Reviewer’s report

Title: EXPLORING EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES IN A BRITISH NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE TRUST: A SERVICE USER-LED RESEARCH PROJECT.

Version: 1 Date: 09 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Rhianna Broadway

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for this really interesting article. I enjoyed reading it and learning from the evaluation you carried out. For me there were a few points that came up that I wondered whether you had considered:

Firstly, at the start of the background section you mention PP groups across the UK to include the public as well as service users and carers, however the public are then excluded from the rest of the article (as this opportunity to research wasn't open to them). Although I can guess the rationale behind this, for me it would have helped for it to be clearly stated. I run a PP in research group for mental health and I find that my members of the public contribute equally to service user and carer members and may be joining because of historical situations that hold personal meaning to them.

Secondly, in the service user recruitment section you state your recruits but there is no information about these three people, are they male or female, are they all the same age. You have broken down the demographics of the participants that were interviewed but for me knowing this information whether this was likely to hold any bias or not in terms of the interviews would have been very helpful to know.

Thirdly, with the first service user led interviews, you state that these were overseen by Giacco, again, how might that have affected responses in these sessions, I wondered here again about possible bias.

Fourth, in the discussion section a key output is that these findings are the first in providing insights about PP in NHS Trusts. This may be the first journal article but if definitely isn't the first output. In 2014 for example my PPI group displayed a poster on this very topic at the INVOLVE conference. I think this needs to be framed more clearly.

Fifth, in the limitations sections (p14) I would have again expected something around researcher bias in terms of who your researchers were and also in terms of the service user researchers not being completely independent.
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I also run a service user group in a NHS trust although I feel this does not impact on my ability to review or hold any competitive interests.

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