

**Talking Mats®:  
Extending the reach into goal setting practices  
for Health and Social Care Staff in Edinburgh.**



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**June 2011**

**An easy read version of this report is also available**

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## **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to acknowledge the contribution of all the health and social care professionals within Craighall and Firrhill Day Care Centres who completed their Talking Mats training programme, together with the service users who supported their experience and learning.

Further thanks to all participants who proceeded to the Goal Setting phase of the project and who were instrumental in implementing goal setting using Talking Mats within the two Day Care Centres.

This project would not have been possible without the support of Day Centre Deputy Managers, Gillian Bonnar and Paul Merchant, and Day Centre Officer Michael Wilson for his role in facilitating the role of the service user evaluators.

Special thanks to the service users who supported the project evaluation:  
Zoe Caven, George Foxtan, David Hart, Kirsty Reid, Anne McFarlane and Alex Wilson.

Not least, we would like to thank Adult Community Speech and Language Therapy Manager, Michelle Brogan for her vision in promoting innovative, multi agency partnership.

Grateful thanks to NHS Education Scotland for making this service innovation and development possible.

## Executive Summary

### Background

Goal setting with people with Long Term Conditions can be problematic because clients can find it difficult to understand the rehabilitation process and how they can participate in it. Clients with Long Term Conditions may have communication difficulties which can be an additional barrier to active participation. For the purposes of this report, where we refer to Long Term conditions, this is taken to include clients both with and without communication difficulties.

### Project Remit

This project delivered Talking Mats training to health and social care professionals working within two Day Care Centres within Edinburgh CHP. Taken together with NHS Education Scotland funded training which had taken place in 2010 (1), it delivered a quorum of staff now trained in this innovative and highly versatile tool for facilitating communication and decision making.

Of those trained, 19 staff received additional training in goal setting with 25 service users, using a comprehensive set of Talking Mats symbols, designed around the WHO-ICF (World Health Organisation- International Classification of Functioning) (2,3).

At the same time these staff, together with six service users were also trained to use a service user Involvement Measure which would form the basis of the project evaluation. Implementation of goal setting using Talking Mats proceeded over a three month period at the end of which the Involvement Measures for 25 goal setting sessions were collated.

The following key outcomes were delivered:

- The embedding of Talking Mats as a tool to support self management of long term conditions.
- The enabling of person centred goal setting practices within the two Day Centres.
- The instigation of project evaluation by service users.

Based on the qualitative and quantitative results, it is clear that Talking Mats can help people with long term conditions to feel more involved in goal setting and that both service users and staff believe it to be a valuable tool which they wish to continue using.

### Recommendations

This project delivers the following recommendations:

1. Goal setting using the Talking Mats framework should be further supported and integrated by appropriate policy/ service delivery revision in the two Day Centres in this project and service users should work in partnership to set their own goals.
2. Talking Mats training should become a core competency for continuing professional development for Health & Social Care Staff working with clients with LTC.
3. Service users should become more involved in service evaluation.
4. The model of training and Service User Involvement used in this project should be extended beyond day centres to a wider range of community & hospital services.
5. Talking Mats training should become accessible to more staff and service users through different modes of technology such as on-line training and iPad Application
6. Day centres and other organisations should consider developing an Accredited Trainer scheme within their teams to further sustain the use of Talking Mats.

## Background to Project

In practice, goal setting with people with Long Term Conditions can be problematic because clients can find it difficult to understand the rehabilitation process and how they can participate in it. Communication difficulties can be an additional barrier to active participation.

Talking Mats is a low-tech, visual communication framework which uses picture symbols to facilitate interaction. Talking Mats has a strong evidence base in enabling service users to express views and opinions more effectively and to make decisions regarding key areas in their lives (4,5,6,7). It offers the unique advantage of making visual the thought processes which underpin decision making, as well as delivering a visual representation of a service user's final outcomes/decisions at any one point in time. A full description of Talking Mats can be found in Campbell and Strachan (2010) (1).

Talking Mats framework has an important contribution to make to supporting the philosophy and implementation of the principles underpinning the Self Management Strategy for Long Term Conditions in Scotland (2008) (8). This strategy recognises two key components to successful implementation and uptake of a self management approach:

- specific training for professionals to develop their capacity to deliver a self management approach and
- service user acquisition of problem solving skills.

In 2010, NHS Lothian Adult Community Speech and Language Therapy Department, with the support of NHS Education Scotland, successfully introduced Talking Mats into two Day Centres within Edinburgh (1). A total of fifteen Health and Social Care staff were trained to use Talking Mats as a readily available tool to support their service users to self manage a range of long term conditions. In addition to the delivery of a high quality training experience in which all participants achieved basic competency in using the Talking Mats framework, the project delivered the following capacities recognised as key to a self management approach (9):

- Enhanced communication skills for use with people with long term conditions.
- Enhanced working relationships with service users with long term conditions.
- Improved range of accessible tools for use with service users with long term conditions.

Following the success of the 2010 project, NHS Education Scotland awarded further funding to

- extend the reach of the original training and
- to support sustainability of the use of Talking Mats within the Day Centres.

A key outcome of the original 2010 project had been the identification of future uses of Talking Mats for people with long term conditions. Both Day Centres had identified a strong impetus to develop the use of Talking Mats to support goal setting practices with service users with long term conditions. Staff were seeking to better facilitate reviews and to better enable service users to determine their priorities for service provision.

Further training for those staff members yet to be trained in Talking Mats was considered essential in order to support maximum uptake and consistency in using Talking Mats to support people with long term conditions.

Advanced training in Goal Setting using Talking Mats would be made available to all trained staff to extend the role and sustainability of Talking Mats within the day Centres.

In addition, one of the challenges identified from the original 2010 project had been insufficient scope to canvas service user views on their experience of using Talking Mats. With this in mind an Involvement Measure which would capture the experience of both service users as well as staff was introduced.

