9. Key Aims and Objectives	15
10. How we will achieve these objectives and resource implications	21
11. How this strategy was developed.....	22

2. Executive summary

This Client Involvement Strategy has been developed in partnership with clients and staff across St Mungo's and sets out how we will achieve our organisational strategic aim to involve our clients in all our work.

Our definition of client involvement emphasises that it needs to be embedded in all of our work at every level. We have related this to the Ladder of Involvement model. Diversity and inclusion are integral to involvement in bringing together diverse views and in ensuring all are treated with respect and have equal opportunities to be involved.

We recognise the fundamental importance of involvement in helping clients to achieve their recovery goals; it boosts confidence, self-esteem and skills, empowers them to take steps for themselves and gives clients a voice. Involvement improves services and enables them to reach more clients. It breaks down 'us and them' cultures, maximises the use of resources and ensures we meet our legal and regulatory requirements.

Our vision is that client involvement will be embedded in every team and services will be delivered in equal partnership with our clients. This strategy is focused on building strong foundations through establishing shared involvement standards and effective support and infrastructure.

We are building on a strong history of involvement at St Mungo's. Our staff and clients demonstrate their passion and commitment to involvement and we are proud of our many achievements over the last decade. Our clients are involved through Outside In, our Client Advisory Board, campaigning, volunteering, fundraising, our Recovery College and in a myriad of other immensely valuable ways.

From consulting with a range of stakeholders we have identified our core challenge as: **To establish a shared understanding of client involvement with shared standards, expectations and opportunities that inspires effective participation across all teams, services and regions.**

At times involvement can be seen as an 'add on' rather than core to our day to day work. It is difficult to measure and there is a need for greater clarity in client roles and pathways for progression. There is variability between services and regions. We do not always have a representative client voice and clients are not always effectively informed about their rights and opportunities for involvement.

To address our core challenge and make progress towards our vision for involvement we have set out five strategic aims, under which we have a series of objectives which we will deliver over the next three years. These will be translated into an annual action plan which will be reviewed regularly. This strategy will be reviewed in three years' time.

Aim 1: *There is a shared understanding of client involvement with clear standards and expectations and means of monitoring and measuring compliance.*

Aim 2: *The work of the Client Involvement Team, including staff and volunteers, is structured in a way that best facilitates meaningful involvement in all regions and services.*

Aim 3: *There is a menu of options for clients to be meaningfully involved and a clear pathway for client progression.*

Aim 4: *Effective methods and lines of communication are in place to ensure all clients are informed about opportunities, rights and responsibilities.*

Aim 5: *Our approach to client involvement promotes innovation and we draw on the ideas, creativity and talents of our clients.*

3. Introduction

This strategy sets out how St Mungo's will achieve our organisational strategic aim to involve our clients in all our work. This includes how we will establish a range of involvement opportunities for our clients across our services and how we will develop a shared understanding of involvement with clear expectations and standards.

Defining Client Involvement

We define client involvement as:

Actively and meaningfully involving clients in all aspects of St Mungo's work, ensuring clients have a real say in any decisions which may affect them and delivering partnerships with clients which put their views, needs, aspirations and expert knowledge at the heart of what we do.

This definition emphasises that involvement is not an 'add on'; it is who we are and how we work every day, in every interaction with our clients. It is everyone's responsibility in every role, team and service and will be embedded in all aspects of our work including in the design, delivery, management and evaluation of services. How clients choose to be involved will be led by them and we will seek to meet their diverse characteristics, attributes and needs.

We have used the term 'client' in this strategy as it is the most commonly used term within St Mungo's. However, staff should use the term that has been agreed with their clients, for example some people may prefer service user, resident or member. This strategy applies to all of our clients and must be effective for clients from different ethnic groups, religions, genders, backgrounds, sexualities, gender identities and disabilities, and in different services including prisons and other non-housing services.

We have used the term 'involvement' throughout to encompass the range of levels that clients may choose to participate. Some people may prefer terms such as 'co-production' to imply a greater level of influence or power. Our concern here is with meaningful involvement - involvement with influence and with genuine partnerships.

Why involve our clients?

There are many reasons why it is fundamentally important to involve our clients in all aspects of our work.

