**Dundee Public Social Partnership**

**Tests of change proposal**

**Background**

Over several years it has been identified that there has been difficulty in engaging those using homeless services in a meaningful and consistent manner. This has been identified by service users, organisations, commissioners and regulators.

It has been identified that those with lived experience are often excluded from decisions which directly affect them, and fails to capture their views e.g.

* Safe consumption, availability and contaminated drugs,
* Drug testing,
* Life chances, opportunities & hope

It is almost universally agreed that the best way for services to best support service users is to have their input. Often in the past service user input has been superficial

and patchy. Many agencies are reluctant to directly engage with service users in a meaning way as feedback may contradict their current service delivery. As the response to the changes in a way we approach homelessness[[1]](#footnote-1), the relationship between service users and organisations becomes more inclusive and less transient.

The current pandemic has been excellent in promoting innovation, in the ways we all work, and this has made the prospect of organisations embracing change easier. Whilst services may promote change, individuals may find this more difficult and this needs to be considered and monitor throughout the test of change process.

**Proposal**

The test of change would work with the current service at DVVA and support those with lived experience by promoting and support lived experience informing the decision-making process. This would be carried out by trained and supported peer mentors to support others to get involved. This could be done via the development of peer support groups and networks and the availability of peer mentoring. The level of peer support to be defined by peers themselves and not exceeding qualified professional boundaries. It is not intended to replicate Advocacy services.

The test of change would target those who have

* experienced multiple homeless;
* have multiple complex needs; and
* a willingness to engage

The rationale for looking at this cohort, instead of the mainstream homeless population is that we have evidenced that this group is more likely to benefit to the introduction of enhanced peer support and engage positively, With a view to achieving improved individual outcomes for those involved. It is also intended to provide participants engaging in delivering peer support adhere to all regulatory requirements including support and supervision, PVG registered and working toward meeting necessary SSSC qualification requirements.

Outputs and outcomes would be developed to ascertain the effectiveness of the test of change; an example of what these could be are:

**Outputs**

* Number attending peer support workshops and events
* Number of individuals trained to deliver peer support/mentoring
* Number of individuals attending focus groups that contribute and participate in co-production
* Number of individuals involved in the decision-making process

**Outcomes**

* Increased sense of engagement by service users
* Services feel that live experienced is meaningful and practical
* Empower service users to move away from homelessness through attaining knowledge, skills and experience of consultation processes
* Help build service user confidence and a sense of achievement

**Recommendations**

The test of change would last one year and be attached ownership to Dundee Housing First aiming to provide to funders added contract value to the current Housing First Dundee programme, which is currently funded *via* Housing First Scotland Fund and the Scottish Government. This would be reviewed at six months at which point an interim evaluation would be published.

Improvements would be measured by monitoring output and including outcomes in the final pathfinder reports to be carried out by Heriot Watt University and reported via the current mechanisms; with the addition of the PSP steering group.

The project aims to also develop a pathway to education, training, volunteering and moving toward employment for peer mentors, in order to embed the skills, knowledge and processes into services.

Bryan Smith

Operations Manager

Transform Community Development

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1. The use of more community focussed intensive support services like Housing First Dundee & Transform Community Development’s Housing Support Team [↑](#footnote-ref-1)