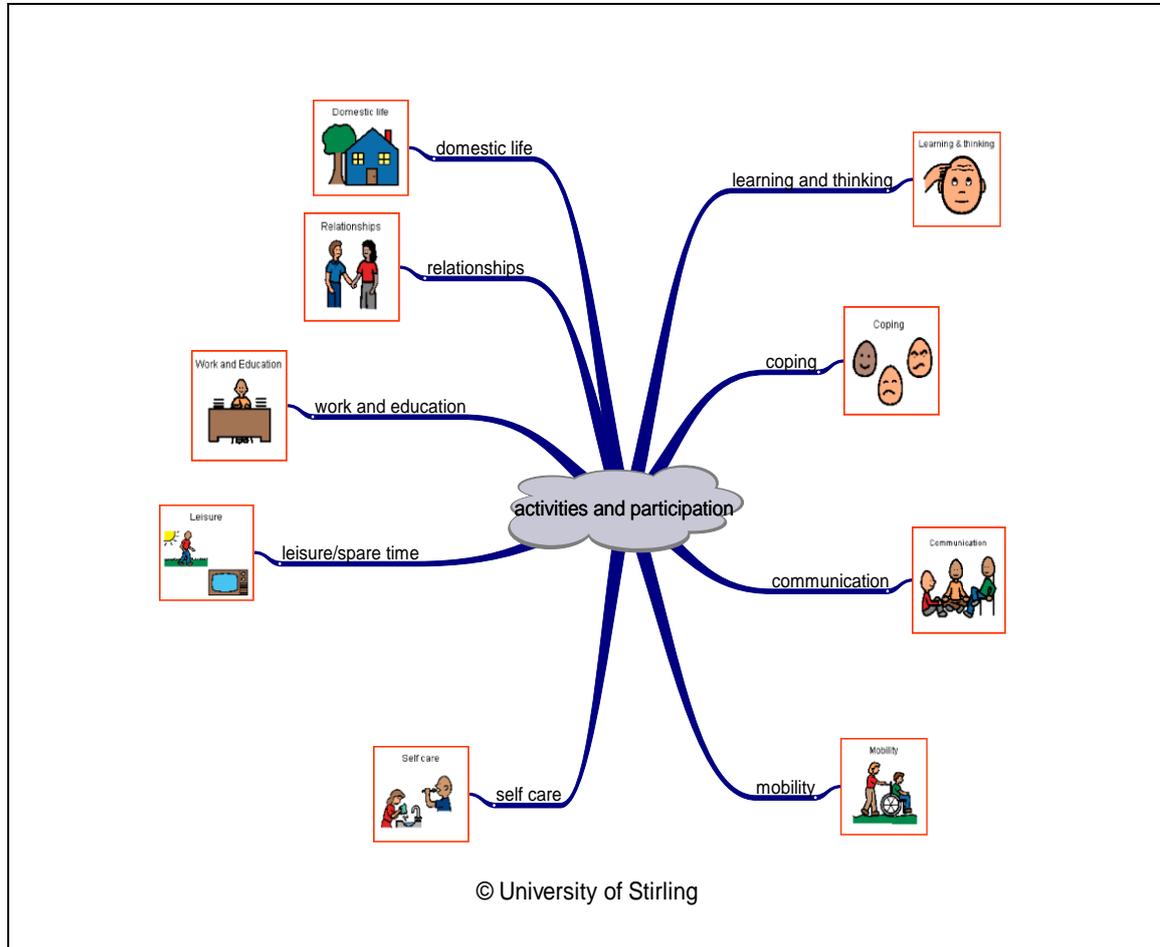
### **Goal Setting using the WHO-ICF and Talking Mats**

The Talking Mats Research and Development Centre have done extensive work in examining ways to help staff support service users to be involved in setting their own goals (3,4). Their research has focused on the World Health Organisation International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health (WHO-ICF) (2).

The WHO-ICF aims to provide a standard language and framework for the description of the complete range of health-related states and experiences of health and is now being used both by researchers and clinicians (4,10). It provides a framework which helps staff to take a holistic view of the service user, taking into account environmental and personal factors and how these interact with each other. It provides health and social care professionals with a common language and a structured way of focusing interventions and has been associated with improved interdisciplinary working and a more systematic approach to assessment and intervention (11,12).

The WHO-ICF proposes nine different 'domains'. A 'domain' is a specific topic which represents an aspect of daily living. These domains/topics are a neutral list covering the full range of life areas, irrespective of the person's ability, age or culture. The Talking Mats team have adjusted the wording and converted the nine ICF domains/topics into symbols to make them easier to understand and to enable them to be used in conjunction with the Talking Mats framework (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The nine domains/topics from the Activities and Participation sections of WHO-ICF in graphic form.



These domains or 'topics' act as a good starting point to help people consider issues in their lives. As rehabilitation typically involves two or more topics, this model allows the person to focus on each topic, one at a time, and then consider their goals holistically by seeing their views on each topic as a composite picture on their completed mat.

The Talking Mats team have examined the domains and compiled 9 subsets with a total of 180 symbols (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Example list (subset):

<p><b>communication</b></p> 	<p>e.g. understanding</p> 	<p>writing</p> 	<p>communication with group</p> 
<p><b>mobility</b></p> 	<p>e.g. walking</p> 	<p>using transport</p> 	<p>lifting</p> 
<p><b>self care</b></p> 	<p>e.g. washing</p> 	<p>dressing</p> 	<p>exercise</p> 

When used in conjunction with the WHO-ICF Activities and Participation framework, Talking Mats gives structure for service users to consider and express their personal goals and to develop person centred goals to support self management of their condition.

### Project Plan

There is well established collaboration between the Talking Mats Research and Development Centre at Stirling University and the Adult Community Speech and Language Therapy Department at the Astley Ainslie Hospital, Edinburgh.

This current project was led and delivered by Yolanda Strachan who is an Adult Community Speech and Language Therapist and an accredited Talking Mats trainer and Joan Murphy who is a Speech and Language Therapist and the Research Manager at the Talking Mats Research and Development Centre.

### Aims

Quality Strategy (2010) recognises the “need to put people at the centre of care” and support the development of relationships which result in shared decision making and better outcomes for patients. Based on these principles and a desire to enhance person centred service delivery for clients presenting with communication impairment and long term conditions (13) the aims of this project were;

- to provide on-site, Talking Mats training to those staff who had been unable to attend the previous round of training.

