Community Development Case Study – co-design of John Taylor Hospice’s Volunteer Strategy

Introduction

When developing our volunteer strategy we wanted to move beyond simply engaging and consulting with staff and volunteers. Instead, it was our desire to ensure paid staff and volunteers had a role in co-designing our three-year Volunteer Strategy.

Methodology

To achieve this we held four co-design workshops designed to ask our staff and volunteers about their experience of volunteering. A number of questions were posed to the group relating to three different themes – the structure of volunteer services, the support provided to staff and volunteers by the team and how volunteering could grow in the future. Each of these questions were deliberately designed to be open-ended to provide qualitative data.

Each workshop was planned to last for a maximum of 90 minutes - although sessions could be extended to facilitate more in-depth discussions. Staff and volunteers were also made aware that they could provide feedback by email or arrange a one-to-one meeting with the Head of Community Engagement and Volunteer Resource if they could not attend the meetings.

Attendees were split into three equal groups, ideally comprised of individuals from different hospice areas, and were seated at a table covered with a paper. Each table was based around one of the three themes and the paper would have both the theme, and the questions associated with it, detailed on the paper.

Each group would be given 15 minutes to discuss each theme and record their responses. At the end of the 15 minutes, the groups would move to a different table and repeat the process. When each group had visited each of the tables, a group discussion took place looking at the feedback and adding further comments as appropriate. A fourth sheet of paper was provided for attendees to add any further information they felt was important that did not necessarily fall into the existing themes already discussed.

Outcomes

In total 23 paid staff and volunteers took part in the process. This included 10 members of paid staff and 13 volunteers. The feedback from these sessions had a significant impact on our strategy, allowing us to develop a three-year action plan of targets we wanted to achieve in addition to a set of volunteering principles for the organisation to adhere to.

Our co-design workshops have also had an impact on our levels of volunteer involvement, with volunteers becoming increasingly engaged with activities outside of their day-to-day volunteering role including fundraising, monthly volunteer get-togethers and helping us shape and design hospice services.

Head of Community Engagement and Volunteer Resource Mark Jones - March 2019