

CHECKLISTS

About these checklists

This is a set of checklists which are intended to help individual people who are volunteers and projects which work with volunteers work out what support and information they would find helpful.

There are also checklists to help other teams think about what they can do to support volunteer activists and respond to the issues that people are raising.

The checklists were developed as part of a project which looked at what helped to promote the well-being of people affected by mental illness who are volunteers with mental health groups or projects in West Dunbartonshire. There is more information about the project at the end of the checklists.

The people who took part in this project hope that people in other areas will also be able to use the experiences and suggestions described in the report and in these checklists to encourage and support other people who are making volunteering part of their recovery journey.

There are 5 checklists here. Each one links to the others, and together they cover many of the issues that were raised in the recent consultation with people who are volunteers in mental health projects in West Dunbartonshire.

- 1. **For individual volunteers/activists** to plan for their own support.
- 2. **For a group which works with volunteers** – such as a peer support group, a Mental Health Forum of a support service – to plan for the support needs of their members who take on a volunteer role.
- 3. **For the Consumer Issues Group or Strategy Groups**, to plan how they contribute to meeting the support needs of each local project or service with a significant number of active volunteers.
- 4. **For the Consumer Issues Group or other groups to have an annual review session**, when the members reflect on the support needs across all the various user-led and carer-led groups.

- 5. **For Mental Health services or teams and other support providers**, to plan for the support they give to clients who are taking on these volunteer roles, and to help the staff in these services or teams think about how they engage with the people who use their services.

Notes



At the end of each checklist there is a set of notes. They have some more suggestions about how the checklists can be best used.

The checklists are designed to be copied and then used as often as people wish.

There is further information about the project at the end of this document.

Making a contribution and being well

VOLUNTEERS' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Checklist for each individual volunteer

Name:		Date:	
Tasks		What support do I need for this?	
For this volunteer role, e.g. being an advocate, offering peer support, being on a committee Skills that will help me with this Practical resources, e.g. computers			
Dealing with the statutory bodies, or other organisations, if this is part of the role Skills that will help me with this Practical resources, e.g. information about who does what			
My mental health and well-being e.g. What keeps me well			
Other things that I do, e.g. going to college, other volunteering			

My support plan for the next 6-12 months (look back at the checklist)

Things I am going to do myself:

People I am going to ask for support, or training, etc:

People I am going to contact and ask if they will change some things they do:

Things I am going to offer to other people and to other groups:



Notes

People can use the checklist to work out what will be useful for you over the next 6-12 months. You can do it on your own or do it with a pal.

It is your plan and you might not want to share it. But the idea is that people will discuss at least some aspects of it with someone else in the group, so the group's committee can draw together what everyone is raising.

The second stage is taking this and reviewing it 6-12 months later:

- Where was I then?
- How did the plan go?
- Did it make a difference?
- Where am I now?

Use the tool again, for your current situation, but take account of what worked last time and what didn't.

Making a contribution and being well

VOLUNTEERS' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Checklist for group

Group:		Date:
People involved in doing this review:		
Tasks	What support or information do members need?	
<p>For this volunteer role, e.g. being an advocate, how peer support works, being on a committee Skills that people will find helpful</p> <p>Practical resources, e.g. computers</p>		
<p>Members' mental health and well-being E.g. access to services for members</p>		
<p>Group's relationships with the statutory bodies, or other organisations</p> <p>Skills</p> <p>Practical resources, e.g. <i>information about who does what</i></p> <p>How do members want to feed in to the formal planning and user/carer participation systems?</p>		
<p>Links with other organisations that take on members' interests</p>		

Our support plan for the next 6-12 months (look back at the checklist)

Things we are going to do ourselves:

People/organisations we are going to ask for some support, or training, etc:

People we are going to contact and ask if they will change some things they do – *includes feeding in to the formal joint planning groups:*

Training or support we are going to offer to other people and to other groups:



Notes

Groups can use the checklist to work out what will be useful for their members over the next 6-12 months.

It probably will work better if a few people work on it – the committee, or a worker at that project and some of the committee.

The information on the checklist is based on what members tell the committee, or what the committee or coordinator are noticing. It can draw on what individual members have identified by using their checklists, if they are willing to share this.

The second stage is taking this and reviewing it 6-12 months later:

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- How did the plan go?
- Did it make a difference?
- Where are we now?

Use the tool again, for the current situation, but take account of what worked last time and what didn't.

Making a contribution and being well

VOLUNTEERS' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Checklist for Strategy Group or Commissioning Group – support for particular projects or services

Project or service:		Date:
People involved in the review:		
Aspect of what the group does	What support does the group need and who is meeting this?	
Supporting the volunteer roles at this project <i>E.g. contributing to training</i> <i>Enough funding for the group</i> <i>Help with administrative back up</i>		
Project's relationships with the statutory bodies, or other organisations		
Opportunities for members or users of this project to feed into the planning process		
Volunteers' mental health and well-being		

Plan to support this project over the next 6-12 months

Things the Strategy Group/Commissioning Group is going to do with the project:

Other people whom the Strategy Group/Commissioning Group is going to ask to provide support, training, etc for the project:

People whom the Strategy Group/Commissioning Group is going to contact and ask if they will change some things they do



Notes

The Strategy Group or formal joint planning group which takes the lead on mental health for an area will have funding or other responsibilities for many services and projects. We hope that they will want to use this checklist for a few key projects where members are taking on volunteer roles.

Someone looks at the support needs for each project, probably on a yearly basis.

This task could be shared by several people, with input from the service user and carer members of the Strategy Group.

