Good Practice Guide

Service User Involvement

Making services fit people
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In order to include the people we support in every aspect of our work it requires creative thinking, time and sometimes resources we do not have to hand. This document has been put together to aid people working with service users to highlight some of the good practice that already exists within the organisation. It draws on available material and expertise and is commended as a useful tool to aid workers working directly with service users.

The guide was initially compiled by the Inclusion and Access Co-ordinator who visited services over a four month period. Particular thanks to those who met to share their good practice and to those who welcomed this as a discussion area at local team meetings. In addition special thanks to the service user forums who welcomed this and shared their own personal experience of service user involvement at Turning Point Scotland.

Note

Throughout this guide the terms tenants, service users, clients and residents are interchangeable.

In some sections of this guide, good practice has been detailed under headings of substance misuse services, learning disability services and homelessness, criminal justice and mental health services. These headings are to give the reader some context about the type of service that the good practice was collated from. However, one of the aims of this guide is to share good practice across client groups so please read all sections, not just the section that is applicable to the service you work in.
Introduction

The ethos of Turning Point Scotland (TPS) is based on delivering person centred services and promoting recovery. Involving the people we support in the way services are delivered is a crucial element of this approach.

There is considerable evidence across TPS services that people who use services are involved in making choices that affect their lives, and that people have the opportunity to influence service delivery and policy.

To ensure this good practice is consistent across the organisation and services, the Board of Directors agreed in November 2009 to expand the remit of the Employment Development Manager to include the promotion and coordination of service user involvement, peer support and recovery focussed practice.

A tour of all TPS’s services was made by the Access and Inclusion Co-ordinator over a four month period to meet with staff in services. This included meeting directly with service managers and service coordinators as well as support staff. Attending team meetings and service user forums took place as part of this exercise and good practice in relation to the work of involving service user involvement was collated.

The guide has been produced in a direct response to a request by staff and service managers to share the existing good practice within TPS. The document is intended to promote fresh, innovative ways of involving the people we support in all aspects of our services and TPS as a whole.

It should be noted that there is further good practice that already exists in services which have not been acknowledged in this guide and that the information highlighted is based on the good practice collated during the research period.

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Service User Involvement

Service user involvement across the organisation differs. Sometimes this depends on the service sector or the nature of the service.

It can be defined in different ways and the following definitions summarise it well:

- “Service user involvement is a way of enabling people to participate in decisions and actions that affect their lives” – Glasgow Homeless Network
- “The active participation of people who, because they have used services, can bring their knowledge and experience to contribute to the design, planning, delivery and evaluation of services at a local, regional and national level” – STRADA

There are also varying levels of involvement – people may be involved in their own support, in the development of the service they use, in the development of organisational policies, in the wider community, or involved in local or national government policy.

Why involve service users?

There are benefits to both individuals and services when a good model of service user involvement is apparent within a service:

- It promotes strong person centred values i.e. equality, dignity, respect, choice
- Individuals are offered an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise
- Individuals can develop new skills, gain confidence and self-esteem
- Discrimination and stigma can be challenged
- It can inform campaigning issues
- It helps services to focus on continuous improvement
- It helps deliver positive outcomes for people who use services
- It helps to meet requirements set out by the Care Commission and contract monitors

Most importantly -

- “Everyone has the right to have the support they need to be involved and to have their say” – Let’s Get Involved, National Involvement Network 2009
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SECTION 1

Involving people in their own support
Involving people in their own support

Our organisational ethos is one of being person-centred and ‘making services fit people’ so giving people choices about the service they receive is of paramount importance. While all services strive to deliver services that are led by the people receiving them, there are often barriers that have to be overcome to implement services in this way e.g. funders may make restrictions on the types of activities that can be supported or the length of stay in residential units. Staff are often required to take an innovative approach to how services are delivered, to ensure that the service user is provided with the service they wish, and funders also receive the outcomes they require.

Existing good practice within services includes:

**Substance misuse services**

- Service users work with staff to set their own goals and the support that is delivered centres around helping achieve these goals
- On a regular basis key workers meet with service users to review whether the goals that were set are still relevant, review progress in achieving goals and update the support plan to include relevant actions
- Staff rota’s are on display for service users to see so that they know when their key worker will be available
- Regular managers surgery takes place offering service users an opportunity to raise concerns or simply have a chat about the service they’re receiving and how they’re feeling about it

**Learning disability services**

- Constant observation of service user behaviour helps staff determine their likes and dislikes. This knowledge informs the choices that are made about how people with profound disabilities are supported
- People are encouraged to make choices about activities they undertake even when restrictions are in place due to the forensic nature of the service
- Advocates and guardians are fully involved in review meetings and in helping with issues arising, for example, financial issues
- Photographs and boardmaker are used at reviews to help service users to participate

*Boardmaker is a tool for creating symbol-based graphic materials.*

- An accessible copy of the complaints procedure is issued to service users and explained to them
- Key worker meetings take place weekly and feed into weekly planners, task lists and activity planners
- Service users are fully involved in holiday plans, risk assessments and in daily living activities, for example, banking, food shopping and cleaning
- Service users are involved in induction programmes for the staff that will work with them.

- A house charter and team charter are used to detail how staff should work with individual service users and the expectations of each service user.

- Individual service users have their own charter indicating how they like to be treated.

- Weekly meetings with support workers are written up into monthly summaries, service users sign them and they have a copy in their home.

- Hospital admission plans are written in the first person and service users are involved in risk assessments.

- Self advocacy is encouraged and supported.

The **Getting Involved Group** in Dumfries is supported by TPS but includes people who use other learning disability services in the area. This group actively participate in discussion and action around issues that affect them, thus supporting them to become active citizens within their community, and influencing the support they receive from a range of statutory, private and voluntary agencies.

**Dumfries Learning Disability Service**

Everyday items that you would expect to find in recreational places such as a café menu, Starbucks coffee cup are stored in a cupboard in the service users home.

For service users who do not have verbal communication they are able to express and indicate where they would like to go for the day by showing staff the relevant item.

This is a simple tool yet really effective which provides service users the opportunity to be involved in their own support.

**Inverclyde Learning Disability Service**
Homelessness, criminal justice and mental health services

- Housing support modules are completed by service users as part of their support plan.
- A question around “what are your views on the service that you’re receiving?” is asked as part of review meetings.
- ‘Face to face’ time in the service offers service users an opportunity to chat informally to staff about their thoughts and feelings.
- The service culture is such that there is no hierarchy but very clear boundaries – staff are friendly but are aware of having appropriate relationships. This means people will openly discuss what they feel is right for them at the right time.
- Service users lead on the content of a monthly summary detailing their recovery journey and achievements. This is sent out to everyone in their support circle.
- Service users are given welcome packs and choices about what parts of the service they want to use and which areas of support should be given priority.
- Support plans are agreed at the start of every month but the plan will change as directed by the service user on a daily basis.
- In a service that provides visiting support a communication book is used in every house. Both staff and service users write in it and can read what's happening on a daily basis.
- Daily notes are kept in the service users house, sometimes the service users write the notes themselves but in all cases they review them and sign them.
- Service users are given a booklet called “A guide to Your Review” to help them understand the review process and encourage them to lead the process.
A ‘guide to your review’ details what a review is, and why, when and where they take place. It then goes through the planning process indicating tasks to be completed in the weeks leading up to the review date, for example:

4-6 weeks before: your key worker will discuss with you who you wish to attend, where you would like the review to be, and any preferences you might have about date and time. Invitation letters will be sent out. You will be supported to take as much responsibility for the organisation of your review as you like.

