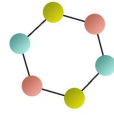


North London

SOCIAL WORK

TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

**Good Practice Guide for
External Organisations engaging with
Adult Service Users & Carers**



1. Who is this guide for?

This guide is for any organisation that wants to involve Service Users/Carers (SU/C) in the design, delivery and evaluation of the services they provide.

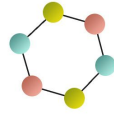
2. Why SU/C Involvement Matters in Social Care

- It can improve how services are run and their outcomes
- It can improve the quality of care, and the relationships between staff and SUs/Cs
- Creates a sense of service ownership, by ensuring that services reflect the needs and wishes of those who use them.

3. Examples of SU/C Activities and Key Benefits

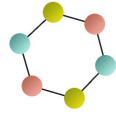
SU/C Activity	Examples	Key benefits
Consultation, Research and Evaluation <i>(Appropriate when planning, reviewing or analysing decisions or</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responding to questionnaires, surveys• Participating in interviews, focus groups/workshops• Peer reviewing• Questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates opportunities for service users to give views on service delivery and strategy• Allows multiple channels of access to those who may not be able to contribute in person

<p><i>trends that may directly affect service users/carers.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Focus groups • Auditing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can enable a broad set of viewpoints and results • Determine processes or have an influence on decisions • Brings different perspectives and questions to review process • Honest and open feedback from service users to improve services
<p>Co-production/ Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where service users/carers work in partnership with the service provider and share decisions and responsibility, determining outcomes, from beginning to end • Collaboration on funding decisions or applications • Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an arena for service users to voice concerns, views and ideas and shape decisions, determining outcomes • Opportunity for service users to build relationships with others in a similar situation • Keeps service users informed



	<p>membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council membership	
<p>Delivering training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leading or supporting workshops• Training staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages other service users to get involved because they see their peers involved• Fosters an environment of trust• Offers unique insights into service users' perspectives on good practice
<p>Selection and recruitment of staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sitting on interview panels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates to service users that their views are important• Demonstrates to candidates the importance of SUI to the organisation• Increases the likelihood of employing staff with the values and

		interpersonal skills that service users appreciate
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where service users/carers support decision-making, serving as a committee or board member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps service users to gain a better understanding of your organisation • Brings a service level perspective to board-level discussions • Demonstrates active inclusion and equality within your organisation
Media and publicity work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending or addressing events and conferences. • Speaking to the press • Featuring in your organisation's magazine or on the website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights real life stories and helps external audiences to better understand the issues. • Offers service users the chance to develop skills e.g. public speaking



4. Engaging with SUs/Cs

- Encourage diversity of service users/carers.
 - Look at who and from where you engage service users/carers and how that demographic helps your organisation.
 - Consider the number of service users/carers to engage in order to be representative of that demographic.
- Consider providing a role description.
 - Include the types of activities which can be expected, the benefits of service user/carer involvement, the organisation's aims etc.
- Understand the needs of each service user/carer.
 - Ask about accessibility needs; experience; minimum notice required for participation.

5. Support and training to increase/maintain long engagement

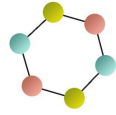
- Provide enough information and/or training before each activity or event, so that the service users/carers know what to expect when being asked to participate.

→ This could also include shadowing an experienced team member in order to gain experience and further skills where needed.

- Offer training (e.g. IT skills) to make tasks more accessible to service users.
- Consider a trial period for new service users/carers to allow for adjustment for them and the organisation.
- Consider whether you can accommodate service users/carers who cannot participate in person – via post, phone, online surveys, social media etc.

6. Administrative tips

- Have a database of service users/carers.
 - Distinguish between those who don't mind being contacted at short notice (in case of cancellations) and those who require more.
 - Detail the experience/skills of the service user/carer so that activities and opportunities can be matched.
- Check the minimum number of service users/carers that are required for each event.
- Allow enough time and notice for planning events.
 - Check that the timing and length of your event is appropriate to the needs and lifestyle of the service users you want to reach.



? Service users/carers may need time to make alternative care arrangements, specialist transport.

? The timing of the event may impact accessibility.

- Choose a venue that offers the service user easy access.
- Book ground floor rooms wherever possible (in case of lift failure); check that rooms and spaces are fully accessible.
 - For wheelchairs, walking frames etc.
 - Provide wheelchair ramps where needed.
 - Ensure there are suitable toilet facilities available.
- Consider if special seating or lighting at meetings or events would be appropriate.
- Offer to provide documents in large print or Easy Read format.
- Provide a British Sign Language interpreter or induction loop facility for service users with a hearing impairment.
- Have regular refreshment/rest breaks at consultation events (every hour is good practice).
- Check if there is disabled/blue badge parking available nearby.

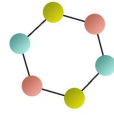
Good practice:

- Use plain language for your communications
- Avoid unnecessary jargon

- Provide a location map with clear instructions
- Provide a contact number and/or name of staff member in case of difficulties.

7. Communication

- Make and maintain direct contact with service users.
- Provide accessible formats of all materials where needed.
 - Examples of formats are: easy read (for those with learning difficulties); braille; large print (for those with visual problems); audio files, email etc.
 - Take into account any language difficulties.
- Provide a contact number and/or name of staff member in case of difficulties.
- Be mindful of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
 - Ensure you have gained consent from each SU/C for their data to be kept and shared.
 - Explain with whom the data will be shared and for how long.
 - Do not share personal information without consent.
 - Only procure information that is relevant to the purpose.
- Provide a choice of communication methods to ensure that your communication methods suit your service user: telephone call, text message or email or post.



- Send out board meeting or consultation event papers at least two weeks in advance so that service users have sufficient time to read and seek clarity where required.. Include a glossary of terms and acronyms.
- Offer pre-meetings so that new or difficult issues can be explained and discussed informally, in advance of a more formal meeting.

8. Payment tips

- Discuss and agree with service users the terms of involvement before they commit to it (whether there will be any reimbursement of expenses incurred and/or payment for their contribution).
- If you decide to pay service users, pay them according to open and consistent criteria.

Good practice:

Ensure that each service user:

- Understands and agrees to the terms and conditions upon which they get involved
- Is aware of what is expected of them and what support they will receive.

9. Reflect on impact:

- Make SU/C involvement meaningful
 - Capture feedback on how the involvement has been received and support individuals to provide genuine feedback.
 - Feed back the changes that have occurred as a result of service user/carer participation.