- To develop and provide specific training and support resources for the implementation of Talking Mats as a goal setting tool within the two Lothian Day Centres.
- To provide an evaluation tool which would engage service users, as well as staff, as primary assessors in the evaluation of a pilot implementation of the use of Talking Mats for goal setting with service users with long term conditions.

### **Talking Mats training**

Between January and March 2011, the trainers (YS and JM) would deliver 2 complete programmes of Talking Mats training, to a further 20 health and social care staff from two Day Centre facilities in Lothian – Craighall and Firrhill. As previously, the training delivered is the prescribed training by the Talking Mats Research and Development Centre. This consists of a core curriculum of workshop and practical activities delivered over the course of two, half day training sessions, separated by a four week gap. Participants receive an acknowledgement of completion of the training course in the form of a recognised certificate from Stirling University. There is a requirement for participants to reach a basic level of competence in the use of Talking Mats by the end of the second session. To demonstrate this, each participant is required to compile a DVD clip of their use of Talking Mats and to show this to the training group. For the purposes of this project, participants would be asked to video themselves using Talking Mats with a service user. The DVD is completed in the planned four week break between the first and second sessions. (A full description of the training is available in Campbell and Strachan 2010, p9.) (1)

### **Goal Setting workshop**

On successful completion of the basic training, trained staff from both this and the previous 2010 project (1) would be eligible to attend a further 2 hour workshop to introduce goal setting using Talking Mats.

In addition staff would also be instructed in the use of an evaluation tool known as the Involvement Measure. The Involvement Measure is an accessible tool which has been developed at the Talking Mats Research and Development Centre and specially adapted for this project (Appendices 1 & 2). It comprises a set of seven questions designed to capture the qualitative experience of a shared communication, in this case the goal setting experience, as measured on a four point scale. The qualitative indicators include, for example, the importance to the service user of the topics being discussed, the service user's understanding of any explanations given and the service user's overall sense of having been able to express their views.

Between April and June 2011, staff who had attended the Goal Setting workshop would each aim to use Talking Mats to engage two service users in establishing their goals. Each Centre would be provided with three, comprehensive packs of goal setting symbols developed by the Talking Mats Centre for Research and Development using the WHO-ICF (World Health Organisation – International Classification of Functioning) framework. Each goal setting pack comprises symbol sets for the nine main topics and nine complete subsets.

### **Service user training**

It was felt to be crucial to involve service users as well as staff in the evaluation process of this project and in recording service user experience of goal setting using Talking Mats. This links into the LTC agenda of involving people with long term conditions in directing services and engaging them in service evaluation (8). A one hour workshop would be designed and delivered to a total of six service users (three in each Day Centre) accompanied by two members of staff (one from each day centre) to explain and teach them how to use the Involvement Measure evaluation tool. These six service users (known for the purposes of this report as Involvement Measure Interviewers) would be asked to administer the Involvement Measure to their peers after every goal setting session. The timing and location for the Involvement Measure interviews would be facilitated by the two staff members.

### **Evaluation Approach; data collection and analysis**

This project was evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods.

Qualitative evaluation was used to elicit participants' opinions of the two part Talking Mats training programme as follows;

- 1 from comments gathered and ratified by participants during the training sessions (Appendix 3).
- 2 from Post-It® note comments gathered from participants immediately after each training session (Appendix 4).
- 3 from evaluation forms sent out to staff by email after their final training session (Appendix 5).

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods were employed to capture service users' and staff experience of goal setting using Talking Mats as follows;

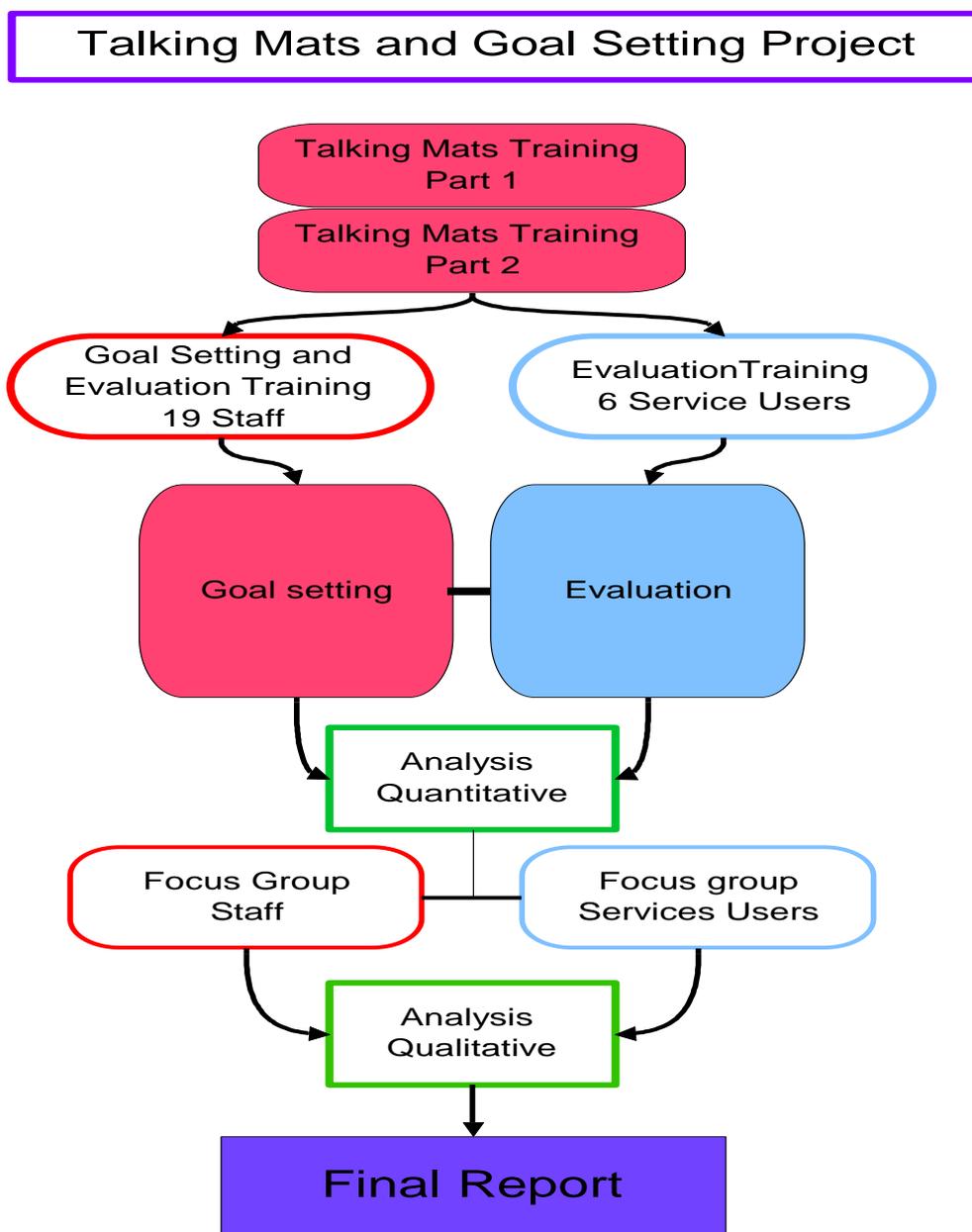
- 4 From completion of the Involvement Measure by both staff member and service user immediately after each goal setting session.
- 5 From Involvement Measure Interviewers and staff focus groups held during the final delivery phase of the project.

