Service users, carers and patients are increasingly involved in the education of health and social care professionals – just as their involvement is increasingly built in to the running of health and social care services.

This RLO concentrates on preparation and practical issues for involving people with teaching and speaking to students.
Benefits for students
Research into service user involvement in health and social care education has shown that there are positive benefits to students on both pre-registration and continuing professional development programmes. Feedback shows that involvement is generally highly valued by students.

Benefits identified include:
• Increased empathy and improved communication skills (Wood and Wilson Barnett 1999)
• Greater understanding of how nurses’ interventions affect patients (Frisby 2001)
• Positive changes in attitudes (Happell and Roper 2003; Rush 2006)
• Raised awareness about how care can be improved (Khoo, McVicar and Brandon 2004)
• Developing ability to work in partnership with service users (Barnes, Carpenter and Dickinson 2006)
• Positive changes to students’ practice and the potential for transformative learning (Rush 2008)
How are service users and carers involved?

People may be involved in a range of work across a school or programme, such as curriculum and resource development, staff recruitment, admissions, teaching, assessment, management and quality assurance, and research.

Direct involvement in delivering the curriculum can take a variety of forms, including participation in e-learning such as online discussions, and live performances of plays, poetry, or music, as well as taking part as guest speakers, lecturers, and trained facilitators.

"Perhaps there is a section of your module that doesn't really come alive; your students see it as a chore? Our members can demonstrate what it's like for real people to face daily life with a particular illness or disability. We can give a formal lecture but, mostly, we want to tell our stories or answer students’ questions freely, encouraging as much interaction as possible.

You might want to try less traditional methods, such as role playing a scenario, interviewing the speaker, or having along more than one member of the group – a user and his or her carer for instance – who could discuss their experiences in hospital, in the community, and managing their way through social and medical services."

Barbara Preston
Service User and Carer Advisory Group member
School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy
The University of Nottingham
Who are service users and carers?
• It could be anyone – nearly all of us use health or social care services!
• People who have learning disabilities, people who have used mental health and other services, carers, parents, young people, and sometimes children
• People from different communities and backgrounds
• Usually, people with quite a bit of experience of using health or care services
• It depends on the topic – sometimes members of community groups or the general public might be involved
• When we are thinking about involvement with education, they are people who are willing to share their experiences to help students learn
What next?

Involving service users and carers can be an exciting and realistic approach to engaging with students. Sometimes you would be thinking about a speaker for a particular topic. You may also be seeking to build up long term relationships with groups who may get involved in a range of activities.

So how can you get service users & carers involved in your module? This section concentrates on involving people in teaching sessions.

Initial Contact

Learning outcomes - what do you and your students need?

Negotiation

Frequently Asked Questions

Video Interviews cover:

- Points of contact: how do I approach someone?
- How do I know I’ve got the right person?
- Would I be involved in planning the session with them?
- Tutors’ responsibilities for making the sessions work well
- How can staff help people to prepare for a session and how will I know what they are going to say?
- What guidance and information do people need to help them to prepare? i.e. timing, number of students, purpose of session, saying no to questions (remembering that getting stuff off their chest isn’t the purpose), tutors’ roles in the classroom (i.e. facilitation, support, negotiation)
What next?

Initial Contact

In the first instance you may want to contact a member of staff or a group working on service user involvement in your university. They could discuss ideas, and put you in touch with other teachers already involving service users and carers in their teaching, and with relevant groups or individuals. Other starting points would be local public involvement groups, voluntary organisations, and self help groups.

Learning outcomes - what do you and your students need?

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What next?

Initial Contact

Learning outcomes - what do you and your students need?

It is crucial to think about the purpose of the session, and what it is you want the service user and carer to deliver.

For this it is important to discuss the desired learning outcomes. This ensures that you can develop a session that will achieve what you are setting out to do, it helps the speaker understand the needs and wants of the students, and also helps you and the speaker to discuss different perspectives you may have.

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What next?

