

Improving Together

working in partnership with
patients and communities



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Introduction

Ensuring that patients, families and communities have a voice in the way they receive healthcare is critical. In 2020, Solent NHS Trust refined and reframed their vision, values and strategy solidifying a commitment to working collaboratively with communities and patients, promoting co-production, person-centred care, and continuous improvement. Through this holistic approach, the Trust has strived to create a culture that not only addresses the current needs and priorities of our service users and communities, but also serves as a foundation for growth through continuous learning and advancement.

This report acknowledges the ongoing journey of Solent, highlighting a selection of approaches that have been adopted to thread meaningful service user involvement through all Trust activity. As a learning organisation, many of these examples have been evaluated or have been part of systematic improvement initiatives demonstrating Solent's commitment to continuously improving practices and enhancing the experiences and outcomes of service users.



Training, Facilitation and Mentoring

The Academy of Research and Improvement supports systemwide partners through the provision of training and support to involve service users in making positive change. Embodying the ethos of service user involvement, a wide range of the Academy's workshops and training programmes are co-designed and co-delivered with members of Side-by-Side who give a patient and public perspective to what the Academy does. Examples of this are:



Co-Production Programme: Co-designed and co-delivered with patients who have experience of working in partnership with services. The programme has supported eight teams to co-produce improvement – our patient partners have designed and delivered the training, and provide ongoing mentorship to teams.

QI Leader Programme: Provides experienced staff and patients with a comprehensive understanding of improvement approaches to enhance skills and confidence in improvement implementation. QI Leaders is a network that brings together individuals with a passion to improve services by leading and supporting others through QI activity. We have three patient representatives as QI leaders - Penny, one of our patient QI leaders received the Solent NHS Trust People Partnership Award 2023 for her involvement in the programme.



Participation Workshops: Side-by-Side members collaborate with the Academy team to deliver content and support teams attending a range of participation workshops (e.g., Experience Based Design, Co-Production, Working with Patients and People to improve services). Side-by-Side members ask challenging questions and provide a patient insight. They also offer encouragement and advice to teams around how they can engage with their own patients and service users.

Patient Review Panel

This year we introduced a patient review panel to promote patient and public involvement in clinical audit, service evaluation, quality improvement and research projects. Project authors share a summary of their methods, findings and future plans with the panel before a virtual session takes place. During the session, panel members ask questions, provide insights from their lived experience and make recommendations. Project authors receive a summary of the panel's feedback and are encouraged to implement improvements and feedback to the panel.

This panel initiative was recognised in the Clinical Audit Awareness Week 2023 and were awarded the HQIP national award for patient and public involvement.



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I found the panel really helpful, in terms of generally developing my own QI and patient participation skills for future projects and not just this particular evaluation that I am reflecting on and hoping to take forward.

Charlotte Gatehouse, Specialist Health Visitor for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health

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“

I value the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution, and to feel part of a motivated and effective team. I have enjoyed learning about the projects going on within the trust, and providing constructive feedback. These activities all help to embed the relevance of the patient perspective in delivering high quality healthcare

Sian Lloyds-Jones, Side-by-Side

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Involving patients and people in recruitment and interviews

A number of teams in Solent (for example, Academy of Research & Improvement, Learning Disabilities and Child and Family Services) involve patients as part of all their recruitment processes.

In a bid to share this across Solent, an Interview toolkit was co-designed with the voluntary organisation ReMinds and patient representatives . This includes methods, resources and [videos](#) to help others involve patients and service users in recruitment and interviews.

This has now been adopted by our People Services and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion leads who are integrating the toolkit into a new inclusive recruitment strategy. People Services will now support managers in recruiting staff for band 7 and above positions to involve service users in interviews.



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I think that we were able to give useful feedback from different perspectives, which helped with the decision making.

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It was helpful to have patient input because neither of us knew the applicant and we were seeing her with fresh eyes.

”

I think having us there also helped to put emphasis on the value that Solent gives to the patient voice, demonstrating action, not just words.

System working

Working across organisational boundaries in partnership with teams, organisation, systems and communities, has resulted in the use of a range of innovative approaches. Systemwide steps have been taken to place patient and communities at the strategic centre of improvement.