Benefits of involvement for clients:

There is a growing body of evidence from a range of different fields that being involved can contribute to clients achieving their recovery goals and ambitions. For example, desistance theory highlights that participation may act as a positive intervention for offenders, offering them a vision for change and

moving on¹. Evidence shows that involving clients in substance misuse services is likely to have a significant positive impact on recovery outcomes with those that are involved being more satisfied with their treatment, staying in treatment longer, and reporting a range of positive subjective and objective drug and lifestyle outcomes².

When done well, involvement can have a tangible impact on boosting clients' confidence, self-esteem and skills. It gives them ownership of their own recovery journey, empowers them to take steps for themselves and can lead to other opportunities such as training or employment. It also creates a sense of service ownership as the service reflects the strengths, needs and wishes of those using it.

Involvement offers clients a 'voice', makes them feel valued and respected and is a way of bringing people together to achieve mutually desirable outcomes. Involvement can also break down stigma which has huge benefits for the individual and the wider community³.

"Client Involvement is so valuable because it allows people like me to build hope for a better future by being part of something whilst gaining confidence and skills, it's a life changer."

Liam, St Mungo's client and Client Advisory Board member

Benefits for the organisation

Organisations like St Mungo's are facing significant challenges. By involving individuals in the design and delivery of services, they can be more effective, efficient and sustainable⁴. There is now widespread recognition and evidence that involving clients can improve services, as clients can give unique insights into what does and does not work⁵. For example, evidence from mental health services show that with the right support clients can take on a leadership role and the resulting services can reach more clients and achieve outcomes that traditional mental health services are unable to attain⁶.

"When reviewing our policies and procedures, it became clear the most meaningful feedback I received was from our clients. Even the most experienced worker among us could not necessarily tell us what works for clients, better than our clients can".

Quality and Continuous Improvement Manager, Rachel Wright

Involvement can also have other organisational benefits such as breaking down an 'us and them' culture and increasing trust between clients and staff, improving communication and understanding, and helping staff to develop their skills. In a time of financial challenges, involvement helps to achieve effective use of resources through drawing on client's skills and abilities and ensuring funding is targeted at what works.

We also ensure we fulfil funding requirements and meet our legal and regulatory duties including in relation to CQC and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

It is important to involve clients not only in frontline services but also in central support services. For example, involving clients in research and obtaining meaningful feedback helps give better insights into the impact of approaches and techniques⁶. Involving clients in policy helps to give a unique perspective on the impact (intended or not) of current or future policy and helps decision makers to implement change. Our clients are experts in their own right: from their experiences they know what has worked to support them and what needs to improve⁷.

“Empowering clients to be advocates for their own change is the driving force for all our influencing, and the only way we will truly have a long-lasting impact.”

**Campaigns Manager,
Jennean Alkadiri**

4. Relevance to the Organisational Strategy

The aim of this Client Involvement Strategy is to turn the ‘Involve’ commitments made in our Five Year Organisational Strategy into reality.



Our ambition is to put client’s views, needs, aspirations, experiences and expert knowledge at the heart of what we do.

Meaningful client involvement is fundamental in ensuring we demonstrate our organisational values: to be empowering, inclusive, committed, creative and accountable in everything we do.

Meaningful client involvement is also essential in demonstrating our Recovery Service Ethos and in ensuring we build effective, personalised services around the individual focusing on their unique strengths and abilities as well as their needs.

The Recovery Service Ethos says that, as a client of St Mungo's, we will work with you to:

- Listen to, understand and value your unique individual experience
- Ensure you have a safe place to live
- Focus on your strengths, explore your real options and take practical steps towards achieving your goals
- Build and enjoy positive, supportive relationships
- Create opportunities that empower you to learn, thrive and contribute to your community.

This strategy translates our strategic aim, our values and our Recovery Service Ethos into concrete ways of working which can be monitored and measured.

Client Involvement is fundamental in enabling St Mungo's to achieve the four strategic aims as outlined in the Organisational Strategy. Below we have summarised some examples of how:

Aim one - Improve our services

“Involvement at every stage and at every level in our improvement plans”

- ➔ Monitor the safety and quality of our services through client led audits, mystery shopping, and client attendance in contract reviews.
- ➔ Improve recovery outcomes through meaningfully involving clients in the development, delivery and review of their support plan.
- ➔ Review mechanisms for clients to provide feedback about services including reviewing feedback methods, forums and opportunities.
- ➔ Involve clients in developing annual workplans.