2-3 weeks before: your key worker will give you a feedback sheet so you can tell us how well we are meeting your needs and what comments you have about the support you’ve been getting.

1-2 weeks before: you and your key worker should start to decide what needs to be discussed at your review and if any information needs to be gathered from elsewhere. The minute from your last review may be discussed and may be used to guide the agenda. Setting an agenda is a way of making sure that nothing important is missed out.

On review day: someone should be asked to keep a note of the meeting. At the end of the meeting the main points will be summarised and you will be asked to agree these and sign them before they are taken as a true record of the meeting. A copy will be offered to everyone at the meeting and a copy will be put into your support plan file. The review meeting should be a positive experience for all who attend, especially you!

Creating a guide to reviews for service users gives them as much choice and ownership of their review as they would like to have.

SHAPE and STABLE services
Involving people in developing the service
Section 2

Involving people in developing the service

Services can continually learn and improve through involving the people who actually use the service. A range of methods of asking service users their views, listening to concerns and compliments and responding to comments raised are used across services. Not only do services benefit from this process, service users may also benefit from their involvement by learning new skills and improving confidence and self-esteem levels. It should be appreciated that not everyone will want to have the same level of involvement in developing services. Opportunities should be offered to everyone but people should be supported to have as little or as much involvement in decisions about service delivery as they want to have.

Existing good practice within services includes:

Substance misuse services

- Questionnaires asking about the service provided are sent out at regular intervals. Where required individual comments made on questionnaires are responded to by a member of the service management team. Responses are collated and used to inform funders and the detail of the service plan for the next year

- Service questionnaires are developed and reviewed by service users

- Exit interviews or questionnaires are offered to service users who are due to leave the service

- Service users meetings take place in a variety of formats appropriate to the service. These focus on any issues arising from either staff or service users and offer an opportunity for service users to make suggestions of changes or improvements they would like to see to the service provided

- Weekly service user forum meetings are followed by staff team meetings so that issues and suggestions arising from service users can be followed up on immediately by staff

At the Milestone service each service user is provided with a handbook which contains lots of information about the service. It includes sections “How do I know if the Milestone service is any good?”, “How can I make my voice heard?” and “How do I make a complaint?”

By giving service users the necessary information about the quality of service they should receive and the relevant advice should they be unhappy, service users can always be involved in the development of their service.
The service manager responds in writing to any issues raised at the service users forum and the response is posted on the notice board.

Suggestion boxes or comments books are used in some services. In one service the suggestion box is opened at the service user forum and each suggestion discussed. The service manager attends the forum to respond directly to suggestions made.

In services that use group work, evaluation forms are used at the end of each session and service users are involved in deciding on the subject of future group work sessions.

The complaints policy is distributed in welcome packs and on notice boards and service users are helped to understand the procedure of making a complaint.

Service managers hold consultation events with service users when considering making changes to service delivery.

Annual stakeholder events take place, these offer all stakeholders including service users and their families an opportunity to hear more about the service and to influence the future development of it.

Service users are asked to complete surveys as part of the ongoing development of services.
Learning disability services

- Service user forums have been established in many services. Service users contribute to the agenda and in some cases take the role of Chair. Topics for discussion may include changes people would like to see within services, new developments in services and possible fundraising activities.

- Questionnaires about the service provided are sent to service users, their families and other stakeholders. Responses are reviewed by service managers and suggestions for developments help inform the detail of the annual service plan.

- In a residential service regular house meetings take place. A constitution is in place, people are encouraged to contribute to the agenda, and an easy read minute is sent out to all service users and their families.

- In one service, a service user chairs staff team meetings in his home using PowerPoint on his TV.

- Whilst carrying out daily activities with service users, key workers engage them in conversation about the service they receive and subtly ascertain their views about different areas of support they are provided with.

- A community mapping tool is used to consider how people are involved in the community and to note their preferences for services such as hairdressers.

- Service users are involved in stakeholder events in a variety of ways. Involvement can include making display boards showing their interests and the activities they enjoy, welcoming people on the day, speaking to other stakeholders at the event, contributing to conversation café topics, issuing questionnaires.

- Monthly house meetings take place where support workers help service users to contribute to discussions.

- Comments and criticisms are collected from service users and responded to by service managers.
Greyfriars Close
Service user constitution for house meetings

The meeting will be chaired by, either: Phil, Sheila, Anne, Wilma or Daniel

The meetings will take place on a Friday afternoon

This meeting will last 15-30 minutes only

Everyone will be made welcome

It will be explain what we are going to talk about

There will be an ‘Issue’ to chat about each time we meet

We can talk about those ideas which people share

We will make decisions

We can talk about anything else that people want to talk about?

We will agree the next meeting – Day / Date / Time?
Homelessness, criminal justice and mental health services

- Service users are encouraged to write in the comments book that is reviewed by the service manager weekly
- Exit surveys and ‘moving on’ stories are used when people leave the service
- Tenants are responsible for both the agenda and the minute of tenants forum meetings
- Tenants are involved in reviewing service policies and housing support modules
- Regular questionnaires about the service being delivered are issued to residents. Responses are collated and responded to by the service manager and fed into the service plan

In Midpoint a series of three questionnaires are used to ensure service users are involved in the service they receive during their period of engagement.

An initial evaluation asks for service user opinion during the assessment period as they embark on their personal journey to recovery.

The next questionnaire is designed to review and reflect on their ongoing support by asking questions about their support plan. This ensures that the service user is comfortable with the level of support they are receiving and that they have the opportunity to be involved in any changes they would like to see to the support they receive.

The final questionnaire is used at the end of the service users contact with the service. It is an opportunity to review and highlight the current status of the particular individual in relation to managing their tenancy, budgeting, psychological wellbeing and social functioning.

