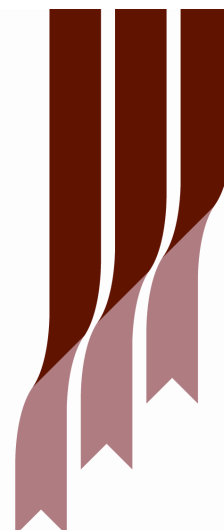


SCOTTISH INSTITUTE
FOR EXCELLENCE IN
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION



Scottish Voices:

Service Users and Carers at the Heart of
Social Work Education

This report will be available on the SIESWE website at www.sieswe.org

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An Overview from the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education

Introduction

In line with its aim to promote excellence in social work education in Scotland, The Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (the Institute) sponsored two conferences which were run in September 2004. These were organised by the team who manage the Institute project to improve service user and carer involvement in assessment within the new social work degrees. The Institute is pleased to support this work and attempts to work in real partnership with service users and carers.

Following this introduction you will find the conference report illustrating what happened during the conferences and highlighting the key messages that service users and carers conveyed. At the end of the report there follows a proposal linked to these key messages indicating how stronger service user and carer involvement might be achieved within social work education across Scotland.

Finally there is a form inviting you to nominate yourself or your organisation to become more actively involved in exploring ways to try and achieve real service user and carer influence on social work education at a national level.

Background

The imperative for increased service user and carer involvement in social work education has come about because service users and carers have increasingly won a voice within this arena and there are now clearer mechanisms and a greater will for this to happen.

The Framework for Social Work Education in Scotland (2003) sets the Scottish context for the integration of service users and carer involvement in social work education. It defines the requirements for social work training and the standards in social work education.

The Framework says that

'policies and procedures for assessment must include effective and appropriate ways of meeting the requirements of key stakeholders in social services...Key stakeholders include people who use services, carers and employers.' (p 15)

and that programme providers must,

'Make sure that selection policies and procedures include effective and appropriate ways of involving stakeholders in social services.(stakeholders include people who use services, carers and employers) (p15)

The eight university social work departments delivering social work programmes in Scotland are all committed to involving service users and carers, not only within their

assessment and selection processes but throughout their programmes in a range of ways. The good practice guide *Learning from Experience: Involving service users and carers in mental health education and training (2004)*, suggests these ways might include,

- Direct delivery of learning and teaching
- Course/module planning
- Programme management
- Recruitment and selection of students
- Practice learning
- Student assessment
- Course evaluation
- Joining courses as participants

This guide also highlights that achieving meaningful involvement depends on:

1. establishing a culture which considers the viewpoints and contributions of service users and carers to be of equal value to academic and professional perspectives
2. developing an infrastructure to recruit, support and give training to service users and carers
3. paying service users and carers at a fair rate and in ways that do not undermine their financial security
4. valuing and encouraging diversity: making sure that minority experiences and viewpoints are included
5. having a strategy for taking forward involvement that is supported by management, professional bodies and other key stakeholders. This must include appropriate funding.

Reference: Tew J, Gell C & Foster S, Nov 2004.

Learning from Experience:

Involving service users and carers in mental health education and training

Scottish Voices:
Service Users and Carers at the Heart of Social Work Education

Conference Report

November 2004

These conferences were organised by Project 3.3, 'Involvement of Service Users and Carers', an Institute funded project of the University of Dundee, the University of Stirling and the Open University in Scotland.

Introduction

Scottish Voices: Service Users and Carers at the Heart of Social Work

This report gives a summary of two conferences which were held in September 2004 in Glasgow and Perth. The conferences were a significant step in drawing people together - service users, carers, university lecturers, organisations - to share experiences and to begin to work out how service users and carers can influence social work education on a national level.

The conferences were organised by the project linking three universities in Scotland (University of Dundee, The Open University in Scotland and University of Stirling) looking at the involvement of service users and carers in social work education. The Open University in Scotland took the lead role in organising the conferences, supported by the project's development worker. Both days in Glasgow and Perth followed the same programme. This report gives summaries of the presentations and combines group discussions from both days. Key messages are given which capture significant ideas from these discussions. Contact information is also given.

40 attended the Glasgow conference and 53 people attended the Perth conference. Invitations were sent to the eight university social work programmes in Scotland, the Scottish Social Services Council and the Care Commission and other service user and carer organisations. The participation of service users and carers was crucial to the success of the conferences and therefore the number of places for service users and carers was weighted in their favour. An attendance fee, travel expenses and replacement carer costs were available to service users and carers.

Both days were introduced and chaired by Iain Ferguson, University of Stirling. They included presentations by Linda Walker, Institute Projects Manager, Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education; The Link Drama Group, Dundee; Wendy Ager, Development Worker, University of Dundee; June Sadd and Jane Reast, Service User Panel, The Open University; Norma McSloy and John Dow, Dundee University User and Carer Group.

These conferences were organised to explore ways in which relationships built at local level may be expressed at national level in order that service users and carers can influence social work education at this crucial time of development.

"I am already involved and to hear other people's experiences made mine feel stronger"
"It helped me to think about practical steps to increase service users and carer involvement, to keep trying to encourage colleagues to be involved, to meet eloquent people who have made great advances already and to be re-energised."

comments from conference evaluation

We would like to thank the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (the Institute) which funded the conferences, Mo Mcphail of the Open University in Scotland and Maggie Gee and Wendy Ager of the University of Dundee who co-ordinated the organisation of the conferences, the presenters and facilitators and everyone who attended.

"An excellent start to a complex, challenging process"

"It was a start of better things to come"

"But only if built on!"

comments from the conference evaluation

Key Messages

- There is great enthusiasm to be involved in working in social work education and it was seen that there was a wide variety of ways of increasing the involvement of service users and carers
- The initiative through these conferences to develop a national network was appreciated but there was a strong feeling that it must be linked with sustainable funding at this stage
- Involving service users and carers at a national level can be achieved through the evolving university networks as well as reaching out through existing user and carer networks and organisations
- Service user and carer involvement in social work education has implications for everyone involved. For service users and carers 'to take centre stage', universities need to listen and respond creatively and most importantly to learn to share power to let real service user and carer involvement begin to happen
- Teaching skills in 'real listening' should be a priority for social work education; as someone put it, demonstrating "an ability to put her foot in my world"
- Clear communication using plain English and avoiding university jargon is very important for service users and carers. Presentations, meetings and all information should be easy to read and clearly understandable
- Ideas about how students could deepen their knowledge of issues facing service users and carers were suggested, including access to video diaries made by service users and carers; virtual learning; live-in social workers and students; and an emphasis on the value of residential practice learning opportunities

'When I'm asked the question, 'are things getting better?' – by things, I mean services for disabled people, I say 'yes'. Slowly they are improving. That is why we need more days like this.' comment of service user on video

'I may not speak but I have a voice. You need eyes to hear what I'm saying, to hear my dreams... This is for students to hear.' comment of service user on video

The proposal for a national network was welcomed. The network could build on local service user and carer links with university social work programmes, reaching out to a wide range of service user and carer organisations and networks. A combination of regular meetings face to face, together with use of email, internet, video conferencing, newsletter was preferred. A paid coordinator with experience of being a carer or service user is needed and funding for participation is vital to build and maintain the developments made so far.