Aim two - Interconnect resources, assets and support in the areas where we work

- ➔ Establish effective local partnerships with service user led organisations, peer support groups and community groups.
- ➔ Involve clients in identifying local priorities for developing new relationships and in identifying activities and opportunities in the community to promote integration.
- ➔ Involve clients in raising the profile of St Mungo's and in fundraising and bids. Our clients are the best at promoting our services.
- ➔ Encourage our clients to volunteer and be involved in their local communities.

Aim three - Innovate and test new evidence-based services that prevent and tackle rough sleeping

- Draw on the skills, creativity and expertise of our clients in co-producing and piloting new service models.
- Work with peer researchers to explore and understand barriers and generate innovative and evidence based means of overcoming them.
- Establish mechanisms for sharing best practice including Client Involvement Lead Worker forums and a Client Involvement Network with other providers.

Aim four - Influence national and local government to implement new rough sleeping strategies

- Involve clients in developing and reviewing our influencing strategy, identifying priorities and in taking part in meetings with ministers and other policymakers.
- Share client's stories and experiences to mobilise the public, reduce stigma and promote involvement in campaigns and events.

5. Our Vision for Client Involvement

In the future at St Mungo's:

- Client involvement will be inherent in every interaction with our clients and be embedded in every team and service.
- Staff will ensure all encounters promote recovery principles, acknowledge non-professional expertise and attempt to minimise power differentials.
- Services will be delivered in equal partnership with our clients and we will recognise that clients have a unique contribution to make as experts by experience in addition to the many other skills, qualities and attributes they bring.

We recognise that achieving meaningful involvement is a journey and we will take a structured, stepped approach to achieve our long-term vision. This strategy is focused on taking significant steps forward over the next three years by establishing shared involvement standards in all services, matched by effective support and infrastructure. This will build strong foundations to achieve our long-term vision.

This strategy recognises that diversity and inclusion are integral to client involvement with all clients being treated with respect and dignity and valued as equal citizens. All clients must have a voice and this may mean making greater efforts to engage some individuals. We will use different methodologies to meet different needs and characteristics, match opportunities to abilities and provide information in different formats. We will monitor and review diversity and inclusion and take action if there are groups that are not being included.

Levels of Involvement

Clients will be involved in all levels:



Involvement in their own support – This is fundamentally about adopting our recovery ethos and ensuring support is person centred and holistic. Clients are seen as experts in their own care, are empowered to take steps for themselves and any plans are developed in partnership. The relationship between staff and clients is integral and staff will work to eliminate any power imbalances and build up trust in all interactions.

Involvement in their service – Services are developed and delivered in partnership with clients. For example, all services have local forums which are co-facilitated with clients wherever possible, clients are involved in recruitment, have a say over the environment, and decisions about the service are made together.

Involvement in the organisation – Clients are involved at all levels including the Board. Local forums will feed up into a more strategically focused client group that can shape high level decisions. We welcome volunteer applications from clients and there is a menu of options for clients to be involved at St Mungo's. Clients will be involved in the commissioning, design, management and evaluation of services and in central support services.

Involvement in the community – All clients are empowered as citizens to interconnect, participate in and contribute to their local community, for example, through volunteering, campaigning, voting and taking part in community events.

The Ladder of Involvement

We will use the Ladder of Involvement⁸ to assess and improve our level of involvement.



The lower rungs of the ladder aim to provide people with better information such as how the service is run, what opportunities are available, changes that are being made, and how they can give feedback. In the middle are a range of approaches that aim to consult and involve people in shaping change. Higher up are examples of co-design and co-production where services are designed and delivered in partnership with clients.

