

CHARTING OUR INVOLVEMENT



photo by Sarah Kelman

Turning Point Scotland's commitment
to the Charter For Involvement

HOW DO TURNING POINT SCOTLAND SERVICES ENSURE THEY ADHERE TO THE STATEMENTS IN THE CHARTER?

Four times a year, the Turning Point Scotland managers who lead services that support people with learning disabilities, meet together at the Learning Disability Forum or LDF. This meeting is a platform for these managers to share good practice, troubleshoot issues and learn from each other in an effort to continually improve what we do. It is also a chance for representatives from our inclusion group, TPS Connects, to engage with managers and share topics from their meetings.

Each year, we report on the key achievements of the LDF and how this has impacted on the lives of the people we support. As Turning Point Scotland has again signed the Charter for Involvement, we thought for this year, it would be prudent to measure our position against each of the 12 statements in the charter. This report is intended to detail how Turning Point Scotland's services ensure each of the statements are met in every location we operate from.

FOR STATEMENT 1: 'WE MUST BE AT THE HEART OF ANY PLANS ABOUT OUR LIVES'

At Turning Point Scotland we firmly believe that people are experts in their own lives; this is not just rhetoric but is our lived experience. We embrace the ethos of person centredness at every level of the organisation and we widely use Person Centred tools like Essential Lifestyle plans and PATH's to thoughtfully plan a person's outcomes and ensure support is targeted appropriately.

We will always involve the person in decisions about their lives; this is what we mean when we say we are a person centred organisation. Each person will have an individual support plan which will promote choice and maximises the individual's involvement and responsibilities. Plans are regularly reviewed to make sure they remain a relevant, living document that ensures the person lives the life they choose; we check this is how supports are delivered through our service reviews and service audits.

FOR STATEMENT 2: 'WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE OUR LIVES INDEPENDENTLY'

At TPS, we pride ourselves in having a 'can-do' approach to our work and we try hard to ensure we get the most out of each person's potential. Support is designed to be flexible so it can adapt as the person grows or their needs change.

Being person centred is not just about the easy decisions and sometimes to maximise the persons potential and to support them to live the life they choose, you need to think differently and creatively. This can sometimes bring with it an element of risk and when this is a possibility, we will carefully ensure the risk is managed properly. When there is a chance of risk we undertake a risk assessment process which is used to find out how a person can do a particular thing safely – not to identify why a person shouldn't be doing the things they want to do.

We have embraced the use of new technology and have seen the real benefits brought in enabling people to be more independent. Our staff will be there to provide guidance whenever this is required or becomes necessary and if we can't provide the support directly, we will find the right person who can.

FOR STATEMENT 3: 'WE MUST BE INVOLVED IN OUR COMMUNITIES'

Turning Point Scotland believe that people are an integral part of the communities they live in – we call this 'Citizenship'. When the 5 elements of Citizenship (rights, responsibilities, roles, relationships and resources) are present, it delivers a sense of belonging that comes from the person being at the heart of their community. The people we support currently access local resources such as:-

- Places of worship such as churches, synagogues and mosques
- Voluntary and paid work in charity shops, pet rescue centres, boatyards, a variety of workshops and garden centres
- Further Educational at College
- Undertaking vocational qualifications such as SVQ
- Sport and leisure activities including Zumba, dance classes, bowling, football, cinema, pubs and clubs.
- Afterschool Care Groups.
- Local Government consultations e.g. Community Planning, strategic work groups
- National consultations with the Scottish Government or National Involvement Network
- Supported employment through our own 'Rosies' social enterprises
- Local 'Get Connected' meetings where the people we support can exchange their knowledge of what is available locally. We will also invite guest speakers from Community Police, advocacy or other networking groups to keep people up to date on wider issues.

FOR STATEMENT 4:

'WE MUST BE ABLE TO SPEAK ABOUT HOW OUR SUPPORT IS WORKING FOR US AND WHAT WOULD BE BETTER'

The most direct way we make sure people are able to speak up about the support they receive is by regularly reviewing a person's support or outcome plan throughout the year. This is done formally at least twice a year with the person or their chosen representative or family member central to all planning; review meetings can involve families, health or social work staff. Less formally, people can speak up at regular house and team meetings and for day to day issues, they can speak to any of their team or their keyworker; this ensures we are responsive, flexible and provide people with the best support we can.

