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Service user and carer involvement GUIDELINES

DRAFT – October 2008



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of these guidelines

The involvement of service users and carers is an integral and important part of delivering social care. It is important that service users have a good experience of involvement, that it meets their needs, is purposeful, is recognised, and will make a difference. We need to ensure that people want to be involved and want to stay involved. This means providing appropriate opportunities, support and recognition. Only in this way can we ensure that both the Council and the service users and carers get the maximum benefit out of their contribution.

This document was prepared following an extensive consultation with various users and carers groups as well as Wokingham Borough Council's staff (see Appendix 1 – Feedback from users and carers focus groups). The guidelines aim to set out the context of service user involvement, its benefits to both the Council and service users and how best to involve service users to ensure this is achieved.

The guidelines include examples of successful user and carer involvement, advice on setting clear objectives (Section 2 – Why), information on various user groups (Section 3 – Who) and practical guidance on involving users and carers in projects and events (Section 4 – How and Section 5 – Organising events).

*"When user involvement is second nature to enough people in an organisation it becomes 'the way we do things round here' and in a sense does cease to exist as a separate or optional activity."**

This is what we hope these guidelines will help to achieve.

1.2. Background

The last few years have seen a number of significant changes in the way that users of social care services have been able to become more directly involved in the planning and provision of the services that they need.

Not so long ago the only opportunities that users of social care services had of influencing the services they received was through occasional surveys or by making representations to the Council either as groups or individuals. This some times worked but there was no real framework which ensured that the services users' views were an integral part of social care planning and service provision.

*Developing user involvement - Working towards user-centred practice in voluntary organisations; P Robson, N Begum and M Locke; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; July 2003

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In 2001 the government published the “Valuing People” White Paper about services for people with learning disabilities. This established a new blueprint for service users to be more involved in the development and delivery of the services they received. The White Paper made it a specific requirement that local authorities should establish Learning Disability Partnership Boards to bring together public, voluntary and independent agencies and the wider community. The White Paper also established a national framework for a person centred approach to planning services.

The Wokingham Council Learning Disability Partnership Board was set up in 2001 and proved so successful that other services followed suit. There are now partnership boards for people with sensory needs and physical disabilities, mental health service users and older people.

At the same time as Valuing People the Government also launched their “Better Government for Older People” programme. This sought to improve services for older people by better meeting their needs, listening to their views and encouraging and recognising their contribution. This resulted in the setting up of local older people’s forums which provided a mechanism for older people to influence local Council policies and services. There are now 5 older people’s forums covering the Borough who send representatives to the Older People’s Partnership Board.

Recent years have also seen the development of “outcomes focussed” practice where the emphasis is on identifying what the service user wants to achieve and shaping services around this rather than simply offering a pre-determined service to meet generic types of need. This supports the “*person centred*” approach to care planning and seeks to ensure that services are flexible and tailored to meet the aspirations of individual service users rather than the requirements of rigid service plans and contracts determined from the centre.

The recent White Paper *Our Health our Care our Say* and the *Putting People First* compact represent the next major step forward in putting service users right at the heart of the provision of social carer services with the promotion of individual budgets and personalisation of services.

Furthermore the advent of Putting People First means that user involvement is no longer an activity run from the centre but will become an integral part of all social care activity, including assessment and care planning as well as commissioning and strategic planning. We are all responsible for ensuring that user and carer involvement is at the core of everything we do. As Putting People First states:

“The time has now come to build on best practice and replace paternalistic, reactive care of variable quality with a mainstream system focussed on prevention, early intervention, enablement, and high quality personally tailored services. In the future, we want people to have maximum choice, control and power over the support services they receive.”

1.3. Benefits of user and carer involvement to Wokingham Borough Council

1.3.1. Meeting the national guidelines

“Over time, people who use social care services and their families will increasingly shape and commission their own services. Personal Budgets will ensure people receiving public funding use available resources to choose their own support services”

Putting People First

Service users will have much higher levels of expectation in relation to the role that they play in the development and provision of services. Services will need to be much more responsive to users needs and preferences, more attuned to outcomes that service users value and more accountable to the people who use them.