Midpoint
 Monthly resident meetings chaired by a service user review policies that are relevant to them, for example, guest policy

 A service user representative attends part of the staff team meeting to bring issues from the resident group

 A suggestion box is used in some services

 Weekly house meetings take place. The minute of the meeting goes to the service manager who gives feedback at the next house meeting. Common themes from the house meetings are discussed at staff meetings. A house representative chairs the house meetings and is the link person between service users and staff

 Quarterly meetings between the service manager and the service users take place, these may take the form of either group meetings or one to one meetings

 Service manager has an ‘open door’ policy and chats informally to service users daily

 Staff learn from service users, for example, a resident who was trained how to deal safely with bodily fluids while in prison now trains service staff

 In social enterprise services quarterly business meetings take place where service users are involved in all operational aspects of the business

 Service users lead forums, decide on topics for discussion and the fun elements to be included e.g. quiz, bingo etc

 Follow-up visits are carried out for a year after a service user has left the service allowing service users an opportunity to reflect on the service they were provided with and suggest any changes they think should be made

 Themed focus groups with guest speakers take place, for example, fire safety with a guest speaker from the fire service. Discussion around the service TPS provides also takes place at these groups

 In residential services questionnaires are used to help decide on menu choices

 Weekly meetings take place in residential services with the agenda for the following meeting posted immediately after each meeting so that people can add to it throughout the week. The minutes of the meeting are photocopied to every service user

 Each week staff discuss with service users the group sessions they attended that week and use this information to improve group sessions

 Service user feedback days take place, both past and present service users discuss their views of the service, barriers to using the service and suggestions for improving it
SECTION 3

Involving people in audit and appraisal
Section 3

Involving people in audit and appraisal

A combination of internal self-assessment and audit processes, and inspection by external agencies helps services to focus on continuous improvement in service delivery. Additionally, a staff appraisal system offers the opportunity for staff and managers to consider how staff performance affects the quality of service delivery and to identify possible development opportunities. It is important that the people who use services are given the opportunity to play a part in assessing the quality of service delivery, and to give constructive feedback to staff on their performance.

Existing good practice within services includes:

Substance misuse services

- Care Commission inspectors speak to service users and occasionally sit in on group work sessions to allow informal discussion with service users about the service provided
- Service users have an opportunity to input to Impaqt self assessment tool
- A service user involvement log is in each service users file to be seen by auditors and inspectors

What is Impaqt?

Every two years, TPS services complete evidence based self assessment tool called Impaqt. This has two main areas – service delivery and service management each with 7 quality themes. Service delivery follows the individual’s care journey, and includes specific questions on service user involvement. The tool is referenced against National Care Standards and is fully compatible with the Care Commission’s inspection process.

Each service uses the process to identify strengths and areas for improvement from which they develop a wider service improvement plan. The TPS Quality and Audit Manager monitors the overall process and identifies areas of learning and improvement to share across the organisation. All results get presented to the Board, Senior Management, specialist forums and individual services.
Learning disability services

- Service user story boards are used for Care Commission audits
- Care commissioners can observe staff using values such as respect and dignity when working with service users
- Service users are encouraged to speak with Care Commission inspectors about the service they are provided with
- Staff support service users to understand the grading used by the Care Commission and in the Impaqt self-assessment tool. Service users are supported to be involved in assessing the quality of the service provided
- Service users have an input to staff appraisals by use of a questionnaire that helps initiate discussion between managers and services users around the quality of practice and conduct of staff in relation to National Care Standards, Codes of Practice and job specification

Perth & Kinross learning disability service asks service users to be involved in the appraisal of staff.

The person conducting the appraisal meets with the service user on a one-to-one basis to ensure privacy. Not all service users will want to participate in this process, and their willingness or reluctance to participate is respected and noted.

The staff member and service user complete the questionnaire which is designed to ascertain information about quality of practice and conduct of staff in relation to National Care Standards, Codes of Practice and job specification. This forms part of the appraisal process for support workers and assistance service coordinators.

Facilitating service user involvement in the appraisal process will have a positive impact on the following:

- Bringing people closer together to achieve mutually desirable outcomes
- Ensuring that staff support reflects the needs and wishes of service users whilst considering appropriate risk management (person centred planning)
- Adding value to service planning, development and delivery
- Enabling TPS to draw upon, and make effective use of staff member’s skills, for example, training and previous experience.

Perth & Kinross Learning Disability Service
Homelessness, criminal justice and mental health services

- Service users speak with Care Commission inspectors
- Each member of staff is given a section of the Impaqt self assessment tool to complete in partnership with service users

Involvement in the Care Commission inspection process

Services that graded highly within involvement were able to demonstrate that people who used their care service were able to contribute to the Care Commission inspection process.

These examples of ways that people can be involved should help you to plan involvement, with the people who use your care service.

Knowledge of the Care Commission

- Do the people who use your care service and their carers know about the Care Commission?
- Do they know about the National Care Standards for their service?
- Have you tried to tell people about the National Care Standards?
- Do people know how to get a copy of the National Care Standards?
- Do people know how to contact the Care Commission for example, to make a complaint if they are unhappy with something about the service and how you have responded to their concerns?

Self assessment and grading

- Are the people who use your care service and their carers aware of the self assessment and grading?
- Do they know that they can be involved in this?
- Have you tried to involve them in this?
- Have they seen a copy of your self assessment?
- Is self assessment involvement activity built into your involvement strategy?

Care Commission inspections

- Have people who use your care service or their carers seen the inspection report for your service?
- Do they know that they can speak to Care Commission officers or lay assessors to give their views about your service during inspection?
- Have you considered inviting Care Commission officers or lay assessors to resident meetings or other involvement activity?
- Are people who use the care service and their carers involved in developing your action plan after the inspection?

Involving people who use care services and their families, friends and supporters: Guidance for care service providers, Care Commission
SECTION 4

Involving people in staff recruitment
Section 4

Involving people in staff recruitment

A comprehensive recruitment and selection process is used across TPS in an attempt to ensure that the right staff are employed within services. Although this formal process does not include the involvement of service users, there are many ways that the people who use services can be involved at various stages of the process.

Existing good practice within services includes:

Substance misuse services

- Service users are involved in putting together questions to be asked during interviews
- Service users participate in open evenings held for staff recruitment purposes. This may involve chatting with people informally, assisting in the delivery of exercises or workshops prospective staff are asked to participate in, or by giving presentations about the service they expect from staff
- Service users ‘meet and greet’ people as they arrive for interview

Learning disability services

- Guidelines and prompts are used for service users to follow when they meet prospective employees and show them round the service
- Service users are involved in various ways in recruitment days – meeting and greeting, providing tea and biscuits, issuing questionnaires, observing group exercises etc
- Service users complete a short questionnaire about prospective employees, for example, they grade whether they felt that speaking to the person was very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult
Introduction
[My name is …. And I have lived at Greyfriars Close for …..]

There are 12 people living at Greyfriars Close, but we will soon have two extra people living in the bungalow.
[Show them where the Bungalow is].

Greyfriars Close has two places where Service Users have their own flats.
[Show them the east wing and west wing]

Staff who work here, could support me or others, with;
- Laundry [Show them the Utility Room]
- Preparing food [Show them the Kitchen]
- Going ‘out and about’
- Taking their medication
- Washing and dressing
- …and plenty of other things!

