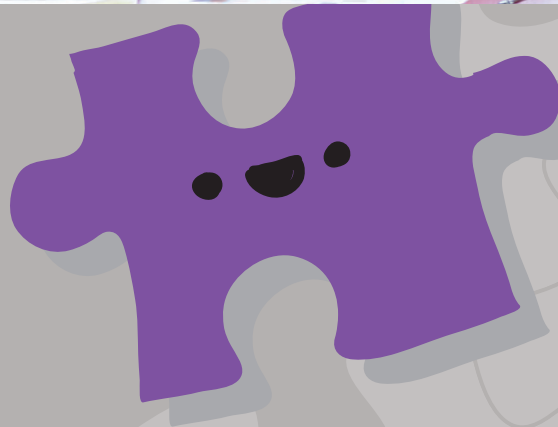


VALUES BASED RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT

VBRT

MODULE 2

INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE



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INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

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WHY INVOLVE PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE?

Finding out what people with disability and people who access your services want from the workers who support them is the key to informing everything you do. Involving people with disability enables them to:

- Exert greater control over who will support them, resulting in better outcomes for the individual
- Provide a unique first hand perspective of what is needed from workers delivering supports
- Tell potential applicants what is important to them and ask them relevant questions
- Judge how well applicants engage and communicate with them
- Identify values, attitudes and behaviours that are important to them

It is good practice within the sector to involve the people we support in the recruitment process. The main benefit described by both professional staff and participants is the different perspective offered by those with lived experience.

“Using someone with lived experience you get a different picture; they bring a different perspective. As a professional, you have an idea of what you want to fit in the box of the organisation, so you miss or see things in a certain way. I guess it’s been invaluable really because they’ve brought a different view of things. It’s been great because being honest you just think, I wouldn’t have thought of that. They have also brought their experience around the sector and the services they’ve used good and bad”.

(Employee interview mid-sized service provider involved in NDIS trial).

“I really value participant involvement, and input for the interview process. I think that they often will provide a different observation and feedback on an individual. It’s really about what would they have wanted from a support worker in their role and they’re often best placed to provide that feedback. So I think their involvement is invaluable. I will continue work with them in our future recruitment where I can”.

(Employee interview small service provider involved in NDIS trial).

Advocacy groups have emphasised the importance of acknowledging the level of commitment and involvement needed to do this well. There is therefore a need to train and appropriately remunerate people with disability engaged in your recruitment process.

In 2013, disability support provider Life Without Barriers developed policies and procedures for disability organisations to include people with disability in staff recruitment.¹ This Toolkit draws on this work.

The processes of recruiting, selecting and developing workers provide a range of opportunities for people with lived experience to participate. The main aspects are covered in more detail on the following pages.

Recruitment and selection

People with lived experience can:

- Be involved in identifying the need and the type of person needed
- Participate in drawing up job descriptions, person specifications and advertisement content
- Assist with production and administration of recruitment packs and information to send to applicants
- Assist with pre-screening and shortlisting applicants
- Design questions for use in interviews
- Participate in interviews, interview panels, presentations and assessment or selection centres
- Participate in video presentations
- Act as assessors and observers during a recruitment process

Induction and training

People with lived experience can take part in:

- Staff inductions
- Ongoing development and specific training activities

Ongoing performance feedback

People with lived experience can:

- Contribute to staff appraisals
- Provide feedback about staff performance

PREPARATION

It is important to ask people how involved they want to be in the process. Some people may have capacity and interest to be fully trained as a recruitment assessor on the panel for recruitment activity, such as structured interviews, group activities and assessment centres. Others will have the desire to be involved as a formal observer or in more informal roles throughout the process. In any capacity it is essential that full training and supports are provided ahead of the actual recruitment process.

With the right support, most people can take part in some aspects of the recruitment process. Think creatively about the possibilities for involving people. If someone can't be part of an interview panel, they may be able to contribute to designing interview questions. It may also be useful to consider involvement and development as a continuum or a series of steps.

Involve people in activities that are meaningful to them. It's important that people are allowed to choose the way they become involved. Do not involve people in things which they do not understand or that make them uncomfortable.

Build in sufficient time for planning and preparation. For involvement to be meaningful, rather than tokenistic, you should set aside time for proper planning and preparation. For example, if individual service users are going to be involved in interviewing job applicants, they should take part in discussions and decisions about assessment criteria and scoring systems.

