



Communications co-production panel information

What is the purpose of the communications co-production panel?

- To enable people with lived experience of mental health conditions to co-produce and help shape our communications work.
- To ensure equality of opportunity for people from all communities to access mental health support with West Sussex Mind by using appropriate communications to reach them and to let them know we are here for them.
- The panel is a safe space to put forward ideas to improve and innovate in our communications, including social media messaging, website content and printed communications.
- The work of the panel will build on existing work around accessibility and inclusivity of communications, and West Sussex Mind's equality, diversity, inclusion and equity work.

Who are we hoping to recruit to the panel?

Since early 2024, West Sussex Mind has funded the setting up and running of a the communications co-production panel.

We are looking to recruit more volunteers to our existing core group. Ideally we would like groups to be up to 10 people; at the moment, our groups vary from two to five people per meeting.

The group is a mix of West Sussex Mind current/previous service users, and people who have never used the charity's services.

There is no need for experience in communications, as we work thoroughly through each project together and we encourage all perspectives and opinions.

The common bond is that all members have lived experience of mental health conditions – whether that is themselves or caring for others, whilst living in West Sussex.

As a panel member, what will I be asked to do?

Panel members discuss and give feedback to the chair about digital and printed communications. The lived experience of panel members provides understanding of how to improve services, including the West Sussex Mind website and Facebook page.

Members of the group will be volunteers recruited from our existing service users, as well as from the wider community, who have not used services; they help us understand more about why people might not be engaging with our services and what action West Sussex Mind can take.

The panel chair has mental health lived experience and has used services. The panel chair is linked to the West Sussex Mind communications team and feeds back to the panel regularly. The chair of this group is a paid position.

The role will include:

Co-producing ways to communicate and engage with West Sussex Mind's audience, and people who might not be using its services. This could be reflected in social media, website content and printed communications work.

Across all of the projects, the panel will be asked to think about ways we can ensure that communications work is accessible, inclusive and relevant.

This is a great opportunity to join a group that wants to see how we can take our communications work to the next stage.

Examples of recent projects

<u>Project</u>	<u>Focus points from the panel</u>
Facebook messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language• Format• Key points• Accessibility
Images on social media and website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authenticity• Optimising visuals
Service user newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design• Readability• Content information
Facebook groups for service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraging inclusion• Improving engagement
Poster and flier review by location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design• Format• Key messages• Images

When will we meet and how much time will I need to commit to the panel?

We plan online meetings every four to six weeks, lasting between one and one-and-a-half hours with a break if needed. They are currently held on a Tuesday evening 6-7pm (however this is not set in stone and can work around attendees).

There will be some preparation, reading and thinking time in between. Members are asked to let the panel chair know if they can or can't attend, but we try to accommodate where possible. If members cannot attend, they are welcome to contribute via email or phone.

Currently our meetings are held online, however we can discuss this if more members would prefer to meet in person. This can be decided and reviewed by the panel. Any out of pocket travel costs will be reimbursed whenever we meet face to face and would be at one of our West Sussex Mind locations (Littlehampton, Worthing).

How is this work integrated into West Sussex Mind's communications work?

A major purpose is extending our reach and communicating to people we are not currently reaching, but should be. We want to ensure that our services and our existing and potential service users know that co-production is an integral part of our work through improvement.

The group's chair reports the panel's findings and collates work of the group to share with the communications team. There are regular meetings within the team to discuss development, planning and integration into West Sussex Mind's communications work.

Our work over the last year has influenced the broader West Sussex Mind communications work in key areas. For example,;

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Comms panel influence</u>
Service users newsletters	We helped improve the formatting of the service users newsletters to create a more uniform, accessible layout – increasing legibility and user readability.
Social media and website	We suggested neurodivergent-friendly tips including formatting and reviewing information posts, increasing informative posts on mental health conditions, and posting more feedback posts where readers can see their influence.
Images on website and blog	We fed back on the authenticity of images

	on the website, and how to improve this area to feel more personable from a lived experience perspective.
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These changes helped shape the communications work and we continue to see positive changes.

Our projects are informed by the communications work plan, an ongoing document written by the communications team and driven by the panel members. This is a mix of project suggestions from members and the wider West Sussex Mind team, which is shared with the panel when reviewing and updating our progress.

What do we mean by co-production?

The term co-production refers to a way of working where service providers and users work together to reach a collective outcome. The approach is value-driven and built on the principle that those who are affected by a service are best placed to help design it.

The key to co-production is that each member of the group has an equal voice and will feel safe and confident in the meeting space.

What other opportunities will there be?

Panel members can progress into other roles; this might include stepping up to be a future chair of this or other panels that are being set up, or volunteering roles in other areas.

All panel members will be offered training via West Sussex Mind. Any other training that is identified can be discussed with the communications manager. Members are welcome to take on as many volunteering opportunities as they like whilst attending the panel.

Current members have attended staff industry days with the communications team, writing articles reflecting on their own mental health experience and creating social media content. Other members remain keen attendees at West Sussex Mind groups whilst using support services.

There will also be opportunities to engage with national Mind and any communications workshops/meetings they organise.