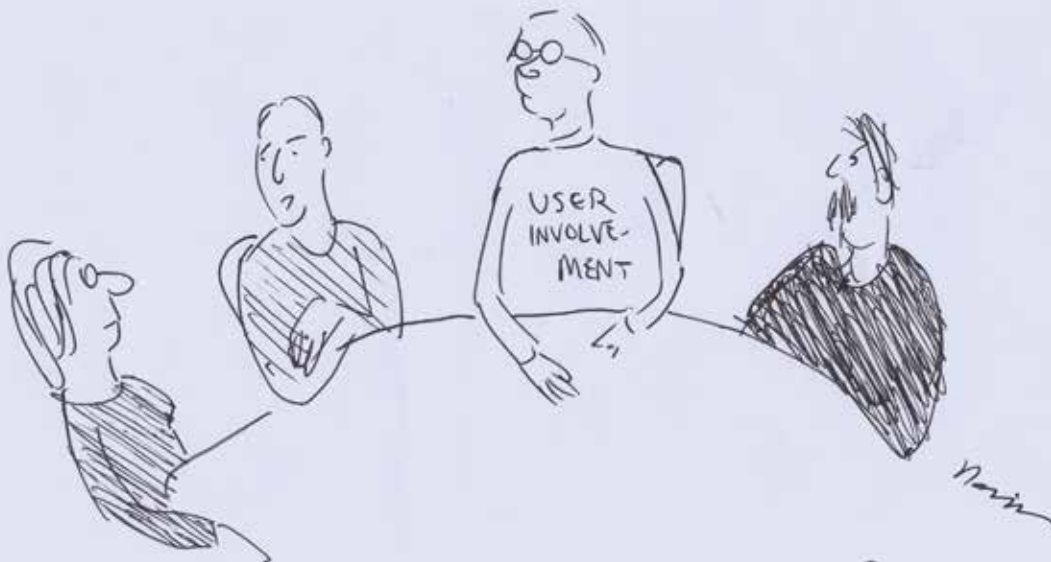

Opportunities for involvement of service users and carers at The Open University in Scotland



"He says he's been there and got the T-shirt."

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About this booklet

This booklet describes the different ways in which you, as a service user or carer, can help with the work of the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS) at The Open University (OU). Activities can include the selection and training of students enrolled on the Social Work Degree or Nursing programmes and assisting in the development of Open University modules (blocks of study). Further information about the Social Work and Nursing programmes can be made available.

Words and phrases used in this booklet

Like other places, there are times when universities have to use some words and phrases other people might not be familiar with. We have tried to cut down on these as much as possible but where this is difficult we have explained the meaning of these words and phrases.

The Open University way of learning

The OU's way of learning is called 'supported Open Learning', and sometimes also known as 'distance learning'. Supported Open Learning means that students learn in their own homes and in their own time by reading module materials, working on module activities such as listening to a recording or watching a video of a relevant situation, writing assignments and perhaps working with other students. They do not attend classes in the conventional way but may attend occasional group tutorials or day schools to support their learning. Increasingly modules take place in an 'online' environment which means students can participate wherever they are located as long as they have access to a computer and a broadband link.

Each module is written by a team of academic staff and may include some printed materials, CDs or DVDs and sometimes a set book.

The School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

The School offers a variety of modules in health, social care and social work. These can be studied by anyone with an interest in the subject including professionals, as well as service users and carers.

Why service user and carer involvement is important to the School

The experiences of service users and carers, both good and bad, are invaluable to our health and social care modules in the OU. It is important that health care workers and social workers look at situations from every point of view. Workers need to listen to and understand the needs of the people who use services or are involved in supporting services for their families or friends. Service providers need to make sure that services are in line with what people want and also that diversity and difference is acknowledged. People



need to have their dignity respected and be treated in an equal and fair way. There is a need to make sure that the health and social care workers of the future are well trained and understand and respect these issues so that the kinds of services people want can be delivered.

Opportunities for involvement

At present there are opportunities for service users and carers to become involved in the School activities in a variety of ways in the social work programme, the nursing programme and other social care courses.