Our aim at St Mungo's is to work towards genuine partnerships with shared power and decision making. For some projects it may even be possible for clients to have full ownership. We cannot move up the ladder without ensuring the first rungs are complete and there is a need to develop how we inform our clients to ensure they are fully aware of their rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

6. Achievements in Client Involvement at St Mungo's

In moving towards our vision we will be building on strong foundations. For more than a decade St Mungo's has been a leader for client involvement in the homelessness sector, demonstrating our commitment through a wide range of innovative involvement approaches. The power of involvement has been shown through the creation of new initiatives, improvements in service delivery and through bringing groups of staff and clients together. Achievements in involvement have included:

The creation and work of Outside In - The name reflected the view that people who were previously on the 'outside' would be at the core of the group, participating and making decisions. Outside In gives clients a voice and has been central to developing new initiatives, improving services, influencing policy, and participating in campaigns. The work of Outside In led to the development of our Recovery College, buildings where anyone in the community can come to learn, grow and inspire each other.



Client Involvement in Governance – Clients are involved at the highest level of governance within St Mungo’s. A trustee with lived experience has been recruited to sit on the Board of Trustees and 11 clients form our Client Advisory Board, which reviews board papers ahead of all board meetings and influences high level strategy and decision making.

Activities and Events – Our clients have been central in the planning and delivery of large events such as our annual client festivals and they regularly host social events, such as open mic nights and film nights. The Activity Grants scheme enables clients and staff to apply for funding in partnership to co-produce activities in projects. To date 132 projects have been funded.

Fundraising – Our clients can promote our services better than anyone and have been crucial in securing donations. For example through clients bravely sharing their stories at donor events. Clients also took a lead on the Snowden Challenge in 2017, which involved planning the climb, sourcing equipment, developing communications and seeking donations.

Staff recruitment and development – Clients have been involved in the recruitment of staff through sitting on interview panels. Clients are also asked to provide feedback as part of staff members’ 360 appraisal process.

Policy and Campaigns – Clients have supported and brought to life many different external campaigns including *Stop the Scandal* and *Save Hostels Rebuild Lives*.

Peer-facilitation - A Peer Facilitator training programme has been developed to support people with lived experience to facilitate groups. Staff and clients co-producing and co-facilitating training has modelled partnership work and helped to celebrate the knowledge and skills of our clients.

2004

Client Involvement first became an organisational aim. Peer researchers from Groundswell made recommendations to improve involvement.

2005

Recommendations were implemented including creating Outside In, clients sitting on interview panels and regular client meetings with Directors.

2006

The Peer Facilitator Training Program was developed to support people with lived experience to facilitate groups.

2007

The Apprenticeship Scheme was developed, the first client conference took place and we made a commitment to our Recovery Ethos.

2008-10

10X Better was launched for clients to support each other as peers. Clients contributed to a range of initiatives including on keyworking and women’s services.

2011

Produced the Escape Plan in partnership with Groundswell. Set up the activity grants scheme.

Apprenticeship Scheme - The apprenticeship scheme was developed in response to feedback from Outside In. To date 131 have successfully completed the programme and 86% have sustained employment at St Mungo's.

Development of our recovery approach – This focuses away from deficits and towards factors such as choice, interdependence, relationships and holistic care. Clients have delivered Recovery Approach Training to staff teams across the Organisation. They also contributed to a wide range of internal policy improvements, for example they were central in informing the revised key working approach.

Peer research – We worked in partnership with peer researchers from Groundswell to interview clients and develop an action plan to implement their recommendations. Later we collaborated again with Groundswell to research common elements to Recovery Journeys which produced the 'Escape Plan' identifying common themes to recovery to guide others on their own recovery journey.

2012

The birth of the Recovery College.

2013

Client Involvement championed better support to form positive relationships, which included the creation of a Children and Family support post.

2014

The Client Involvement Team delivered Recovery Approach Training to Staff and the Client Advisory Board was created.

2015

Clients contributed to the development of the five year Organisational Strategy. Outside In organised Lively Up Client Festival and celebrated 10 Years of Outside In.

2016

Clients facilitated wellbeing groups for their Peers. Clients co-produced 'Involve' staff conference and 'Over the Rainbow' Client Festival.

7 Our Core Challenge

From consulting with clients, staff, managers and external parties we have identified that our core challenge to be addressed through this strategy is:

To establish a shared understanding of client involvement with shared standards, expectations and opportunities that inspires effective participation across all teams, services and regions.