Presentations

Here are the presentations which were made at the conferences:

Linda Walker

Institute Project Manager, Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education

This presentation will look at the perspective of the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education concerning increased service user and carer involvement. This is the beginning of a discussion at a national level as to how we might work together with people who use social work services and their carers.

Who is involved in helping social work students learn? In the past, this was primarily universities, employers and some involvement of service users and carers. In the future, we aim to see all parties working more closely together with service users and carers at centre stage.

Who says this is the way forward? Users of social work services; carers of those who use social work services; the Scottish Executive, through the Framework for Social Work Education in Scotland and the Standards in Social Work Education; Scottish Social Services Council through registration and review procedures; equivalent people and bodies across the UK; and the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (the Institute).

What is the Institute? The Institute draws together the nine universities in Scotland that offer social work programmes. It is funded by the Scottish Executive, the nine universities and SHEFC, the body that funds all universities in Scotland.

What does the Institute do? It supports universities and others who provide social work programmes to talk to one another across Scotland. It also helps to strengthen links between those that run the programmes and other bodies, such as the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Social Services Council. It also leads the way in supporting what and how social workers learn, and supports the development of new technology in social work education.

The Institute does this through 14 funded projects which aim to improve social work education and involves a range of individuals and groups from a variety of settings, including local authorities, voluntary agencies, the private sector, service users and their carers, students, practice teachers, lecturers.

The 14 projects cover different areas:

- New ways of designing programmes e.g. part-time, distance learning, 'fast track'
- How best to involve others in decisions about whether social work students should become social workers
- What and how students learn 'in practice' as opposed to 'in class'

- Developing new ways of teaching and learning through technology
- Child protection

The Institute is committed to involving service users and carers in all its work, and sees their involvement as crucial to the successful development of the new degrees. However the Institute needs to be guided as to how best to achieve this.

One of the projects, the project which has organised this conference, has been set the task to 'explore a range of ways in which employers and people who use services and their carers can be involved and contribute to the assessment processes. One of the particular aims of the project is, in conjunction with service users and carers, to set up a national system where their voices can be heard in relation to how social workers learn.

What might this national 'influence'/advisory group look like? It may look at new ways of linking with the ongoing work of the Institute, advise on new initiatives and opportunities to work together and also investigate how best to reward people for their time and effort when being involved in such activities.

There are a number of opportunities for service users and carers to be involved in existing groups at a national level e.g. the Institute Stakeholder Group, The Practice Learning Implementation Group, the Black and Ethnic Minority Action Plan Implementation Group (linked to the Scottish Executive), and the National Training Strategy.

Our invitation to the conference is to consider the request for a service user and carer 'influence/advisory group/s; to think about how this might be achieved and to highlight and report on the ways forward for the Institute.

"very interesting to hear what is going on"
"provided a clear outline"
 comments from conference evaluation

The Link Drama Group Dundee

The Link Drama Group created a play based on their experiences of social work as young people. Over a series of brief scenes they follow the lives of a number of young people at school and at home. They demonstrate the difficulties in communication between a social worker and young people and find a resolution in the social worker's renewed commitment to her working relationships, in the light of parallels she sees between her personal and professional life.

The group of six young people worked with **activate**, a theatre company based in Dundee, to create this play. A video of the performance was made at the conference.

"This was a wonderful focus which brought the purpose of the workshop to life"

"The play was very good and highlighted some of the main problems"

"Brilliant and very emotional"

comments from conference evaluation

Wendy Ager
Development Worker, University of Dundee

Earlier this year, we reported on the involvement of service users and carers in social work programmes across Scotland. This work is part of the project the University of Dundee is working on, with the Open University and the University of Stirling about the involvement of service users and carers in social work education.

There are eight university social work programmes running in Scotland at Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow Caledonian, Glasgow/Strathclyde, the Open University, Paisley, Robert Gordon and Stirling. When we were writing up our report, all the universities were planning for the new degree and were in the process of finalising their plans. Our report is a snapshot of what was happening at the time and gives some indication of future plans.

We contacted several different groups of people to find out how they saw the involvement of service users and carers. We contacted:

- Service users and carers through the University of Dundee network
- Students from Dundee, Stirling and the Open University
- Practice teachers through different networks in Scotland
- University heads of department

We started by asking service users their views of social work and the role of social workers. As Peter Beresford (2000) says, 'service user and carer knowledge is distinguished from all other, being based on direct experience of policy and provision from the receiving end' ('Service User Knowledge's and Social work Theory: Conflict or Collaboration?' *British Journal of Social Work*, 30: 489-503). What we found was an overwhelming sense that core skills of listening were needing attention.

From the information collected from universities, students and practice teachers, we built up a picture about the extent to which service users and carers were involved. In fact we found that there was limited involvement across the board. In terms of the management of programmes, we noted that the Open University School of Health and Social Welfare has a Service User Panel which has a UK-wide remit. The University of Dundee has a User and Carer Advisory group. Apart from these examples, we could find no others of people being involved on university committees or boards.

Looking at the information from practice teachers and students, we found that about $\frac{3}{4}$ of practice teachers always get feedback from service users and carers about the work done by students when placed with an organisation. They do this most commonly by getting feedback from one or two of the people students have worked with.

In terms of teaching and assessment, there is limited participation too. Service users and carers are involved in teaching on some of the courses in most universities. We did not gather details about the kind of teaching they were doing. We found no examples of service users or carers being involved in the assessment of students in university-based work at all.

There are challenges in involving service users and carers:

- How can service users and carers be empowered against a culture in universities which is often disempowering? How can working relationships be set up that are based on a shared understanding on all sides?
- How can we, and indeed do we, distinguish between service users and carers, acknowledging the differences and valuing them, so that social work training adequately reflects the complex status of carers, as well as exploring the needs and interests of service users?
- How can we get good feedback about students' work from service users and carers that is not just general, but that is specific and constructive and is given by service users and carers who are well prepared for the whole process?

There is very helpful guidance given in the SCIE Resource Guide No 2 (Social Care Institute for Excellence '*Involving Service Users and Carers in Social Work Education*' 2004) about how to enable people to participate. Universities need to be clear from the start about the principles and aims for service user and carer involvement. Different kinds and levels of training can be offered to service users and carers as required, as well as to university staff and staff in agencies to promote an understanding about working with service users and carers.

Universities need to work out their policies and procedures for costs associated with service user and carer involvement. This may include fees and travel expenses, staff time and resources, equipment, refreshments. There are currently no Scottish plans for funding involvement of service users and carers in university social work programmes, unlike the case in England where the Department of Health provides funding.