Initial Contact

Learning outcomes

Negotiation
Once you have workable learning outcomes it is important to meet the service user or carer to discuss the session. Keep an open mind - they may have fresh ideas that you wouldn’t have thought of yourself.

Set the scene with information about who the students are, roughly how many, what stage of their stage of training they are at, and how much experience they have had.

Discuss the format of the session - depending on the person’s experience and confidence, agree with them whether they will teach independently, lead the session with you supporting, run the session jointly with you, lead parts of the session, or contribute with you leading or facilitating.

Whilst you will be used to negotiating when inviting speakers from practice or other academic staff, there are some differences that need consideration when inviting people who are living with the issue or condition on a day to day basis. These are covered in the ‘practical issues’ section.
Policy and guidelines

Your university may have policies, guidelines, and related documents such as:

- A general policy about involvement
- A strategy for developing involvement
- Guidelines and procedures for payments and expenses
- Guidelines about involving people in different types of activities, such as in the classroom
- Standard letters, such as confirming and sending information about a teaching session, and thank you letters

If not, these could be key areas for service users and carers to help you develop
Preparation

Responsibilities
Involving service users and carers in your modules

Preparation

• Agree whether and how you would introduce the speaker, and agree your role in the classroom
• Prompt people to think about any areas they might prefer not to talk or answer questions about. They could think about how they would say no, or you can offer to let students know about ‘off limits’ areas
• Discuss the need for students to learn about details of positive experiences and suggestions for improvements, as well as hearing honest accounts of bad experiences. This could include discussing how teaching future health professionals might be different from feeding back to an organisation about poor treatment in the past
• If the speaker has had particularly negative experiences, ask them what they would like future nurses to learn from this, and what they think could have been done to improve the situation
• Tell people about the confidentiality rules for students, and ask them to think about confidentiality too, by not identifying individuals (including healthcare professionals)
• Raise the possibility that the service user may have met some of the students before
• Discuss formats and compatibility for any IT such as Powerpoint presentations

Responsibilities
Preparation

Responsibilities

- Where experienced or trained service users and carers teach sessions without you present, discuss and agree responsibilities for issues such as discipline and emergencies, make sure they know about any relevant procedures, and that they know where to find help on the day if they need it.

- Remember to let individuals know about details such as getting into the room, and IT access.

- Ask the speakers to let you have copies of any handouts or leaflets for your records, and for a copy of the lesson plan. If they are producing handouts, let them know about any guidelines. Agree any copying that you would do in advance, and when you would need the information by...
Access and travel

Ask about any access, transport or other needs, find out any further information the person needs, and agree arrangements. Keep in mind that many of the potential problems are caused by how the environment is designed and managed.

Click on the people highlighted to find out more:
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Click on the people highlighted to find out more:
Money

- Payment is an important recognition of the value of peoples’ experience and time, and should be offered. People may also choose to take part as volunteers.
- Your university may have guidelines about payment of fees, expenses, and costs such as cover for carers.
- Check budgets with your module or programme leader.
- People taking part will be on a variety of state benefits, pensions, and earnings. Benefits have different and changing rules about how much money people can earn, how many hours they can work, and restrictions on voluntary work or study. It may be advisable for the speaker to contact a welfare advice agency to check the implications of getting involved or getting paid fees and expenses. Don’t try to give benefits advice yourself.
- Actual travel expenses should be refunded on the day, so that nobody is out of pocket as a result of being involved. Ask people how they are likely to travel, estimate the likely costs, and request cash in good time – including small change!
- Before the session, agree whether payment is to be to an individual or to a group.
- Let people know what information they might need to bring on the day, such as national insurance number, or send out some of the forms in advance.
- Take claim forms with you on the day, and set aside time for people to fill them in, with assistance if necessary. They will need to sign for travel expenses, and give or show you any tickets they are claiming for.
Support and feedback