In 2014, a UK Citizens Group noted, in relation to involving people with disability:

“It’s vital to make sure that service users, if they are going to be involved in any sort of process, have plenty of time put into making sure that they’re prepared and trained, so that they feel confident and empowered about expressing their views. In terms of systems change, it would be about making sure that you prepare, involve, and then follow through on that, rather than just the involvement bit...having the necessary support in place [is necessary for people to] make a meaningful rather than tokenistic contribution to the process.²

Preparing the organisation is also important. Think about the culture or ethos of your organisation, that is, the way people go about their day to day business. Questions to ask include:

- “Are service users already involved in the work of the organisation in some way?”
If so, involving people in staff recruitment and development can be a natural progression of their involvement in other areas.
- Does your organisation have a policy for involving people using services and supports?
If so, does this include people getting involved in staff recruitment and development?
- Do people in the organisation welcome participation by service users?
It is crucial that managers and staff are committed to the idea of involving people and to making it happen.

Discuss and inform your colleagues. If you work in an organisation that has an HR Manager or team, it is crucial to talk to them about involving individuals in recruitment processes. This will help them to understand what they may need to do differently, for example, altering scoring systems to make them simpler and more meaningful. HR colleagues also have an important role in ensuring that everyone involved in recruitment follows equal opportunity and fair selection guidelines. Encouraging them to be part of the process of involving people can help to allay any concerns they may have.

People will also need to practice what they are going to do, for example, asking interview questions. Role-play can be a useful technique here. Provide structured and planned support. For example, experienced members of staff may need to support service users to ask candidates questions during an informal visit.

To provide for people’s access and personal support needs, these are some of the things you need to address.

The venue

- Is it physically accessible and on a major transport route?
- Do you need to accommodate assistive technology or an interpreter?
- Is parking available and does this require a permit or payment?
- What time should the panel member arrive and who will greet them?

Transport

- Does the panel member require transport or assistance to arrange transport?

Timing

- It may not be practical for people to be involved early or late in the day.

Supports

- You may need to accommodate a support worker or interpreter.

Breaks and refreshments

- Some people may require frequent breaks especially when they are using an interpreter. Refreshments and suitable breaks should be provided and planned for.

CONTRIBUTING TO JOB DESCRIPTIONS

What clients and their families want from staff can be incorporated into the job description and person specifications. Gathering this information can be done in a number of ways:

- Facilitated forums with the people who access your services and supports
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Speaking to people individually
- Making a video saying what is important to them and what they want from support workers
- It may also be useful to gather information from the person's circle of supports and family and friends
- Some might find it useful to think about individual members of staff who have supported them or who they know as a means of identifying the things that are important to them

SHORTLISTING, INTERVIEWING AND ASSESSMENT

Some individuals will want to be involved in the interview process or panel directly while others will prefer another way to contribute where they will still inform a final decision. Some may want to be involved with the shortlisting of candidates for the next stage of the process. Whatever way the individual is involved it is vital to ensure that they feel that that are valuable and important to the process and not a tokenistic add-on. Options may include:

- Take part in shortlisting.
- Select questions for the panel to ask.
- Be on the interview panel or be an assessor at an assessment centre (where used).
- Be part of the welcome group or administration during a group or individual interview process.
- Act as informal observers during morning tea, lunch and other break times, creating an opportunity to see how applicants interact with the people they might support.
- Be observers in the room during recruitment activities, allowing them to note their perspective in an informal way without the stress of a forced interaction; in this instance you would give the observer a standard document or equipment to record their observations.
- Meet with applicant(s) separately to ask questions they have prepared in advance – this can be a supported activity. The views expressed are included in the applicant's score sheet and taken into account by the selection panel.
- Some disability service organisations have successfully included the people they support in simulation exercises and role-plays. This generally requires training before the event. Exercises detailed in the Toolkit could be used in this way (see module 5).
- Be part of a presentation, video presentation or be part of the audience if applicants are asked to prepare a presentation or something about themselves.
- Talk about the organisation, for example, in the format of a day in their life.

RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Recruitment roles can be advertised internally via support workers to the people they support.

Conduct an interview process and recruit and train the successful applicants to participate in your recruitment panel or become a trained assessor for an assessment centre. Successful applicants must be remunerated appropriately for their expertise and time.

Providers could also collaborate using this model to develop a local bank of trained assessors or interviewers to participate in recruitment activities. A partnership might also be developed with an advocacy organisation.