Some staff and clients have reported feeling unclear about what is meant by client involvement. For example only referencing activities or house meetings rather than the deeper fundamental principles. Client involvement can be seen as an 'add on' with staff feeling they do not have time, or that their clients are too 'chaotic' to be involved. As there is not yet a shared understanding of involvement it is currently difficult to monitor or measure the effectiveness of our approach and there is variability between services. Clients may have different opportunities depending on what service they use and there is a need for more clarity around different client roles and pathways for progression. There is also a need for shared expectations and opportunities in all regions as currently many involvement activities are based in London.

Currently because we do not have consistency across all services we do not always have a representative client voice. Often the same group of clients are consulted and they tend to be further along in their recovery and have had a positive experience of services. We are not capturing the voices of more transient client groups, those who drop out of services, or those in other regions and in non-hostel services.

Our aim is to improve how we communicate with our clients and staff to establish our shared understanding of involvement, ensuring all clients are effectively informed about their rights, responsibilities and opportunities and are given meaningful opportunities to be heard and to shape their service and the wider organisation.

Whilst our core challenge for this strategy is establishing essential standards that are shared and agreed across all services, we want to ensure our approach to client involvement is innovative, inspiring and informed by best practice and we continue to be cutting edge in our approach to involvement. Although we need fundamental core standards in place we also need to continue to be aspirational.

8. Our Strategic Approach

To address our core challenge and make progress towards our vision for involvement we have set out five strategic aims, under which we have a series of objectives which we will deliver over the next three years. These will clarify and then help to embed a culture in which client involvement is the expectation and the norm in every part of the organisation.

The first strategic aim focuses on developing shared essential standards for involvement which are effectively monitored and measured and built into governance and staff processes.

The second aim seeks to embed and deploy these shared standards by developing support and infrastructure in reviewing team structures, client roles and governance structures.

Our third aim focuses on clarifying options and pathways for clients.

To ensure the shared standards, support structures and client options developed through the first three aims are deployed, the fourth aim focuses on effective lines of communication.

Finally to ensure we continue refining and improving our approach, the fifth aim focuses on innovation.



9. Key Aims and Objectives

To achieve our vision for client involvement and to address the core challenge we have set out five strategic aims:

Aim 1: There is a shared understanding of client involvement with clear standards and expectations and means of monitoring and measuring compliance

This aim is important in translating the evident passion and commitment of staff and clients around involvement into concrete practices and ways of working. By establishing effective tools for measuring compliance, we can share best practice, take action to resolve any issues, and continuously improve over time.

- Work in partnership with staff and clients to agree a set of essential standards for client involvement for all services.
- Review the Client Involvement Toolkit to communicate the set of non-negotiable standards alongside suggestions and innovative ideas. This should be based on the Ladder of Involvement with the initial focus being on 'Inform'.
- Establish methods to measure the fundamental client involvement standards using Opal where possible, so performance can be reflected in the Service Performance and Review Report (SPARR). Ensure client involvement is reviewed in Service Review Meetings and clients are involved in quarterly Local Operational Review Meetings (LORM) at least once a year
- Co-produce with clients an approach to 'mystery shopping' to measure involvement in services, pilot it, and roll it out.
- Participate in the review of the current audit process to ensure it effectively measures client involvement, reflects clients' real experiences and client auditors are involved.
- Develop staff understanding of client involvement and the importance of client/staff interactions through co-produced and co-delivered Client Involvement Training. Ensure staff in non-client facing roles visit services and have experience shadowing staff in services.
- Review templates and processes to ensure involvement is built in to supervision, appraisals, team meetings, reflective practice and recruitment processes. Review role descriptions to ensure competencies reflect the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to promote client involvement.
- Ensure clients are involved in recruitment particularly of front-line staff by offering incentives such as vouchers and reducing barriers such as the requirement for clients to have recruitment training. Ask all client volunteers if they would be happy to be added to a pool of client recruiters to support services where it is more difficult to involve local clients.
- Develop a process to ensure the Client Involvement Team promote and support best practice in involvement, offering both reactive (e.g. following a complaint or audit) and pro-active (e.g. following a request from a service) support.

Aim 2: The work of the Client Involvement Team, including staff and volunteers, is structured in a way that best facilitates meaningful involvement in all regions and services.