- Preparation and support for students is important, as well as for service users and carers. Let students know that they will be hearing personal experiences, and be aware that these will sometimes touch on students’ own experiences with much more impact than other forms of learning.
- Let service users and carers know about any training or support available.
- Provide space for speakers and individual students to debrief or talk afterwards.
- Ask how the service users or carers found the session, and if they have any ideas for improvements.
- Ask people teaching sessions independently how the session went, and if there were any issues you may need to follow up – such as behaviour, administration, or concerns that students raise.
- Allow space to discuss tactics such as for dealing with classroom discipline.
- Agree whether the speaker would like more formal feedback such as student evaluations, or summaries of these. People who want to develop their skills as presenters or teachers often welcome more detailed feedback.
Not just in the classroom
- approaches and issues, for example, involving children & young people
Other approaches
The growth of IT and e-learning enables learning to take place outside the classroom, and brings new opportunities for working with service users and carers. This is especially useful for working with people who find it difficult to come into the university, including children and young people.

Click on any of the topics to find out more information…
Involving service users and carers in your modules

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Methods can include:
- Use of actors
- Use of materials from published media
- Collaborations with other organisations
- Online involvement
- Video conferencing
- Diaries and home media

Ethics

Practical

Types of involvement

Access to materials
- Time, updates, length of consent
- Film versus photos and audio
- Are visual images always needed?

Who?
Other approaches
The growth of IT and e-learning enables learning to take place outside the classroom, and brings new opportunities for working with service users and carers. This is especially useful for working with people who find it difficult to come in to the university, including children and young people.

Click on any of the topics to find out more information…

- **Types of involvement**
  - Teaching
  - Consultation
  - Practice learning
  - Policy development
  - Assessment
  - Simulation
  - Developing learning materials

- **Not just in the classroom**
  - approaches and issues, for example, involving children & young people

- **Ethics**

- **Media & E-learning**

- **Practical**

- **Who?**
Top Tips for teaching with service users and carers

Before...
- Get to know the service user or carer who you’ll be working with
- Set the scene about this part of the course, students’ experience, and discuss what students need to learn about at this stage
- Agree the format and the split of responsibilities
- Ask about any training or support needs
- Discuss confidentiality, whether there are any ‘off limits’ areas, and the possibility of the speaker knowing some of the students
- Pay close attention to details of directions, transport, and access needs
- Agree fees and expenses, and make preparations such as ordering cash and finding the relevant forms

During...

After...
Top Tips for teaching with service users and carers

**Before...**

**During...**
- Help people to feel part of the scenery, feel like an equal, and feel valued
- Remember that developing communication skills and thinking about the context can all be part of students’ learning
- Maintain a respectful atmosphere in the classroom
- It’s OK to challenge and have robust discussion with service users, while recognising and respecting their experiences
- If necessary, move discussion on from concentrating on bad experiences
- When facilitating, keep an eye on the ‘vibes’ and non-verbal communication
- As trust builds, you become more like colleagues
- Have fun and keep learning – this can be a great teaching experience!

**After...**
Top Tips for teaching with service users and carers

**Before...**

**During...**

**After...**
- Allow space for speakers to talk afterwards, and ask for their feedback
- Allow space for individual students to talk to you if they need to
- Contact the service user or carer to thank them, and to send on feedback from students
- Let them know about any other ways of being involved, and ask if they might be interested in being involved in other ways in the future
Activity

Producing a checklist for involving somebody in one of your teaching sessions –

Headings: learning outcomes, who, what to discuss with them - access needs, format, preparation, info beforehand, expenses & payments, support, Planning, debriefing (speaker & student)

Activity –
Blank form with key headings
Plan your own session
Type in and print out
Glossary

**Service user** – somebody who uses or has used health or social care services. This can include being a patient of particular health services.