Many service users will commission their own care and support and we will increasingly need to work in partnership with users to ensure that services provided or funded by the Council are focussed on the outcomes the service user wishes to achieve and that the wider market place for care and support services, whether through the voluntary sector or private providers, offers a wide range of well designed and sustainable options.

1.3.2. Ensuring that we plan and commission services that meet users’ needs

The personalisation of care and support services is likely to require a much wider range of services to meet the varied needs of the local community. We will no longer be able to rely on “one size fits all” services which attempt to cater for large groups of people who may have similar needs but who desire different outcomes. By involving service users more in the strategic planning and commissioning of services we will be better able to ensure that the right services will be available to meet these needs on an individual basis.

1.3.3. Establishing a partnership in relation to the provision of services

As service users begin to have an increasingly growing say in the services they want as consumers there is also likely to be a growing trend for users to be providers of services through social enterprise initiatives. The old model of the Council commissioning services from providers for service users will in some cases be replaced by situations where services users both commission and provide services themselves. The government has set a target for there to be a user led organisation supporting vulnerable people in every Local Authority area by 2010. To achieve these objectives it

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will be necessary for the Council to work in more in partnership with users and to develop mechanisms and processes which facilitate this.

1.3.4. Experts by experience (making the most of people's expertise as service users)

The recognition of the expertise of service users and carers on their own needs and the services required to address these has been an important development and will become increasingly so with the implementation of the Putting People First vision.

The transformation of social care will require the putting aside of the old paternalistic approach to assessment and care planning where a health or social care professional told people what they couldn't do and then told them what services they could have to address this. This approach on the individual level was replicated at service and strategic planning levels with professionals at the centre of a system deciding what services were needed and how much should be spent on them.

The new vision recognises that professionals are not always best placed to make decisions about needs and services for individuals in which personal factors will need to be given much greater significance. The new approach envisaged by Putting People First will enable more users to undertake their own assessments of their needs and plan their own services to ensure more personalised services that address each individual's unique situation on the basis that they know best what will be most effective in delivering their personal outcomes.



SPOTLIGHT ON ... Quality Audits

A new initiative which makes use of service users' expertise, piloted in Wokingham in Physical Disability and Sensory Needs services, is the carrying out of Quality Audits by services users. Using an audit framework based on the Department of Health's seven key outcomes for adult social care and after appropriate training, a small group of service users interview users of a particular service to ascertain their views on whether the service is achieving the outcomes it should.

The auditors then produce a report to which the service must respond with an action plan to address any areas where the service is underperforming. The idea is that service users are more likely to open about how they feel the service is performing if questioned by other users rather than staff or statutory inspectors, and service user auditors are more likely to understand the issues raised.

1.3.5. Reducing complaints and user dissatisfaction

By fully engaging service users in shaping services, it is less likely that services will fail to meet objectives which hopefully will reduce dissatisfaction. In such circumstances, even where services do fail, a greater understanding of and involvement in the service will promote constructive input from users into getting things right.

1.4. Benefits to users and carers

"If I don't get involved, I don't have the right to criticise things that other people have done"

WAP member

1.4.1. Empowering and enabling

People no longer want to be passive recipients of services. Service users have told us that being involved in decisions about the services they receive is important to them in feeling that they have more say over the services they receive and that services are more responsive to their needs. Service users feel more respected as individuals and groups when they are involved.

User involvement generates a culture that services should be accountable to the people who use them. Being able to directly question senior managers about services, to take part in discussions and initiate new developments are important in reassuring service users that their views are important, that the services are there for them and that their needs and interests are at the heart of service planning and delivery.