This key aim will help to ensure services in all regions receive support in achieving the essential standards of client involvement. By reviewing team structures, client roles and governance structures, involvement can be properly embedded in our work.

- Write a business case to implement a new regional staff structure. Set out clear delivery objectives for the team to manage capacity and to ensure all services have equal access to the resources and expertise of the team.

- Recruit and support regional teams of client volunteers who will be responsible for promoting involvement in services. Write role descriptions which will include supporting client representatives in services, facilitating client forums and ensuring clients are consulted effectively in their region.
- Develop role descriptions and guidance documents for recruiting and supporting client representatives in services. This will be different in different types of service.
- Work with all central service teams to explore options to create more apprenticeship opportunities.
- Review current internal meeting and forum structures to ensure more clients have opportunities to be consulted and provide feedback. Externally enhance links with local service user groups and forums.
- Ensure there is a Client Involvement Lead worker in every service. Define their role, develop guidance and ensure all leads come together at least quarterly to share practice. The lead worker can help to drive forward change but is not responsible for 'doing client involvement'; it is everyone's role.
- Work with Service Heads to review governance structures and to ensure client volunteers and clients are involved in Service Review Meetings.
- Ensure the working of the Client Involvement team and volunteers are aligned with the Recovery College programme which will be co-produced and present in projects, hubs and the community.

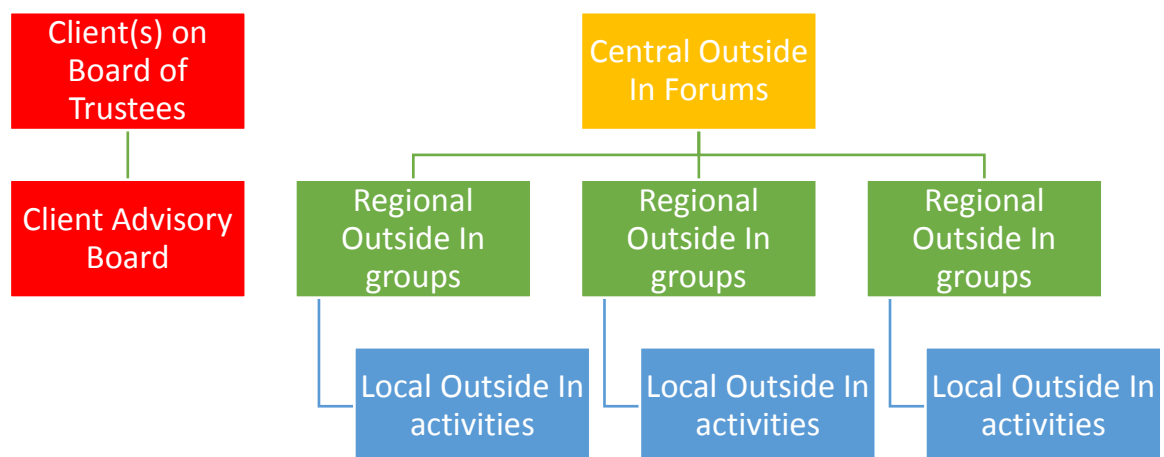
Aim 3: There is a menu of options for clients to be meaningfully involved and a clear pathway for client progression.

This aim is vitally important in ensuring all clients are able to choose opportunities for involvement that best fit their diverse needs, interests and strengths. We want to promote independence and establish a pathway for progression which focuses on achieving recovery within their community. Being involved gives confidence, skills and structure for clients, and shifts identity from being a passive recipient to an empowered part of a team.

- All services support clients to engage in meaningful activities. The focus should be on integration, fostering independence and recovery in the community. Clients should be encouraged to take on roles and responsibilities within their service. This can range from conducting H&S checks, serving tea and coffee, or becoming a client representative. Clients should be linked in with other programmes such as the Recovery College. Promoting engagement in activities should be included in business planning, team meetings and client action plans.
- Review the budget process to have a transparent budget for activities directed by clients.
- Clarify our approach to expenses for clients to ensure we value clients' contributions and they are reimbursed for all out of pocket expenses. Review how we reward volunteering including any monetary payments and utilising the Spice time credits programme.

