

## Frequently asked questions – service users and carers education and training seminars.

### Introduction

This document provides a summary of the common questions which delegates asked across our service user and carer education seminars delivered in 2014–15.

If you require any further information regarding any of the information contained within the document please contact us at: [education@hcpc-uk.org](mailto:education@hcpc-uk.org)

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## **Service user and carer representatives**

### **Q – Is there specific guidance about who our service users and carers should be?**

We do not provide specific guidance about who your service users and carers should be. We use 'service user' as a broad term to refer to the involvement of those who use or are affected by the services of professionals registered with us. We use 'carer', again as a broad term, to refer to someone who has looked after, or who currently looks after or provides support, to a family member, partner or friend. They might need support because of their age, illness, or because they have a disability.

The standard is generic across the 16 professions we regulate and as such, who service users and carers are will vary between and within each profession we regulate. It is therefore up to you as the education provider to consider who your service and carers are; we will want to see that you have considered and can justify the service users and carers you have chosen as the most appropriate and relevant to your programme.

In session one of the seminar we provided suggestions of where further information could be located. For example from your professional body, [Skills for Health](#), [Skills for Care](#), the [Higher Education Academy](#), [Social Care Institute of Excellence](#) and [Shaping Our Lives](#). More suggestions of organisations to contact can be found within the session or within our [Further information section of the standards of education and training guidance](#) available on our website.

### **Q – The definition of 'carer' does not seem to include foster carers. Are they covered by the definition?**

The definition of 'carer' is very broad and we do not provide any specific guidance about who your service users and carers should be. Should a foster carer have experience of some of the professions we regulate through their role, then it may be appropriate for them to be a service user and carer for your programme. As outlined above, we will want to be satisfied that you have considered and can justify the service users and carers you have chosen as the most relevant and appropriate to your programme.

### **Q – There are paid and unpaid carers. Does the definition of 'carer' limit our use to unpaid carers only?**

No, the definition of 'carer' is very broad and we do not provide any specific guidance about whether a carer is / is not remunerated for their role. As outlined above, we will want to be satisfied that you have considered and can justify the service users and carers you have chosen as the most relevant and appropriate to your programme.

### **Q – Can healthcare professionals be service users and carers?**

There is no restriction on healthcare professionals being a service user and carer. This could be because they have been the 'end recipient' of a service from another registrant. Alternatively it could be because some of the professions we regulate do not have direct contact with the 'end recipient' and in these cases (such as biomedical science), service users could include other clinicians or organisations, as well as the patients who ultimately benefit from their work.

### **Q – Is it possible to employ actors to pretend to be service users and carers? Would we be able to meet the standard this way?**

We use 'service user' as a broad term to refer to the involvement of those who use or are affected by the services of professionals registered with us. We use 'carer', as a broad term, to refer to someone who has looked after, or who currently looks after or provides support, to a family member, partner or friend. They might need support because of their age, illness, or because they have a disability.

Should an actor have direct experience of being a service user and carer as per the above definitions, it may be appropriate for them to be a service user and carer for your programme. However, if an actor does not have direct experience of being a service user and carer, then they would be pretending and this would not fit the above definitions. For whomever you choose to be your service users and carers, we will want to be satisfied that you have considered and can justify your choices as the most relevant and appropriate to your programme.

## **Evidence which can be submitted**

### **Q – What evidence can be provided to the visitors which would demonstrate an education provider's service user and carer involvement?**

Session one of the seminar and the [Standards of education and training guidance](#) talk about the following types of evidence which could be presented to demonstrate how service users and carers are involved in your programme:

- information about how you plan, monitor and evaluate involvement activity;
- policies about how service users and carers are prepared for roles and supported when they are involved in the programme;
- an analysis of service users' and carers' feedback through groups, committees and questionnaires; and
- examples as to how the involvement of service users and carers has contributed to the programme.

However, please note that this list is not exhaustive or exclusive, and there may be other evidence which you can provide.

### **Q – What is the threshold level?**

The Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001 says that we must set our standards to protect the public, and that we must set standards which are necessary for safe and effective practice. We set our standards at a minimum level for safe and effective practice and call this the ‘threshold level’.

The threshold level may vary slightly from profession to profession. This is why decisions about the evidence provided by an education provider for all our standards, is always considered by professionals (visitors) relevant to that education and training programme.

### **Q – How can single module approved programmes, such as SP / IP / POM / LA programmes, provide significant service user and carer involvement?**

The standard requires education providers to involve service users and carers in their programme. We do not specify how or to what extent service users and carers should be involved in your programme – this is a decision for you as the education provider. The visitors assessing the programmes outlined in the question will, as they do for all the other standards, take into account that the programme may only be one module when determining whether the standard has been met.

## **Further sources of information**

### **Q – Is there a way that education providers can interactively discuss and learn from each other?**

We hope that attendees to the seminars were able to share best practice with colleagues from other education providers and professions at the event, and possibly share contact details. We recognise that any further formal interaction, possibly a website or forum to share best practice, may be undertaken by the professional bodies. Other advocacy groups may also facilitate the sharing of best practice across the professions. For more information about possible organisations to contact please review our [Further information section of the standards of education and training guidance](#) on our website.

### **Q – When will we receive information / guidance about what we need to submit in our annual monitoring audit?**

We aim to send information to all education providers about their annual monitoring requirement at the start of each autumn. We will start to review programmes against the new standard in the academic year 2015–16 and we will clearly outline in the annual monitoring communication in autumn 2015, what additional evidence education providers should submit to demonstrate how they meet this standard.

**Q – Does the HCPC provide any guidelines regarding the payment of service users and carers?**

No, we do not provide any guidelines regarding the payment of service users and carers. As the standard is flexible and generic across the 16 professions we regulate, funding arrangements that may be appropriate for one profession may not be appropriate for another. As such we do not set any requirements in the standard or guidance that you must pay or compensate your service users and carer in a particular way or to a certain value. We leave this decision to you as the education provider responsible for designing and delivering the programme.

In session one of the seminar we provided suggestions of where further information could be located about how to include service user and carers in your programme, including payment. For example from your professional body, [Skills for Health](#), [Skills for Care](#), the [Higher Education Academy](#), [Social Care Institute of Excellence](#) and [Shaping Our Lives](#). More suggestions of organisations to contact can be found within the session or within our [Further information section of the standards of education and training guidance](#) available on our website.

## **Visits and Lay visitors**

**Q – Will the Lay visitors have service user and carer experience relevant to the particular profession?**

The Lay visitor brief requires individuals to have “previous experience of using or engaging with the services of health and care professionals regulated by the HCPC.” There is no requirement for Lay Visitors to have experience with a specific profession or across a range of professions.

The experience of the Lay visitors is transferrable which means they can bring their experience to, and actively engage in the decision making process, for any programme being visited. We therefore do not match a Lay visitor’s experience to the profession of the programme being visited.

**Q – When do you meet with service users and carers at the visit?**

We suggest that the meeting with the service users and carers happens on day two of the visit; for a multi-professional visit we suggest this occurs on day three. However, if

you would like to change the timings or order of the meetings please contact the Education Executive allocated to your visit to discuss this. The template agendas can be found on our website [here](#).

The service user and carer meeting allows the HCPC panel to discuss issues with service users and carers who are involved in, and contribute to, various aspects of the programme. It also allows the service users and carers (and / or their representatives) to give their views about their involvement and how they are supported.