As indicated by the quote at the beginning of this section many service users feel that by making a contribution through user groups they earn the right to have a critical voice in the development and running of those services.

1.4.2. Building skills and confidence

For many service users, the opportunities provided by becoming involved in partnership boards, project groups, user groups and other forums has been a major factor in enabling them to acquire new skills and gain or regain confidence in themselves which may have been undermined by their illness or disability.

Service users have had opportunities to chair and contribute to meetings, interview staff, assist with drafting strategies and policies and to help organise and run events. For some service users this has enabled them to build on skills that they already had but for

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most this has provided a new challenge and an opportunity to develop new skills. This has a number of advantages.

- People gain self esteem as they realise that they are good at these skills and can make an effective contribution to service provision thereby helping others.
- They gain experience in dealing with officers of the Council and other statutory bodies which gives them more confidence when dealing with these groups on an individual level.
- Skills and experience gained can be built on to improve opportunities for paid employment or voluntary work.
- Some activities include an element of formal training (e.g. interviewing) which helps build self esteem and also adds to the skill set people can make use of when seeking work.

1.4.3. Providing opportunities for employment and volunteering

Involvement initiatives in themselves provide opportunities for service users to participate in meaningful activities, whether offering the chance to take advantage of existing skills, develop expertise gained by experience, or to try something completely new. For example, an experienced auditor who had acquired a disability made an important contribution to the development of the Quality Auditors project.

1.4.4. Being able to contribute to the wider community

The Department of Health has identified enabling people who use services to make a positive contribution to their community as a key outcome for social care services.

It is important that where users are involved the contribution they make is fully valued and it can be clearly shown that their involvement has had a real impact. Some initiatives fail adequately to ensure that service users are kept informed about the final outcomes and the contribution made by their involvement.

Many service users who have benefited from community care services feel very strongly that would like to “put something back”. Becoming involved in projects that help improve or develop services that will benefit other people provides an opportunity for this. This in turn promotes service users’ self esteem and sense of engagement with the wider community.

1.4.5. Opportunities for networking with other users and carers

Many service users find the involvement initiatives linked to community care services a valuable opportunity to meet with other service users. This is important in helping service users share ideas and information about services and can also provide a means of ensuring that information is disseminated through other organisations or groups that users may be members of as well as the users' informal networks (friends, family, social groups etc.). This can be particularly valuable for hard to reach groups.

There is also great value in service users being able to share experiences both within and across service areas. This can help users put their own experiences in context but also to understand the perspectives of other groups.

By enabling users to meet each other, involvement activities can also provide an opportunity for peer support as users can share problems with each other and suggest solutions based on personal knowledge and experience. Council led initiatives can also act as a spring board for users to start their own groups.

1.5. Barriers to user involvement

Despite the increasing demand and opportunities for users to get involved in social care services many service users find it difficult to do so. People who have disabilities or illnesses face many challenges which organisations seeking to promote greater involvement have to address to ensure that anyone who wants to become involved can be and that access to involvement opportunities is fair across services and communities.

Factors preventing or discouraging user involvement include

- Not being aware of opportunities due to poor publicity
- Information about opportunities not being in an appropriate, accessible format
- Lack of access to/provision of transport to get to events
- Venues, paperwork, processes either not accessible or not user friendly
- Lack of opportunities due to the nature of their illness, disability or caring responsibilities and of support to overcome this.
- Costs of attending events (transport, sitting services etc)
- Opportunities based on existing formats and structures framed by professionals which are not user friendly
- Not wanting to be associated with the activities of the Council
- Lack of confidence in expressing views or being in a group situation
- Belief that their views don't matter or won't be taken seriously by professionals/officers
- Lack of clarity about what is required and what the results/benefits will be

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- Bad experiences of previous involvement activities (e.g. lack of feed back, lack of support to take active part, lack of appreciation, views not accepted or valued)
- The effort of taking part, especially where support is not forthcoming, or where a long term commitment is required/expected

It is important when considering user involvement initiatives to ensure that these barriers are addressed. Guidance on this is set out in Section 4 – How.