- Refine the purpose and vision for Outside In in partnership with members. Review guidance documents, communications and processes to reflect any agreed changes. Establish Outside In teams in different regions and promote opportunities to more clients.
- Create a menu of client involvement opportunities which match the three levels of formality as outlined by our volunteering strategy and require varying levels of commitment. These can include attending service forums, recovery college sessions, Outside In meetings, being a client representative within a service or a regional client volunteer, or CAB member.
- Work with volunteering in creating a menu of other client volunteer roles. For example, peer researchers working within research, client ambassadors within fundraising, diversity champions within the staff diversity networks and peer facilitators within learning and development and the Recovery Colleges.
- Work with the volunteering team to signpost clients and client volunteers to internal and external opportunities including peer advocacy and peer mentoring programmes. Seek to highlight to staff and clients the power of clients being given opportunities to help and support others in achieving their own recovery.
- Structure client involvement and volunteering opportunities around the Five Ways to Wellbeing, for example around 'Give' clients can be linked in with 'Putting Down Roots' to improve green spaces for their community.

The diagram below is an initial proposal for how client involvement could be structured within St Mungo's:



The Client Advisory Board will continue to operate as an independent board working in partnership with the Board of Trustees.

The structure of Outside In will be reviewed to build on the success of the model and to promote equal involvement opportunities across regions and services.

Central Outside In – Client volunteers and clients can choose to attend Central Outside In forums. This will include the Central Office surgeries where clients are consulted by teams such as fundraising or communications, and meetings with the Executive Team. It is recommended that Central Outside In forums are rotated between regions to enable more clients to attend.

Regional Outside In – In each region there will be a team of client volunteers who will form a regional Outside In. Their role will be to promote client involvement within services through peer-facilitation, auditing and training, and to host regional Outside In meetings and events.

Local Outside In – Services should seek to promote involvement locally. This can include attendance of house meetings, recruiting a client representative, involvement in Recovery College activities and organising fun social events. Local Outside In activities can be supported by the Regional members.

Outside of the client involvement opportunities mapped out above there will be a menu of other options, including volunteering as a client ambassador, peer researcher or communications volunteer.

Aim 4: Effective methods and lines of communication are in place to ensure all clients are informed about opportunities, rights and responsibilities.

The first rung on the Ladder of Involvement is ‘inform’. We must ensure clients are given accurate, up-to-date and accessible information and have the opportunity to communicate their views, ideas and experiences to enable meaningful involvement.

- All teams to focus on ‘Inform’ as the initial level on the Ladder of Involvement. This will involve reviewing how we inform our clients about their rights and responsibilities, opportunities for involvement and activities and events. This would include a review of welcome/induction packs, use of notice boards and client meetings. Teams will consider how we can ensure communications meet different diverse needs and are accessible.
- Work in partnership with clients and our Communications Team to co-produce means of communicating directly with clients. For example, through a client newsletter, emails and/or social media. This can be linked in with our Digital Inclusion Strategy.
- Conduct a review of feedback mechanisms from central teams out to services and back in. For example, key points from service level client forums could be fed in to regional Outside in forums which feed up in to a central Outside In forum.
- Review the tools we use for obtaining feedback including exit interviews, surveys, feedback cards and staff appraisal questionnaires.

Ensure methods are appropriate for all clients including those who are not resident in St Mungo's services. Consider use of technology, for example electronic surveys, texts and use of tablets.

- Review the methods to demonstrate that we are listening to feedback, for example, 'you said we did' boards and sending out client forum minutes.
- Work with clients and our Communications Team to develop guidance for staff around communicating with clients including the tone of messaging, for example the value of displaying a 'Thank you for not smoking poster' instead of 'No Smoking' and avoiding authoritarian notices such as 'no admittance'. This can be linked to guidance around Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE).
- Establish a 'Keep it Short and Simple' group of clients to work with our communications team in reviewing all organisation wide communications which are sent out to clients.

Aim 5: Our approach to client involvement promotes innovation and we draw on the ideas, creativity and talents of our clients.

We aim to be a leader in client involvement and want to remain cutting edge in our approach. Our clients are experts by experience and can offer unique insights into what does and does not work.