### Project Implementation

The Talking Mats training was hosted on site at Craighall Day Centre. Previously the training (2010) had been hosted at Firrhill Day Centre and it was hoped that by involving both centres as training hosts, this would facilitate more equitable uptake by staff across the two Day Centres. A total of 18 health and social care staff members participated in the Talking Mats training.

Figure 3 illustrates the sequential stages of the project delivery.

Figure 3 Sequential stages of the project delivery.



Both the goal setting workshop and service user Involvement Measure Interviewer training were hosted at Firrhill Day Centre as part of an in-service training day. It was originally planned to offer the Talking Mats goal setting training to a maximum of 16 staff, however, on request from the Day Centre deputy managers, the goal setting workshop was opened up to include any of the staff eligible through having successfully completed the original Talking Mats training. A total of 19 staff attended the Goal setting workshop. The workshop incorporated training in the Involvement Measure for staff together with detailed explanation of the Involvement Measure Interviewers' role in the evaluation process.

As planned, six service users, three from each centre, accompanied by two staff members, attended the service user Involvement Measure training.

Following a demonstration of a Talking Mat, each service user was given the opportunity to rehearse both introducing and reading aloud the Involvement Measure questions. All service users reported feeling confident in their assigned role as evaluators.

The focus groups, one for staff and one for Involvement Measure Interviewers were held at both Craighall and Firrhill Day Centres to make it easier for people to attend. The Craighall groups were facilitated by the project leads, JM and YS, whilst the Firrhill groups were facilitated by designated staff members who were equipped with the agreed, brief set of questions beforehand. Comments were scribed as the group progressed and ratified by group members at the end of each session.

### **Project Outcomes**

The following key outcomes were delivered:

- The embedding of Talking Mats as a tool for use by Health and Social Care staff to support self management for people with a long term condition.
- The enabling of person centred goal setting practices within the two Day Centres.
- Service User Involvement in project evaluation.

16 Health and Social Care staff, completed the basic Talking Mats training. When added to the 15 staff trained in 2010, a quorum of 31 staff trained in using Talking Mats was achieved across the two Day Centres.

As previously this training was very well received by staff with predominant feedback relating to what each staff member gained in terms of development of communication skills and improved relationships with their service users, as well as the perceived value of Talking Mats as an accessible tool for use with service users with long term conditions (Appendices 3-5).

In the period between April and June 2011, a total of 25 Talking Mats goal setting sessions were carried out by trained staff: 14 in Firrhill and 11 in Craighall. Each session was evaluated by the staff member and service user, the latter facilitated by one of the Involvement Measure Interviewers, using the Involvement Measure.

**Analysis of Involvement Measure scores:**

The Involvement Measure questions were all related to the goal setting conversation which had just taken place:

1. How many of the topics discussed were important to the service user?
2. How well did the service user understand the explanations?
3. How well was the service user listened to?
4. How well was the service user able to express his/her views?
5. How much time did the service user feel they had to express his/her views?
6. How respected did the service user feel?
7. How involved in the conversation did the service user feel?

The questions were assigned a score whereby 'All/Always' = 4, 'Most/Usually' = 3, 'A Few/Occasionally' = 2, 'None/Never' = 1. All scores were totalled to quantify feelings of involvement, with a higher score indicating a greater degree of feeling involved in the conversation.

There were no discernable differences between the Centres, either for service user or for staff scores.

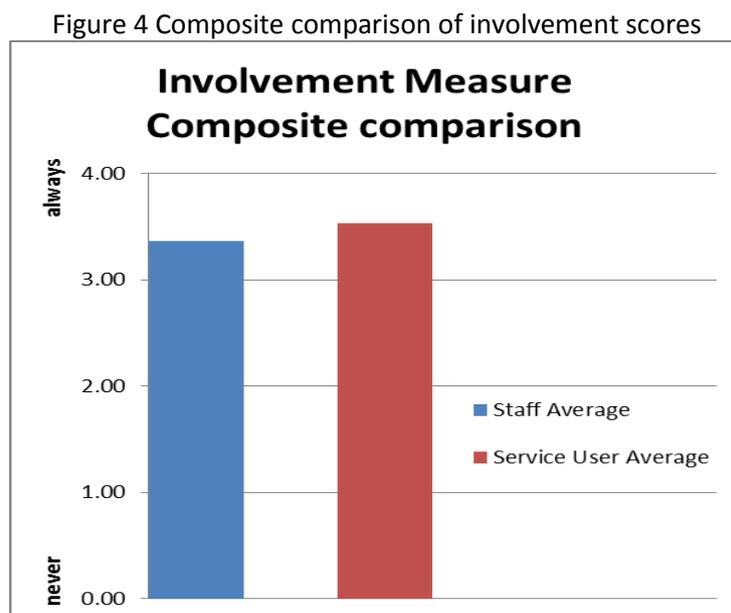


Figure 4 shows the composite average for all seven involvement indicators. Scores reveal that all of the participants, service users and staff alike, felt very positive about how well Talking Mats facilitated the involvement of service users in goal setting.