2. Why

*"At times I was asked for my views, but the decisions had already been made."
Carer*

Involving users and carers in the planning, delivering, monitoring and running of services should be at the centre of everything we do. The personalisation of the service delivery means that service users are the decision makers and our role is to facilitate their involvement in choosing and commissioning their own care. This means that user involvement is not an option, but a necessity.

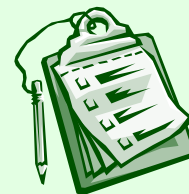
User involvement has to be meaningful and beneficial both to users and WBC staff. Lack of clarity about the purpose of user involvement results in users and carers being confused about what is expected of them. Similarly, if users and carers are not given information on the impact of their involvement or feel that their input is not important, they become disillusioned and disengaged.

Therefore, clear objectives for user involvement have to be established and communicated to everyone. Service users and carers have to feel confident that their input is valued and is not a token gesture.

You can use the checklist on the next page to clarify why you are involving service users and what you want to achieve.

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Checklist - Why



- What do you want to achieve?
 - Identify future needs
 - Stakeholders' views on service development
 - Monitoring of a service
 - Service evaluation / audit
 - Change of policy
 - Employment / development opportunities for users / carers
 - Other

- What do you want to know?
If you have made your mind up before you consult, you are doing it wrong!
 - Are you consulting on a draft proposal or aiming to generate new ideas?
 - Do you want to identify gaps in services?

- Are you prepared to respond positively and sensitively to critical comments?

- What are the benefits of user involvement to your project / service delivery?
 - Input from experts by experience
 - Representative view
 - Users / carers taking ownership
 - Partnership
 - Other.....

- What impact will the users / carers have on decision making?

- Are your objectives clear to the users and carers who will be involved?
 - Are they SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound)?
 - Are they free of jargon?
 - Are they accessible in various formats (e.g. large print and Braille)?

- How will the value of the user involvement be apparent at the end of this process?
 - How are you going to evaluate users/carers input?
 - How are you going to inform users of the impact of their involvement on the project?

- Is anyone else engaging service users in similar work?
 - Will service users be overwhelmed with too much work?
 - Can you join forces?

3. Who

There are various forms of user and carer involvement, for example: individual input, participation in user groups and partnership boards or representing interests of the wider community. You may be involving users and carers on an individual level, but as part of the same consultation, you may also be asking them to represent views of other users and carers.

Whether you will be involving individual users and carers or wider interest groups will depend on what you are asking people to be involved in and why. For example, consultation on major changes to service delivery will involve a wide range of people, whereas taking part in a job interview panel will involve only one or two individuals.

3.1. Partnership boards

There are several partnership boards led by service users in Wokingham borough. Members of the partnership boards include service users, carers, representatives of NHS as well as other private and voluntary organisations and Wokingham Borough Council staff:

- Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Wokingham Ability Partnership for people with disabilities and sensory needs
- Mental Health Partnership Board
- Older People's Forums and Partnership

The partnership boards and forums give users and carers opportunity to present their views on a wide range of issues affecting their lives and get involved in a variety of projects and initiatives ranging from service improvement, self-support, consultation on policy changes and setting up of new services.

3.2. User groups

In addition to the partnership boards, there are also a number of other user and carer groups. Some of these groups are informal and their primary aim is to offer self-support to its members. Other groups focus on specific interest areas such as Direct Payments, access to local buildings and advocacy.

3.3. LINKs

A Local Involvement Network in Health and Social Care (LINKs) is being currently developed to give the local residents the opportunity to get involved and shape the way that services in health and social care are provided. LINKs will use existing networks and

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community activity allowing local people to dip in and dip out of issues and concerns as no formal membership is required.

Please see Appendix 6 for information on local users and carers groups.