Portsea Better Health

The closure of a GP practice during the pandemic raised concerns among Portsea residents regarding access to primary care services. Utilising learning, tools and support from the Academy of Research and Improvement Co-Production programme, the Portsea Better Health Working Group was formed. Representatives from diverse backgrounds, including residents, campaigners, charities, and local organisations like the Portsea Pantry are working together to discuss barriers and gather public views through surveys. The group aims to present findings to the Primary Care Operating Committee, ensuring diverse voices are given an opportunity to shape local services.



Developing a care pathway between Macmillan Psycho-oncology and NHS Talking Therapies services

The services are collaborating through the Wessex Cancer Alliance Quality Improvement programme to improve the psychological support for people with cancer and are using Experience Based Co-Design to gain insights from patients and staff regarding the current care pathway. By identifying key areas for improvement the teams will co-design solutions that address the needs and experiences of both patients and staff.



Redesigning gardens and estates

The Staying Close (Portsmouth Social Care) and STaRT (Solent CAMHS,) services involve young people in care in the redesign of their garden and their rooms. Seeking ideas and discussing improvements with young people, the project aims to create a more personalised living space. Involving young people in tenant and estate agreements has led to their participation in team meetings, enabling them to share their lived experiences and contribute to addressing challenges and concerns relating to the estates.

Supporting Sandbox – collaboration between Portsmouth City Council, PUH and Solent NHS Trust

This project is an NIHR funded collaboration between Portsmouth City Council and Portsmouth Universities Hospital Trust which aims to support research in and with under-served communities. Three research topics have been identified by communities: Cultural understanding of faith-based needs and practices at a time of mourning, Understanding suicide risk (and potential supports) for local young people, and The challenges with access to respite care for families with children with Special Educational Needs. The Academy of Research and Improvement is facilitating research training and support for three community peer researchers from diverse areas in Portsmouth. Through creative research methods the project aims to enhance community participation in research.



FAIRER Oral Health and Research

The Academy of Research and Improvement have partnered with Communicare in Southampton to discover vulnerable older people's views on oral health and research. Together we are running a project to test approaches for accessible involvement. This will help us understand how research, improvement initiatives, and NHS services can avoid widening disparities by only engaging those who are easier to reach.



Creating a Community Peer Researchers Network

In partnership with the Young Foundation, we have recruited, trained and are building a network of community peer researchers to help us understand priorities for both research, and ideas of appropriate and accessible methods. To date, they have engaged with people in their communities across Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight and then met to feedback findings and co-produce the outcomes. The findings indicate that engaging people in research, creating a safe and comfortable space, and empowering individuals can lead to insightful and creative conversations, amplifying the positive impact and giving everyone a voice. What has been so successful is the groups' expertise in their own communities. A second cohort have been recruited and have been mentored by the first group, placing greater power in the hands of communities to shape, design and deliver research on the issues which matter to them.



PEER RESEARCH TRAINING

ANALYSIS SESSION

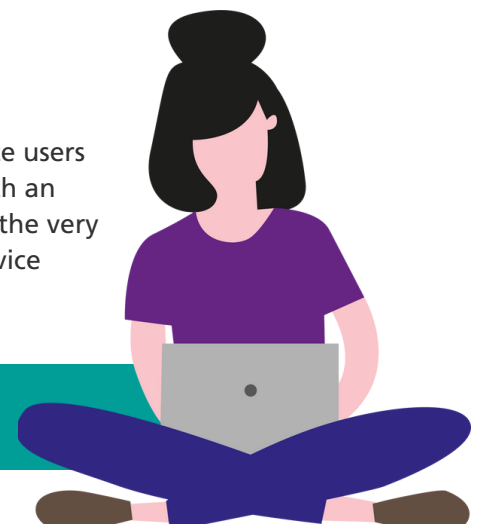


Peer Interviewers in rapid evaluation

Students from Christ the King College, Isle of Wight, are working with the Academy of Research and Improvement to bring a student perspective to an evaluation of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HIOW) ICS 350+ NHS Careers Programme. Peer interviewers will play a crucial role, providing valuable insight as we design evaluation methods and craft relevant questions to capture the experiences of their fellow students. The findings will be shared with the HIOW ICS 350+ programme team to help shape future initiatives and improve the overall effectiveness of the programme in meeting the needs and expectations of students.