*Very useful tool – would like to continue to use it.*  
Staff

*Talking Mats may provide a broadened way of thinking about [goal setting].* Service user

Figure 5. Composite individual question comparison – the average score per Involvement Measure indicator

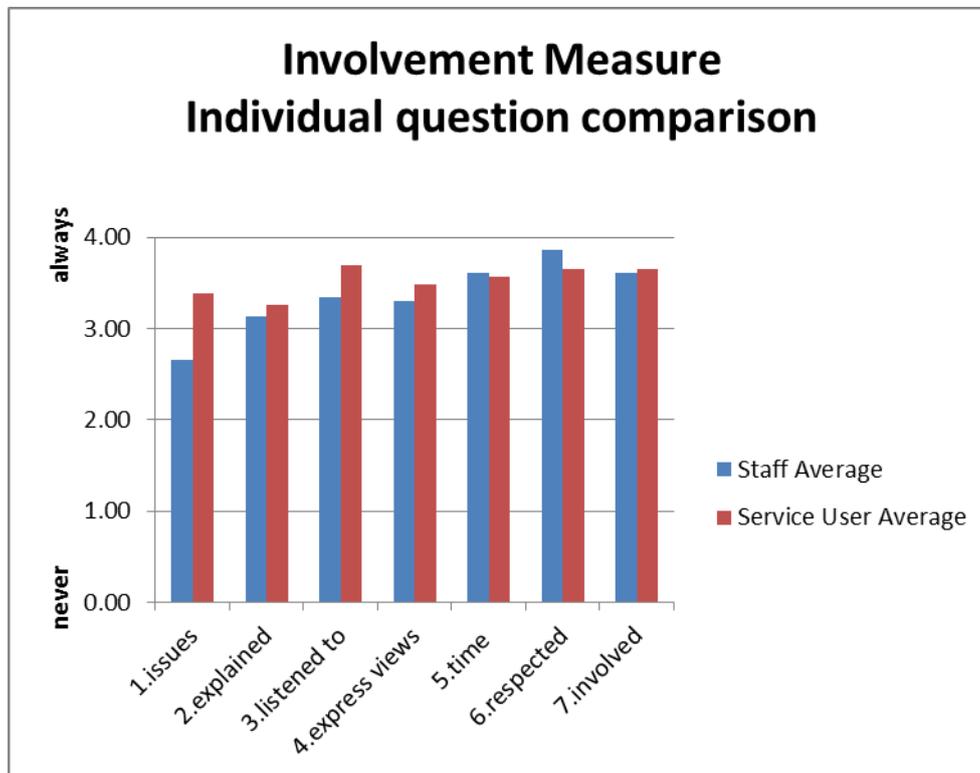


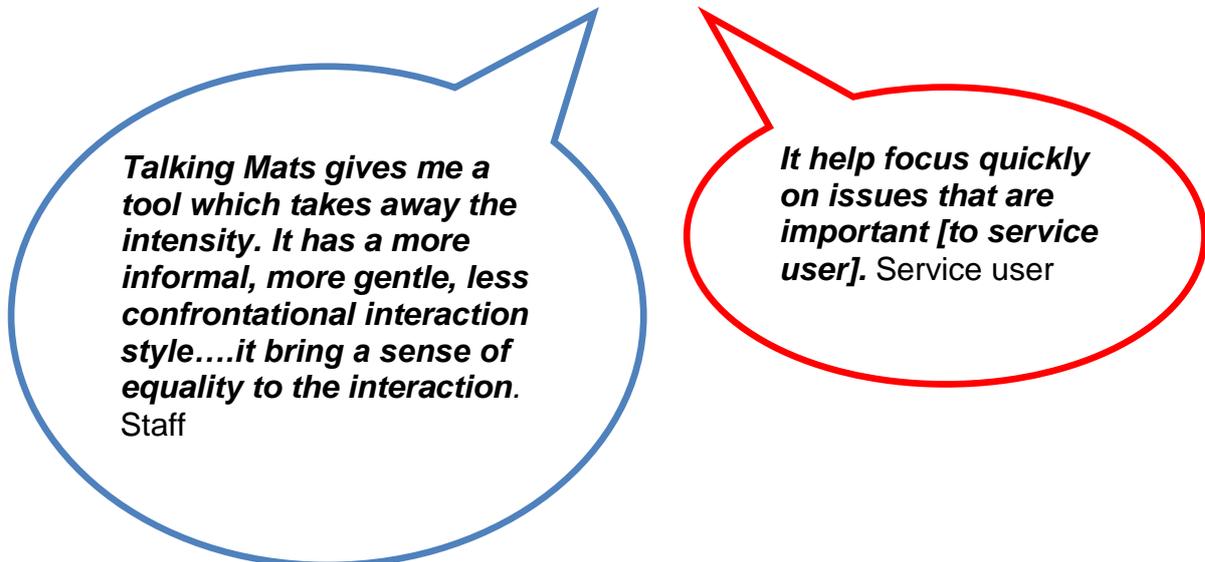
Figure 5 considers the comparison between staff and service user average scores for each of the Involvement Measure indicators. Service users rated five out of seven indicators more highly than staff but in actuality there was very little difference in the ratings allocated.

The biggest discrepancy was in relation to question 1 which showed that service users were more satisfied than staff that the topics discussed were important to them.