What kind of involvement?

This can mean doing one or more of the following things:

- Helping with selection of students who wish to study the social work and nursing programmes
- Serving on a panel or a committee to help ensure the programmes meet the regulatory requirements
- Sharing your own experiences of using health and/or social care services
- Reading and giving feedback on new learning materials
- Helping to assess students' work and practice.

More detailed information about these activities follows.

Who can get involved?

By 'service user' and 'carer' we mean people who currently use, or have recently used, social or health care services. This could be people with disabilities or other conditions or situations that require them to access health or social care services. Individuals who care for someone who needs support also have a wealth of experience to offer from their different perspective.

In addition anyone who has had regular involvement with social work services, social care or particular health care services, and feel their experience would be useful to our students could consider getting involved.

We need to make sure there is a good cross section of people involved in our work with people of all ages and all backgrounds representing the diversity and difference from all of Scotland's communities so they are able to contribute to social care and nursing education.

Student selection for the social work degree

What is student selection?

All students on The Open University social work degree may be sponsored by their employers or pay for the modules independently and be employed in a social care setting. They have to take part in a selection process, part of which involves service users and carers.

What we ask you to do if you are helping with student selection

You can be involved in a number of different ways. For example:

- You might take part in an informal discussion session with shortlisted students, with another carer or service user or staff member. This could be meeting with a small group of students and discussing your experiences of social work services or asking how they would respond to specific situations. You then give your views and opinions about the students' comments.

- You could be paired with a member of staff to observe students during group exercises and make notes for feedback.
- An agency might ask you to read part of the student's application (or get someone else to read it to you) and comment on it. For example, would you want the student as your social worker or do you have any concerns? Then you give detailed written feedback on each student's application. Your comments would be included in feedback to both successful and unsuccessful students.

"The trouble with you users is you never want to join the consensus"



- Some organisations might involve you in student selection interviews. You could play a full part in the interview process including drawing up questions and the final decision making.

In all of these examples you would be properly prepared and supported by the organisation.

The skills and experiences you need for student selection

You might like to think about being part of the student selection process if you have an understanding of the following:

- you have an understanding of what you think makes a good social worker
- you can work to timescales set by other people
- you are able to offer constructive feedback about a student's written work
- you are able to offer constructive feedback about a student's performance in a group discussion
- you feel confident you can play a full part in an interview panel
- you are willing to undertake some training to carry out the student selection role.

Critical reading

What is critical reading?

Critical reading means reading OU books and other materials and giving us feedback on them to say whether you think they are suitable for their purpose. It is an important part of developing new OU modules and happens at the early stages of developing new modules or updating current modules.

What we ask you to do if you are a critical reader

We ask you to read early drafts of course materials (or get someone else to read them to you) and use your own experience as a service user or carer to give us feedback by filling in a questionnaire.

You need to tell us:

- Are the important topics covered?
- Are the materials accurate and relevant to what students are being trained for, e.g. as social workers or nurses for example?
- Are they up-to-date and accessible?
- Are they interesting?
- Is the style right?

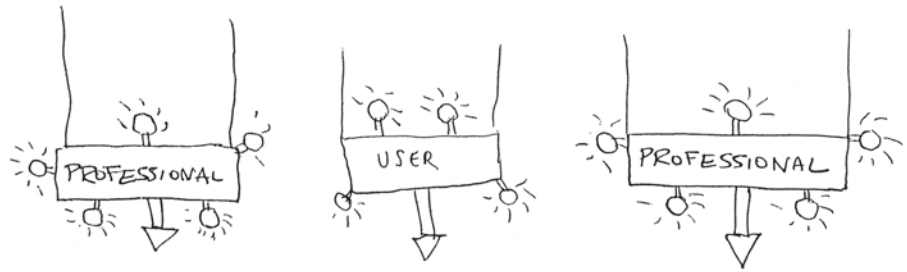
- Which parts of the materials are the strongest?
- Are there any gaps?
- Can the students cover these materials in the time allowed for this part of the module?

