

Authentic Voice Deep Dive Whole System Working

May 2022



**Authentic
Voice**

Embedding
Lived Experience
in Scotland

Introduction

Authentic Voice: Embedding Lived

Experience in Scotland is a partnership project from SafeLives, the Improvement Service, and Resilience Learning Partnership, working together with survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and other forms of complex trauma. The project aims to help local authorities and partners develop

safe, meaningful and trauma-informed processes that ensure survivors' voices influence and shape services, systems and pathways of support in local communities across Scotland. The project is overseen by the SafeLives Authentic Voice Panel and is also supported by the National Trauma Training Programme.

Speakers

Shumela Ahmed presented on Resilience Learning Partnership's work embedding lived experience through trauma informed and responsive approaches.

Watch here →

Sophie Gwyther and **Melanie Hyatt** presented on lived experience approaches within Dundee City Council's Protecting People structure.

Watch here →



This was the first in the series of deep dive events bringing together stakeholders from across different policy agendas to discuss the extent to which their work is currently shaped by people with lived experience of GBV and other experiences of trauma, and identify key opportunities to work together to ensure this happens in a joined-up, person-centred way in the future. This workshop aimed to:

-  Explore how a whole systems approach can be taken to **embedding lived experience** of GBV and trauma into local system and service design processes.
-  Identify examples of good practice in embedding a cross-policy, **trauma informed** approach to service design which is informed by lived experience; and
-  Consult on the current challenges and barriers to embedding lived experience in a high quality and sustainable way and identify the tools, support and resource needed to overcome these challenges/ barriers.

This particular deep dive was focusing on identifying key barriers/ challenges that organisations are facing in trying to collaboratively develop processes to empower people with lived experience to have influence in decision making. Whilst participants were not specifically recruited for their own lived experience, we recognise that there were attendees who have experiences of GBV and trauma. These discussions were also informed by the case study examples provided by the speakers listed below, which focused on current examples of lived experience work, and the ways survivors of GBV and trauma have been involved in co-design and co-production.

EMBEDDING LIVED EXPERIENCE

In the context of this project, 'Lived Experience' work means ensuring people with lived experience of GBV and trauma are able to provide feedback on their experiences of services/systems, and be meaningfully involved in decision making processes to help systems/ services implement changes. This also involves power sharing and recognising that leaders, experts by profession and experts by experience all have different expertise about what works and what doesn't in supporting people to recover from their experiences.

TRAUMA INFORMED

Being 'Trauma Informed' means being able to recognise when someone may be affected by trauma, collaboratively adjusting how we work to take this into account and responding in a way that supports recovery, does no harm and recognises and supports people's resilience.

More info [here](#)

Key Messages

The following points were key themes throughout the discussions at this session:



At present, participants felt there is a **lack of buy in from leadership** to embed lived experience of GBV and trauma into systems and services, and a limited understanding of the benefits of undertaking work to do this safely and effectively.



There is currently a **lack of guidance or resources** on how to undertake work to embed lived experience in a way that is safe and empowering for both people with lived experience and staff. There is a need for this to be addressed through both training and sharing guidance on aspects of lived experience work, for example, how to remunerate those involved.



Examples of good practice **highlight the benefits of meaningful engagement with people with lived experience**, and there needs to be more focus on how co-design and co-production works for those involved to support embedding this approach into systems and services.



Working together with other organisations, through **partnership working and/or utilising a network of interested and experienced organisations**, would help to provide support to those looking to undertake lived experience work.



It is crucial when undertaking lived experience work to **ensure that those with lived experience are provided with a high level of practical and emotional/psychological support**, and that staff members with their own lived experience are recognised and respected.



Organisations need guidance/support to ensure they are reaching out to and **providing sufficient support to those with a variety of identities and experiences** to ensure that there are a diverse range of voices involved.

What are the current barriers to embedding lived experience into systems and services in an effective and empowering way?

