

# Voice, Participation and Co-Production Statement

## Principles

This statement applies to the Board of Trustees, employees, and volunteers within The Bond.

The Bond Board is committed to encouraging, supporting, and developing opportunities for our beneficiaries to have their voices heard. We value their lived experiences and believe their views on what will make a difference to their lives should be used to inform the design, development, and evaluation of services. Having conversations with people who have used our services can be an empowering moment for all involved.

This approach helps to ground discussions in reality and encourages a person-centred, beneficiary perspective throughout everything that we do. This commitment requires all Board of Trustee members, employees, and volunteers to encourage and support user involvement and to participate in co-produced activities with beneficiaries, where appropriate.

The Bond Board believes that services that reflect and take into account the experience, needs and wishes of their users are more likely to be effective in achieving better outcomes for those who are homeless and/or living in poverty in the Private Rented Sector and that beneficiaries are the best or right persons to determine how those needs should be met.

The purpose of this statement is to confirm The Bond Board's commitment to developing a consistent and committed approach to user involvement across our services and to working towards making beneficiary involvement and co-production an integral component of organisational activity.

Co-production' means delivering services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families, and their neighbours (New Economics Foundation). At The Bond Board, this means moving beyond consultation towards shared influence and, where appropriate, shared decision-making. Beneficiaries and stakeholders contribute not only their experiences, but also help shape priorities, interpret learning, and influence organisational strategy.

In addition to supporting organisational values and objectives, this statement reinforces our commitment to build on local experience and national evidence that demonstrates that genuine user involvement and a Co-Production approach can positively:

- Promote the self-esteem and personal growth of those who take part.
- Raise beneficiary expectations.
- Promote partnerships to improve service quality.
- Facilitate the development of skills and experience which are valued by beneficiaries.
- Awaken us to ideas and needs which we may not have thought of ourselves.
- Encourage the growth of peer support networks instead of just professionals as the best means of transferring knowledge and capabilities.
- Allow our services to become catalysts and facilitators rather than simply providers.
- Devolve real responsibility, leadership and authority to beneficiaries and encourage self-organisation rather than direction from above.

We are committed to continually strengthening our approach to co-production. Building on our established engagement work, initiatives such as *Our Voice Our Choice* and *Our Voices – Our Future* create deeper opportunities for beneficiaries, communities, and stakeholders to shape

not only our services but the future direction of the organisation.

Through these approaches, we are working to ensure that our organisational development, including our 5-year strategy, is genuinely co-produced, reflecting lived experience, shared learning, and collective decision-making.

## **Approach**

The Bond Board is committed to developing opportunities for beneficiary involvement and co-production at all stages of a person's contact with the organisation, where appropriate. Beneficiary involvement may be related to a person's individual support, the organisation or making representation to other organisations or bodies on The Bond Board's behalf.

We will enhance existing opportunities and commit to developing new ways in which beneficiaries can have the opportunity:

- To be able to have a say in and make informed choices about the individual support they receive.
- To have information available about their services and rights, including complaints, boundaries, and confidentiality etc.
- To have a say in and be able to influence The Bond Board's service development and its governance via participation, engagement, research, and consultation.
- To have appropriate and supported opportunities to volunteer and apply for employment at The Bond Board.

In developing our approach to beneficiary engagement and co-production, The Bond Board acknowledges that we work with a varied beneficiary group who possess a range of strengths and needs and who are often at a point of crisis in their lives when using our services.

To account for this, we have developed an accessible, community based, safe space via our 'Quid's In' Coffee mornings where all beneficiaries and others in the community can drop-in as they choose to access Bond Board services.

Our approach recognises 'Quid's In' sessions as a major focal point for developing beneficiary engagement and co-production opportunities, along with our Migrant Support Service drop-in, which also reaches under-represented groups who are at particular risk of inequality and discrimination.

As such, we will ensure that an ethos of inclusivity underpins a range of creative approaches designed to facilitate appropriate co-production activities at these drop-ins and that we take a test and learn approach to ensure opportunities are appropriate and accessible for as many beneficiaries as possible. We acknowledge that people in crisis may have limited resources to spare for beneficiary engagement and may choose to dip in and out of activities and opportunities. We will ensure that we take a flexible approach, allowing for the needs of our beneficiaries and recognising that even limited or inconsistent engagement is valuable.

We will also take into account the skills and resources available to Trustees, the leadership team, employees, and volunteers when designing and developing co-produced activities and ensure that they are appropriately trained, so they understand what co-production is and how to make it happen and be involved.

*Our Voice Our Choice* is The Bond Board's evolving framework for embedding co-production across all areas of our work. It brings together beneficiaries, employees, volunteers and partners to explore lived experience, identify priorities and co-design responses. As part of this approach, *Our Voices – Our Future* uses creative, story-led methods to create safe and accessible spaces where people can share their experiences in ways that feel meaningful to them. This includes flexible, low-pressure participation and opportunities for ongoing reflection and feedback.

This work is not only about gathering stories, but about making sense of them together. Through shared reflection, feedback loops and collaborative sensemaking, participants are supported to influence how their experiences are understood and used.

The learning generated through these approaches directly informs service development and is a key part of our “twin track” approach to organisational planning, where lived experience insights and organisational priorities are developed alongside one another and brought together to shape our future direction.

Through this, we are working to co-produce our 5-year strategy with those who access, deliver, and are impacted by our services.

### **Intended Outcomes of Our Approach**

We will take action by exploring ways to address issues and develop solutions and use the lessons learned from beneficiary engagement and co-produced activities to inform how we shape and develop services.

We will seek to influence positive change for our beneficiaries by sharing learning with key stakeholders and policy makers.

We will draw on the experiences of everyone involved to work together with other groups and organisations in our communities.

We will encourage and seek opportunities to collaborate with others.

We will co-produce organisational strategy, ensuring that lived experience, community insight and stakeholder perspectives directly shape our 5-year planning and future priorities.

We will develop more meaningful and inclusive ways for people to contribute, recognising that participation may vary over time and valuing all forms of engagement.