Universities also need to look at widening and promoting participation, by looking at which organisations they are linked with and identifying gaps and then making plans.

To bring this report up to date, universities are reaching out to service user and carer organisations and are building up an understanding of views on social work and the social work role to inform their planning and teaching in the new degree. The 'Scottish Voices' booklet in the conference pack is one example, drawing on work done by the Open University over the past few months. Glasgow Caledonian has begun some interesting work too, using a user-friendly document featuring pictures and symbols.

Universities are working out ways of linking with organisations and individuals and working on establishing a clear understanding about the aims and scope for people's participation. Robert Gordon University, for example, have taken forward their work through separate consultations with service user groups and carer groups, taking a phased approach, building up relationships as they go. It will be important to follow the progress of all initiatives within university programmes, as the new degree unfolds.

June Sadd

Service User Panel, School of Health and Social Welfare Open University

Thank you for inviting me to your conference, "Scottish Voices". I come from South of the Border and live in Wiltshire, but my granny's name was Agnes MacDonald so I feel that makes it okay for me to be here.

I will tell you about the Service User Panel for the Open University, School of Health and Social Welfare, and about user involvement in some of the Social Work Programmes in the South West of England. I will give you some ideas that have helped us to get going on the road to involvement with the academic institutions.

But first I would like to say that getting involved can feel scary and confusing. **It takes time to support user involvement to develop properly.** It takes time to outreach to individual service users and groups in order to invite them to become involved, and to support their involvement effectively.

Service users should dictate the pace saying:

- 1) **whether** they want to be involved
- 2) **how** they want to be involved, and
- 3) **what** they want to be involved in

The role of the professionals is to **facilitate and enable** the process.

I said that involvement can seem scary and confusing. We need support to build our confidence and develop our own empowerment. These are some of the supports the professionals can offer to help us on our journey to empowerment:

- Training including induction
- Information
- User-friendly language
- Enablers/signers at meetings
- Facilitators
- Accessible facilities and venues
- Money – fees, expenses, care costs
- Time – for the work to be done properly (some of which is time needed for us to go through papers to prepare for meetings)
- **Sharing power – professionals "letting go" of their power**

Service User Panel for the Open University, School of Health and Social Welfare

We have always tried to keep our **independence** as users in our involvement with the University, so that we really influence the decisions **that are important to us**. For example, the University said the Panel should meet twice a year, but we said that it was important to meet four times a year, and they then agreed to fund us to meet four times a year.

How did we start? In **October 2000** there was a workshop chaired and facilitated by an independent national user-controlled organisation called Shaping Our Lives. This was funded by the Open University and was attended by some of their staff and service users. This Workshop was held to look at ways in which the School of Health and Social Welfare could involve users in the Programmes they offer. But it took until **July 2002** for the 1st Service User Panel meeting to take place. These are some of the things that we have worked out to help the process of the meetings.

Process

- In the morning for one and three quarter hours we meet in two groups separately to go through the agenda items and anything else we feel is important – the staff in one room, and the service users in the other.
- The two groups come together for lunch and then meet together in the afternoon for two and a quarter hours, to discuss the agenda items and anything else that is important.
- Ground rules for the meetings.
- Terms of Reference for the meetings.
- A part-time paid coordinator who is a service user.
- A Bulletin Board on the internet administered by the coordinator which keeps the service users on the Panel informed.
- A paid note taker for our morning meeting.
- Meetings arranged to start and finish at times that are suitable for the service users attending.

Power-sharing

It is important that professionals learn to 'let go' of some of their Power for **real** service user involvement to happen. From the beginning we said we did not want to get involved only in the Service User Panel, but that it was important to be at the decision-making and strategic meetings as well, to really influence the University's programmes. In the Open University these meetings are the **School Board**, and various Committees such as the **Equal Opportunities Committee** and **Research Committee**. We do attend, but it hasn't been easy to come to an agreement with the School about our attendance and role – there were issues about whether we went as observers, or whether we had voting rights and also how many users could attend each meeting. Some of these issues still haven't been resolved.

We also attend the **Social Work Degree service user Sub-Group** and the **Steering Group for the Social Work Degree**.

General point - We have said that service users should attend only two meetings (other than Panel attendance) to make sure more people have the chance to be involved, but some people attend more than two because not all the Panel members can attend these extra meetings.

These are some of the other things that service users can get involved in with the Open University, School of Health and Social Welfare:

- Critical Reading
- Taking part in Course Teams
- Reading the statements of applicants for the Social Work course and commenting on their suitability
- Interviewing
- Case Study material
- Research proposals with academic staff

As I said before there have been, and still are, issues for user involvement:

- Cost of user involvement – service users wanted more involvement but the amount of funding meant we had to limit the meetings we attend.
- Service users want two people to attend each meeting for peer support. We have had this accepted for most Committees, but this principle is not generally accepted by the University, and they try to limit us to one person sometimes.
- Sometimes decisions have been made outside of the Service User Panel meetings, which means that service users have not been involved when they should have been.
- Service users have different perspectives, and that's good, but the issue is how best to enable the different views to be heard fairly and equally.
- The service users have debated for a long time whether we should attend as members from organisations, or as individuals. As we could not agree on this, there is a mixture of both sorts of involvement on the Service User Panel.

Service Users' Involvement with Other Universities and Colleges

These are some of the ways in which we are involved:

- Teaching on Social Work Programmes on – the user perspective, empowerment, anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice.
- Interviewing of applicants for the Social Work Courses.

- Management Group (Social Work Programme) – we are members of this Group (at two academic institutions) which makes the strategic decisions.
- As members of the Management Group we have the automatic right to be included in the Sub-Groups which make strategic decisions on:
 - 1) Curriculum Design, 2) Selection, 3) Assessment, 4) Equal Opportunities and 5) Quality Assurance.
- Evaluation of the programmes.
- Placements - The user-controlled organisation I work for takes students on placements. (I am a Practice Teacher, rooted in the user perspective)
- Assessment - Service users are involved in the assessment of individual students.

In conclusion I want to remind you of the three things that I think are the most important for you, as service users, to push for in your involvement with the academic institutions. These are:

Money (visual aid – pound notes)

Power (visual aid – light bulb)

Rights (visual aid - placard "It's my Right as an Equal")

Jane Reast
Service User Panel, School of Health and Social Welfare
Open University

The Challenges of Collaboration

Many thanks for the invitation and the opportunity to work with you all at this exciting event. My name is Jane Reast and I live in Middlesbrough. I have direct experience of using mental health services and up until last November, I was Director with Redcar and Cleveland Mind with whom I had worked since 1991.