Staff are here all of the time, to support me and the other Service Users. Staff have ‘shifts’, which can be;
- morning or evenings
- waking nights
- weekends

Service Users have most of their meals in the dining area
[Show them the dining area]
Breakfast can happen once people have got up, which can be between 7-9am.
Lunch usually happens around noon.
Dinner usually happens around 5pm.

Is there anything else that I can help you with?

Thank you very much. Good luck with your interview!
Homelessness, criminal justice and mental health services

- Service users lead group discussions at information nights and score prospective employees with the staff afterwards.

- Service users are involved in interview panels.

- Prospective staff go through two interviews – a residents panel and a staff panel. Residents have a chair person on their panel and decide on their own questions whilst a member of the staff is in the background writing down answers. Both panels come together to discuss thoughts afterwards.

- Service users assist in observing prospective staff carry out a task focussed assessment and give their views afterwards.

- Service manager does one to one training with service users to prepare them for participating on interview panels. Service users are called guest interviewers and are paid for their service.

Moving On Project Operational Guidelines

Tenants in Recruitment

Moving On aims to involve tenants as fully as possible in their support and when appropriate tenants are encouraged to take part in the recruitment process. Staff involved in TPS’s recruitment process must be fully trained so appropriate training is also given to tenants. The service aims to meaningfully involve tenants alongside staff ensuring the confidentiality of candidate(s) personal details. Moving On has opted to involve tenants in groupwork, open evenings or scenarios rather than on interview panels.

- Tenants will receive training and guidance on their involvement in recruitment.

- Tenants can opt out of the process at any stage.

- Tenants input to the selection process will contribute one third of the overall process.

- Tenants will not be able to be involved if staff suspect they are under the influence of alcohol or substances.

- Tenants will sign agreements about their conduct during the process.

- Candidates will be informed of tenants involvement in recruitment.

- Tenants will not have access to candidates personal information.

Related Policies: Handbook of Recruitment and Selection.
The Courtyard at Turning Point Scotland

Potential employee questionnaire

1. Speaking to the person was
   - very easy
   - easy
   - difficult
   - very difficult

2. They spoke to me like an adult
   - all of the time
   - most of the time
   - some of the time
   - none of the time

3. They listened to me
   - all of the time
   - most of the time
   - some of the time
   - none of the time

4. I would like this person in my team
   - definitely
   - probably
   - possibly
   - definitely not

Signed .......................................             Date .......................................
Involving people in staff training
Section 5

Involving people in staff training

For TPS to deliver services based on our stated values and principles, and which are appropriate to the needs of service users, we rely on a suitably trained and skilled workforce.

TPS delivers training in line with best practice which is designed to achieve good outcomes for people who receive services, and to help us do this service users contribute to training materials and in some case, to the delivery of courses.

Opportunities for service users to become involved in training are provided for people in all geographical areas and across our addictions, mental health, criminal justice, learning disability and homelessness services.

These are advertised through services managers, and service users are selected for their interest in the topic and their ability to represent the wider views of others. Meetings are structured in such a way as to allow the best use of service user input.

Benefits to service users:

While there are clear benefits to the organisation of having service users involved in training, there are also benefits for service users. These include:

- an opportunity to inform support workers of the way they like to be treated when accessing services
- raised self esteem from the knowledge that their life experiences have helped improve the way services are delivered to others
- up-to-date work experience that can be included in a CV
- a referee for job applications
- an opportunity to increase their income

Service users who are involved in the facilitation of staff training will be guided through the following 10 training standards.
10 Training Standards
Service User Trainers

We want your experience of working with us to be enjoyable and rewarding.

We believe you have a lot to offer TPS staff and we hope the 10 points below will help you to understand what we expect from you and other trainers who deliver workshops.

If you have any questions or concerns about the points below please speak with your trainer.

1. **Use clear and simple language that respects everyone**
   Try to avoid acronyms and slang like ‘PCP’, ‘CPN’ or ‘BBV’ as people may not understand what they mean. Avoid words including swearing, that may offend people. In particular avoid names and jokes used against minority groups including women, older people, those with religious views, people who identify as gay, lesbian or transgender, racial & ethnic groups and those who identify as disabled. Speak to your trainer for some examples of this.

2. **Be prepared**
   It’s really important to ensure that you are prepared as possible. This means getting an early night, not arriving at the training/meeting visibly under the influence of any drugs (including alcohol) and not smelling of alcohol.

3. **Ask people to clarify what they’re saying**
   If you don’t understand a question or comment from anyone ask them to be clearer; your fellow trainer may also be able to help.

4. **Maintain the Group Agreement**
   All courses and some meetings will have a written agreement at the start that establishes how everyone will behave. This is for everyone to agree and keep to.

5. **Don’t become defensive or argumentative**
   If there is a view or opinion that you disagree with don’t enter into an argument. An appropriate response would be to say “That’s not my view but I accept that it’s yours” – try to agree to disagree and don’t be judgmental.

6. **Speak slowly**
   This means that everyone will understand what you’re saying. If it sounds slow in your head it will be the right pace.

7. **Give examples**
   When you’re speaking about your experiences it’s useful to give examples. “I needed something to motivate me – like attending college or getting a job”
8. **Wear it well**
   It’s best to wear clothes that you feel comfortable in and like. However, avoid anything with a political, sporting, or offensive slogan/image as this might offend people. For example don’t wear a football top.

9. **Keep to time**
   It’s important to be on time for the workshop. This means arriving 30 min before you are due to speak or contribute in a meeting. It also means that if you have five minutes to talk try and stick to this. It may help to wear a watch or look at the clock in the room.

10. **Relax**
    If you feel nervous when speaking try the following:
    - take a deep breath and smile
    - remember people are on your side
    - remember people are interested in what you have to say
    - have a code word or phrase with your fellow trainers that indicates you want them to take over from you
Involving people in marketing services
Section 6
Involving people in marketing services

It is important that anyone who needs a service is able to access it. For some of TPS’s services individuals can self-refer or are referred by health professionals and other agencies.

Regularly promoting the service and organisation is vital and involving service users in the marketing of the service can add to the creativity. It is an opportunity for service users to express their own personal experience through advertising, stakeholder events and the media.

Existing good practice within services includes:

Substance misuse services
- Service users are involved in visits by prospective service users (showing them around, telling them how the service is provided)
- Service user stories are told in TPS newsletters, annual reports, intranet and in local publications

Learning disability services
- Service users are involved in the production of publicity material such as having their photograph taken
- Service user stories are told in TPS newsletters, annual reports and in external agency publications

Homelessness, criminal justice and mental health services
- Service users are involved in reports to the media
- Service users show people round the service on open days
- Service users feature in TPS annual reports
- Service users art work and quotes are used in service leaflets
- A group of service users produce a newsletter which is supported by the local college as part of their groupwork
- Service users suggested having an open day within the service to let other agencies know of the service provided and increase the number of referrals received. They then led the whole process of planning, organising and facilitating the day.
- Service users visit other TPS services to talk about their experience of using services and to promote the service they currently use
Other ways of involving people
Section 7

Other ways of involving people

Previous sections of this guide have categorized service user involvement activities under specific headings but good practice indicates that service user involvement should be an integral part of the design, planning, delivery and evaluation of services. There are elements of good practice evident in services that do not sit naturally under any of the previous headings of involvement in own support, in developing the service, in audit and appraisal, in staff recruitment, in staff training or in marketing services.

