

## LIVED EXPERIENCE IN STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

It has widely become best practice when embedding a lived experience model to adopt an organisational wide approach and not just as part of front-line services but integrated into leadership. This has witnessed an increase of lived experience leadership roles and creation of specialist boards and panels to ensure lived experience is represented at all levels of an organisation.

Many Organisations have achieved this by embedding Lived Experience into their governance and Strategic Leadership by adapting one or more of the below:

- Creating Lived Experience Trustee roles
- Setting up Lived Experience Panels or Advisory Groups
- Establishing fully functioning Shadow Boards

Deciding what is the right approach for your organisation will depend on many variables such as: organisation size, the organisational need, available resources and what you want to achieve.

### Lived Experience Trustee Roles

Trustees have independent control over, and legal responsibility for, a charity's management and administration. A trustee role is generally unpaid and requires committing your time to supporting the vision and mission of the organisation.

Trustees have a legal duty for governance for full guidance on trusteeship visit [The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do - GOV.UK](#)

Many organisations seek trustees with a particular skillset to support their charities goals, Lived Experience Trustees are therefore often sought for their direct experience of the services provided by the organisation.

#### ***Benefits***

- Insight into the needs and challenges of service users that are represented at board level.
- New perspectives and voices of experience that can bring reality to board discussions and ensure better decision making.
- Opportunities for people to learn, grow and develop their knowledge and experience in leadership roles.

### Lived Experience Advisory Panels

Advisory Panels are often set up to provide insight and understanding of the issues faced by services users and are made up of a group of diverse representatives. Advisory Panels do not hold decision making powers but act more like consultants that are utilised to gather first hand insight into the experiences of service users, such as; barriers, challenges and effectiveness of provision using their

expertise of being a service user. Panel members are normally not involved in the day to day running or service delivery of the organisation and predominately made up of volunteers.

### ***Benefits***

- Offer real world perspectives on challenges or new services
- Provides insight and knowledge that may not be available to the Board
- Enables organisations to stay up to date with emerging issues
- Can be utilised to co-design and co-evaluate services

## **Shadow Boards**

Shadow boards mainly function like Advisory Panels but with a wider focus that includes reviewing not just the services of the organisation but the internal management and operating procedures. Shadow Board members are therefore predominately made up of existing employees from across the organisation rather than service users, but many may also have lived experience as a past service user. Shadow Boards play a wider role than advisory panels and can have a key role in driving strategic change, innovation and representing the voice of employees.

### ***Benefits***

- Can create a culture of inclusivity and collaboration across different levels and organisational functions.
- Shadow Boards can bridge the gap between front line services and Organisational Leadership Boards.
- Provides development opportunities for employees to participate in leadership functions.

## **Choosing the right fit for your organisation**

All three of the above can provide valuable insight for Senior Leaders, choosing the right option for your organisation will depend on your goal and available resources. It is important to consider:

- The level of commitment required to set up and facilitate ensuring they are not tokenistic but have a defined purpose, goal and terms of reference.
- Recruitment and retention of members if choosing groups of members.
- Training and support required for members to participate fully.