Amongst our successful service user led developments are contracted day services and a thriving independent advocacy service. Since 2002, I have been involved in working with the Open University as a service user consultant. Whilst I was initially thrilled, I was soon overwhelmed with angst at the prospect of working with academics and a load of baggage about having little or nothing of relevance to contribute in such a setting. I had a good word with myself about the amount of times many of us had moaned on about training as being one of the routes to changing attitudes and practice in mental health and took the plunge.

My role as a course team member has evolved and I have recently become involved in the Social Work Degree as a member of the service user social work panel, a sub group of the Open University's School of Health and Social Work panel. In your packs for today are a couple of articles about the engagement, involvement and collaboration of service users/survivors. These highlight the wide range of input by people with direct experience of mental distress that is fundamental to the OU's new mental health course development.

My message to you all is to overcome any fear and to go forward with confidence in your own voices of experience. The context offers many opportunities to be valued as equal partners, no matter what the nature of involvement. It is vital that a hierarchy of engagement does not emerge. We will all have different amounts of time. Opportunities may include: group contributions, critical reading, assessment, audio and video input, through the arts, exam boards, as writers of units-these are just a few. Often we are able to access key networks to inform the work and can extend the range of voices and involvement.

All of this needs support in terms of time, training, payment, the development of principles for involvement. There needs to be goodwill too as the journey evolves. There is a real need for resources in terms of a budget that is solely and transparently deployed for involvement in all aspects of the challenge. Universities need to free up their bureaucracies in relation to payment - like any large institutions they are hide bound in audit trails.

The energy and enthusiasm from today demonstrates a real momentum that demands real resources that will in turn deliver social work training that is relevant and respects. In a recent report from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Social Exclusion Unit in England, John Prescott said '... professionals across all sectors too often have low expectations of what people can achieve.'

This sector can be in little doubt of what you are ready and willing to offer - you just need the resources to sustain and succeed.

Norma McSloy
University of Dundee User and Carer Group

I am here today because I care for a son with a learning disability. I want to influence social work education and put across what we can offer and what we can receive by working together. I am a member of the University of Dundee user and carer group who have taken part in the planning of the new social work degree. We have put together a statement of intent which describes some of the key principles that we thought should be included. The Dundee group members have connections to organisations working with a wide range of people. These connections are crucial to balance the relationship between the university, service users and carers.

One of the most important things that I have seen happen with the user and carer group from the university is that we are actively involved in assuring future good practice. It has been recognised that we have first hand knowledge of the skills and personal qualities that social workers need to have. We have had experience of good and bad social workers. We have at last found the opportunity to discuss what these experiences feel like and bring them to the attention of social work education. Taking part in the assessment of social work students has been a very interesting way of being part of social work education.

It is very important that we as service users and carers get feedback on what our involvement has meant to students of social work. We want to contribute to making a difference in our lives and the lives of those we care for. We need to know if our time is well spent and that our input is useful and beneficial to social work education.

Community care has affected the lives of a lot of us. Some services in the past were out of sight and out of mind. We were able to exclude people from a lot of normal day to day activities that we enjoy. It makes a great difference to people who use services that their social workers listen carefully to what they need to make them part of our communities.

There is a TV ad for Heinz salad cream, (it's on before Emmerdale), where one person says, "the vicar has gone organic", the listener says to the next person "the vicar has gone manic", that listener says to the next person "the vicar has gone satanic". This shows very clearly what happens when people pass things on. It is a very good example of how things get distorted and diluted when people do not communicate directly with each other.

I have been involved in community planning for services for learning disabilities implementing the same as you directive. I am also on the board of a group in Perth called 'Push'. I represent 'Push' on the Scottish Council of ENABLE and I am a firm believer in sharing knowledge. I do not believe we should be precious about our roles,

as we all want the same end product. Services that fit the individual and which are person centered.

I have two sons - one called Ewan who has a learning disability and one called Colin who hasn't. I know which son has made more decisions for himself. Social workers and care managers are very important people in Ewan's life. They are who he has to go to get the services and support he requires.

My sons' Gran tells me that in her day there was very little choice because of rationing. In social services everything is kind of rationed too – choices, money, staff, people's time and even some services. When things are rationed you have to be very creative and do a lot with a little – just like social services. You must not waste the resources you have and end up with services that people do not want.

My son has suffered by being told what to do all the time. He considers himself the same as you and I. He often says if they (social workers and local government) can tell me what to do – then I can tell them what to do.

I feel very strongly that service user and carers should influence the way the new degree is being planned, taught, reviewed and monitored. This is a new way of working. It will take time, patience and money. Some training may be required to have service users and carers on board.

Can you believe that when I was a young mum I thought that all social workers training included input from people who use services – never for one minute did I think that was not the case?

I feel very positive about the future. We are at last sitting at the table with more and more opportunities to be involved opening up. This means there will be lots of challenges ahead – funding being a major consideration in the involvement of service users and carers. We look to the Institute for a long-term sustainable commitment at the start of this partnership.

John Dow
University of Dundee User and Carer Group

I have been a user of mental health services and general health services for approximately 28 years. Over that period of time I have on a personal level gained much through my being an informal carer for two individuals, who have themselves needed to use both mental health services and general health services, as well as the services of their local social work departments.

I have also over a number of years benefited from the input of and working with social work departments, not only at a personal level, where they have shown me assistance in my the various problems I have in both my mental and physical health, but also in a professional capacity, when employed as a Senior Local Government officer I had the opportunity to work closely with the Social Work Department in order to begin to implement change in the field of housing and health.

Initially I was approached by Maggie Gee (of the University of Dundee) around January/February 2003, and asked if I would consider joining a group which she was facilitating. This group had been tasked with gaining the views of both carers and service users, to assist in the writing and implementation of a degree in Social Work.

Now to say that my immediate reaction was "yeh that's great, we should have been doing this years ago, and certainly no matter where, or at what cost to me, I was definitely interested, and up for it" would in fact be extremely far from the truth.

In fact, my initial thoughts were, here we go again, another group of the great and the good that had seen the financial benefit to their stretched budgets - by involving users and carers 'in meaningful involvement', by showing they had 'engaged with both carers and users' and whole host of the current buzzwords which help them and other statutory groups gain "brownie" points from the Scottish Executive.

But, this seemed different. Maggie explained that this group would have the opportunity to influence change in how academics, employers and social workers, view the need or indeed the benefit of engaging with carers and service users. She explained that I and others would have **an equal voice** within the planning and implantation of the Social Work Degree.

Another important aspect of this group for me, was, that unlike the many other groups and bodies where I have been involved in the consultation process, this group, along with the other groups they would be working with, would be working to a **structured timetable**, which would ultimately lead to the introduction of the degree.

This willingness for all of those involved to work towards a common structure where I and those like me would see actual change from our involvement would be different from the other areas of consultation I and others have been involved in. Unlike other groups which called for care and user involvement we would see a return for our involvement. We wouldn't feel we have been **Involved- Heard – Asked, Involved – Asked – Heard – Asked – Involved etc, etc, etc**. We would see a definite result from our involvement and consultation and we would all be aware of the challenges and tasks which lay ahead. This was for me a main influence in my deciding to join the Group.