“We were delighted when we were asked to be involved and how Jennifer came along to some of our regular events to chat to service users to help shape the project from the beginning. She didn’t come to us with an idea already in mind but was very much led by those she spoke to from the very start, so this is definitely a people-focused piece of research and our service users will be helping shape future services for others like them.”



Co-designing Improvements to Clinical Services

Child and Family Services

The Participation Team within Child and Family Services support teams and young people to work across and alongside the service line to improve them. This involves:



Youth Ambassadors are provided with the opportunities to shape services and wanted to help more young people get involved. They decided to co-design a youth training package, which included videos about the ways you can be involved and developed the onboarding forms and process. This work was presented during away days.

Young Inspectors join service leads on quality visits across our sites and feedback on our service quality.



Young Recruiters are involved throughout the recruitment process of new staff. The group of young recruiters co-developed training and resources to help young people to gain skills and confidence in being part of interviews.



Young Person's Mental Health Participation Groups

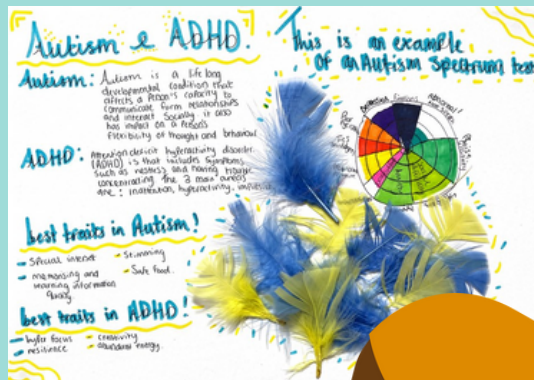
These groups are across Portsmouth and Southampton to improve our mental health services and together they have provided:

- feedback on a range of leaflets containing information, advice and support.
- feedback on CAMHS new care plan and assessment form and also questionnaires on neurodiversity.
- Ideas and helped create a poster promoting CAMHS new yoga therapy.

The Southampton CAMHS participation group have talked about what the young people would like to work on and achieve as part of participation activities. They told us what they felt was important to improve our mental health services and to raise awareness of mental health.

One goal chosen was to raise awareness around Autism and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). To do this, young people in the participation groups created posters.

During half term they held a poster making workshop, where they got creative to co-design the poster.



Fareham children's development centre

Children, young people and their families have been actively involved in co-designing a new centre. Through engagement with schools, youth groups and individuals with neurodiversity a broad range of ideas have been gathered. Common themes emerged, emphasising the need for a shared environment with quiet and comfortable areas, Wi-Fi and charging points, sensory areas, and access to food and drink. The developers are now incorporating these ideas into the centre design and will continue to work with service users who will use the space.

Jigsaw participation group

Dragon's Den funding supported the Jigsaw team to establish a young persons' forum to gather insights and feedback to improve services. Collaborating with Great Oaks School, a series of short, frequent meet ups have been organised to support the involvement of interested young people. The group are currently establishing ground rules, finalising a group name and determining an area for improvement focus.

Parent/therapist engagement in children's therapy services

A comprehensive evaluation involved a literature review, exploratory interviews, therapist and parent questionnaires. Co-produced recommendations emphasised; joint goal setting between parents and therapists, diverse parent preferences, and increased parent/therapist interactions. The co-produced recommendations are suggested at operational, organisational and system levels with the potential to enhance engagement, improve outcomes and reduce costs through reduction of waste.



Neurodiversity approach

Early support for young people with neurodiversity is key to helping them and their families develop crucial skills needed to live a happy, healthy, and successful life. For young people with ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder there are cases where young people don't meet diagnostic thresholds or experience long waiting times due to high demand. This can cause increased feelings of anxiety, isolation, and frustration within families. To improve this a partnership between clinicians, educators, parents and young people in Portsmouth came together to co-develop a training manual, behavioural tables, a profiling sheet, and a psychoeducational resource pack. This new approach was tested as a research project and the findings showed a significant increase in the wellbeing of the child from the teacher and parent view, but no significant increase in symptom management.

