



**STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING GROUP**  
**12<sup>TH</sup> February 2007**

## **SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT BASIC PRINCIPLES PAPER**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this paper is to brief the SCG on the current position regarding service user involvement across the APGs, and to propose a set of basic principles with which to take service user involvement forward in Cardiff.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Service user involvement has been central to the development of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy. Following those consultations it was deemed to be appropriate to fund a Service User Involvement Officer Post for a period of 15 months from the Joint Working Special Grant. The post holder was based with Voluntary Action Cardiff. The aim of the post was to develop a sustainable and effective method of ensuring adult service user involvement across all relevant service areas in the delivery of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy.

It was decided to develop the Service User Reference Panel (SURP), which met on a monthly basis. Terms of Reference were developed which stated that the group aimed to involve service users in the work of each Advisory Planning Group (APG). Training support was provided to service users and an event was held at St David's Hall to promote the SURP and service user involvement.

The Service User Involvement Officer resigned from the post in March 2006 and it was decided to incorporate the post within the Health Partnership Team to integrate service user involvement in the work of the whole team and provide a consistency of approach.

The level of attendance at SURP meetings had declined and a review was conducted. In the SURP meeting May 2006, discussions were held about the effectiveness of the structure. The consensus was that the best way to proceed with service user involvement was to have specific representation under each APG but that there could be value in periodic SURP meetings.

### **CURRENT POSITION**

From 27<sup>th</sup> November 2006 a Project Officer was appointed who would provide general support to the SCG and APGs and have a particular focus on service user involvement.

The Project Officer has met with the majority of the APG Chairs (some meetings still to take place) and with services users and / or other organisations involved in service user involvement to explore views on how best to develop service user involvement. The results of these meetings have shown that the level of service user involvement varies significantly across the APGs. Some APGs have JOing Operational Groups (JOGs) of which some have service user involvement and some do not. The number of service users who are engaged in joint planning is limited.

## **PROPOSALS**

### **1. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT**

A set of basic standards for service user involvement have been developed (appendix 1). These are submitted to the SCG for consideration with the aim of the SCG adopting and agreeing a set of principles which will then be disseminated by the APGs as the accepted standard.

### **2. STRUCTURE**

The APG Chairs have been in agreement that the recommended model of an area specific service user forum under each APG would be appropriate. However the APGs are at different stages of developing this successfully. Some APGs need support in initially setting up such a group, (SMAT, Older Persons APG). Others need support to strengthen or change the way that the existing group is managed (Learning Disability APG, Carers APG). Some APGs need support to strengthen the wider network of services users, through alternative methods, such as an email forum (Physical Disability APG). Furthermore some service areas don't have a captive audience making it very difficult to engage with service users (Homelessness APG, Asylum Seeker Stakeholders Group, Sexual Health APG).

As a consensus from these discussions the proposed structure for service user involvement, for the majority of APGs is therefore to develop a robust service user forum under each APG, with between 1-3 nominated service user representatives attending each APG, with an aspiration to develop service user representation at other levels such as the SCG, and to develop a SURP which would meet periodically.

### **3. ACTION PLAN**

The Project Officer will work with APG Chairs and service users to develop an action plan for each APG. The Project Officer will help develop the service user forums under each APG.

The Project Officer will report back on the Action Plan for each APG at the next SCG, but it is anticipated that initial work will begin before then.

### **4. TRAINING**

As only a limited number of service user representatives will attend each APG there is a need to ensure that they are given appropriate support in order to fulfil this role, and be truly representative of the service user forums. There is

potential to set up a Service User Representative Training Programme with the support of VAC, so that service users are given appropriate guidance and support.

## **5. TRAVEL EXPENSES**

The SCG is asked to consider how best to support service users with travel expenses remuneration. Previously service user travel expenses were funded from the budget for service user involvement under the Joint Working Special Grant. This could be trialled over the next financial year, at which point it would be reviewed by the SCG. *Reward and Recognition* the paper on service user payment and reimbursement from the Local Government Information Unit states that "Ensuring that people who give their time and expertise are reimbursed or paid is an important way of recognising and encouraging their contribution".

## **6. VENUES**

It is proposed that service user forums will use partner organisations as venues for service user forum meetings whenever possible. However resource for teas / coffees and on occasion venues will need to be available for meetings.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The SCG is asked to consider the proposed basic principles of service user involvement, for adoption by the SCG and integration into the APGs.
- The Project Officer is to develop actions plans on service user involvement with each APG and to report back to SCG
- Costs for service user forums, training and travel expenses to be met from the Joint Working Special Grant 2007-08, monitored by the Project Officer. To be reviewed by the SCG March 2008.

## Appendix 1

### Basic Standards for Service User Involvement

1. **Involvement:** we will identify and involve the people and organisations with an interest in the focus of the engagement, and will have an active network of specialist and generic service users across Cardiff
2. **Support:** we will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement, and will ensure that service users have the opportunity to receive appropriate training in order to participate fully
3. **Planning:** we will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken, consulting at the right time and early enough to influence decisions
4. **Methods:** we will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose
5. **Working Together:** we will agree and use clear procedures to enable the participants to work with one another efficiently and effectively
6. **Sharing information:** we will ensure necessary information is communicated between the participants
7. **Working with Others:** we will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement
8. **Improvement:** we will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants, and will ensure that the knowledge, experience and expertise of service users is used to improve services
9. **Feedback:** we will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected, and ensure that the service users are made aware of any changes made as a result of consultation
10. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** we will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement meets its purposes and the national standards for community engagement

### Guiding Principles of the Standards

- **Equalities:** explicit and evidenced
- **Purpose:** agreed, and success defined
- **Structures:** clear and fit for purpose
- **Knowledge:** shared and used
- **Skills:** developed and applied
- **Capacity building:** supports in place
- **Information:** accurate and timely

Adapted from:

The Scottish Standards for Community Engagement – May 2005

Service User Involvement Charter 2004 – Waltham Forest NHS

A Good-Practice Guide to Valuing, Respecting and Supporting Service-user Activity  
– Together Directorate of Service User Involvement