You can send extra comments in the form of notes or write notes on the draft if this is more appropriate.

The skills and experiences you need to be a critical reader

You might like to think about being a critical reading if you:

- have expertise in relevant areas of knowledge and practice
- are able to offer constructive critical feedback
- can work to timescales set by other people
- are interested in reading a lot of material and trying the activities.



"we don't believe in labels here..."

Developmental testing (assessing module materials)

Developmental testing is also about reading course materials and giving feedback. It is different from critical reading because you are asked to think about how it might feel to be a student studying the course. It is an important part of developing new modules.

What we ask you to do if you are a developmental tester

We ask you to:

- study the materials
- say whether the mix of course components (such as reading, activities, DVD or audio material) works
- say whether the activities work
- say whether the materials meet the learning objectives
- say whether the timing is realistic.

You need to be able to:

- read through the draft module material and any supporting material that is available such as articles, chapters

- comment on the units that form the main part of the module as if you were a student taking the course
- send us your comments by completing a questionnaire for each draft unit
- send extra comments in the form of notes as well and/or write notes on the draft if you wish.

Developmental testing helps to ensure that module materials are relevant, up-to-date, accurate, accessible, interesting and reasonable to study within the time allowance.

The skills and experiences you need to be a developmental tester

You might like to think about being a developmental tester if you:

- know about the topics covered by the module from your experience as a service user or carer
- have the time and interest to read material designed for students
- can work to timescales set by other people
- are able to give constructive feedback.

Sharing your story

Why consider sharing your story?

Another way you can contribute is by sharing your story for us to include in our modules. When you tell students about your direct experiences of health and social care services you help to encourage better and more relevant professional practice. Students taught by service users and carers are likely to work more effectively than those taught about users and carers.

How we can use your story

We can use your story in different ways. For example, to develop learning activities and assessments; to show different voices, points of view and experiences; to encourage thought and discussion; to help students to respond actively to real-life situations. All of this encourages students to improve their practice.

How you can share your story

There are two ways in which you can share your story – directly on DVD or audio recording, via podcasts or indirectly where we use an actor to tell your story or parts of it.

- Directly - your story on DVD or audio. This will involve three or four meetings with a team working on module production. You would tell your story during these interviews either to an audio recording or a DVD. First, someone would contact you by telephone to discuss your experiences, your willingness to share your story and what would be required. This conversation would help the author decide how best to use your story. Next you would have a meeting with the people who are developing the CDs and DVDs for new modules. This might involve an interview where the author or producer would ask you questions that have been agreed beforehand. Your answers would be based on your experiences of situations you had been involved in.
- With an actor – they would read your story to the recording device

Steering group for the social work degree

What is the steering group?

This is a group of people who advise us and suggest how we might develop the social work degree programme. They also help us to make sure that the students are studying the right subjects and are being trained to be good social workers. We call these people stakeholders. The steering group meets twice a year and is made up of OU staff, employers, students, service users and carers. Each meeting lasts about four hours, with refreshments provided. There are about fifteen members. The location of meetings can be in various parts of the country depending on the needs of those attending.

What we ask you to do at the steering group

We ask you to take a full part in the meetings and particularly to comment on how any new developments or ongoing issues might affect service users and carers, either directly or indirectly. We would ensure that new members are well prepared and can meet other members before they attend their first meeting.

The skills and experiences you need to be part of the steering group

You may be interested in joining this group if the following apply:

- you have an interest in social work training
- you would be comfortable being part of a meeting with a number of other people
- you have the time (and patience) to learn about the systems that enable the social work programme to run and the role of the steering group
- you are willing to read (or get someone to read to you) some written information which is sent to members in advance of the meeting

Each meeting lasts for four hours which means that, with travel, you would need to have a whole day available to attend.

The Practice Assessment Panel

What is the Practice Assessment Panel?

The Practice Assessment Panel is a group of people who get reports about how well social work students do on their placements. Social work students have two work placements during the practice based modules. On each placement they have a supervisor, a qualified social worker, who is known as the practice assessor.