Information families received before their first therapy appointment

The Children's Therapies Team noticed that children and families coming to their first appointment were worried and did not know what to expect. They undertook the Academy QI Practitioner programme where they worked with service users and community groups (including Portsmouth Parent Voice) to learn more about what information families needed and how they would like to receive it. This has led to the co-creation of a series of videos to welcome families which contain information that is important to them.



‘The team were really welcoming and inclusive of my views and ideas and took the time to listen to my family's experiences, alongside the views of other parents and families across Solent. In sharing my honest experience of using the service, I was able to give the team insights and ideas about what was working well and how they could improve the journey for other families. Tracey Herald, Parent

Children with special needs

The Community Engagement Team provided support and connections with parents with children who have special needs. These connections have led to parents and their children being involved in improvement work across the child and family service lines. One example is the use of Slam Poetry, where parents of children with autism from ethnic minorities including asylum seekers shared their experiences and feelings.



Integrated Learning Disability Service

The service works alongside people with learning disabilities in many ways to co-deliver and continuously improve the service. This includes:

Learning Disability partnership board

As an integrated health and council service, the partnership board discuss and work together on projects which are important to people with learning disabilities in Portsmouth

Quality checkers

This service user led group visits organisations and services which someone with a learning disability might use, where they review the environment, talk to staff and look at communications to see how welcoming and accessible the service is. The group writes up a report which includes suggestions about how things could be improved and shares this with the service.

Recruitment group

Service users are involved throughout the recruitment of new staff, from job descriptions, interviewing and as part of induction. The group have developed resources and training to support people with learning disabilities being involved in interviews. The group were part of the co-design of a recruitment and interview toolkit and a video.

Inclusive communication group

The group support, review and make changes to service communication materials. They have worked with Solent's safeguarding, finance, sexual health and dental teams on their materials e.g. easy read version. Within their service they have also worked to improve communication throughout the complaints, comments and compliments process. e.g. easy read versions.

Volunteering

The service support a variety of volunteering roles which include administration, practicing of interviews and a role with community nursing. The expert by experience roles enables volunteers to develop and deliver training to staff and students on what it is like to have a learning disability, their personal experiences and challenges they face and ways which help them.



Voices Heard

People with learning disabilities can share their stories from past experiences, which is important as we hear, learn and remember how people should be supported and given choice over where they lived. Recently they shared their experiences from living in Coldeast Hospital, Fareham which closed in 1992. Their stories were turned into a film for staff to view and learn from.

Adult Services

Home Oxygen Incidents

To improve patient education and reduce oxygen misuse incidents, the team conducted focus groups and telephone interviews with patients. This helped the team understand patient knowledge and identify key themes. As a result, the service is co-designing a patient-held information folder with education materials on proper oxygen use to address patient knowledge gaps and provide clear guidance to enhance patient safety.

Discharge to assess project

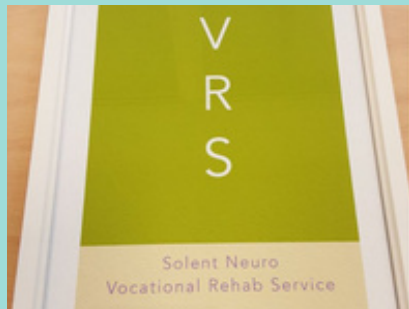
Collaborating with carers who provide support to service users helped identify several areas for improvement within some of our wards. Their valuable input resulted in numerous recommendations, many of which were implemented by the wards. The project worked with our patient safety partners to ensure that these changes were effectively made, further enhancing the quality of services.

Vocational rehabilitation programme

The Solent Vocational Rehabilitation Service identified that patients attending the service experienced common challenges; fatigue, low self-esteem, anxiety and cognitive challenges. Patient-led forums and feedback resulted in a co-designed 3-stream intervention programme. The new programme included a 6-week 'Building Skills for Work' group, workshops on endurance and attention, and tailored 1:1 interventions. The group and workshops optimise peer support, as a key component of the intervention. The 3-stream intervention programme has seen an improvement in patient experience and outcomes, and reduced waiting times.