Now before anyone thinks that my glasses have been fitted with 'rose tinted glass' - let me say that my involvement and that of others in the group has not been a case of members of our group getting whatever we felt was necessary. As I stated earlier, there were other groups each with a specific task and remit. This meant that the CU group (which stands for Carer and User group) had to not only challenge but equally important had to show a commitment to listen to others from outwith our own group. After all, there are very few journeys where an objective is in sight, where we can travel down a road of our choice, over a smooth surface, where all the traffic would moves at our pace, never overtaking, or questioning our manoeuvres. By listening, and agreeing to disagree we could all be part of a changing and evolving process.

In order to achieve this we as a group set out what we felt were important and necessary values which would help to achieve worthwhile and full involvement of both carers and users.

No tokenism each of us involved would share genuine ownership and power we would listen and be listened to.

Plain English don't assume that we are all at the same speed; engage and communicate at a level we can all understand. My own yard stick is that if I can grasp and understand, then surely all the highly qualified out there can.

We would see change from the consultation as I said earlier we all knew when the implementation would be and the work has now been accredited.

So where do I see things going from here? I fully believe that we can now continue to run with the momentum we have achieved. We can, and are, certainly in Dundee involved in training, further consultation, evaluation. We are respected as equal partners in the changing picture - a picture that, although it is now framed and ready to be viewed, we can all be part of the on-going maintenance and where necessary, any re-painting that may be needed in the future.

However I do feel that in order to continue with full and meaningful involvement, we need to expand our network of those involved in this process. We need to ensure that as far as is possible we can all have a voice especially those groups or individuals who may be difficult to reach. Over the number of years I have been involved in consultation processes, I have found, along with others I have worked with, that we are not bilingual in either 'User or Carer speak'. We need to have others to help us add additional colour to the picture which has been created. We need to try and form a network where we can all, when the need arises, take a break, step back, AND whenever we can, have fun, during the process of all working together towards seeing change within Social Work.

CHANGE which we would like to see
CHANGE which students feel part of

where universities and others can see positive gain, and where employers can feel and recognise the real benefits, to be gained by us all being involved as equal and respected partners.

So whilst I don't say that this process is easy, I do feel that unlike other consultation and involvement processes I have been involved in, this process has demonstrated a full commitment to everyone involved, being able to work in real and valued partnership. And sure, we may make mistakes but like any one who has been involved in the change process, making mistakes and taking on board the lessons from those mistakes. Ultimately this leads to greater and worthwhile change, which will see benefit for **people like you and me.**

*'Inspiring. Made it feel possible to move forward, even if it is slowly'
'I think this is an excellent way to go forward because it is impossible to know exactly
how service users and carers feel'*
comments from conference evaluation

Ideas about social work education

On each of the conference days, participants divided into small groups to talk about social work education. There were also opportunities to comment on this topic on a 'graffiti wall', by audio cassette and on video camera.

Trigger questions for this session had been sent in advance to everyone attending the conferences, giving people opportunity to think about them. Here are the trigger questions:

In 5 years time what differences would you like to see in social workers?

What would you like to influence in social work education?

Thinking about your own experience with social workers - what are the positives and the not so good ways they operate?

Has the drama raised anything for you?

How should social workers work with carers?

If you had a magic wand, what instant changes would you like to see in the way social workers work with service users and carers?

If you were in charge of a social work course, how would you include the views of service users and carers?

How should social workers work with service users?

What differences would you like to see in new social workers?

Notes taken during the small group discussions and the written and recorded comments on the graffiti wall and audio and video tape provide a record of people's views. The main themes reflecting these views are set out here:

Communication

Real listening is what is wanted; as someone put it, "an ability to put her foot in my world." The importance of telling your story and being listened to in that process was underlined. "We're all human beings so if you are getting told someone's story, someone like me, they've got to listen." Social worker students were encouraged to start with the person as an individual – to find out their views and needs, without prejudgement.

Basic courtesy featured quite extensively. Being on time for appointments, returning phone calls, giving sufficient time for meetings, all these things added up to demonstrate a respectful attitude to people who use social work services and their carers.

How do social workers talk to people? One group noted, "**we** (service users and carers) have to tune into **their** (social workers) language and the way they speak, for example the word *collaboratively*." Overcomplicated language and jargon set up a massive barrier. Plain English is needed not only for the benefit of clearer communication, but also to shift some of the power attached to the social work role.

A clear explanation of the role of the social worker and the limits of that role is needed. Quite a few people felt that there were assumptions made that this was known already, and yet it wasn't. Alongside this was a call for realistic and honest accounts of what could be achieved. When things go wrong, acknowledge the fact and take action. "In helping someone, if it is outwith your means, tell them rather than (making) false promises, as people know."

Increasing understanding and awareness

There was discussion about how social work students might gain 'real life' experience to deepen their knowledge of the issues facing service users and carers. People felt it was crucial to look at the opportunities students have to experience aspects of people's lives **alongside** them. Video diaries made by service users and carers was one suggestion. There was a further suggestion: "There is no short cut to experiencing the issues – live with people to understand their lives." There were views on the type of placements students could benefit from too and a particular value set on residential placements which links with the feelings expressed here.

People felt that social work students would benefit from a greater understanding of disabilities, especially to understand the integration of disabilities. "They need to show us they understand we have different disabilities." A greater understanding of cultural differences was also highlighted.

Organisational issues

Social work students need to understand the system and to build up wider networks to benefit the people they are working with. Working together with other professions and sharing information was seen as beneficial. However people pointed out how messy structures in social work can lead to complications. Assessments may get done by people who don't really know the details – accurate recording is very important.

One group encouraged us to applaud times when things go well. When there is continuity in social workers, for example, this is appreciated as a good experience.

Making changes

It was appreciated that these conferences were a good start in actively approaching service users and carers to become involved in social work education. There was interest and enthusiasm in being involved in many aspects of university programmes.

By giving personal stories and testimonies, using drama or video, giving lectures or doing presentations, people could imagine that they could be involved in the classroom. In this way, they would be sharing knowledge and help students, staff and employers understand something about their lives.

Service users and carers felt they could be involved in the selection of students too, having a say on the selection criteria as well as the interview process itself.

There was considerable agreement that residential placements are of particular importance. People also recommended organising placements where social workers are not often in employment, for example in schools. This was linked with the opportunity for closer interprofessional working.

Finally there was a call for more investment given to the qualified social workers in the workforce and value given to their role.

"it was very good to have only a short time as participants got straight to the point, past the anecdotal stage"

"there was not enough time, but I felt the group discussions went well and were of paramount importance"

comments from conference evaluation

Ideas about national influence on social work education

Participants divided into small groups to discuss ways of influencing social work education on a national level. What would be the most effective way service users and carers could influence social work education? And what would be needed to make this happen?