These elements of good practice include:

Substance misuse services

- Service users facilitate group work sessions in partnership with staff as part of their own recovery
- Service users organise community activities for groups of service users to participate in, therefore developing peer support opportunities
- Service users are involved in external service user involvement groups such as Scottish Drugs Forum groups

Peer support occurs when people provide knowledge, experience, emotional or practical help to each other. Across TPS informal peer support happens when people who use services meet up at service user forums, social events or external support groups. Both parties can benefit from peer support, some of these benefits include:

- Feelings of fear and self-stigma may be reduced
- Peer support helps put difficulties into context to encourage new ways of looking at things
- People may take more control over their own wellbeing
- Supporters often grow in self confidence
- Peer support helps people accept what’s happening in their life
- Having someone who really understands help people develop trust and openness
Learning disability services

- Services have their own newsletters with stories about service users lives
- Service users are involved in deciding which group activities they would like to participate in, for example, dominoes, prize bingo and skittles
- TPS e-bulletin is taken to service users homes to encourage them to contribute to it and enter competitions
- A recipe book has been written by service users for service users
- Service users participate in fundraising events such as sponsored walks and bag packing
- A service user employed within the service as a part-time administration assistant collates news from other service users for the newsletter
- Service users choose the furniture and materials for decorating their own homes
- A group of service users have worked through the standards of the Charter for Involvement to identify which of them TPS currently does well and which ones the organisation could improve on
- Service users sit on the committee for the Make It Happen fund which invites service users and staff members to apply for funding that would help to make their dreams come true
The Charter for Involvement was developed by the National Involvement Network which is made up of people with learning disabilities who use services and their helpers. The charter has 13 standards which detail how service users would like to be involved in the service they use. The standards say:

- We want to be at the HEART of any plans about OUR lives. We want control over our plans and action to come from them.
- We want to be involved in choosing our support workers, other staff, volunteers, advocates and people we trust to talk to. This includes:
  - writing job descriptions
  - planning interview questions
  - interviewing
  - deciding who gets the job
- We want to be involved and have our say in talking to staff about what they do well and what we would like them to do differently.
- We want to give information and training about how to involve us:
  - to staff at all levels
  - the Management Committees and Boards of organisations that provide our services
- We want to be involved in evaluating the services we use
- We want to be involved in writing policies that affect us
- We want to be involved in making policies that affect us easier to understand
- We want to be involved with our Boards and Management Committees
- We want to be involved in Annual General Meetings of our organisations, for example by doing presentations or running workshops
- We want the chance and the choice to be involved in national and local campaigns
- We want the chance and the choice to be involved with other ‘speaking up’ groups
- We want the chance and the choice to be involved in community groups that matter to us
- We want to be able to make formal complaints

Dumfries Learning Disability Service
Service user involvement can increase and maintain self-esteem and self-confidence and support an individual’s progression along the **employability** pathway by:

- Improving communication skills
- Building motivation to try new things
- Increasing self-awareness; service users may start to explore volunteer or job opportunities that they previously would not have considered
- Learning how to build effective working relationships
- Understanding behaviours that an employer might find unacceptable
- Learning how to deal with conflict and differing views and opinions
- Providing skills and experience that can be highlighted on a CV

- Service users help organise an art exhibition to showcase their work and boost self-esteem
- Service users put craft classes on for other service users
- Service users organise activities for one another e.g. bingo nights, horse riding days etc
- Coffee mornings take place at Rosie’s cafe for people from crafts & picture framing to encourage peer support and social networking
- Existing service users mentor new service users to help them learn how the service works
- Service users are involved in the planning, delivery and de-briefing for events for mental health awareness week
- Service users make suggestions for fundraising and organise activities such as Christmas Fayres
Helpful hints
Section 8

Helpful hints

In this section we have created a series of helpful hints on a variety of methods that can be used to involve service users in service delivery. They may be useful as a starting point to stimulate discussion amongst staff teams when thinking about the most appropriate way of involving people.

The information provided should not be taken as being the only way to do things, but as a guide to what is considered good practice and a reminder of some things you may want to consider before using specific methods of involvement.

For more information or help to implement new methods of service user involvement, please contact the Inclusion & Access Coordinator at TPS, Govan Road.

Topics covered include:

- Service user forums or meetings
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Suggestion boxes
- Talking walls
- Notice boards
- Posters and leaflets
- Focus groups
- Using the creative arts
- Film making
- Newsletters
- Peer research
- Peer education
- Peer mentoring
- Stakeholder events
- Exit interviews
Service user forums or meetings

Regular forums can be relatively easy to facilitate and are an effective means of service user involvement. They might take the form of residents meetings or weekly or monthly meetings on issues or themes raised by service users through other types of involvement. Forums often generate more feedback than other types of involvement as members opinions can be triggered by discussion points raised by others.

Helpful hints:

- An experienced chairperson should facilitate meetings in the early days
- Service users should be offered the opportunity to learn how to chair meetings and take up the role of chair when they feel confident
- Agendas should be set jointly with service users and should not contain jargon or acronyms that people might not understand
- The normal structure for meetings should be followed – welcome, introductions and apologies followed by matters arising, discussion points, any other business and next meeting dates
- Introductions should outline agenda items so people know in advance when there are opportunities to discuss various issues and when comfort breaks will be. The introduction should also state clearly what the intended outcome of the meeting is, when people will receive feedback, and things that the meeting could potentially influence
- Ground rules should be set at the first meeting to ensure that everyone feels safe and comfortable within the meeting
- A note/minute taker should be appointed and notes should be sent out as soon as possible after the meeting in whatever format is easiest for the participant to receive them
- External people can be invited to meetings to give information and or stimulate discussion
- A file of forum agenda and minutes should be kept for evidence of service user involvement
Surveys & Questionnaires

Surveys and questionnaires are excellent methods of gathering information around specific areas of a service or organisation. They enable services to collect information from or about people and help to describe, compare or explain their knowledge, attitudes or behaviour. By adopting this method a service can gain a rich source of data which can be used to improve service delivery.