*Areas identified by client as 'not managing' are not always what they want to set goals on. This matches with a common issue ...that [service users] may be happy with status quo.*  
Staff

*We're all for continuing Talking Mats ; they sort the wheat (what is truly relevant to the service user) from the chaff.*  
Service user

The score for question 6 showed that the staff score relating to respect was slightly higher than the service user score. The staff valued the capacity of Talking Mats to help them be respectful of their service user's views.



Question 7 indicates that there was an almost equal perception of service user involvement among staff and service users.

### Focus group comment analysis

When asked about their **experience as evaluators**, all service users reported this as a positive development of their role within their respective centres. Service users from one centre commented *'I felt valued'. 'I was glad to help'*. Comments from the other centre were *'Great! Why not? There isn't the same sense of hierarchy you can get (at) e.g. the 'expert' G.P. consultation'. 'Perhaps the client feels freer to be more accurate as there are no staff members there. Staff shouldn't do the evaluations'*.

Staff felt having service users as evaluators was *'a good thing'*. One centre acknowledged that they were *'not strong on service user evaluation as part of current policy... and could do a lot more'*.

Both groups commented positively about **goal setting using Talking Mats**. Staff appreciated the broad range of categories provided within the goal setting packs which allowed service users to be specific about *'what they wanted to home in on'*. Talking Mats was felt to be *'person-centred, led by the individual'*. Where difficulties were encountered, this was commonly a result of skills under development, such as confusion about how to word the visual scale or how to manage the range of available topics.

Service user evaluators commented that previously they had not been aware of goal setting and that using Talking Mats had raised their awareness. They felt that goal setting using Talking Mats was a *'way of crossing communication hurdles'* but also recognised that some service users *'are not wanting or able to make goals'*.

When asked **what was needed to sustain the use of Talking Mats**, service users said that service users need *'more support to understand the process of goal setting'* and that staff

need 'time and space to use Talking Mats for goal setting'. Staff suggested that they have 'a sub group with time to take forward the use of Talking Mats' and one centre proposed to set up a resource area which could be used for communication in general – they identified a back office as resource corner and planned to make a more comfortable meeting area for clients with right height of table etc.

A further question related to the centres **continuing to use Talking Mats for goal setting**. Service users said that they felt that '*Talking Mats* guide thoughts into actions' and '*should be an extra tool in the box to find goals*'. '*[We're] all for continuing Talking mats!*'. Some staff commented that they would like more practice and that getting to know who it works for is important. Others said '*For the clients it works for – a definite yes to using it more*'.

When asked to think about **the use of Talking Mats beyond their centre**, service users thought it should be used in other centres, for people with language difficulties, children and other client groups including people in care homes. Staff suggested it be used for '*Mediation, Conflict resolution, getting groups together where there are uneasy relationships. Hospital discharge. Children Services. Helping agencies to get people talking*'. They also suggested it be made into a Talking Mats Application for a touch screen device (currently under development).

## Discussion

Based on the qualitative and quantitative results, it is clear that Talking Mats can enable and assist people with long term conditions feel more involved in goal setting and that both service users and staff believe it to be a valuable tool which they wish to continue using.

This project extended the reach and sustainability of the Talking Mats framework within Craighall and Firrhill social work day centres within the Self Management of Long Term Conditions agenda.

Evaluation of the basic Talking Mats training replicated the findings of Campbell and Strachan (2010), which positioned Talking Mats as an important tool for health and social care staff working to promote self management of long term conditions in line with national strategy. Talking Mats was again demonstrated as a key support to staff and service users in the acquisition of the core communication skills and problem solving capabilities identified in the aforementioned strategy.

We specifically identify that Talking Mats goal setting can support staff in pursuit of inclusive client centred care – this was corroborated in comments from group reflection during and after training where staff acknowledged that service constraints, over time, could lead them to subtly direct or influence client choices and responses and that Talking Mats offered greater integrity to the goal setting process.

The discrepancy in the analysis of question 1 in the Involvement Measure (How many of the topics discussed were important to the service user?) may reflect that some staff are continuing to identify topics that **they** feel service users need to address rather than accepting that although a service user may not manage something, it may not be an issue they want to address. Inevitably this might result in frank discussion about a client's chosen

priorities but if managed in partnership with the client, this was seen to potentially lead to a better health outcome.

### **Talking Mats and Co-production**

Talking Mats has a major contribution to make within the evolving direction of current policy in health and social care.

Co-production (14) is the term used to describe the delivery of public services in equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, service users and the wider community in order that agencies can extend beyond the oftentimes, self limiting role of central service provision and become catalysts for change for their service users. Co-production is not an alternative to service provision but a way of transforming it to make it effective and sustainable.

Co-production advocates that people's needs are better met when they are involved in an equal and reciprocal relationship with professionals and others working together to get things done. This is borne out in the focus group evaluations with both staff and service users. The challenge to both Day Centres is how the predominantly positive reaction of both service user and staff may now be capitalised upon so that the vision of reciprocal relationship becomes reality.

In keeping with the Self Management in Long Term Conditions policy context, co-production recognises that professionals need to acquire skills to be able to see and harness the resources that people have, and to make room for people to develop for themselves. Our model for integrating the use of Talking Mats at organisational level offers a recursive and generative method for working *with* people rather than deciding for them. It embraces a shift away from 'caring' towards 'enabling and facilitating.'

The authors believe that Talking Mats and Talking Mats goal setting exhibit the essential features which support the philosophy of co-production:

- Talking Mats embraces service users as assets.
- Talking Mats builds on people's existing capabilities.
- Talking Mats promotes mutuality and reciprocity.
- Talking Mats breaks down barriers between professionals and recipients
- Talking Mats facilitates rather than delivers.

### **Challenges**

Design and delivery of the goal setting workshop was largely governed by the availability of a quorum of staff to be in the same place at the same time, the actual time available to staff within their allocation for continuing professional development whilst minimising impact on service delivery, and the time constraints for delivery of the actual project.

In hindsight we would perhaps revise and extend the goal setting training to make it even more interactive and participative – we relied on staff having achieved the basic Talking Mats competencies which could then be directly applied to the goal setting materials. However this level of application would perhaps benefit from more support from the Talking Mats accredited trainers in order to embed understanding of the WHO-ICF framework and the correlation between the WHO-ICF framework and the Talking Mats Framework. One

centre has identified a need for practice supervision in order to more fully integrate Talking Mats.