Other ways we ensure the people we support can speak out about their support is through their involvement in risk management plans, staff appraisals, Care Inspectorate questionnaires, recruitment processes and delivering training. We also work closely with local advocacy groups to ensure people who need it have access to independent representation. When all else fails, we have a complaints procedure which is readily available and we will also ensure the people we support have information about the complaints processes available through the Care Inspectorate and the local authority.

FOR STATEMENT 5:

'WE WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN CHOOSING THE PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT US'

At Turning Point Scotland, we believe the people we support have the right to be involved in choosing who supports them. Each of our services has developed a range of approaches that ensure this happens and starts with the recruitment process itself. Where required, we work with the person to agree the wording of the advert and we will adapt the person specification to make sure the new member of staff will have the skills and attributes they require.

Where we can, people will recruit or select their own staff team. Some people are confident and capable of being on the interview panel and we provide training to bolster their confidence and develop their knowledge in this key process. Some people may not or cannot be directly involved in interviewing but we capture their preferences ahead of time to ensure there are questions or exercises in the interview that fully address the points the person has highlighted. Responses are fed back to the person before any decision on appointment is made.

Some of our services will look to employ new staff through information events and recruitment open days; lots of the people we support have been involved in welcoming candidates and sharing their perspective of the support we provide.

For day to day support, we will ensure each person is given the option to have a key worker and a say in who that key worker should be. Our aim is for each person to be able to choose which staff support them – this means they could have different staff for different activities. We will endeavour to be flexible enough to change the make-up of the person's support team as the person's needs and interests change and develop.

FOR STATEMENT 6:

'WE WANT TO GIVE INFORMATION AND TRAINING TO STAFF AT ALL LEVELS'

Our experience tells us that we have a great deal to learn from the people we provide support to. This has motivated us to involve people in a range of ways to educate, train and inform our staff, our board and our stakeholders as often as possible.

We have invited the people we support to speak at board meetings, to lead on informing staff about the Charter for involvement and training staff on topics such as Prader-willi Syndrome and 'Talking Mats'. We have involved people in staff induction programmes and we ensure that people are involved in planning stakeholder events, contributing to the programme as well as facilitating workshops and groups.

FOR STATEMENT 7:

'WE WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN WRITING
POLICIES THAT AFFECT US AND MAKING
THEM EASIER TO UNDERSTAND'

This is an area of our work that our inclusion group, TPS Connects, takes a prominent role in. Through TPS Connects, the people we support have been involved in reviewing some of our organisational policies and redrafting these into easy read documents. This has not happened for all policies but we have focused attention on those that directly affect the people we support. We have also supported people to attend and contribute to Scottish and Local Government initiatives and we have been instrumental in ensuring that people are involved in local and national consultation events.

Many of the people we support were heavily involved in writing the Charter itself and others have played a leading role in developing Turning Point Scotland's Commitment to Citizenship and local connects groups like the Ayrshire Involvement network.

FOR STATEMENT 8: 'WE WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN DECISIONS MADE BY THE ORGANISATIONS THAT PLAN AND RUN OUR SUPPORT'

We have a great deal to learn from the people we support and their opinions and experiences matter and make an invaluable contribution to organisational decision making. Much of what we learn comes from local engagement and all of our services have regular stakeholder meetings or local connect groups; this is also where many of the people we support have developed the confidence they need to join larger, sometimes national speak up groups like the National Involvement Network.

The people we support are pivotal in developing the agenda for any local forums and on top of that, services will also send out annual questionnaires and will hold annual stakeholder events to ensure all key stakeholders (people we support, their families, advocates etc) have the opportunity to have their voice heard.

More recently, the Learning Disability Forum, which is a group made up of Managers from TPS services that support people with learning disabilities, have invited representatives from the TPS Connects group to join as sitting members of this forum. This will ensure an easier flow of information between the people we support and the managers who have responsibility for service delivery.

Throughout the course of each year, the people we support engage with managers across the organisation from simple face to face meetings (we encourage the principal of management by walking about!) right through to making presentations at Board meetings; such open lines of communication are essential and are embedded in the ethos of our work.

