Approaches and challenges of user engagement
Questions addressed

• What are the motivations for spin-outs to encourage user involvement?
• What are the structures in place to facilitate engagement?
• How influential are users in decision-making?
• How has spinning out and mutual ownership influenced engagement, if at all?
Motivations for involving users

• External drivers
  – Regulators (e.g. CQC)
  – Commissioners, contract requirements

• Commercial drivers
  – Efficiencies, customer focus, personalised budgets

• Social purpose and co-operative ethos
  – Community focus, empowerment of users, local democracy
## Types of user involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of involvement</th>
<th>Number of cases (30 total)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service user forum</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users as members or shareholders</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither of the above</td>
<td>9</td>
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- At least half of cases have some sort of user forum – but large variation in how these work in practice
- User membership does not necessarily correlate with high degree of perceived influence
Cultures of involvement

- Consultation/ informal discussions: incl. surveys, feedback
- Co-governance: User representation in governance
- Co-production: direct participation in personalised services
- Involvement in service decisions: user forums, etc.
User influence/ power

- ‘User-led/focused/centred’ organisations
- Empowerment – users as experts by experience
- Choice – users as consumers

- “They don’t do anything without asking the forum first. We’re on interview panels, everything. We are not lip service anymore.” (Service user)

- “The ideas aren’t ours. It’s when people come to us, they have a set of expectations and aspirations, ideas to make that happen. We don’t provide services anymore; we provide a service to that person.” (Chief Executive)
Issues/ barriers

- Resistance from staff
- Disconnect – lack of feedback
- Tokenism
- ‘Usual suspects’

“We were hoping that information from this group would be fed into various meetings and then into the board. It’s not happening at the moment.” (Service user)

“I think perhaps when we were in the NHS we were very proactive or tried to be more proactive. I think as we moved over, things have fallen behind or were lost along the way.” (Service user)
Conclusions

• Issue of staff vs user ownership and empowerment

• Culture of involvement is more important than structures (but this doesn’t mean structures don’t matter)

• Motivations for involving users often determine the degree of user power/influence