The following is a **summary of ideas** from the two conference days:

Combining a range of methods for networking suits different people's circumstances:

Access to a website, providing a safe forum to chat and for information exchange - this needs a moderator

Use of email

Use of video conferencing

Face to face meetings centrally (in Edinburgh?) and in local groups linked with university social work programmes

Production of a newsletter/magazine/journal

but don't assume we all have or like computers!

and we have concerns about distance and access to internet in remote areas

We can reach out to service users and carers to be involved in a network through:

Contacting national organisations

Using existing networks and their newsletters

Building on local links through the 8 university social work programmes

Contacting voluntary organisations in local areas

Using networks that participants at the conferences have

Using word of mouth

Advertising information in GP surgeries and libraries

Asking social workers, health visitors, community nurses to inform their clients about the network

Using professional networks to inform them about developments

Contacting groups working with particular groups of people e.g. mental health, dementia, learning disability, young people in care

What about Highlands and Islands and the Borders, which don't necessarily link with the university social work programmes?

We do have concerns about costs:

Who is going to fund this network? Will the Institute reinforce their commitment by giving money? Will the Scottish Executive?

Consultancy fees, expenses, phone bills, stationery, refreshments, care costs all need to be covered

Could the network retain its own budget?

There are new ideas and different ways of working to save costs, such as the new Economics Foundation and through Timebanks. Further details can be found on the internet.

The conference fees and expenses have been administered through the university finance systems and in common with the experience reported by the Social Care Institute for Excellence in their Resource Guide (2004), 'Involving Service Users and Carers in Social Work Education', there have been difficulties in the prompt and flexible payment of service users and carers. One organisation was discouraged from attending the conference at all by the financial claim method adopted. Solutions to this complex aspect of service user and carer involvement will need to be found at a national level as well as at an organisational level, in order that the principle of fair payment for time and effort may be observed.

We need to be inclusive:

We need to make efforts to widen participation (for harder to reach people)

We need accessible information to send out to those who are interested in getting involved

We need to use creative ways to include people e.g. children and young people – and have to listen to how these groups want to meet

We need to ensure diverse experiences are included e.g. age/gender/disability/sexuality

We need to include potential service users and carers - what would they expect?

We need to commission research to inform each client group and explore their views on how they want to be involved

Who will make this happen?

What will be the sanctions for universities if it doesn't happen - fines?

A coordinator is needed - a person with experience of being a carer or service user

What would be involved as a member and what support would be offered?

Create a membership list

Based on what service users and carers are saying, job description and tasks should be developed, including definitions of service users and carers, valuing the differences in their roles

Build in peer support e.g. two people from each organisation

Build in flexible attendance patterns taken account of different people's needs

Agree frequency of meetings e.g. 2 or 3 times yearly meetings

One member of the network must be on the Institute Stakeholder Group to ensure influence

Training could be available where required:

For service users and carers and by service users and carers to meet different needs e.g. IT training

Why meet?

To share knowledge, information, good practice as well as experience

To influence universities and national institute

To mark significant progress

To link with other professions and areas too e.g. Social Care, Further Education, Occupational Therapy

To develop models of practice across different universities i.e. selection, quality assurance

To influence both at a local and national level

What next?

We need to take forward the ideas given at these conferences by arranging a day for interested service users and carers - with a specific focus and clear outcomes so that people can see results

Next steps

The conferences were an exciting first step in working out how service users and carers might influence social work education in Scotland on a national level. They generated a lot of enthusiasm and interest amongst those who took part and encouraged a sharing of the experiences so far in terms of the varying degrees of contact with Scottish social work programmes, as well as hearing about the work being done through the Open University.

The Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education expressed its commitment to service user and carer involvement and is keen to take forward this particular initiative for 'a national group of influence' together with service users and carers. They have made proposals in response to the conference which follow this conference report.

We will circulate this report and will build up a contact list of people who are interested in being involved in further work. In this way, we hope the momentum will continue so that we can move to the next step in the involvement of service users and carers in social work education across Scotland.

"loads of useful ideas"

"all groups seemed to have similar answers and advice"

"not convinced it will happen on the scale talked about"

comments from conference evaluation

Involvement of Service Users and Carers

Project Management Committee

Wendy Ager, Development Worker, University of Dundee

John Dow, Service User/Carer Consultant

Iain Ferguson, University of Stirling

Maggie Gee, Project Manager, University of Dundee

Mo Mcphail, Open University

Norma McSloy, Service User/Carer Consultant

Conference Evaluation Sheet

Involving service users and carers in social work education is a process in which we are all learning. To assist in that process, it would be really helpful if you could complete the following brief evaluation sheet and hand it in before leaving. Replies are completely anonymous!

36 evaluation sheets were completed over the two days

1. In your opinion, how successful was the day as a first step in increasing the involvement of users and carers in social work education?

Very successful 18 successful 12 neither successful nor unsuccessful 3 unsuccessful very unsuccessful 2 no response 1

Comments:

It was a start of better things to come

Hopefully the momentum will continue

An excellent start to a complex challenging process

Great first step – short of time, but a day would have been too long

But only if built on!

There isn't any funding yet, so will it happen?

I have been very encouraged by today's conference and am hopeful of successful involvement of service users

Try not to reinvent the wheel – use existing local/national networks of service user organisations

Interesting insight as my previous involvement has been professionally through education

The day wasn't too long

2. This question for carers and service users only: To what extent did you feel your views were listened to at this conference?

Very much 19 quite a lot 8 enough 2 not a lot not at all no response 7

Comments:

I was given a chance to view my opinions

It was a good day. I felt I was on the same level as everyone else.

But don't know that we would be listened to in a 'real' situation

Considering the pace of today's conference, I feel every effort was made to ensure everyone was given the opportunity to air their feelings/thoughts

Very much – time will tell what influence these views will change social work education

Because I refer to profound things, I don't expect much feedback

3. Which conference did you attend (please tick):

- Glasgow 17
- Perth 19

4. **Did you attend as a** a) a service user 12 b) a carer 12 c) social work academic 6 d) other 5 no response 1

5. How helpful did you find the pre-conference information? (please underline)

Very helpful 13 helpful 19 neither helpful nor unhelpful 2 unhelpful
very unhelpful 1 no response 1

Comments:

I did not have any

As someone inviting service users in our local network to attend, I was concerned in advance about the complications of the payment. This was clarified as soon as we arrived. Thank you.

I tend to focus more on the day

It would have been better if I could have received the information before the day

Map was excellent

Too little

6. How helpful did you find the introductory sessions? (introduction to day/involving users and carers in social work education – Iain Ferguson/Linda Walker)

Very helpful 18 helpful 17 neither helpful nor unhelpful unhelpful
very unhelpful no response 1

Comments:

Provided a clear outline

Very interesting to hear what is happening

Linda spoke at too high a level and used jargon. A lot of what she said went over our heads

Well presented and interesting and informative. Clearly communicated.

