



# **IJB Public Representative Network**

## **Improving Processes and Supporting Communities**

**Event Report**

**17 April 2018**

**Aberdeen Arts Centre**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018 the ALLIANCE held the third event aimed at supporting Integration Joint Board (IJB) public representatives. After previous events have been successful in identifying the various challenges faced by the public representatives and hearing about some of the good practices in supporting them, this event wanted to look at how some of these challenges might be addressed. The focus was on developing criteria for a role description and exploring methods/support for enacting process change within IJBs.

## **Role descriptions**

A theme that has emerged consistently across events with IJB public representatives is the lack of clarity about their role. A discussion was had around what people would like to see in a role description. We heard from people who had seen a role description when they joined the IJB and a carer who is involved in developing a role description for carer representatives. There was an interesting discussion within this about the notion of representation and how core this is to the role.

### **Representative or not?**

There is a debate around the role of the Public Representatives as being representative of a community and offering a demographically representative view of a whole community. Participants at this event felt uncomfortable with this notion for two core reasons:

- The 'community' is not well defined (more so for carers)
- It is extremely difficult to engage with the whole, or even a representative sample, of a community

However, in response to concerns around the ability of people to be representative, many IJBs have suggested that the Public Representatives are to sit as individuals with lived experience and offer insights based on that. There was a sense of unease about this role with people suggesting that there is a balance to be struck between being 'representative' and being an individual voice of lived experience on the IJB. It was suggested that the role of the Public Representative is to be the channel through which people can begin to influence decisions; for example, being the voice of a community of interest in the IJB. This is the role that the Public Representatives see themselves as fulfilling currently – but would like clarity on this as they require support in being able to connect with different communities looking to get their voice heard.

### **Channel of Communication**

People spoke of the potential for the public representative to be part of the dialogue between the IJB and local people. People felt as if there was not enough external information about the role of the IJB, how to get in touch and the work they are doing' something that is echoed across a number of Our Voice and ALLIANCE events that touch on integration. Therefore, it was thought that in making connections with community groups in order to feed information into the IJB, there is an opportunity to let people know about the work of the IJB.

## **Naïve Questioning**

The notion of naïve questioning was raised by a number of participants who commented that one of the ways they feel they have impact is by challenging organisational assumptions. The public representatives are able to play a role in scrutinising decisions in a way that is free from organisational bias and based in experiences from accessing services.

## **Support from the IJB**

The aim of developing a role description is to establish what Public Representatives are expected to do and ensure that the IJBs are providing the support required to fulfil the role. There were a number of examples of IJBs providing support to Public Representatives to fulfil their roles. These include:

- Having a briefing session before meetings so that people can ask questions about the papers to be discussed
- Appointing 2 people for each representative post to allow for substitution at meetings
- A key named contact at the HSCP that can support the Representatives with questions and queries

There were also examples of support facilitated by the IJBs that include:

- Forums that allow Representatives to link with wider communities
- Key workers hosted in the third sector to support Public Representatives

Different models of support suit different local needs and it was demonstrated that there is a lot of work to do to fill the gaps in support for Public Representatives but that there is a lot to learn from practices across Scotland.

The role of leadership from the IJB Chief Officer was raised with regards to providing and facilitating support to Public Representatives. Many attendees were complimentary of the accommodation from Chief Officers to change processes. Attendees agreed that it is important that the Chief Officers and more senior members of the IJB lead the way in giving the Public Representatives equality of esteem while also recognising their very different circumstances. One of the biggest difference in circumstance is that the Public Representatives are not employees and therefore do not have recourse to supervision and performance review regarding their work with the IJB. This puts them at a disadvantage with regards to accessing different areas of organisations that might help their work and knowing whether they are being effective.

## **How a facilitated network of IJB Public Representatives can offer support**

Having spent previous Network meetings discussing the challenges facing Public Representatives and identifying gaps in support for them; this event included discussion on the role a Network could play in supporting Public Representatives to have a bigger impact. There was general support for continuing the face to face meetings and for the benefits of meeting people and sharing experiences. However, the post-event evaluation revealed that alongside this, people were looking for a more proactive network that can offer capacity building collaborations.

### **Sharing Good Practice**

When discussing how people have been able to make changes to processes in their IJB there was a feeling that IJBs are generally receptive to ideas that support the Public Representatives. Therefore, it is the sharing of good practice and generating ideas that participants at this event saw as key to improving practice at IJBs.

Different methods for sharing ideas were discussed, including:

- Regular case studies
- Themed newsletter with ideas from different areas around a specific issue
- 'Day in the life' photo case studies to raise awareness of the work of Representatives
- Develop workshops derived from good practice

### **Capacity Building**

Many of the attendees spoke of feeling isolated in their role and felt that this Network could be a good source of practical support. Feedback from the post event evaluation saw comments such as:

- "More practical support needed and possibly workshops"
- "Something more practical, maybe some quick, basic training and more of a chance for reps working well to share how/why. Maybe they could design a workshop for the other reps?"
- "A bit more of a mix of talks and skill building workshops"

Therefore, there is work to do away from the network to identify good training/workshop opportunities that can help people with the challenges identified across all the events. Furthermore, there is scope to begin developing a training resource in collaboration with the Network and teams across the ALLIANCE and the Scottish Health Council, including the Third Sector Support team and Voices Scotland trainers.

### **Working with TSIs**

There was an interesting discussion over the role of local Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs). TSIs are responsible for support third sector organisations in a number of capacities, including engaging with integration structures. Carer and Service User Representatives at this event suggested that there could be an expanded role in

supporting them to access third sector organisations and, more crucially, the people these organisations work with, in order to hear their voices and feed them into the IJB. One of the biggest challenges facing Carer and Service User Representatives is being able to engage with different communities, they often see third sector organisations as a channel through which to communicate with them. Therefore, TSIs can play a role in promoting the role of the Representative and being more proactive in making these links. There are good examples of TSIs doing this and facilitating this. However, there is an opportunity to highlight these practices and promote them with TSIs.

### **Working with IJB Chief Officers**

Regarding above discussions about leadership from the IJBs, participants in this discussion suggested that there could be benefits in engaging with IJB Chief Officers more explicitly in this work. Raising awareness of the work that is done by the Public Representatives and the challenges that they face to Chief Officers has the potential of increasing the level of support, or the receptiveness for change, on the part of the IJB.

### **Next steps**

#### Interactive Workshops

- Explore available training that could be delivered as part of a workshop
- Begin looking at how a new set of training could be co-produced by the Network
- Plan a programme of workshops and meetings based on the above

#### Good practice sharing

- Design a method of identifying and collecting good practice examples to share
- Plan thematic newsletter
- Work with a member of the Network to trial a 'day in the life' photo essay

#### Online collaboration

- Begin sharing more online as a network
- Post the 'key points' of the Role Description and discuss – what is missing? What needs expanding?