The Trusts Equal Partners Strategy provides a vision for developing a culture of meaningful involvement and participation of all.

Our ambition is to develop and achieve partnerships which put service users, carers, partner agencies, public and staff views, experiences, needs and expert knowledge at the heart of what we do.

Through working together we are increasing opportunities to inform, consult, listen, involve and empower people in a variety of ways.

“No decision about me without me”

Our vision is to work for the wellbeing of the people we serve and be recognised as the best at what we do

Equal Partners is about….

- People being fully involved in positive choices about healthcare
- Participation in shaping and developing healthcare services
- Choice of services and how to access
- Greater say in how healthcare services are organised
- Much more say in how their personal care is delivered
- Better information on how they can stay well or manage their own illness
- High quality accessible information so that they can make informed choices.

“Empowered in this way they become co-providers and active participants in healthcare”

NHS England

Service users/patients/carers have had the opportunity to engage and get involved with the Trust through the Equal Partners Assembly Steering Group. This group has been operating as a strong platform in driving forward the Equal Partners agenda.

The Assembly are representative of 35 different organisations across the region. Members are passionate to ensure that patients and carers have a voice and have been active in a variety of ways over the last year. The purpose of the Equal Partners Assembly Steering Group is to:

- Tap into the skills and expertise of people who have lived experience of using healthcare and social care
- Provide a force of practical support to Equal Partners work
- Act as critical friends regarding Trust services
• Bring a reality check to discussions and debates from the perspectives of people who use services

• Show through example how equal partnerships with service users/patients and carers and the public can influence policies, procedures and practice.

The members of this group are now active volunteers. The majority of them are patients/service users and carers who have experienced services from the Trust; and therefore have first-hand experience of our services.

Equal Partners Assembly Steering Group

Winners of the Volunteers of the year Award 2015

The group have been actively involved in many initiatives in the Trust working alongside the Engagement Team to progress involvement and experience work. They have raised awareness through meeting with staff teams and voluntary organisations and have delivered presentations to empower staff in learning from peoples experiences.

Achievements include:

• Reviewing, examining and scrutinising relevant Trust strategic plans, objectives, processes and procedures
• Providing observations and commenting on Values and Behaviours Workshops, and the Community Mental Health Survey and Action Plan
• Developing the Equal Partners Strategy and 3 year Objectives
• Involvement in the Delivering Compassionate Care through Practice Education work, the Trust Clinical Strategy, Volunteer Policy, the Engagement Charter, Ward to Board Electronic Boards, and the Mental Health Care has changed events and PLACE visits
• Involvement in the recruitment of staff including the Chief Executive
• Supporting the development of Patient Stories
• Judging Q Awards alongside staff in the Trust.