The day was on a tight timetable – longer intros would have been better

L Walker – too lengthy

7. How helpful did you find the drama group presentation as a way of raising the issues about user/carer involvement? (please underline)

Very helpful 23 helpful 12 neither helpful nor unhelpful 1 unhelpful
very unhelpful

Comments:

It was so well done and I would think very much showed how it really is

The play was very good and highlighted some of the main problems

I thought the youngsters were brilliant! I feel it was good/positive involvement of young people

Brought home the plight of the user

"Well done. Need this to go to heads of department at primary and secondary schools."

Unfortunately I couldn't hear all of the presentation

Nice touch

Presentation was very entertaining and informative

This was a wonderful focus which brought the purpose of the workshop to life

Brilliant and very emotional

People can relate more to words spoken or acted out

This was excellent

8. How helpful did you find the first small group discussion exercise, and feedback tools like the graffiti wall, as a way of raising the issues about user/carer involvement? (please underline)

Very helpful 24 helpful 8 neither helpful nor unhelpful 2 unhelpful
very unhelpful no response 2

Comments:

Not just by being given the opportunity to talk, but other members of the group and their experiences

More time would have been helpful. It took time for some of us to feel confident to speak.

Interesting listening to other people's views and ideas now to take things forward.

Too short

Enjoyed involvement

Met some interesting people and heard lots of interesting stories and views

There was not enough time to utilise the above, but I felt the group discussions went well and were of paramount importance

The group was very lively and a lot of useful comments came out

There is a lot of expertise out there. People very clear on what is not happening

It was very good to have only a short time as participants got straight to the point, past the anecdotal phase

Lots of similar points

9. How helpful did you find the 'Seeing Change Happen' Session, where service users and carers talked about their experience of involvement? (please underline)

Very helpful 14 helpful 19 neither helpful nor unhelpful unhelpful
very unhelpful 2 no response 1

Comments:

But too long and tiring x2

I also do this and to hear other people's experiences made mine feel stronger

Wanted to hear concrete examples of what changes had taken place

Inspiring. Made it feel possible to move forward even if it is slowly.

I think this is an excellent way to go forward because it is impossible to know exactly how service users and carers feel.

Would have been better if each speaker had more time

It was good to hear of positive involvement of service users down south

England benefiting from funding which is passed on to service users and carers. Shows where action is required by SIESWE

1st and 3rd speakers were too long

Inspirational

10. How helpful did you find the final small group discussion session on 'Planning a Scotland-wide service user and carer network?' (please underline)

Very helpful 16 helpful 15 neither helpful nor unhelpful 3 unhelpful
very unhelpful 1 no response 1

Comments:

As this would help the work reach its ultimate goal

Not enough time x4

Good to hear constructive opinions

Again, not convinced it will happen on the scale talked about

Lots came out of this

Loads of useful ideas

Lots of ideas – definitely no wish to have another talking shop but real beneficial results

There seemed to be too many individual agendas and a lack of focus at times

Once again, all groups seemed to have similar answers/advice

11. How would you rate the overall organisation and administration of the day? (for example, registration, lunch, building layout, room sizes, etc)? (please underline)

Very good 30 good 5 adequate not good poor no response 1

Comments:

Would recommend the day to my friends

Well refreshed and time-managed

Could have done with a whole day

It was a great venue which added to the experience (Glasgow)

Not enough to eat especially at tea break

Water/cold drinks at coffee break would be good

A very good day

12. Overall how helpful was the day in increasing your understanding of issues relating to carer and user involvement in social work?

Very helpful 18 helpful 15 neither helpful nor unhelpful 1 unhelpful
very unhelpful no response 2

Comments:

Another side to the story!

It helped me to think about practical steps to increase service user and carer involvement, to keep trying to encourage colleagues to be involved, to meet eloquent people who have made great advances already and to be re-energised. Thank you.

All down to funding to facilitate

Hope they get the money to do it and that new social workers will benefit from user/carer input to their training

It was good learning by other people's experiences

I have a better understanding of the frustrations of other users

Excellent overall – good inputs and participation from everyone

Section 3: Ideas and Proposals from the Institute

Proposal for a Service User and Carer National Influence Group

After the conferences, we took the key conference messages (outlined earlier in the conference document) and developed a proposal that aims to address them. The table at Appendix 1 shows how these key messages have been used to develop the proposal.

The diagram shown in Appendix 2 provides a model of how a National Influence Group of service users and carers might operate within Scotland. The Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (the Institute) proposes to host and fund a short term working group of interested service users and carers to come together to develop the parameters and agenda for a National Influence Group. This would require this group, alongside the Institute, to look at a range of thorny issues in relation to getting a National Influence Group established. Appendix 3 shows the issues that this short term working group would need to consider.

Grassroots network

This group of people would consist of existing local service user and carer groups who work with universities across Scotland, national service user and carer organisations and other interested individuals. Some of these groups are well developed whilst others are at an embryonic stage. It is not envisaged that this group would meet together but rather they would together form a network of voices whose views could be represented through the National Influence Group.

National Influence Group

This group would have service user and carer representation drawn from the grassroots network. The short term working group would consider who should be a member of this group – perhaps seeking people interested in the development of social work education with the time commitment, willingness and skills to work in this capacity. The working group would need to consider what role it wanted the National Influence Group and grassroots network to have in social work education. The role would depend on a range of factors such as resources, available networks, access to social work programmes and wider policy groups. It would be the task of the short term working group to consider these issues.

The Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (the Institute) is committed to support the work of the group in relation to all these areas.

Communication Link

It is extremely important that the people involved in the National Influence Group can communicate easily and effectively with the grassroots network and vice versa.

The Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (the Institute) is committed to support this link through their web based intranet, Xchange. This will allow individuals within the whole network at a local and national level to talk to each other on line.

Additionally, it is recognised that not everyone has access to or wants to use a computer so there will need to be other ways to help people know what is going on and be able to contribute to discussion and debate. These ways might be through a newsletter, regular updates/information sent through the post, local meetings etc. It would be the task of the short term working group to consider these issues.

Final comment

The conferences were an exciting first step in working out how service users and carers might influence social work education in Scotland on a national level. They generated a lot of enthusiasm and interest amongst those who took part and encouraged a sharing of the experiences so far in terms of the varying degrees of contact with Scottish social work programmes, as well as hearing about the work being done through the Open University. We hope that the views of users and carers gathered at the conferences will be taken forward.