- Ensure clients are involved in the development of St Mungo's Innovation Strategy.
- To ensure clients are involved from the start in designing and developing services we need to promote client involvement in commissioning. Members of the client involvement team and local managers can foster relationships with commissioners to facilitate opportunities for clients to be involved.
- Work with the St Mungo's Bids, Implementation and Contract Management Team in the development of the implementation toolkit for new services to ensure effective client involvement in the process.
- Establish a Client Involvement Network with other providers to share best practice and ideas. Develop links with service user led organisations to draw on their expertise.
- Ensure clients are involved in work planning and away days. Annual work plans should be co-produced and co-delivered with clients. Client Involvement should be built in to the main service work plan rather than having a separate client involvement plan to emphasise that there is no separation between client involvement and the work of the service.
- Review in partnership with the Campaigns, Policy and Research teams how clients are involved and how clients can influence external policy makers, for example through meetings with MPs.
- Review in partnership with the Quality Team how our clients are consulted around changes to policy and procedures. For example, through using the new regional client involvement structure described above.

10. How we will achieve these objectives and resource implications

Short and medium term priorities will be set out in an action plan with SMART objectives for year one. Progress against these objectives will be reviewed at least quarterly and the action plan will be reviewed fully each year.

Major projects within this will be included in the organisational Operational Plan signed off and monitored by the board.

The strategy will be reviewed every three years.

The action plan will set out how the strategy will be implemented to ensure it is fully deployed and embedded across the organisation. The plan will be developed in partnership with key stakeholders including from operations and communications. Service Heads and Department Heads will be responsible for checking on progress and feeding back, for example, through completing an implementation checklist.

To deliver the objectives listed above will require additional resources. We will require additional staff resources within the Client Involvement Team, in particular to support services in regions outside of London. It will also require staff and managers in services to dedicate time to establishing the new ways of working. It will require a review of local budgets to understand what money is available for involvement activities such as client expenses and materials. Business cases for these resources will be developed and brought to the executive to consider as part of the annual budget process and the review of use of discretionary fundraising.

Although additional resources will be required there are cost savings associated with effectively implementing this involvement strategy, for example being able to draw on the skills of our client volunteers, making better use of existing resources and interconnecting with resources within the community. This strategy will also enable us to evidence outcomes relating to client involvement which can attract funding from commissioners and effective client involvement can support fundraising for example through client ambassadors.

11. How this strategy was developed

In this strategy we have sought to draw on current best practice examples from across the organisation and the insight, ideas and creativity of our staff and clients. We have also looked externally at best practice examples and drawn on ideas from leaders within client involvement.

The consultation process has included:

- A review of documents including our Organisational Strategy, other departmental strategies and current policies and procedures
- Meetings with managers from all central support services
- Regular meetings with Outside In members
- Meetings with members of the Client Advisory Board
- A dedicated half day client workshop which was attended by 25 clients
- Service visits to meet with staff and clients which has included:
 - 25 services in London
 - 7 Services in Bristol
 - 2 Services in Bath
- Meetings with Client Involvement leads or CEOs from external providers including Hestia, Evolve, Providence Row, St Giles, Genesis and Groundswell
- Meetings with all members of the Executive Team, four Regional Directors and five Regional Heads
- All members of Leadership Plus were sent the strategy and given the opportunity to feedback
- Two half day planning sessions with the Client Involvement Team
- Involve staff conferences which were attended by 884 staff, 40 volunteers/locums and 20 clients

References:

1. Clinks (2016) *A Guide to Service User Involvement and Co-production*. 40 pages.
2. Fischer J, Jenkins N, Bloor M, Neale J and Berney L (2007) *Drug user involvement in treatment decisions*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
3. Together (2014) *Service User Involvement in the delivery of Mental Health Services*. 6 pages
4. New Economics Foundation (2015) *The Challenge of Co-production* www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/the-challenge-of-co-production.
5. Newton, A. Beales, A, Collins, D and Basset, T (2013) *Service user leadership: training and development for service users to take the lead by*. *Journal of Mental Health Training, Education and Practice*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 134-140
6. Big Lottery Fund (2009) *Good Practice Guide: User involvement* www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/er_res_good_practice_guide_user_involvement.pdf
7. Making Every Adult Matter (2016) *Voices from the Frontline policy influencing guide part two: Involving Experts by Experience*
8. Arnstein. S (1969) *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 216-224.