3.4. Engaging with hard to reach, underrepresented groups

It is not uncommon for a service user event to be organised and well publicised, but only attended by a small number of service users. It is often the case that those who take part in consultation or other initiatives (“the usual suspects”) do not represent a wide range of people with diverse needs and circumstances.

There are various reasons why not all users may wish to be involved. The most common barriers to user and carer involvement include communication, cost, respite and transport. These issues will be addressed in Section 4 – How.

In addition to addressing issues that may prevent users and carers from getting involved in various initiatives, there are other steps that can be taken to encourage underrepresented groups to be involved in user and carer initiatives:

- **Don't expect users to come to you – go to them**

Hold user and carer events in places that are attended by service users and carers – e.g. GP surgeries, day centres, community centres and clubs.

- **Become part of the community**

Attend community based events and activities, e.g. fayres, sporting, cultural, ethnic and religious events. Subject to negotiations with organisers, you may be able to host an information stand, do a presentation or hold a workshop.

- **Involve users in involving other users**

Peer support and networking plays an important role in user involvement. Users find it easy to relate to other users due to shared experiences. Therefore, it is important to ask users and carers to encourage others to give their views and become involved in various user and carer initiatives.

“As a carer, I know how important it is to speak to someone who understands your situation. Therefore, if the Council needs to consult with carers on a specific issue, I am willing to call other carers and ask their views.”

Carer

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- **Seek help and advice from people working with hard to reach groups**

There are many local organisations working with people with disabilities, older people, carers and people with alcohol and drug addictions. For further information, please refer to the Linkup – online database of local services:

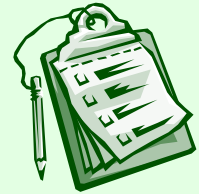
www.wokingham.gov.uk/linkup.

The Council's Social Inclusion Worker will be able to give you information and advice on how to engage with people from minority ethnic groups, migrant workers, people living in rural areas, older people and other underrepresented groups.

☎ 0118 974 6790.

For advice and information on consulting with travellers, please contact the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer, ☎ 0118 974 6040.

Checklist - Why



Please consider the following:

- Who is going to be affected?
- What expertise do you need?
- How are you going to ensure that you have input from underrepresented and / or hard to reach group?
- How are you going to ensure that a wide range of views is represented?
- Are there any statutory requirements you need to consider – e.g. equality legislation?

Who to invite to take part

- Service user groups:
 - Partnership Boards and Forums
 - The LINK
 - Service user and carer support groups – e.g. Direct Payments
- Individual users and carers
- Advocates
- Voluntary organisations representing service users and carers (e.g. Age Concern, Princess Royal Trust Carers Centre, etc.)
- Wider community (i.e. everyone with an interest in the issues)
- Other

4. How

The Putting People First initiative is transforming the way we engage with service users and carers as it puts them behind the steering wheel. As the Putting People First initiative evolves, service user and care engagement will increasingly focus on people planning and arranging their own care services in addition to having a say on wider issues.

There are various levels and forms of user and carer involvement – ranging from consultation through to planning and monitoring of services.

Users told us that the social aspect of involvement can be very important. Please remember to build this into the project.

The table below gives some examples of user and carer involvement, but this list is not exhaustive due to the increased involvement of partnership boards and individual service users and carers in the planning, development and monitoring of service. The list is growing all the time and you can add to it. It is up to you to work with service users to develop new ways of involving users and carers in what we do.

Types of user involvement		Description and examples
Consultation	<i>One-to-one interviews with individual service users and carers</i>	This approach can be used when you need to target members of a particular group, when you need to discuss confidential or sensitive issues or when you need to talk about issues that concern only an individual, such as care arrangements.
	<i>Written and telephone surveys</i>	Surveys are particularly useful when you need to gather information from a large number of people or for a snapshot in time. Examples include customer satisfaction questionnaires and surveys on pilot projects.
	<i>Focus groups</i>	This is a group interview (typically 6-10 people) or discussion focusing on a particular issue. Focus groups are particularly useful if service users and carers are required to provide suggestions or options. Service user and carer involvement guidelines are based on discussions taking place in focus groups.
	<i>Public meetings</i>	Widely publicised meetings open to everyone. They may be held to introduce changes in services, a plan, strategy or report. For example, public meetings are held to present a post inspection findings and changes in eligibility criteria.