Resources & Capacity

Lack of resources and dedicated funding, and limited capacity due to staff workloads impact the ability for staff to give sufficient time to embed lived experience effectively and safely.

Learning & Confidence

There is limited understanding and confidence about how to embed lived experience into work in a safe, meaningful and trauma-informed way.

Good Practice & Tools

No clear structures or good practice examples to follow, such as how to pay lived experience participants and how to manage demands on their time.

Addressing Risk & Safety

Lack of good practice processes that take into account the impact of trauma on relationships and power dynamics – support is needed to address risks such as retraumatising people and supporting staff wellbeing within services.

Diversity & Plurality*

Concerns over ensuring diversity and inclusivity, such as the need to initiate engagement with people who may face additional barriers to engaging with co-design processes, including women with multiple and/or complex needs and/or protected characteristics.

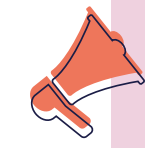
Leadership & Culture Change

Lack of understanding from leadership around the benefits of power sharing among leaders, experts by profession and experts by experience.

* We are using the term plurality in this project as we aim to ensure our resources/ activities support stakeholders to recognise and include plural experiences in participation work. This involves recognising and reflecting different and diverse experiences and positions, rather than presenting these in siloes or as one cohesive narrative. This language was introduced to our project by the work of Chayn - www.chayn.co

What actions would support joined-up/whole system working and help to overcome some of the challenges identified in embedding lived experience into system and service design?

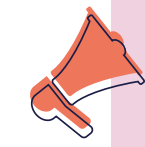
Participants were then asked what actions they believed would help to overcome some of the challenges that they had identified in the previous question and help services to undertake lived experience work. The actions they suggested were grouped into the following categories:



Systems and services working with survivors of GBV and trauma should be adequately funded and resourced, incorporating lived experience in a variety of ways. Flexibility, innovation and meeting people ‘where they are at’ is key.



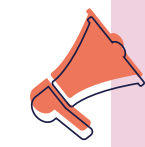
Accessible training on lived experience engagement and peer support for staff to build the capacity for trauma-based approaches across workforces.



Working collaboratively with other allies and organisations. For example, one participant suggested developing a national network of professionals working to embed lived experience in system and service design.



Providing adequate support to those with lived experience. This includes practical support, such as having a budget for creche expenses and ensuring all information is accessible, and emotional/psychological support like taking the time to build relationships and having regular supervisions.



Ensuring that systems and services are co-designed with people with lived experience and allowing staff with lived experience to be a key resource, if they choose to be visible and participate.



Changing the internal culture of organisations so that staff are more aware of the benefits of lived experience work. Specific ideas included doing an internal assessment to ensure that everyone reflects the same values.

Do you have any examples of good practice in your own organisation/ service/area of effective survivor participation/lived experience work?



Designing research projects so that they are co-produced with the group whose experiences are being researched.



Gathering feedback from people with lived experience and keeping an 'open door' in order to shape the service and strategic direction.



Undertaking research to share stories about people's experiences.



Putting a gendered lens on work, such as within guidance on how to work with refugees.

One action you could commit to following today's workshop which would support embedding lived experience in your work.



Start discussions with colleagues and managers.



Look into evidence documents and examples of good practice.



Connect with others to look into partnership opportunities.



Embed best practice working into the organisation (specifically a trauma-informed approach).



Reach out to diverse groups of people with lived experience, ensuring that quieter voices are included.



Take the time to form relationships and provide emotional support with those with lived experience.

Tools and resources needed to support embedding lived experience into system and service design, identified by participants:



Training for staff in co-design and co-production and safe lived experience work



Resources to support staff wellbeing and safety when undertaking lived experience work



Standardised guidance, e.g., on remuneration and human rights duties and accountabilities



Training for lived experience participants



Dedicated, realistic and sustainable funding



Cross-sector network of organisations interested in this work



Tools supporting lived experience participants with communication difficulties

Get in touch...

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[Click here](#)

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