

USER VOICE

ONLY OFFENDERS CAN STOP RE-OFFENDING

JOB DESCRIPTION

Role:	Peer Researcher
Location:	London based, including nationwide travel
Responsible to:	Research and Evaluation Manager
Objective:	The Peer Researcher will consult, engage with and work with service users, providers, academics and healthcare staff to conduct research.
Hours:	3 days per week
Salary:	£20,000 - £25000 per annum pro rata, depending on experience (1 Year Fixed Term Contract subject to continuation of funding)
Holiday:	25 days per annum (pro rata for part time hours)
Probationary period:	The post is subject to a six month probationary period

USER VOICE

Why We Exist

We believe that the fundamental issue that causes the stubbornly high rates of re-offending and all the other associated problems is the 'us vs. them' culture.

Society feels frustrated with those who re-offend repeating cycles of behaviour and not engaging with rehabilitation services. Yet people with convictions feel marginalised by society, with rehabilitation services which are often inaccessible and unhelpful and a system that doesn't value their input.

Whatever the truth, we won't reduce crime unless we deal with this division. User Voice's core belief is that rehabilitation only happens when everyone in the criminal justice system shares responsibility for transforming the 'us vs. them' division into real collaboration.

Our Role

Our role is to improve rehabilitation through collaboration.

At User Voice we build the structures that enable productive collaboration between service users and service providers. We are able to do this because our work is led and delivered by ex-offenders. This gives us the special ability to gain the trust of, access to, and insight from people within the criminal justice system.

The entrenched exclusion of some of the people we work with can be a huge obstacle to service providers. The involvement of ex-offenders has many benefits, not least of which is the power of a narrative of success; working with ex-offenders can be a powerful way of motivating people who often have little self-belief that they can overcome the barriers they face. All the work User Voice has done suggests offenders want to talk to people who have 'walked in their shoes' and experienced similar life events.

What We Do

In order to achieve this we do the following:

- User Voice **Councils**, which provide a platform for service users to have a voice. They have been developed for use within prisons and in the community for probation, youth offending teams and other related services. Their democratic processes enable voices to be heard and focus on collective challenges and solutions.
- User Voice **consultations**, which are bespoke projects that help service providers and commissioners access, hear and act upon the insight of their users. These include research and specifically designed workshops and have ranged from working with drug users on recovery services, to engaging with excluded and vulnerable young people on the future of social work.
- User Voice **peer support**, sometimes, through the gate, which provide support for people in the community or those who are leaving custody; one-to-one sessions and peer-led groups give practical help and inspiration. Our supporters are uniquely placed to promote and ignite real change, as advocates and role models.

Impact

There are two sides to User Voice's impact:

1. Improving Services – with service user insight and experience, services can become more effective and accessible for hard-to-reach groups.

2. Promoting active citizenship – as service users engage with improving the services they access, they develop the skills and behaviours to become contributing members of society.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This is a fantastic opportunity to work in an innovative and growing charity. User Voice are looking for a dynamic, authentic and inspiring individual to join their Research Team. We advocate peer led research, undertaken by individuals with similar lived experience to the participants of our research.

User Voice seeks to appoint a Peer Researcher based in London, which will involve a significant amount of remote work. The Peer Researcher will assist the Research and Evaluation Team delivering engagement activities for research projects, including topics around offending, anti-social behaviour, and mental health issues. Full training will be provided to undertake the work.

Core duties and responsibilities are detailed below. Please note that User Voice is a rapidly growing charity and all applicants must be prepared to work flexibly and undertake new responsibilities as requested to support the development of the charity as a whole.

The Peer Researcher will be responsible for the following:

- Engaging with offenders and ex-offenders.
- Conducting interviews.
- Collecting and entering data.
- Managing project participant case load and arranging engagement opportunities.
- Completing reports.
- Liaising with academics, healthcare providers, and Criminal Justice System agencies.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential:

1. Personal experience of the criminal justice system as a service user
2. Ability to communicate with a wide range of people at all levels
3. Interest in research
4. Computer literate to a good standard
5. Ability to be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the service
6. Ability to accept and maintain confidentiality
7. Commitment to Equal Opportunities
8. A 'can do' attitude
9. Well organised with the ability to prioritise tasks effectively and meet deadlines amid a range of competing demands

Desirable:

1. Experience of social research techniques or counselling skills in any environment.
2. Experience of working with offenders or on mental health issues.
3. Good knowledge of the charity sector and/or criminal justice.
4. Good IT skills, with experience of using spreadsheets, databases, and mobile technology.

FURTHER INFORMATION**Equality and diversity**

User Voice welcomes applications from ex-offenders and from all sections of the community regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age or disability.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

This post is subject to an enhanced criminal record disclosure check via the new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) processes, as the post holder will have regular unsupervised access to vulnerable adults. The purpose of the check is to ensure that the nature of the applicant's criminal record, considered alongside evidence of the applicant's rehabilitation, does not indicate that his or her employment in this role would put current service users at risk.