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Types of user involvement	Description and examples	
	<i>Open days / surgeries / exhibitions</i>	One-off events where service users and carers as well as members of general public can share views or gather information on a specific topic. Someone with a detailed knowledge will be present to answer questions and collate feedback. Examples include open days at day centres and information events.
Participation in user groups / partnership boards	<i>Chairing meetings</i>	All Partnership Boards and user groups are chaired or co-chaired by service users / carers. Members of the user groups shape the agenda.
	<i>Leading projects</i>	Members of the Partnership Boards are developing and leading a wide range of projects benefiting the local community. Examples include Hate Crime Campaign (Learning Disability Partnership Board) and removal of advertising boards from pavements (Wokingham Area Access Group).
	<i>Self-support and advocacy</i>	Membership of user groups and partnership boards offers opportunity for networking, exchange of views and self-support. For example, carers of Westmead users meet monthly to exchange information and experiences. Guest speakers are invited if the group needs information on a particular issue.
	<i>Organisation of events</i>	Service users and carers organise events either by themselves or in partnership with WBC and other organisations. Wokingham Ability Partnership and Reading Disability and Sensory Needs jointly organised a sport and leisure event for people with disabilities living in Reading and Wokingham area.
Planning, development and monitoring of services	<i>Contributing to service specifications / commissioning of services</i>	Users and carers are involved in deciding what services should be provided. For example, people with learning disabilities were involved in remodelling the day services provision and transforming it from a traditional day centre with a set of activities to a community centre open to all.
	<i>Taking part in tendering processes</i>	Users and carers are involved in choosing care and household services providers. For example, a panel consisting of users and carers as well as WBC staff sampled meals supplied by several meals on wheels contractors to identify a preferred provider.
	<i>Auditing of services</i>	This involves service users talking to other service users about their experiences of receiving a particular service. For example, members of the Wokingham Ability Partnership were trained as

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Types of user involvement		Description and examples
		Quality Auditors to interview other users and prepare a report with recommendations for service development.
	<i>Mystery shopping</i>	This is another way of monitoring the services. Users and carers are asked to make enquiries about a service and report on how well they were treated, timescales they were given and a general experience of the service. The CSCI uses this method when inspecting our services.
	<i>Taking part in project groups</i>	Project groups greatly benefit from having experts by experience, especially if the project is about development of a new service or improvement of an existing one. For example, service users at Westmead are actively involved in reshaping the provision of day services.
Staff recruitment and training	<i>Writing job descriptions</i>	As direct recipients of care services, service users and carers can contribute greatly to writing job descriptions. For example, Wokingham Ability Partnership (WAP) had an input into collating the list of tasks and responsibilities of the WAP Development Worker.
	<i>Taking part in interview panels</i>	All interviews for frontline staff should involve a user or a carer.
	<i>Providing training / presentations for staff</i>	Users and carers can provide a first hand experience of the service and their views on services they receive are invaluable. For example, users give presentations at the Middle Managers Forum and staff meetings.
Your suggestions and examples	<i>What new initiatives or activities are you involved in?</i>	

Please refer to Appendix 2 for further guidance on consultation.

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User and carer involvement should be carefully planned to ensure that all the barriers to participation are removed and everyone is fully able to participate in all projects and initiatives. Resources, communication, training, access and choice should all be taken into consideration when opportunities for user involvement are established.

You should be prepared to listen to a range of views some of which will inevitably be critical. It is important that these are equally valued and not simply dismissed.

