



Fire Fighters
Charity



Service user voice and participation strategy



Why participation matters to us

Everything we do starts with the people we're here for — our fire family.

This strategy explains how your voice helps shape our services and our future as a charity.

By building stronger, more meaningful ways to involve you, we can design support that truly meets real-life needs and ensures we remain trusted, relevant and effective.

When we create with you, not for you, we make services that are better understood, better used, and better suited to your life.

This work is important to three of our core strategic priorities:

- Develop and improve services:
- Build engagement, relationships and partnerships:
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency:

Our Service User Participation Strategy began in late 2024, building on the strong foundations of our existing Service User Panel. We worked closely with service users, staff and external organisations to understand what meaningful participation looks like and how to embed it across everything we do.

The strategy has been shaped entirely by the voices and experiences of the people we support and will continue to evolve as we learn and grow together.

Our vision for service user participation

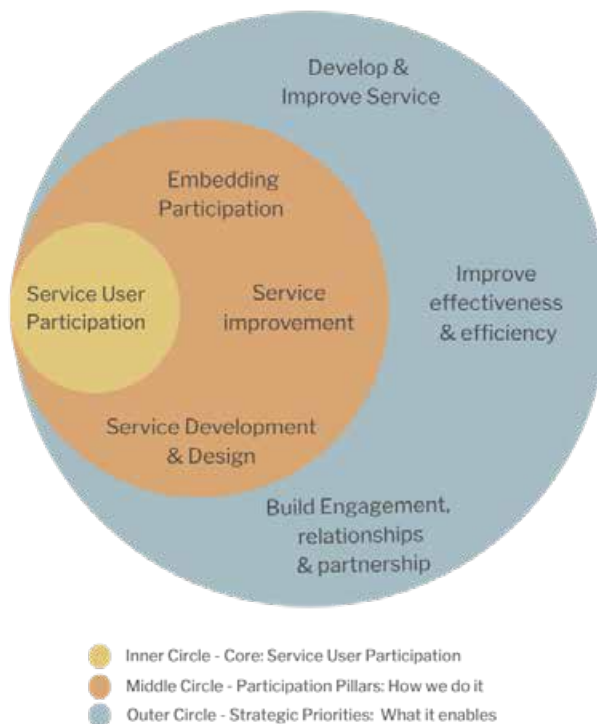
Our vision is to build a culture where service user participation is part of how we work every day. We want everyone we support to be able to get involved in shaping the charity in way that feels meaningful and accessible to them.

This means creating opportunities to listen, involve and work together. Whether that is helping to shape a new service, helping us to see where we can do things better, or sharing insight that strengthens our understanding, participation needs to be woven into everything like a golden thread.

We want our service user involvement to feel like a natural part of the work that we do, something that strengthens trust, builds connections and keeps us focused on what really matters to the people that we are here for.

How Service User Participation connects to our Strategic Priorities

Service user participation is at the heart of how we work. It is supported by the three core pillars of participation and drives our ability to meet our strategic goals.



Three pillars for participation

Our work is guided by three core areas. These pillars help ensure that participation happens meaningfully and consistently across all parts of the organisation.

1. Service development and design

We involve service users early, before decisions are made — using your insights to guide how new services are developed or existing ones adapted.

That might include:

- Focus groups or informal conversations to understand what matters most
- Using lived experience to shape early ideas
- Checking that new services work for the people who'll use them

2. Service improvement

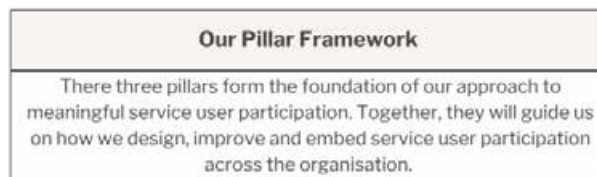
We use feedback to make our services stronger and more responsive. That means not just collecting feedback, but acting on it — identifying patterns, highlighting what works well and tackling areas where we can improve.

Your input helps us keep learning and evolving.

3. Embedding participation

We're making participation part of everyone's role — not just one team's responsibility.

From planning tools and project templates to regular training and support, we're giving staff the confidence and practical tools to involve service users at the right time, in the right way.



Different ways to take part

We know people want to contribute in different ways, depending on their time, energy and interests. That's why we've created three flexible pathways for involvement. You can move between them whenever you like.

1. Ad hoc participation

Quick, low-commitment opportunities such as surveys, polls or one-off discussions.

Perfect for sharing views without an ongoing time commitment.

2. Short-term participation

Join focused projects (lasting around two to six months) to help shape or test something specific — such as a new resource or service. Ideal if you want to see how your ideas can directly influence change.

3. Long-term participation

Be part of regular panels or advisory groups that help guide our long-term direction.

This is about building relationships over time, helping us sense-check our thinking and stay focused on what matters most to our fire family.