The process has several key stages:
1. Identifying objectives for the survey
2. Deciding who should be asked to complete the survey
3. Designing the survey
4. Carrying out the survey
5. Managing and analysing the data
6. Reporting the results

Helpful hints:
- Careful consideration should be given to the design of the survey
- State the purpose of the questionnaire and how to complete and return it
- Include a ‘thank you’ to everyone who takes the time to complete the survey
- Use plain English throughout the survey and ensure that it doesn’t look cluttered or confusing
- The process of developing appropriate questions is often most successful when service users and staff work together
- Use closed questions – questions that can be answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’ are the easiest to analyse and produce statistics from
- Use open questions – how?, why? what? types of questions may give useful information but may be difficult to interpret
- Have the questions in a logical order
- If the survey is going to be conducted by interviewers, they should be trained in effective communication, active listening skills and how to reflect back answers to ensure the response is accurately understood
- When analysing the data from surveys, look for common themes and responses
- The results from surveys can be reported in either a written format or orally
- Service users can be involved at all stages of the survey being produced, conducted and results reported
- Keep a record of the process used, the survey content and the results reported as evidence of service user involvement
Suggestion boxes

Suggestion boxes are an easy way to gain feedback about a service if used correctly. They should not be used as an anonymous complaints boxes. Service users who use a suggestion box should have the option of either making anonymous suggestions or including their name so that they can be given feedback on their suggestions.

Helpful hints:

- Suggestion boxes should be set up somewhere where it is easy for service users to put comments in without being seen by others
- A pen should be attached to a string nearby and paper or suggestion slips should be provided. These should be maintained on an ongoing basis
- A sign near the box should indicate how often and when the box will be emptied, how suggestions will be responded to, and when people can expect a response
- Options about how a response will be provided should be offered, for example, personally, through meetings, typed response sheets on a notice board or in newsletters
- Responses should inform people of any changes that may happen as a result of their suggestion
- If no change will be made as a result of a suggestion, the service user should be given an explanation of why nothing will change
- Care should be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality is protected
- Written records of all suggestions made and responses given should be kept for evidence of service user involvement
Talking Walls

A talking wall is simply a large piece of paper put up in a prominent position in a meeting space. It can be used at meetings or events to give people an opportunity to comment on how they felt on the day or how they feel a meeting went. It can be used effectively as an evaluation tool. A talking wall may also be used to collect responses to a particular question over a short period of time, for example, in a residential service a talking wall may be put up for a week to give people the opportunity to respond at a time that suits them.

Helpful hints:

- Write the question you want to ask people at the top of the paper using a brightly coloured marker pen
- Leave lots of markers nearby so that people can write their comments when they wish
- Make sure the talking wall is somewhere really noticeable and accessible
- During the meeting or the event ensure that attention is drawn to the talking wall and people are encouraged to use it
- Post it notes can be used to write comments on and then stick onto the wall
- Ensure someone is responsible for taking the talking wall down, writing up the comments and feeding back to everyone
- Inform everyone present how and when they will get feedback from the talking wall
- Circulate information about changes that have been made or will be made as a result of information gathered from the talking wall
- Keep a record of all information gathered from the talking wall and any responses given as evidence of service user involvement
Notice boards

Notice boards are a great way to advertise service user involvement activities within your service. They should be displayed in a prominent position with the majority of information at eye level. The information they hold should be reviewed regularly to ensure the most up-to-date information is available and outdated information is removed.

A notice board is a great place to display an organisational chart so people know who’s who and who does what. Staff rota’s can also be displayed so that service users know when each staff member is due in. Invitations to consultations and thank you message are best displayed on notice boards too.

Helpful hints:

- Ensure that all information is as accessible as possible, for example, written in plain English, colourful, large font
- Put colourful headings or drawings on pieces of information that you particularly want people to read
- Divide the notice board into sections separating different types of information if appropriate
- Give someone responsibility for maintaining and reviewing the notice board information on a regular basis
- Don’t allow the notice board to become overcrowded
- Give service users information about the purpose of the notice board during induction, and remind them of it at other meetings
Posters & Leaflets

Posters and leaflets offer a means of communicating with service users, potential service users and other stakeholders about the service you provide. They can also be used to encourage participation in service user involvement activities, or to inform service users about consultations on policy and or practice. Posters and leaflets should be developed in partnership with service users whenever possible. At the very least, service users should be asked to offer feedback on how easily read the posters and leaflets are and whether the language is appropriate. Service users may also be involved in the production and distribution of posters and leaflets.

Helpful hints:

- Involve service users from the beginning whenever possible
- Take time to plan the content of the posters and leaflets, printing is often costly and mistakes cannot be rectified once the poster or leaflet has gone to print
- Don’t make references that will go out of date quickly, for example, staff may leave the service so names might be best avoided
- The design and layout of leaflets and posters should take account of potential audiences as some design decisions can exclude people. The use of graphics and layout can disadvantage people who are visually impaired or who have literacy issues
- Fonts should be ‘clean’, clear and of a suitable size. Densely printed areas should be avoided
- Pay close attention to the use of text with background images
- As a general rule keep it simple
- Question and answer formats and clear spacing make easy reading
- Develop posters and leaflets to a high standard as the quality of them is often taken as an indication of the quality of the service
- Involve service users in checking accessibility, content and attractiveness, ask for their comments on whether the message is clearly understood
- Record the process used in the production of the poster and leaflet as evidence of service user involvement
Focus groups

A focus group is a research method in which a specifically selected group of people can be asked about their attitude towards a particular topic. Questions and specific discussion points are raised in an interactive group setting, and members of the group are encouraged to talk freely. Ideally a focus group works best with a minimum of four people and a maximum of twelve. It will usually last one to two hours.

Helpful hints:

- Decide what information you want to gather and who to conduct a focus group with to get the required information
- Participants of a focus group should have some kind of experience or opinion relating to the subject of the focus group
- Find a neutral and comfortable meeting place for the group
- The date and time of the meeting should suit the needs of participants and plenty notice should be given of the date and time. It might be appropriate to remind people about the group a couple of days before it’s due to take place
- There should be two facilitators for a focus group, one who is skilled in helping people keep a focus and ensuring that everyone has an equal chance to speak, and the other should have good note taking skills
- Note takers should write clearly on flip charts and ensure that everyone’s comments are recorded
- The note taker should seek regular clarification from the group regarding notes reflecting what is being said
- If necessary, facilitators can be independent of the service
- Facilitators should ensure that ground rules are either generated or presented at the beginning and that an agenda for the session is outlined (including comfort breaks)
- Confidentiality should be assured through the ground rules
- People should be encouraged to give honest views and not to say what they think will make staff happy
- An outline of what the results of the group will be used for should be given at the beginning and again at the end of the focus group
- The focus group should finish with the note taker going over all the key points raised, ensuring that all participants are aware of what the group feedback will be
- If the results will be compiled into a report, ensure that each participant leaves a contact address so that a copy of the report can be sent to them
- Keep a record of the focus group as evidence of service user involvement
Using the creative arts to involve people

The creative arts are a good way of involving people, particularly where language or literacy issues may be identified in a group or individual. They can address sensitive issues that are difficult to talk about and help to engage people who might not normally get involved. Being involved in creative arts can build confidence, increase skills and may lead people to become involved in further learning, involvement or employability activities.

**Drama** can bring a complex issue to life, making it emotionally powerful, more interesting, easy to understand and relevant to people’s lives. In many cases, a play is more likely to be noticed and remembered than a written report. It can be a useful way to involve a wide range of people with very different levels of experience.