Patient folder co-designed in stroke service

The service involved patients and carers in co-designing a new patient folder to improve rehabilitation engagement and self-management. Following a 'Have Your Say' event, a Health Education England Improvement grant facilitated the formation of a group comprising staff, patients and associated charities who collaborated to assess existing materials, leading to the development of an accessible folder. Following a successful pilot, the new folder was adopted across the service with positive feedback from patients.



Musculoskeletal, Podiatry and Pain Services

Co-design by ex-service users in the pain service

People with lived experience of the pain service, have become peer support workers within the pain management sessions. Working together with the peer support workers the service has co-designed, co-delivered and evaluated the pain management sessions. This has resulted in improvements in service users understanding of the service and importance of peer workers sharing practical self-management examples and instilling hope. The evaluation also emphasised the need to diversify the demographics of the peer support workers, which will be a focus in future recruitment.

Enhancing podiatry services

The service worked with community leads from racially minoritised communities to co-design workshops with two main objectives. Firstly, to increase the profile of the podiatry services, and secondly to create a platform for gathering valuable feedback to help reshape services around community priorities.

Waiting well in Musculoskeletal (MSK)

The MSK Team was supported to work with Solent volunteers to help improve the experience of patients waiting for their initial appointment. To help people to 'wait well' and keep in touch with the service, the volunteers phone to check in how they are and if their health needs have changed.

Primary Care

Solent GP Services

Solent GP services, through the Community Engagement team have worked with some of the communities in the postcode area SO14 to understand what needs to improve and how. The agreed recommendations are being put into action by the GP service.

Dental Services

Service user communication needs at Special Care Dental receptions

The reception team identified challenges with meeting people's communication needs when coming into clinic. The Learning Disability Liaison Dental Nurses had many ideas on how they could improve this but invested in understanding what patients' thoughts were and their concerns on communication. After informal discussions with service users, it became apparent that there was no need for an additional communication method from their perspective. This raised the question of whether reception staff training to improve confidence in effective communication was necessary. There is now a plan to involve patients in communication training for staff. Reaching out to patients and understanding their needs, saved the service time, money and resources by not creating a communication aid that wasn't needed.

Mental Health

Effectiveness of loss group in NHS Talking Therapies

Patient surveys and interviews identified that the IAPT loss group has proven effective in promoting therapeutic outcomes and fostering a sense of community among participants. It provides a supportive space for sharing grief and emotional experiences. However, the online format poses challenges to connection, such as lack of personal contact, difficulties reading cues and disrupted connection. To address these issues, a face-to-face group is now being offered.

Enhancing NHS Talking Therapies for Minority Ethnic Communities

Talking Therapies and the Community Engagement Team collaborated with communities to better meet the needs of minority ethnic communities in Portsmouth. Engaging with 108 individuals, a set of recommendations was agreed upon. As a result the service recruited two community workers, one dedicated to LGBTQ+ communities, and the other to ethnic minority communities. This initiative has led to increased self-referral to the service from minority ethnic communities.

Trust wide

Patient Safety Partners

Patient Safety Partners have been instrumental in establishing the new Patient Safety Incident Response Framework, policy and processes. The partners also have gathered feedback from service users for the Falls Review and Patients Safety Chats. These findings have provided recommendations for improvements.



Key Learning

By recognising and valuing the patient, service user and community expertise Solent NHS Trust developed insights and perspectives which enhance the planning, delivery and evaluation of the services that we offer.

Establishing and nurturing genuine partnerships with service users, treating them as equal partners, involving them in decision making and actively seeking their input to shape improvement has led to improved service design.

Providing training and support to service users and our communities which includes research and improvement methods, and ensuring they have access to ongoing mentorship and guidance has led to effective participation.

Embracing a culture of continuous improvement by regularly evaluating the impact of involvement activities, collecting feedback from service users and using this information to enhance future efforts has generated a mindset that fosters service change and adaptability, and on-going improvement.