Making sure everyone has a chance to be heard

We know that not everyone has the same opportunity to take part, so we're building a participation model that is flexible, accessible and shaped around people's lives.

Equity for us means doing what's needed to make involvement possible, not just available — creating spaces where everyone feels safe, respected and valued.

We're committed to hearing from the full diversity of our fire family, including LGBTQ+, Black, Asian and racially minoritised communities, and disabled and neurodivergent people, whose voices are too often missing from decision-making.

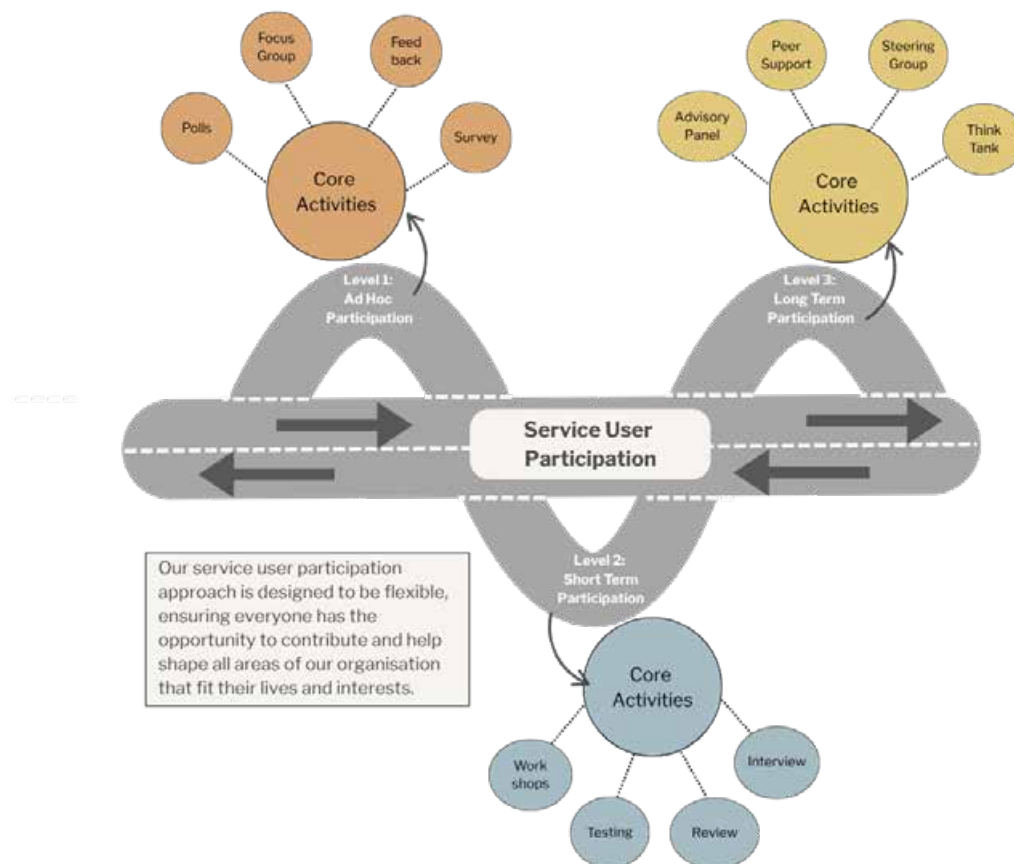
We'll offer a range of ways to get involved, use clear and inclusive communication, recognise people's contributions, and keep learning as we go — so everyone has a genuine opportunity to shape the charity and know that they belong in our fire family.

How we make it happen

Meaningful participation takes time, support and the right culture. We're investing in this because your insight helps us make better decisions, stronger services and a more responsive charity. We're making it part of everyday work by building it into team plans, giving our staff the tools and training they need, encouraging collaboration across teams, and continually learning and improving as we go.

Examples of how we're doing this include:

- **Building it into roles and plans:** Teams are supported to include participation in their work from the start.
- **Equipping staff:** Through toolkits, training and shared learning, we're giving people the skills and confidence to do this well.
- **Collaborating across teams:** Our Engagement, Impact, Digital and People and Governance teams are working together to make participation easier and more effective.
- **Reflecting and improving:** We'll regularly review how participation is working and make changes based on what we learn.



Measuring success

We'll know this approach is working when:

- Service users' voices are visible in decisions across the charity
- Feedback clearly leads to change
- More people are choosing to get involved and stay involved
- Our services continue to improve in quality, reach and relevance

We'll track participation activity, monitor feedback, and regularly report progress to our leadership team — keeping participation visible, accountable and evolving.

Ultimately, success means that participation feels natural, valued and worthwhile — for you and for the whole fire family.



Our promise

This is more than a strategy — it's our commitment to building genuine partnerships with the people we support.

Your experience, insight and ideas help us make better decisions, design better services and stay true to our purpose.

Together, we're creating a culture of listening, learning and collaboration that keeps our fire family strong, connected and well — during and after service.





Patron: His Majesty The King.

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