It would have been helpful to compare views about the use of Talking Mats goal setting with usual goal setting practice within the Centres. The amount of time needed to carry out a Goal Setting session/ sessions was recognised by staff as one area of difference. One Centre felt that a policy decision to further raise the status of Talking Mats within the Day Centre would potentially be required in order to accommodate the necessary service delivery revisions.

### **Recommendations**

Several key recommendations arise from this project . Weir et al (2004, p1) (15) identify key practitioner and organisational factors which influence the uptake and implementation of change to how services are delivered. We believe the following factors can be applied to the assimilation of the Talking Mats framework into everyday practice and they provide the basis for our recommendations as follows:

#### **Practitioner level**

‘When training is combined with informative support materials and organisational consultations, it is more likely... to be implemented by individual workers or as a formal organisational response to service delivery’.

- It is recommend that goal setting using Talking Mats is further supported and integrated by appropriate policy/ service delivery revision in the two Day Centres affiliated to this project and that service users be enabled to work in partnership to set their own goals.
- Staff have identified the need to maintain their skills in the use of Talking Mats through involvement in a supervisory process and it is recommended that the day centres develop an Accredited Trainer scheme within their teams to further sustain the use of Talking Mats within their Day Centres.

‘Workers who participate in ..(goal setting) training are more likely to implement.. (goal setting) practices and principles than those workers who have not attended training.’

- It is recommend that Talking Mats training becomes a core training and competency for continuing professional development for both current staff who have yet to access the training and for new staff recruited to the Day Centres and their outreach services.
- We further recommend that Talking Mats will become a core competency for all health and social care staff working with clients with long term conditions.

During the course of this project, we received a number of helpful comments from service users and staff about the future use of Talking Mats. The participants in the focus groups were asked specifically for their thoughts about sustainability. Staff identified the need to devise a way of storing materials and symbol sets, creating new symbols and keeping track

of them. One recommendation therefore, by staff, was the creation of a resource area which could be used for communication in general and a more comfortable meeting area for clients. Local initiatives such as this should be encouraged.

### **Organisational Level**

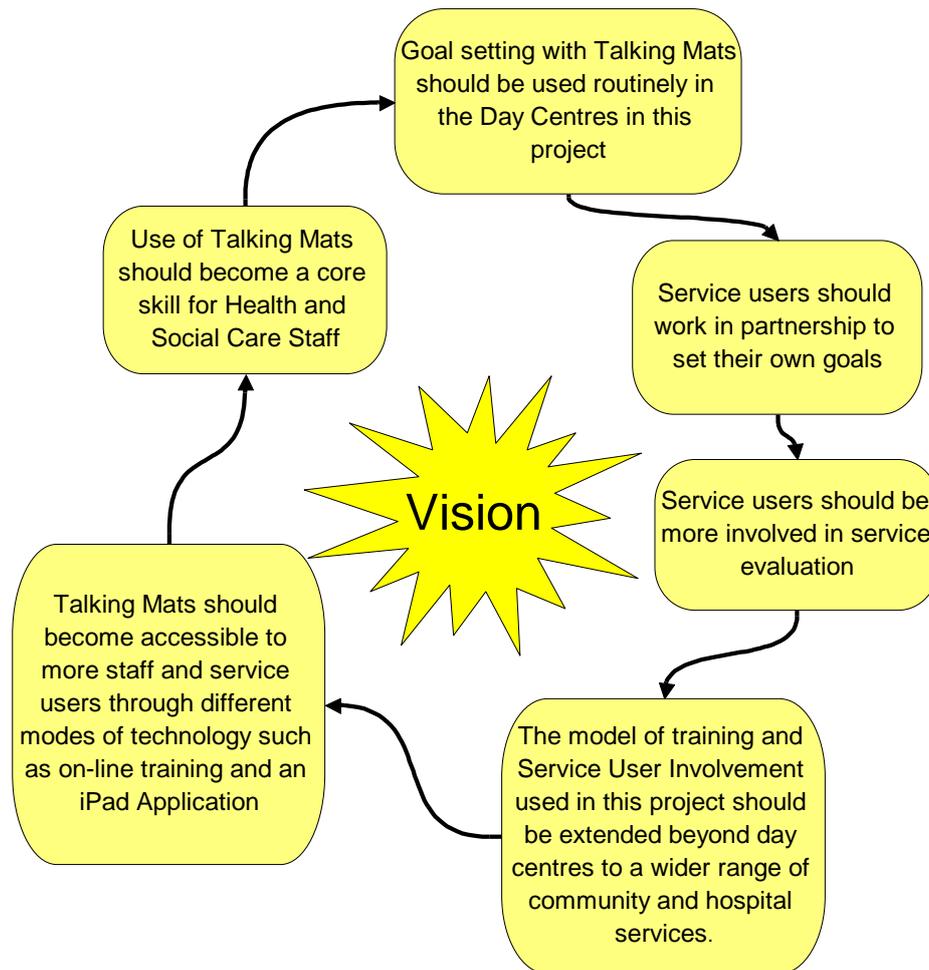
'Key to further integration of .(the Talking Mats framework) within both Day Care Centres will be conviction that ..(Talking Mats) can augment existing quality assurance measures.' We believe Talking Mats and our model for service user evaluation provides a transparent and simple means of demonstrating quality assurance on many aspects of service delivery.

- It is recommend that service users continue to become more involved in service evaluation and we welcome any associated enquiry that may evolve from review of quality assurance measures within the two Day Centres.
- It is recommend that Talking Mats training and usage becomes more accessible to staff and service users through different modes of technology such on line training and use of an iPad Application. These are currently in development at the Talking Mats centre.
- It is recommended that the model of training and Service User Involvement used in this project be extended beyond day centres to a wider range of community & hospital services and Practioners. This is an effective and highly valued model of training which embraces service user participation and inclusion. Key learning generated from this project will be cascaded through practice development networks locally and nationally.