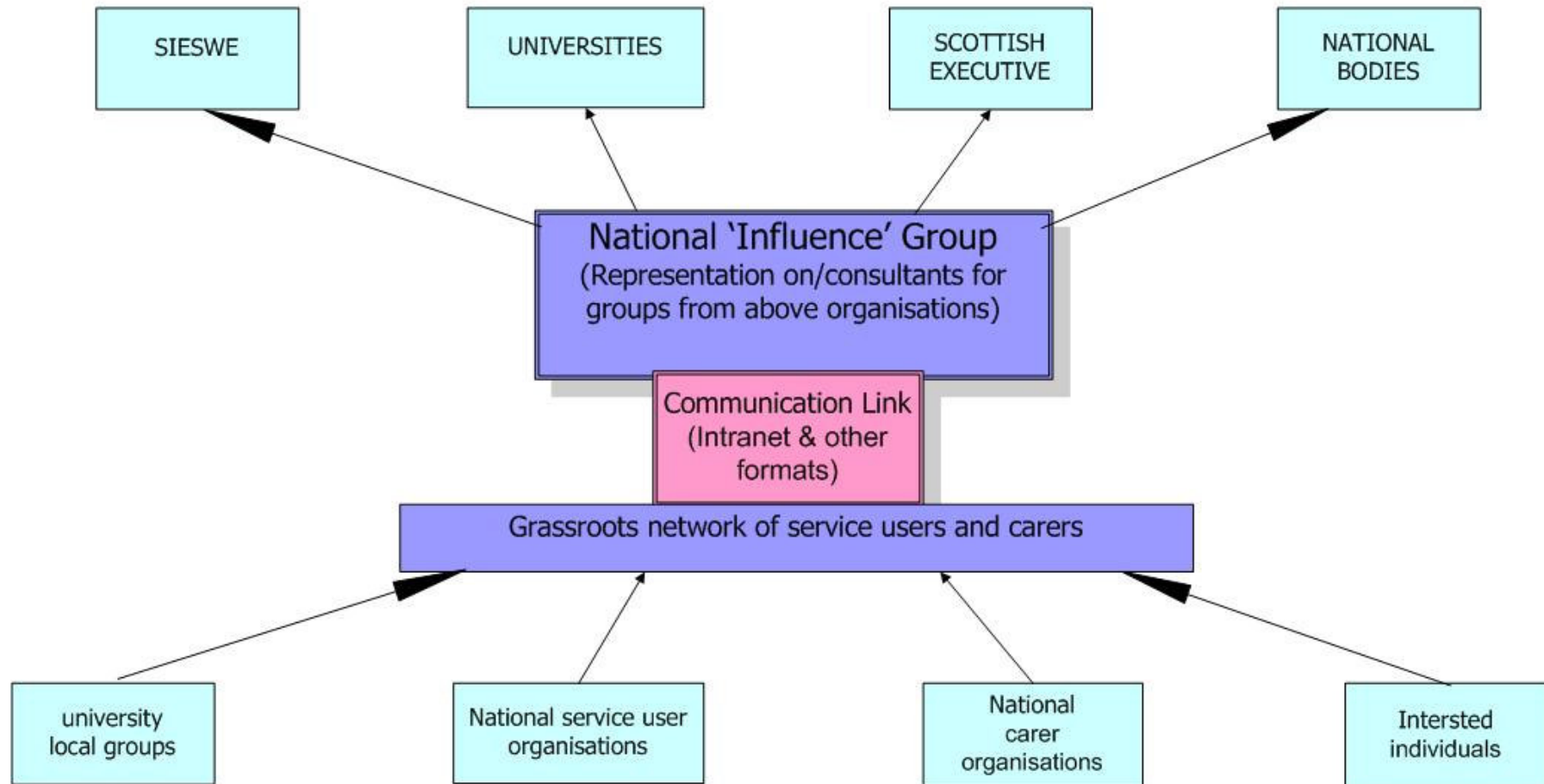
Mapping of key conference messages to proposal

KEY CONFERENCE MESSAGE	PROPOSAL ACTION POINT / OUTCOME
<p>There is great enthusiasm from service users and carers to be involved in social work education.</p>	<p>The proposal aims to enable service users and carers to get involved in social work education at a local level and/or at a national level. It aims to establish a structure that will be supportive and ensure good communication between service users and carers as well as between users and carers and others involved in social work programmes. The proposal aims to create a national group, with members that can participate on committees and other groups working on improving social work education. These representative members will be informed by the views of the grassroots network of other user and carer participants.</p>
<p>There are a wide variety of ways of increasing the involvement of service users and carers.</p>	<p>The proposal for a working group gives us the opportunity to develop clear ideas about how service users and carers want to be involved, where they want to be involved and what they want their involvement to achieve. The working group will need to work closely with staff who deliver social work programmes in order to reach agreed conclusions about these matters.</p>
<p>The initiative to develop a national network was appreciated by those attending.</p>	<p>The proposal takes forward the idea of a national network by establishing a working group of service users and carers who can give detailed consideration to some of the many issues</p>

	<p>raised at the conference and produce proposals on what would be needed to “make it happen”.</p>
<p>There was a strong feeling that the development of a national network must be linked to sustainable funding.</p>	<p>The proposal to establish a working group gives us an opportunity to firm up our ideas about where funding could come from, what funding would be needed for and how much money this idea of a National Influence Group and network would cost. Once these matters are clearer, we will be able to present constructive ideas about funding issues. We also need to consider the practicalities of making payments to service users and carers. These are critical issues that we need to have well thought out plans for. Appendix 6 shows how others have begun to address this issue.</p>
<p>Involving service users and carers at a national level can be achieved through the evolving university networks as well as reaching out through existing user and carer networks and organisations.</p>	<p>It is not intended that the proposed National Influence Group will replace activities that are already taking place at local level between universities and service user and carer groups. The national group will give user and carer representatives the opportunity to influence social work education at a national, more strategic level.</p>
<p>Service user and carer involvement in social work education has implications for everyone involved. For service users and carers ‘to take centre stage’, universities need to listen and respond creatively and most importantly to learn to share power to let real service user and carer involvement begin to happen</p>	<p>The proposal for a working group gives us the opportunity to develop clear ideas about how service users and carers want to be involved, where they want to be involved and what they want their involvement to achieve. The working group will need to work closely with staff who deliver social work programmes in order to reach agreed conclusions about these matters.</p>

<p>Teaching skills in 'real listening' should be a priority for social work education; as someone put it, demonstrating "an ability to put her foot in my world"</p>	<p>One of the tasks of the proposed short-term working group is to provide advice directly from service users and carers on the best ways to make sure these views are heard.</p>
<p>Clear communication using plain English and avoiding university jargon is very important for service users and carers. Presentations, meetings and all information should be easy to read and clearly understandable</p>	<p>One of the tasks of the proposed short-term working group is to provide advice on the best ways to make sure these views are heard.</p>
<p>Ideas about how students could deepen their knowledge of issues facing service users and carers were suggested, including access to video diaries made by service users and carers; virtual learning; live-in social workers and students; and an emphasis on the value of residential practice learning opportunities</p>	<p>One of the tasks of the proposed short-term working group is to provide advice on ways to get the messages of service users and carers across to students.</p>

Service User and Carer National 'Influence' Group Proposal





Appendices

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