In the UK a dedicated organisation plays this role and describes its interviewers as experts by experience.³

INDUCTION AND ONGOING STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Employers can provide a range of opportunities to involve service users and families in inducting and providing ongoing development for workers. If you regularly seek information from clients about what they want from staff, you can use this to inform induction and ongoing development activities and training. You can also actively involve people who access services and supports in a number of ways that include:

- Showing new staff around and talking to them about how they want them to work with them. This can be done individually or by a group spending time with new staff talking about what's important to them.
- Contributing to induction or other training sessions by talking to participants about what they want from staff, or by giving a presentation and answering questions. This gives a strong voice but does not require them to have skills in facilitation or managing a group.
- Showing a video in which users and/or carers talk about what they want from workers as part of induction training. This can be used to stimulate group discussion and individual reflection.
- Involving service users and carers in staff training, for example, providing person-centred care. People from your own service can take part or you can consider commissioning individuals who have had training and experience in providing training.
- Providing feedback about the impact of training and development on staff member's attitudes, skills and behaviours. This can form part of the process of evaluating the quality and impact of training in your organisation. For example, if a worker has recently undertaken training in manual handling, you could ask about how they are going about this. Are they explaining to them about a manoeuvre they are about to perform? Are they using equipment such as hoists, correctly? Are they asking if they are comfortable?

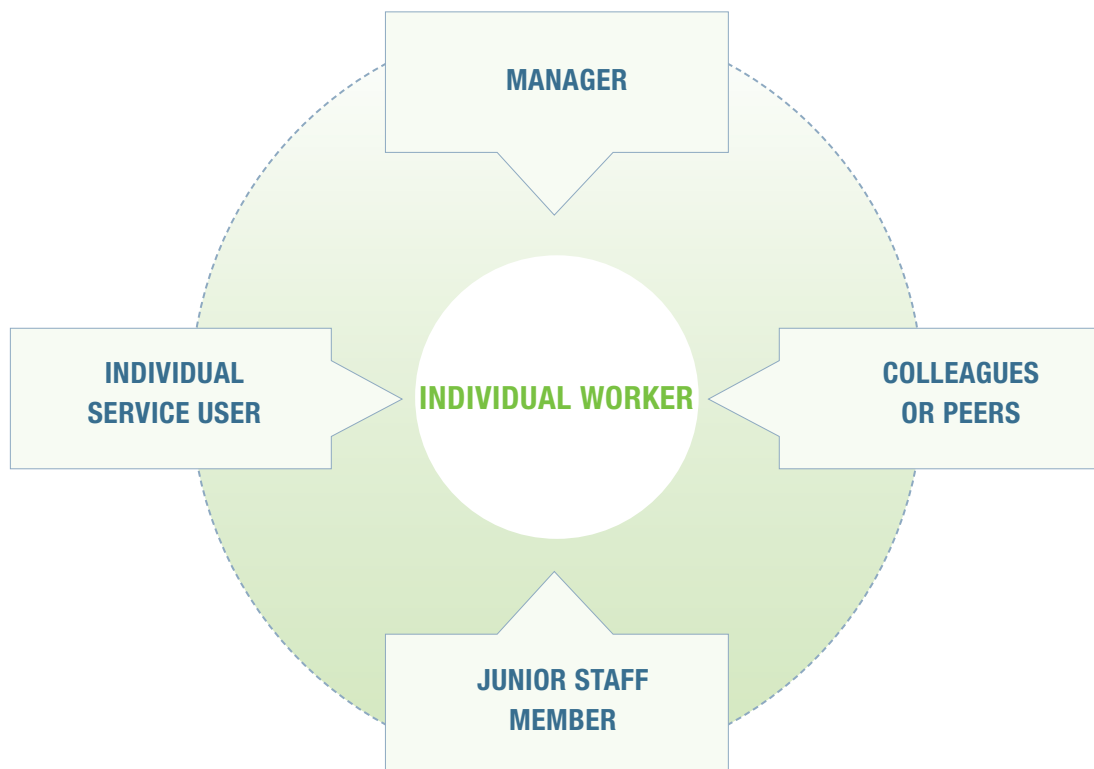
Note that where individual service users are formally involved in training or development activities, you need to consider paying them for their contribution.

ONGOING PERFORMANCE REVIEW

People being supported and their families/carers can provide helpful and informative feedback about how an individual worker or teams are working to provide support. This can then be incorporated by managers and supervisors into HR processes for individual performance and development. Feedback provided can inform supervision, probation reviews, appraisals, learning and development as well as team discussion and decisions.

Some organisations conduct 360° appraisals where a manager, colleague or peer and junior member of staff give feedback on how a person is doing. Involving people receiving supports in this is an extension of this process.