**Poetry & Creative Writing** can help people express emotions, talk about issues or find a voice they would not necessarily express verbally. There are many ways of beginning a writing activity, examples include providing a series of words or phrases that can be rearranged into a story or poem; a bag of objects that can be used as a prompt for a storytelling or a series of songs or film clips that can prompt writing reviews or fiction.

**Arts & Crafts** sessions can offer therapeutic benefits while helping people develop creative skills. They can also simply be used as a tool for conversation, where service users and staff can sit down and do an activity together and discuss any relevant issues. This way of engaging can seem much less threatening than a more formal meeting. Sessions could include, poster making, glass painting or simple mosaic.

**Music** is universal and most people respond to music in some way regardless of other issues in their lives. It can promote relaxation and reduce stress. A group session where each member chooses their favourite music and discusses what it means to them can be really effective. Learning to play or make music can also be a useful engagement activity but this will usually require a specialist tutor.

**Helpful hints:**

- Take a flexible approach to sessions in order to take account of different abilities while still retaining a planned structure

- Be sure you have enough materials for everyone as well as some spare (people may make mistakes and want to start again or finish early and want to do more)

- Advertise the purpose of the sessions

- For poetry and creative writing make sure other ways of recording work are provided for those who have literacy issues e.g. a voice recorder to record people reading poems or putting people in pairs where one can write for the other

- Using computers can also be a good way to write as people have the benefit of spell checking, cutting and pasting and can experiment with colour and design

- If work is to be shared outside of the activity ensure that permission is asked from the service user in advance and ensure that service users also have an opportunity to keep some of their work

- Peer support should be encouraged by asking participants who are more confident to help people who feel they need some support to carry out the activity

- Keep a record of all creative art sessions e.g. timetable of sessions, attendance sheets, information sheets etc as evidence of service user involvement
Film making

The production of a film as an involvement technique can be an excellent method of sharing control of a project. Both the organisation and service users involved can agree on the message that they want to convey through film. Service users can express their own, or others, opinion and experiences. A film can be used to present these opinions and experiences to a wide variety of people.

Films can be in the format of interviews, documentary, video diary or drama. Service users can be involved either in front of the camera or gain skills and experience by taking a role behind the camera.

Helpful hints:

- Ensure that everyone involved is aware of the reasons for creating the film and to whom it will be shown
- Each person who appears on film must give written consent for the distribution of the recording for its use
- Ensure that there is clarity on whether people being filmed are representing the wider service user population or just themselves
- Decide how many copies will be made and who will receive them (including those who are involved in the production and filming)
- Ensure all are aware of the possible repercussions. For example, although you may guarantee that your organisation will only show the film on certain occasions, once you have given the film to other organisations, or service users, monitoring becomes difficult
- Make sure that you provide training to ensure no one discloses anything they may not want recorded in the future
- Provide training to ensure that people have a chance to practice what they are going to say
- If a professional production company is recruited to record and edit the film, try to ensure they are a socially responsible film maker
- Ensure sound quality is good, especially if going to be shown to large audiences
- Make sure you allow time for further meetings to show the DVD throughout the various stages of the editing process. This allows those who have been filmed to have a chance to ensure that the editing process has adequately reflected what they wanted to say
- Allow lots of time to get each ‘take’ right
- Make sure that you have realistic costing as the process can be expensive
- Keep written records of the process and a master copy of the DVD as evidence of service user involvement
Newsletters

A service user newsletter produced by staff to communicate to service users is not a tool for service user involvement. However a service user newsletter that involves service users in its production and editorial decisions may well be. This is a common means of involving service users. Done well, planned and resourced properly, service user newsletters can be an empowering means to involve service users and develop communication.

A service user newsletter is a means of communicating on developments and news within your service, and possibly also providing news about external agencies and other opportunities. Most often they go beyond this remit and provide opportunities for issues, personal experiences and opinions to be voiced.

Helpful hints:

- Do a single issue initially then decide what aspects could be developed for more regular output
- Involve service users from the start so they understand the process and the types of decisions that need to be made
- It’s worth considering and establishing who will be the editor early in the process
- Ensure boundaries are clear and established, for example, can service users write about any issue and express any opinion they wish?
- Decide what level of impact you want the newsletter to have. Do you just want to provide an opportunity for service users to volunteer or are you hoping to use the information to influence practice within your service?
- If you have a lot of interest from service users, roles can be rotated
Peer research

Peer research is a method of gathering information that work on the basis that a peer is more likely to share information with someone who has experienced similar circumstances. Peer researchers are trained appropriately and conduct the research (sometimes with the support of staff). This is particularly effective as it is a bottom-up approach and should be developed entirely working in partnership with service users.

Helpful hints:

- Peers should be involved at every stage of peer research development, including the method of research, for example, focus groups, questionnaires or discussion groups
- A comprehensive training package should be considered, and should cover areas such as confidentiality, boundaries, equal opportunities and research development
- Staff should have a facilitative role as opposed to leadership role in the process, allowing all work to take a bottom up approach (including data analysis and write up)
- Research can take the form of one, or a combination of many, of the tools outlined
- Service users and staff should consider which tool or technique is most appropriate
- Service users should be involved in the dissemination of the research
- Offer people an opportunity to research an issue that particularly interests them and to use their own personal insight when conducting research
- Keep a record of the training provided, the research areas conducted and the findings of the research as evidence of service user involvement

Peer education

Peer education works on the basis that shared experience will provide an added value and expertise. By removing the usual hierarchy of ‘teacher-student’ relationships, learners are more likely to relate to educators and the relevant information they have to impart.

Helpful hints:

- Peer education needs adequate time for preparation for each stage of the process
- Peer education materials should be designed and developed in partnership with service users
- Service users and staff should work together to agree the specific types of peer education techniques to be used
- Peer educators should be identified and recruited, then trained in peer education techniques
- Advertising to reach peer learners should be considered and then peer educators should make contact
- Supervision and support should be ongoing for peer educators
Make contact with organisations that have already developed peer education programmes and try to learn from them

Acknowledge the benefits to both service users and peer educators of participating in the programme, for example, new skills, self-esteem, confidence and self-awareness

Consider writing up the procedures surrounding the peer education programme

Be aware that peer educators can get caught in an ‘identity crisis’ when the issue that makes them a peer is no longer a suitable or helpful identity for them

Keep a file of peer educator advertisements, the training package delivered and the peer education programme conducted as evidence of service user involvement

Peer mentoring

Peer mentoring is a one-to-one non-judgmental relationship between a mentor and a participant. A mentor is someone who can help the participant with some aspect of their life. They will listen to the participant, discuss solutions and set goals. Mentors rely upon having had similar experiences to the participant which is more likely to ensure a greater understanding of their issues. The participant will have the chance to share issues with someone who has experienced similar situations. This will encourage sharing, communication and support with future direction and opportunity. A mentor should ask questions and challenge, while providing guidance and encouragement. Mentoring allows the participant to explore new ideas with confidence. The participant has a chance to explore any issues, opportunities or goals, which can lead to greater self confidence and self awareness.