**Vision for future**

Figure 6 encompasses some of the suggestions from the project participants as well as our vision of the future development of Talking Mats and goal setting.

Figure 6 Future vision



## Conclusion

Weir et al (2004) (15) state that 'practitioners who experience the organisational implementation of new initiatives, as compared to practitioners who implement new initiatives at their individual discretion, are more likely to agree that (i) the new way of working is effective (ii) they are also significantly more likely to enjoy structures to assist with the administration, evaluation and support of the new way of working.'

This project established a model for the delivery of inclusive communication and person centred goal setting practices, based on the Talking Mats Framework, to staff and service users working towards self management of long term conditions. There is significant scope for this model of training and service user involvement to be cascaded across NHSScotland and there is a recognised need for enhanced training opportunities and funding to be available at a local and National Level to support this implementation.

In essence, this project is distinctive in inviting service users to evaluate the project based on their immediate healthcare experience & involvement in the goal setting process. They all did this with enthusiasm and diligence and, as one service user commented, 'It made me feel valued'.

We contend that the Talking Mats framework is strongly positioned as a unique and flexible tool which has the capacity to support future service and workforce development within the government's Long Term Conditions Self Management Strategy. This project substantiates the role of Speech and Language Therapists as skilled communication enablers distinctively placed to work collaboratively and on a consultative basis supporting the implementation and evaluation of Talking Mats communication framework across healthcare services for people living with long term conditions.

## Addendum

The Talking Mats Centre, with the support of the University of Stirling, will become a Social Enterprise on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011. Its vision is to a) enhance the involvement and inclusion of people with communication support needs through the use of Talking Mats, b) to promote better communication and inclusive practice among those who work with and care for people with communication difficulties and c) to empower people with long term conditions to participate in planning and shaping service.

The Scottish Government emphasises the importance of seeking the views of people with long term conditions in assessing and planning to meet their needs. Both Talking Mats Ltd and NHS Lothian Adult Community Speech and Language Therapy Service propose that there is considerable potential to expand the use of Talking Mats to benefit many more people with health and social care needs throughout the Lothians and Scotland and to build on the successful partnership with NES, evidenced through this and our previous long term conditions project (1)

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1– example page from Involvement Measure (Service User)
TalkingMats

Please tick the most appropriate box for each question ✓

Service User: \_\_\_\_\_ Staff member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Involvement Measure**

1) When you think about the conversation you had with ..... about setting goals, how many of the 9 topics discussed were important to you?

	a) <b><u>ALL</u></b> of the topics that are important to you were covered;		<input type="checkbox"/>
	b) <b><u>MOST</u></b> of the topics that are important to you were covered;		<input type="checkbox"/>
	c) <b><u>A FEW</u></b> of the topics that are important to you were covered;		<input type="checkbox"/>
	d) <b><u>NONE</u></b> of the topics that are important to you were covered;		<input type="checkbox"/>
	e) I was not able to express my view at that time.	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Appendix 2 Example page from Involvement Measure (Staff)
TalkingMats

Please circle the most appropriate box for each question

Service User: \_\_\_\_\_ Staff member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1) When you think about the conversation you had with the service user about setting goals, how many of the 9 topics discussed were important to your service user?

		<input type="checkbox"/>				
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2) When you think about the conversation you had with the service user about setting goals, how well did s/he understand the explanations?

		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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3) When you think about the conversation you had with the service user about setting goals, how well was s/he able to listen to you?

		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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4) When you think about the conversation you had with the service user about setting goals, how well was s/he able to express her/his views?

		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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### Appendix 3 - Comments on positive and challenging aspects of using Talking Mats

Feedback Group 1	
Positives	Challenges
Clients enjoyed 1:1	Familiarity with Boardmaker
Scepticism becomes a positive	Time to get equipment / symbols
Made client 'think before they spoke'	Nerve wracking (video)
Helped client make decisions	Hard not to influence with facial expression
Thinking tool	Storage of symbols
More truthful	
Cut out devious ways we try to influence	
Got a lot to work on from mat –led to programme	
Picture added shared understanding (signer working with lady with hearing impairment)	

Feedback Group 2	
Positives	Challenges
Consent – hadn't proven to be an issue however	Preparing symbols (not being sufficiently familiar with Boardmaker)
Aware of position	Technology available within centres (some recordings made with third person holding hand held camera)
Use in future –define where to go	Would like a dedicated person/ team to manage symbol preparation OR build up ready made symbols and develop a library of symbols
Self reflection	Seeing self on camera
'This is helping me think' (quote from service user)	Ability to use starter topic
'That's me!' (quote from service user)	Staying with using open questions
Helped clarify things	
Made me aware of exactly how client felt	
Identified specific bits of work I could do	
This person knows I now know things	
Great for final session to summarise with client where next	
Clear evidence of what client likes and dislikes	

#### **Appendix 4 – Post-it® note comments on the Talking Mats training course**

- I got lots of information. Looking forward to using the mats more. Thank you for the very enjoyable training.
- An excellent way of aiding communication. Have been very enthusiastic about the course and using the knowledge given. Managed to carry out a successful Talking Mat with a client.
- Very informative. Great tool for those who have difficulty expressing themselves.
- Excellent training.
- Simple idea. Good way to communicate.
- Nerve racking recording/ watching videos – but enlightening.
- Want more!
- Excellent. Fab. Way to help folk think and become more aware of themselves.
- Very enjoyable. Great way for people who have difficulties communicating to communicate. Very interesting. Thumbs up.
- A huge benefit was videoing ourselves and learning from this.
- A very enjoyable course from which I learnt a lot. Very pleased to know about Talking Mats and hopefully will be able to use in the future.
- Thank you. Very useful and friendly training I'm sure I will use again and again.
- Very useful feedback and gently handled videos.
- Very positive experience. Two great trainers. Initially sceptical, I believe I can make great use of this training.
- Very flexible – wide range of applications for different client groups.
- Really practical and client focussed.
- More aware of necessity to think about planning and my use of language.
- More confident in using it with clients and focus on client centred.
- Surprised! Positive experience.

