

SECTION 35: EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE AND CARER INVOLVEMENT ON THE COURSE

In the past the views of experts by experiences and carers of experts by experiences have been a secondary consideration when NHS services are planned, despite the fact that as the recipients of care they are in a good position to offer helpful advice to health professionals and managers. However well-intentioned a service, the acid test of its quality and acceptability is the experience of those who use it. Actively seeking out (and responding to) the views of experts by experiences makes considerable sense, not only because it is humane but also because services that are responsive, appropriate and acceptable to their clients are likely to be more efficient and effective.

This document sets out the ways in which the Course involves experts by experiences and carers in its organisation and in the teaching programme. In developing these links our guiding principle has been to avoid the tokenism which develops if experts by experiences are asked for their views without being fully informed of the background to the issues on which their opinion is sought, or are asked to comment on matters which are not within their experience. For this reason our strategy has been to build a experts by experience network, developing their roles as we gain experience with them, and they with us.

Experts by experience and carer committee

The experts by experience and carer committee meets two to three times a year; its aim is to coordinate and develop the input of experts by experiences across all the domains of the course – to the curriculum, placement experience, selection and research.

Membership comprises of a clinical tutor (who acts as a coordinator) and experts by experiences and carers recruited from local NHS trusts and voluntary organisations¹, as well as two trainee representatives. The aim is to build up a core membership of experts by experiences and carers who can represent as closely as possible the range of contexts and client groups with whom the course is preparing trainees to work. The meeting is co-Chaired by a member of staff and a experts by experience.

In order to integrate the experts by experience committee into the organisational structure of the Course, action points arising from its meetings are raised in the Course Executive Committee by the Academic Director, and are discussed as part of the agenda of the relevant course committees and Annual Course Review. If these proposals are seen as appropriate plans can be put in place to take them forward; if they are not taken forward then the reasons for this are fed-back to subsequent meetings of the experts by experience committee. Representatives from the experts by experience and carer committee also sit on each of the course committees (e.g. clinical practice committee, curriculum committee, selection committee).

¹ Experts by experience are paid for their time at the rate for external speakers (joint lecturer rate)

Experts by experience input to teaching

Experts by experiences are involved in the teaching programme in a number of ways, from providing feedback on the content of the curriculum to co-developing and delivering specific teaching sessions throughout the three years. For example, within the first two weeks on the course, trainees are introduced to some of the members of the experts by experience and carer committee in an interactive teaching session focussed on the experts by experience perspective of attending for an initial psychology appointment.

Experts by experience input to selection

Experts by experiences are actively involved in the selection process. The UCL interview procedure comprises two separate panels: the first is an academic, clinical and professional interview (with course staff and supervisors), the second a 'expert by experience' panel, (with two experts by experiences and a member of the course staff). This is a group task, with questions and a rating system developed by the experts by experience and carer committee. Candidates' scores in this interview contribute to their overall rating, and therefore to decisions about acceptance onto the programme.

The experts by experience and carer committee also consult on all aspects of the selection process, with a experts by experience representative attending and contributing to all selection committee meetings.

Experts by experience input to research

The experts by experience and carer committee are currently reviewing the process by which members of the group can consult with trainees on their major research project. If a trainee wishes to access the experts by experience and carer committee to consult on their research project (e.g. to obtain ethics approval), they are instructed to complete the *relevant form* and send this to Jarrod Cabourne (DClinPsy Experts by experience Lead)

Trainee consultation with experts by experience and carers while on placement

The course requires trainees to undertake consultations with experts by experiences and/or carers while on placement, outside of the usual therapeutic contact. The rationale for this is straightforward: although experts by experience involvement with the course is important, the most effective way for trainees to learn from experts by experiences is to gain direct experience while on placement. The consultation exercise is detailed in Section 10 of this handbook..