Helpful hints:

- For this to be meaningful, developing a peer mentoring programme must be planned with adequate funding in place; including for a staff member to coordinate the programme, to cover all service user expenses, training materials for mentors and any additional resource materials

- The coordinator’s role should cover full support for the mentors and participants throughout the entire mentoring process

- It is useful to research other organisations who currently run or have in the past ran a peer mentoring programme. Meeting with key members of staff who coordinated this work is hugely advantageous and might help to flag up any potential pitfalls to avoid

- When recruiting mentors, create and follow a list of criteria for the role, for example, dedication, reliability, commitment and non-judgmental attitudes

- It’s crucial that the above attributes are adhered to in order for the potential participants to feel safe in the developing relationship

- Put training in place for mentors. It’s essential that mentors are properly trained to equip them with the skills needed to carry out a mentoring role

- Keep a record of the training provided for mentors and a timetable of the mentoring sessions carried out by each mentor as evidence of service user involvement
**Stakeholder events**

Stakeholder events offer an excellent opportunity for all relevant parties to discuss current issues. These events can be specific to one project or across several projects. With careful organisation stakeholder events can be meetings as large as 200 people.

The purpose of these events is to bring together service users and other stakeholders and open the opportunity for communication and understanding. Stakeholder events aim to create a dialogue where planners and decision makers can respond to questions and explain the processes involved in delivering services to the people using them, and the opportunity for service users to influence this process. Discussion groups, question and answer sessions, focus groups and meetings can be used to generate the structure of a Stakeholder event. These can also be interspersed with drama, poetry, art and music workshops. This can ensure that delegates are engaged throughout the day and these are also a fun way to get the work done.

**Helpful hints:**

- Service users should be involved in the planning of the event from the beginning, right through to the production of a report about the event
- Organisers must ensure that events provide a genuine forum of equality and that everyone present is able to speak freely
- Relevant advice and information should be made available at the event
- Ensure the budget for the event is enough to cover all costs including promotional costs, costs of incentives or ‘freebies’, venue costs and service user expenses
- Facilitators should ensure that there are a number of mediums through which people can put forward points of view, for example, discussion groups, talking walls, questionnaires
- Ideally discussion groups should contain low numbers so it is easier for people to speak up
- Plenty of time should be allowed in discussion groups for people to get their points across
- People should be encouraged to use the event as an opportunity to get to know peers and build social networks
- The event should be evaluated e.g. ask what people liked and what they would change
- A report should be developed, which will not only record the event, but be used as a tool for further discussion and action
- Ensure minutes of planning meetings are kept, along with attendance sheets, questionnaires used, records of workshops and a final report from the event. These can all be used as evidence of service user involvement
Exit Interviews

Exit interviews are most likely to be conducted with a service user just prior to them leaving a service or no longer accessing it. They provide an opportunity for the service user to review the service they received, and to discuss, if and how effectively their needs were met.

Helpful hints:

- Participation by the service user should be voluntary
- The process should focus on the service user
- Be flexible around when and where the interview takes place, making it as easy as possible for the service user to attend
- Agree with the service user how they would like the interview to be conducted; it can be as formal or as informal as they wish
- Inform the service user of the benefits to them from taking part in the interview – they get an opportunity to reflect on the progress they have made since first accessing the service, and/or the things they’ve learned about themselves
- Offer the service user an opportunity to speak with a member of staff who did not directly provide support
- Encourage the service user to speak freely about all aspects of their experience and support in the service
- Remember that the process is about the service user feeding back their views, it’s not an opportunity for the service to justify itself
- Use active listening techniques to gather views and avoid closed questions that only require a yes or no answer
- Encourage the service user to initiate discussion topics
- Don’t be defensive about your service! Remember this is an opportunity to develop and improve your service
- If appropriate, provide information on other agencies and services the service user may wish to use in future
- Where possible staff and service users should work together to draw up a structured exit questionnaire
- Written records of interviews conducted should be retained for evidence of service user involvement
Section 9

Evidencing involvement

Organisations with responsibility for auditing and monitoring care services look for evidence that service users are appropriately involved in their own care and support. Collecting evidence of involvement is important to us as an organisation for a number of other reasons too. The information collated may be used when tendering for new business or re-tendering to continue to provide existing services. When real examples of service user involvement can be demonstrated in a tender exercise it shows commissioners the value we place on the people that use services, and our commitment to providing service users with the best possible service for them.

As well as keeping records of each service user involvement activity, below are some additional ways of evidencing service user involvement within a service:

- Have a service user involvement statement on display within the service, provide a copy of it in welcome packs for new service users, and ensure that it explained to new service users when they start to use the service
- Have a written constitution for the service user forum showing clearly why it exists, what it hopes to achieve and responsibilities of participants
- Write an annual report for the service user forum detailing the activities of the forum and the influence it has had on service delivery

An annual report for the Mile End Service Users’ Forum was produced. The report recorded the work carried out by the service users’ forum over the previous year and planned for the year ahead.

The following sections were included:
- Introduction
- Service users’ forum structure
- What the forum means to me
- Service users’ forum logo
- Service issues
- Fundraising ideas
- Healthy eating
- 10 year anniversary celebrations
- Sponsored walk
- Away day
- Christmas lunch
- Service users’ forum picture
- Action plan for year ahead

Mile End, Renfrewshire Learning Disability Service
- Provide a newsletter for service users showing how things have changed in the service as a result of service user feedback

- Adapt the TPS service user charter to suit each individual service user so that it is specific to them and details exactly how they want to be treated by service staff

- Keep written records of any involvement service users have in staff recruitment e.g. ask the service user how they were involved, how they felt, whether they would like to be involved again in the future, anything they would change etc

- Print an information leaflet about reviews detailing what they are, why they are conducted, when and where they take place

- If the service manager holds consultation events with service users, ensure the points raised by service users and the responses given to them are written up

- Keep copies of service user comments that have been made in response to discussion topics instigated by the TPS Board

- Keep records of how, when and how often service users have been involved in staff training

Service user involvement statement

At (service name) our vision is for meaningful service user involvement and partnership working that benefits both the service users attending (service name) and (service name). One of the ways we will empower the people who use this service to achieve their aspirations, is by involving them in making decisions about the service they receive.

We want to work in partnership with service users to continually improve the service provided at (service name). We will work jointly with service users, maximising their presence in a variety of settings to help the service to change and develop. We will create opportunities for service users to influence formal decision-making, opportunities for service users to learn from each other’s knowledge and expertise, and opportunities for service users to become part of other networks where appropriate.

All service users will be treated with respect and care and their dignity preserved at all times. We will value our service user’s strengths and consistently work to build on them. We will endeavour to keep service users on a path to meet their aspirations and strive to establish and maintain their trust.

Substance misuse services
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It can also be made available in alternative
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