The points raised should be reported to staff within the Council or NHS who have direct responsibility for commissioning the project or service.

Making a contribution and being well

VOLUNTEERS' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Annual review session on support to local projects

The Strategy Group/Commissioning Group may want to look at what is coming from all the plans/reviews by projects and from their review of how they support some key projects.

You may also want to consider ways for anonymous individual plans to also feed in, if this is what people want to do.

People involved:		Date:	
These are the broad areas where people need support, or need things to change to sustain their contribution as volunteers.		What is the joint strategy group doing to help?	
<i>E.g. people think nothing has changed</i>		<i>E.g. publicise what has changed.</i>	
What are the barriers?		What/who is going to unblock these?	



Notes

This could be done at a routine meeting of the Strategy Group, or as a specific session.

A few people could work on the checklist and bring it to the full group to discuss, or you can do it together.

If it feels as if it might be difficult, e.g. at the first time you do this, then you could get someone in to facilitate the discussion. The aim is to help people raise points without feeling they are criticising individuals or need to defend what has happened.

Like the other checklists, it would be repeated every year. This would start with what did we plan last time? How did the plan work out? What do we need to do differently? What worked well?

Several people in the consultation in West Dunbartonshire, which led to the development of these checklists, noted that the root of some problems lay in national policies or practices. These are some notes on possible ways to tackle the blocks that people are identifying which are around what the Scottish Government and other national bodies do.

- Try to be as specific as possible
- This is the problem we are facing
- This is what we think is the cause
- This is what we want you to do to make it better – change something you do, give clearer guidance to someone, raise an issue nationally, etc.

Making a contribution and being well

VOLUNTEERS' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Checklist for a Mental Health Service/Team or other service provider

Team:		Date:	
People involved in the plan:			
Aspects of someone's life		What support people may need	
This volunteer role , e.g. <i>being an advocate, providing peer support, being on a committee</i>			
People's mental health and well-being			
People feeding back to our team Have we asked the people who use our service how they want to participate? How do we feed back to people about what we have done in response to their suggestions?			
People working in partnership with our service/team Have we asked people about ways they would like to work in a peer support role?			

Our plan for the next 6-12 months (look back at the checklist)

Things our service/team members can do to support people in volunteer roles:

People/organisations we are going to ask for support, or training that we need, so we can continue to support service users or carers who are volunteers:

People/organisations we are going to ask for support, or training, etc for our service users or carers who are volunteers, and for other volunteers:

Things we are going to offer to other people and to other groups



Notes

People can use the checklists to work out what will be useful for the people they support over the next 6-12 months.

It probably will work better if a few people work on it – a few members of staff, people from different roles if this makes sense for your team, and some people who use the service or from a local user-led group.

This is based on what clients are raising with the team and on what the workers are noticing.

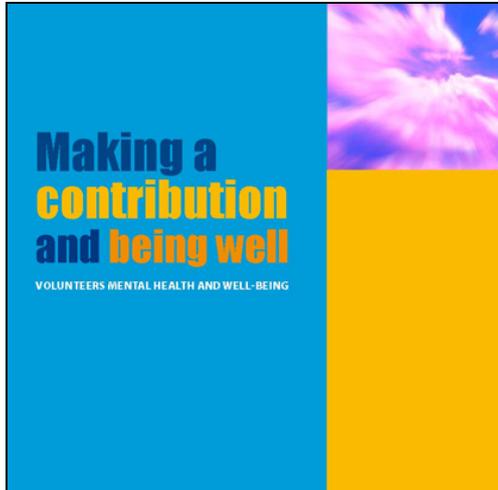
The second stage is taking this and reviewing it 6-12 months later:

- Where were we then?
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Making a contribution and being well

VOLUNTEERS' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Information about this project

The experience of people in West Dunbartonshire and in other places is that becoming a volunteer is often good for people's well-being and is an important part of their recovery. But if there is unwelcome pressure or tensions, these activities can be less helpful.

Partners in West Dunbartonshire have tried to build in steps to enable people who have used mental health services and who are volunteers to get positive benefits. They wanted to check that individual volunteers are getting the support they need.

The Consumer Issues Group, which brings together members of the Mental Health Forum, NHS staff and local authority staff, decided to consult with volunteers about their support needs. They asked Outside the Box to carry out this project for them. Outside the Box is an independent community development support organisation which has worked with local mental health groups in West Dunbartonshire and in other parts of Scotland. The members of the Consumer Issues Group gave advice on the planning and completion of the project.

Funding was provided by the West Dunbartonshire Partnership and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde through the West Dunbartonshire Mental Health Awareness Group.

These are the aims of this project.

- Describe the roles and tasks people are undertaking, what the good aspects of these are for the people taking part and any concerns or difficulties they face.
- Establish what support people needs have, in their volunteering roles or in other aspects of their lives which affect their health and well-being.
- Suggest ways in which these support needs can be met.

In early 2007 there were around 40-50 people taking on a range of volunteer tasks. The main activities were

- organising self-help groups
- being a peer advocate
- being on the committee for user-led projects
- being a member of a Mental Health Forum
- participation in partnership groups or committees with the Council or NHS to represent the views of other people who have mental health problems.

There is a summary report which includes a set of action points. These will enable individual volunteers, other people in those projects and staff in local authorities and the NHS to support volunteers and help them to make a contribution and to keep well.

The full report is available from Outside the Box and from West Dunbartonshire Council. It includes information about the local organisations and formal committees.

Both reports are on the Outside the Box website: www.otbds.org

Contacts for more information

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