There may also be conflict within groups. Not all service users and carers share the same opinions or viewpoints. Think about how such conflicts can be resolved constructively. Sometimes it is necessary to acknowledge the difference of opinion. Establish ground rules at the outset of the project.

4.1. Resources

4.1.1. People

You may need other people to help you with certain tasks such as facilitating meetings and carrying out surveys. If you are organising an event, you will need help with administrative tasks such as sending out invitations and collating responses. Consider involving users and carers in the planning and preparation of the activity. They will provide a valuable insight into what will work best.

Consider setting up a steering group to help with allocating tasks and ensuring that they are completed on time.

4.1.2. Financial resources

Make sure that you allocate adequate resources for user involvement taking into account the following costs:

- Transport (taxis, public transport, transport provided by the Corporate Transport Unit)
- Information in accessible formats such as Braille and audio tapes
- Interpreters: other languages, British Sign Language, deaf-blind interpreters
- Venue
- Refreshments
- Respite
- Training
- Remuneration of service users and carers (please refer to the Wokingham Borough Council's Reward and Recognition Protocol for guidance)

4.1.3. Efficiency

- Think outside the box!
- If possible, use free venues and in-house services.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
 - Ask colleagues, especially if they have experience of similar events or initiatives
 - Advertise for help from users and carers or voluntary organisations
- Share resources and costs with other organisations
- Involve in-house employment services for users such as Wokingham Employment Service and It's Working
- Use the Volunteers Bureau (check name)
- Certain projects may be eligible for grants (you can search for grants on www.governmentfunding.org.uk and www.grantsnet.co.uk)



4.2. Timescales

Effective service user involvement requires a lot of time and effort. Make sure that you set yourself realistic goals and timescales. Prioritise the tasks if necessary. Remember - everything always takes longer than you think!

Users told us that they were often not given enough time to take part in consultations, please ensure that you allow enough time for everyone to participate.

Below is a list of the most common tasks with regards to user involvement events and projects and typical timescales:

- Booking a venue: 2-3 months
- Consultation on proposals / draft documents: 6 - 8 weeks*
- Preparing information in accessible formats (e.g. Braille and audio tapes): 6 weeks
- Booking a photographer (e.g. user event, consultation, etc.): 6 weeks
- Booking interpreters: 6 weeks
- Information given to users / carers before meetings / events: 4 weeks
- Publicity (distribution of flyers, posters, invitations and media releases): 4 – 6 weeks
- Booking respite care: 4 weeks
- Booking transport through the Corporate Transport Unit: 1 week
- Preparing and distributing surveys and collating feedback 10 weeks
- Preparing and printing publicity materials 6-8 weeks



**Please note: consultation on major service changes will take longer*

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Be aware of deadlines for Council publications such as the Borough News, leaflet distribution, internal newsletters, mailouts, etc. in which you might be able to publicise your event or project as these may affect the timescales.

Please refer to Section 5 – Organising events for further information about timescales for organising events

4.3. Information and publicity

Information has to be accessible to everyone either through interpreters and facilitators or through written, visual or audio methods. If you are not sure what communication methods are best for users, please ask rather than make assumptions.

Use technology to help you make information available as widely as possible and in accessible formats



SPOTLIGHT ON.... VictorStream

Several service users were trained as Quality Auditors and interview other users. Some of the Quality Auditors had visual impairments and had to rely on a facilitator to read out questions to be asked during the interviews. This was obviously restricting their independence and their full involvement in the interviews.

One of the Quality Auditors suggested purchasing a VictorStream - a small electronic device with a text recognition software (word documents are read out) for people with visual impairments. The device also works as a dictaphone and is therefore ideal at meetings and presentations. Two VictorStream devices were purchased and given to the auditors. Thanks to VictorStream, the auditors were able to easily access questions to be asked during the interview and ask the questions without having to rely on a facilitator.

VictorStream is now being used by users with visual impairments to chair and facilitate meetings.