Practice assessors meet regularly with the students and observe them working with service users. At the end of the placement the assessors write a report about the students' practice. They then send this report to the University and it is considered by the Practice Assessment Panel of lecturers and tutors. The panel confirms the recommendation and discusses any recommendations for a fail.

What we ask you to do for a Practice Assessment Panel

We ask you to read (or get someone else to read to you) a small selection of the reports (probably three) and discuss them with one of the members of the

Panel in advance of the meeting. We want to know the following:

- Does the report give a good picture of the student's practice?
- Have service users' comments been included?
- Are these comments well reported so that they make a real contribution to the assessment of the student?
- Is there anything missing from the report that you think should have been included in order to prove that the student has worked well with service users and carers?
- What are your views on the practice of the student, as described in the report?

We would prepare you well for this work. A member of the panel will meet with you to explain a bit more about how the panel works and what you have to do. The work usually takes place in the early autumn. It is usually spread over one month and altogether amounts to about two days of your time.

The skills and experiences you need to be part of the Practice Assessment Panel

You might be interested in this work if you:

- have the time and patience to learn about student assessment on social work modules
- have views about social work training
- want to help make sure students are fit to practise as social workers at the end of their training
- have the time to read a small number of lengthy documents, with support if necessary



"We decided to restrict the professionals to ten, so you wouldn't feel intimidated."

Nation Partnership meetings for the Pre-registration nursing programme

What is the Pre-registration nursing programme?

This programme addresses the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) requirements for entry to the nursing professional register and is a recognised route to become a registered nurse. Students can study either the Adult branch or the Mental Health branch. The programme is sponsored by the Scottish Government. The students are all employees of the NHS and are usually Health Care Support Workers (HCSW).

What are Nation Partnership meetings?

Once a year all those involved in the programme meet together to discuss the problems and successes of the last year. This meeting currently involves OU staff, employers, Scottish Government representatives and students. We would very much like to include service users and carers. Each meeting lasts about five hours, including lunch. There are usually around a

dozen people attending. Meetings are usually held in Edinburgh but may also be held in other parts of the country as Health Boards often like to invite the group to their area.

What we ask you to do at these meetings

We want to hear your views on curriculum development and recruitment and selection of student nurses. Before you attend your first meeting we will explain the programme to you and give you an opportunity to meet with some of the people who regularly attend the meeting.

The skills and experiences you need to be part of this meeting

You may be interested in attending these meetings if:

- you have an interest in pre-registration nurse education
- you would be comfortable being part of a meeting with a number of people

- you are willing to learn about the OU Pre-registration nursing programme and the way in which it happens in Scotland
- you are willing to read (or get someone else to read to you) some written information which is sent to participants in advance of the meeting.

Each meeting lasts for five hours which means that, with travel, you would need to have a whole day available to attend. It may be possible in some cases to link in by video conference or through a computer link.

Recruitment of nursing students

Currently service users can contribute to the recruitment of nursing students by reviewing a service user task. This task involves a question being set for the student as part of the application process where they have to write up a short answer to this. It is then reviewed



"Ok so there's clearly been a misprint - on the agenda sent to users item 6 is 'powersharing' but on our agenda that item reads 'lunch'...."

by the service user, scored out of 5 and then an additional question is set by the SU to be asked at interview. This question is then scored by the interview panel as part of the overall process.

Support for service user and carer involvement

How we would support you to do this work:

- We would make sure you are well prepared and are clear about the job we are asking you to do
- We would ask you to tell us about your support needs and tell you clearly what kind of support we are able to offer
- We would make sure your involvement in our work is fully respected and appreciated
- We would cover your travel expenses
- We would pay you for doing the work. The amount of this payment will depend on the type of job you are doing for us and how long the job takes. This will be discussed and agreed with you before you decide to do the work
- We will ask you how you feel about your involvement, listen to and take account of any suggestions you make about how to improve your involvement

- We will make sure someone is available to discuss any concerns or difficulties you have when you are doing any of this work for us.