FOR STATEMENT 9:

'WE WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN EVENTS RUN BY THE ORGANISATION THAT PLAN AND RUN OUR SUPPORT'

At TPS, we not only involve the people we support in events we run, we actively promote their involvement in planning and delivering in any such events. Our TPS Connects groups are run by committees made up of people we support. These committees run events from small, local gatherings to the large national conference we hold every two years. As well as being involved in planning, the people we support will deliver workshops, presentations and the social activities which have made the conference such an important part of the TPS calendar and our culture.

Local connects groups have been instrumental in planning and hosting stakeholder and consultation events across Scotland for local authorities, Health trusts and the Care Inspectorate, from leading on an NHS Strengthening the Commitment event to Christmas fayres and summer barbeques. Local groups have also organised fundraising efforts such as supermarket bag packing and a range of sponsored activities.

Every year, we promote Learning disability week and we consult with the people we support to ensure this week is a properly marked celebration of people's lives. In recent years, Learning Disability Week celebrations have included upwards of 60 people taking part in the West End festival parade, hosting galas, dances and a host of other 'get togethers'.

FOR STATEMENT 10: 'WE WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN 'SPEAKING-UP' GROUPS'

After TPS signed the Charter for Involvement the first time round, we explored how we could improve the involvement of people we support and this gave focus for the development of the TPS inclusion group 'TPS Connects'. This is now a well-established and energetic national group, which has its own committee made up of people we support from across the country. We have an Access and Inclusion Co-ordinator who helps organise and facilitate events and also ensures an effective flow of communication into and out of this active group.

All of our services support and encourage the people they support to attend the local and national events this vibrant and active group facilitates. TPS Connects also holds a biennial national conference and at the first TPS Connect conference, we held a workshop where we asked the people we support 'What makes a good Support Worker?' The responses were compiled in a document called 'Have Your Say' which comprehensively details the work ethic the people we support expect from our support staff. This is included as a part of the job pack sent to all new job applicants so people are aware of the standard TPS expects of its staff right from the earliest point of contact.

Across Scotland, our services host a variety of events that offer people the opportunity to speak up, these include:

- Holding local 'Get Connected' events which are a mix of information sharing and social activities.
- Hosting 'Get Together' social groups which are led and organised by the people we support.
- Annual Stakeholder events which involve the people we support, their families and loved ones as well as care managers, NHS staff, advocates etc.
- Easy Read Policy Group.
- Tenant meetings.
- Planning days.
- Development days.

FOR STATEMENT 11: 'WE WANT TO TAKE PART IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL CAMPAIGNS'

Across Scotland, the people we support have the opportunity to be involved in numerous national and local campaigns. People are actively supported to attend national forums such as the National Involvement Network, the Learning Disability Alliance Scotland, Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities, the Cross Party Group at the Scottish Government and the Support for Offenders with Learning Disabilities forum.

The people we support have been involved in consultations leading to changes in local service delivery, charges and health care provision, local health surveys and national initiatives such as Strengthening the Commitment and have lent support to campaigns driven by LDAS and others.

We have worked with others to support people to understand the process for national and local elections including both the Scottish and EU referenda and local managers will ensure any questionnaires and survey monkeys they receive are distributed to as many of the people we support as possible.

FOR STATEMENT 12:

'WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE FORMAL COMPLAINTS IF WE NEED TO'

When things don't go as planned, TPS have a comprehensive complaints procedure which is included in the 'Welcome Pack' each person receives as a part of their introduction to TPS; this is in an easy read format. Our complaints process ensures any complaint is investigated thoroughly and involves the person or their nominated representative throughout. Each complaint is formally concluded but if the person is not satisfied with the conclusion, there is a right of appeal and the person will be supported to do so if required. We will also ensure people know that they can raise any concern or complaint to the Care Inspectorate and/or the local authority and our staff will provide any support a person requires in order for a complaint to be submitted.

We believe the complaints process is an important safety net that ensures TPS gets it right for each person. Our person centred approach to support and our close involvement with advocates means that complaints are generally an infrequent last resort.

IN CONCLUSION

Whilst we are confident at both local and organisational level that we do as much as we can to involve the people we support, true to the spirit of the charter statements, we are not complacent enough to think we cannot still improve and so we remain alert and receptive to any suggestions or comments that will further enhance the lives of the people we support. If you have any such comments or suggestions, please contact us on info@turningpointscotland.com or call 0141 427 8200 and a member of our staff will direct your call to someone who can take your idea further.