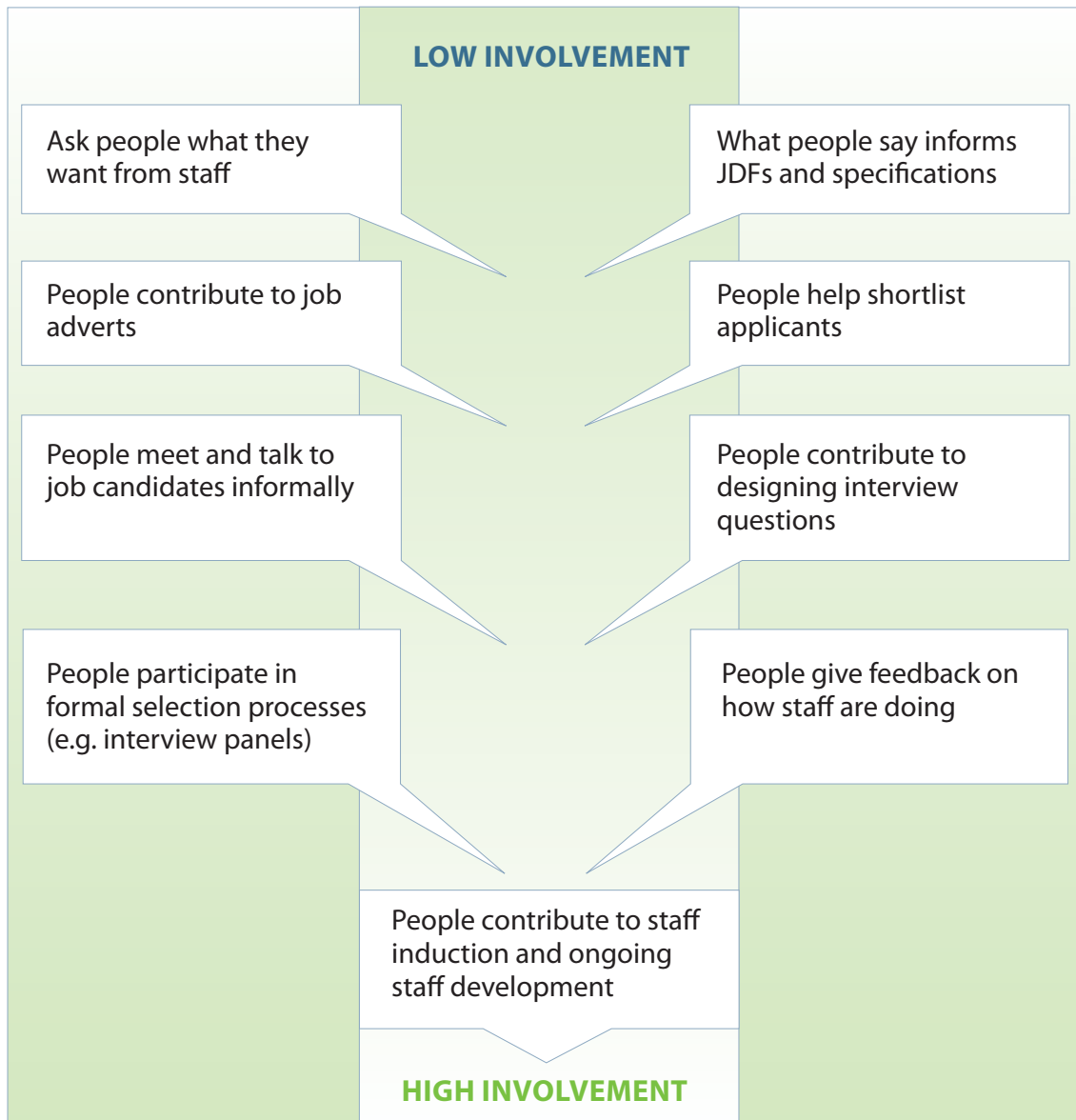
Figure 1: 360° appraisal involvement



CONCLUSION

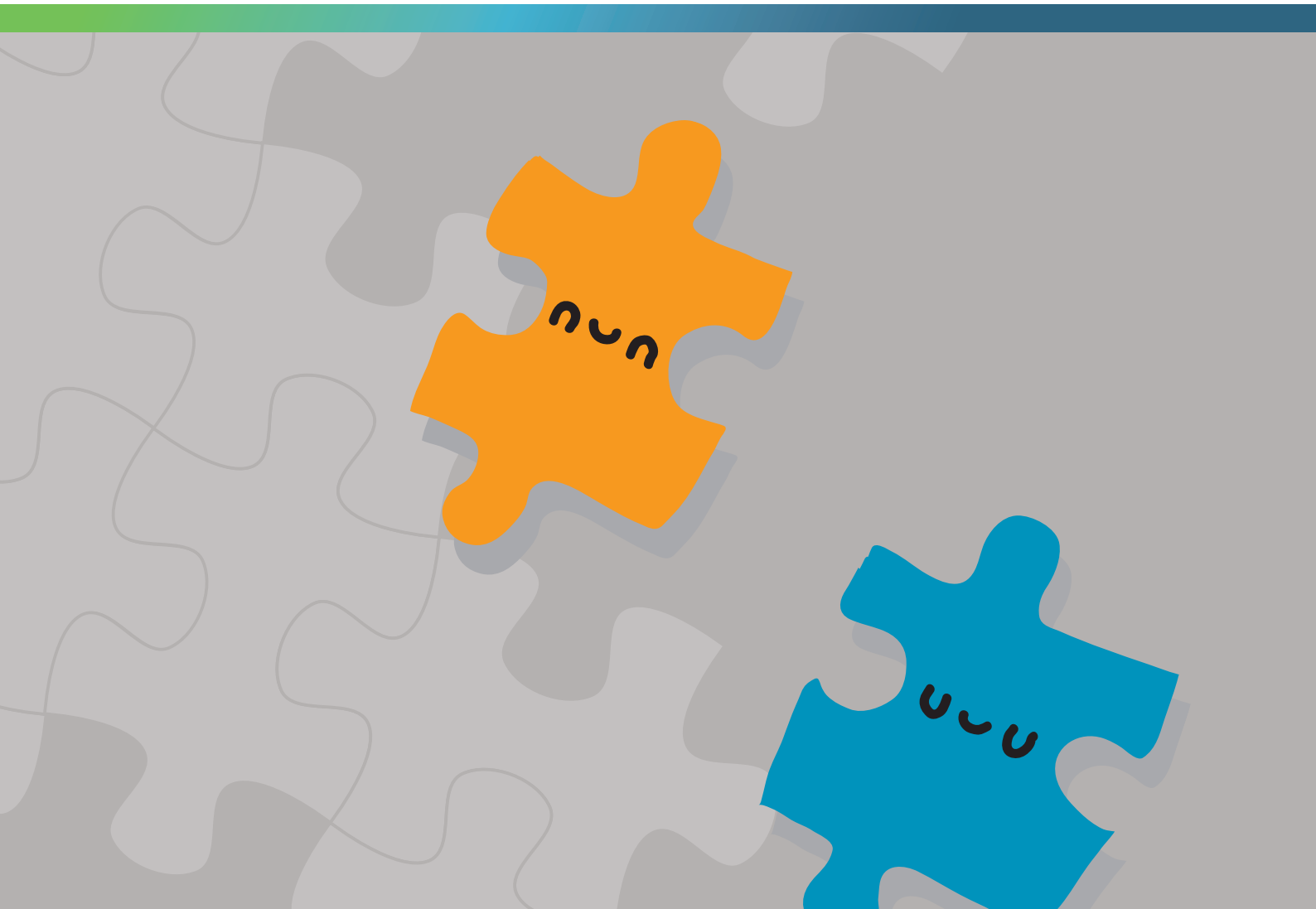
In conclusion, there are many ways to employ and include the people with lived experience in a recruitment process. Not all of them are covered in this Module, and each person will prefer different positions and levels of involvement in the process. However, the evidence is clear that the more that people who access the services and supports are used in the recruitment of staff, the quality of recruitment will increase along with higher quality service delivery matched to the needs of the service users.

Figure 2: Options to involve people with lived experience in recruiting and developing workers



END NOTES

1. The "Life Without Barriers" toolkit gives step-by-step suggestions and methods based on Life Without Barriers' own experiences. At the time of writing, this toolkit was no longer publicly available.
2. Murphy, A., Adamson, J., Nield, J., Momori, N., Howe, P., Morgan, S. and Bell, S. (2015). "Involving service users in recruitment: A peer-led research project by the Fulfilling Lives (multiple needs) National Expert Citizens Group". CFW Research, Leicester, UK.
3. Murphy, A., Adamson, J., Nield, J., Momori, N., Howe, P., Morgan, S. and Bell, S. (2015). "Involving service users in recruitment: A peer-led research project by the Fulfilling Lives (multiple needs) National Expert Citizens Group". CFW Research, Leicester, UK.
4. Also see The Advocacy Project <http://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/>



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