How to get involved

At the end of the booklet there is information about how to get in touch with us if you are interested in being involved in our work. If you know of anyone who is interested in getting involved but who needs this booklet in a different format, please get in touch to let us know what is required.

The Open University School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

Payment to service users and carers

Information for consultants

Income tax

The University is required by HM Revenue & Customs to apply deductions of PAYE tax and National Insurance from payments made to you if appropriate. Whether deductions are applied will depend on the nature of your relationship with the University. A relationship defined as one of 'self-employment' will not attract deductions whereas other outcomes will. The contract with which you have been issued will attract deductions of tax and national insurance from any payments made.

If you feel that your relationship is one of self-employment please advise the University. In such cases the University will then determine your status using the Employment Status Indicator tool provided on the HMRC web site at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/calcs/esi.htm>. This questionnaire takes account of factors such as level of direction and management; level of exposure to risk; location where work is performed; who provides the equipment required; whether you are required to provide a substitute; and what happens in the event of poor services provided.

The University will be bound by the outcome of this process and if you are unhappy with the decision you will have to contact HMRC on 0845 302 1434.

You should note that a decision to apply statutory deductions to payments is limited to your taxation status and does not confer any employment rights or benefits.

PAYE tax

If PAYE is deducted from your payments you will be placed on a University payroll. Payments will be taxed at source as at the standard rate (20%). If you consider this rate inappropriate please complete the new starter checklist form available on the HMRC website. Please send it to the address below:

Staff Payments Office

Finance Division

The Open University

PO Box 77

Walton Hall

Milton Keynes MK7 6BT

Tel: 01908 652761/652282

Email: finance-staff-payments@open.ac.uk

National Insurance

If Class 1 National Insurance is applicable then contributions will be due if the total Open University earnings exceed the equivalent proportion of the National Insurance Employees Earnings Threshold (£663.00 per month).

This could mean that although total annual earnings do not exceed this value you may still be required to pay National Insurance in those months where your monthly income exceeds one twelfth of this sum.

Married women and widows who hold a certificate of reduced liability and individuals who are over the state retirement age and who hold an Exemption Certificate should submit their certificate to the University with the signed acceptance of their contract.

Payment

There are two possible methods of payment for services undertaken by service users and carers for The Open University. These are:

- a) A single payment for a particular service. This will usually be for a one-off task. Single payments can be up to a maximum of £500.00 per year.
- b) A consultancy contract which is available for longer-term services. The actual amounts paid for particular services are discussed and agreed with people before any services or tasks are taken on. The amount of payment and the period of time for which it will be paid will also be agreed in advance.

Tax and National Insurance is taken off when the payment is made. People who are not required to pay tax can claim this back on a form which can be obtained from Milton Keynes Tax office. If you need support in finding out about how to claim back tax, please talk to the person who is asking you to do the particular task or service.

The service user or carer is responsible for letting agencies, such as the Benefits Agency, know about these payments if this is a requirement of the particular benefit.

Expenses which have been agreed in advance are paid in addition to the payment for the service. Train tickets can be sent in advance. Normally at least two weeks' notice is required.

Any questions?

Some people ask whether they can still be involved in our work if they:

- have difficulty with reading and writing
- use other ways of reading and writing such as Braille
- communicate in a language other than English
- use British Sign Language.

It is possible to get involved if the right support can be put in place. If you have a question like this and want to get involved with any of our work please get in touch with us to discuss it. Also get in touch if you have a question we have not thought of and we will do our best to answer it.

How to get involved

If you are interested in any of the work that is described in this booklet you should make contact and we will then discuss with you the process of getting involved.

School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care
The Open University in Scotland
10 Drumsheugh Gardens
Edinburgh EH3 7QJ

Tel: 0131 226 3851

Email: R11-SHSW@open.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in our work. Together we can ensure that Open University students in Scotland involved in health and social care and nursing education programmes are provided with relevant and appropriate opportunities to understand the needs of service users and carers in Scotland's diverse and changing communities.