**Carer** – somebody who supports a relative, friend or partner to enable them to have better quality of life. A carer might be providing full or part time direct care, or might be liaising with a range of health and social care services.
Resources
Open these links to see lists of resources under the following headings:

References from the introduction – benefits for students

Guidance on involving service users and carers in education

Publications about service users and carers’ involvement in education

School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy, The University of Nottingham

Networks

Involvement in health and social care services

Involvement in research
Resources

References from the introduction – benefits for students:


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Networks

Involvement in health and social care services

Involvement in research
Resources

References from the introduction – benefits for students

Guidance on involving service users and carers in education:

- Trent Strategic Health Authority (2005). Principles for Practice - involving service users and carers in health care education and training, Trent Multi Professional Deanery

Publications about service users and carers’ involvement in education
School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy, The University of Nottingham

Networks

Involvement in health and social care services

Involvement in research
Resources

References from the introduction – benefits for students
Guidance on involving service users and carers in education

Publications about service users and carers’ involvement in education:

- Philosophy and infrastructure
- Curriculum content and teaching
- Assessment of students

School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy, The University of Nottingham

Networks

Involvement in health and social care services
Involvement in research
Involving service users and carers in your modules

Resources

References from the introduction – benefits for students

Guidance on involving service users and carers in education

Publications about service users and carers’ involvement in education:

Philosophy and infrastructure
- McGarry, J. and Thom, N, 2004, How users and carers view their involvement in nurse education, Nursing Times 100: 18: 36-39

Curriculum content and teaching
- Assessment of students

School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy, The University of Nottingham

Networks
- Involvement in health and social care services
- Involvement in research
In involving service users and carers in your modules

Resources

References from the introduction – benefits for students

Guidance on involving service users and carers in education

Publications about service users and carers’ involvement in education:

**Philosophy and infrastructure**

**Curriculum content and teaching**

- Hanson, B (now Rush) and Mitchell, D, 2001, Involving Mental Health Service Users in the Classroom: a course of preparation, Nurse Education in Practice 1: 120-126

**Assessment of students**

School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy, The University of Nottingham

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Involvement in research
Resources

References from the introduction – benefits for students

Guidance on involving service users and carers in education

Publications about service users and carers’ involvement in education

The School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy, The University of Nottingham:

- Strategy and guidelines on involvement are available via the intranet

Networks

Involvement in health and social care services

Involvement in research
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References from the introduction – benefits for students

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Publications about service users and carers’ involvement in education

The School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy, The University of Nottingham

Networks:

- Professional Education Public Involvement UK Network – sharing information about involvement in health and social care education http://pepin-uk.net
- NHS CHAIN - Contact, Help, Advice and Information Network: sub-groups sharing information on patient and public involvement http://chain.ulcc.ac.uk/chain/index.html
- Mental Health in Education - Mental Health in Higher Education aims to increase networking and the sharing of approaches to learning and teaching about mental health across the disciplines in UK higher education. www.mhhe.heacademy.ac.uk

Involvement in health and social care services

Involvement in research
Involving service users and carers in your modules

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Networks

Involvement in health and social care services:

- NHS Evidence - patient and public involvement: formerly a Specialist Library of the National Library for Health - policy, background and evidence about patient and public involvement in health services. From late 2010 patient and public engagement information is listed in the commissioning process section at [www.library.nhs.uk/commissioning](http://www.library.nhs.uk/commissioning)

Involvement in research
Involving service users and carers in your modules

Resources

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Networks

Involvement in health and social care services

Involvement in research:

• INVOLVE is a national advisory group which supports greater public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research. Involve publishes a range of guides on public involvement in all stages of the research cycle - www.invo.org.uk
Feedback

Please click this link to send us feedback about this learning resource. Thank you very much.

Standard RLO feedback questions (most with click buttons)
1 How would you rate this learning object?
2 How easy was it to use this learning object?
3 How helpful has the learning object been for learning the subject? OR After using this RLO, do you think you could more easily involve service users in the future?
4 Would you recommend it to others?
5 What did you like most about this learning object?
6 What did you not like about this learning object?
7 Are you a student, member of staff, service user, carer, patient, or other?
8 Which module are you studying or teaching?
9 Which university, institution or organisation are you from?

If you would be willing to give more detailed feedback on this and other learning objects, please fill in your details below.