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- Information must be clear and concise
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Provide information in accessible formats for people with various communication needs:
 - Braille
 - Large print (16 Ariel, white or light yellow background, no pictures and watermarks)
 - Audio tapes and audio recordings (e.g. VictorStream – personal text reader)
 - Symbols and drawings
 - Video and photographs
- For further information on information in different formats, please contact the Promotions and Publications Officer, ☎ 0118 974 6777. For information on communication aids and equipment, please contact the Access Officer, ☎ 0118 974 6379, email: access@wokingham.gov.uk
- Interpreters:
 - *Non-English speakers*: Slough Translation and Interpreting Service, ☎ 01753 539944
 - *British Sign Language Interpreters and Deaf-Blind Communicators*: RNID, ☎ 01225 485770.

In addition, various user and carer involvement opportunities have to be well publicised to give people maximum choice and opportunity to take part. Photographs from earlier events make good publicity as they help promote positive images of local people taking part in activities.

Make sure that you send publicity materials to all relevant user groups (for example, current users of WBC services), partnership boards, user groups, day centres, residential homes, sheltered housing and voluntary organisations.

Be creative – distribute your publicity materials to all the places users and carers may be attending, such as churches, schools, community centres, leisure centres, GP surgeries, libraries, clubs and cafes.

For further advice and information, please contact the Publications and Promotions Officer, ☎ 0118 974 6777.

4.4. Support for users and carers

4.4.1. Access

It is your responsibility to remove barriers to user and carer involvement. You have to ensure that:

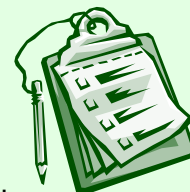
- Information is provided in good time and in appropriate format
- Interpreters are provided if needed (see page 23 for further information)
- Advocates are available
- Users are given necessary aids and equipment to participate (e.g. communication aids such as induction loop and VictorStream)
- Accessible transport is available (see section 4.4.2. on transport)
- Dietary requirements are met
- Respite care is provided for carers
- Venue is accessible (see page 25)
- Personal assistants and helpers are available if required (remember to ask users in advance if they need this!)

Think about whether the venue is right for the event. Council offices, hospitals and venues in remote locations may discourage people from taking part.

Think outside the box. Venues need to be easily accessible, neutral and friendly, and set the right tone (not too big or impersonal or small and cramped). Check with users what they might like; the right venue might be a coffee shop.

For further advice and information, please contact the Access Officer, 📞 0118 974 6379, email: access@wokingham.gov.uk

Checklist – Venue accessibility



- Is a car park available?

Disabled parking bays need to be available and clearly marked. They should be on firm flat surface (e.g. concrete, tarmac and not gravel or lawn). There should be plenty of space for wheelchair hoists, etc. on both sides and at the back of the disabled bays.

If there is no accessible car park at the venue, identify other local parking facilities

- Is the venue accessible for wheelchair users?
 - If there are steps into the building, is there a ramp or a lift?
 - If possible, hold the event on one floor only.
- Does the venue have an induction loop?
- Are guide dogs allowed into the venue?
- What is the lighting like?

Natural lighting is best with an option of blinds/curtains.
Consider specific needs of people with visual impairments (e.g. some people prefer areas with contrasting colours, etc.)

- Does the venue have toilets for disabled people?
 - Are they easy to find?
 - Do they have handrails?
 - Do you need a RADAR key to open the door?
- Does the venue have clear signage? If not, make your own.

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4.4.2. Transport

Accessible transport (e.g. minivans and taxis with ramps) can be arranged through the Wokingham Borough Council Transport Unit (CTU). Please contact CTU at least a week in advance (you will need a cost centre code). ☎️ 0118 974 6270

If using private or public transport, users and carers are entitled to be reimbursed for their travel expenses. Please refer to the Wokingham Borough Council's Reward and Recognition Protocol.

4.4.3. Training

Please ensure that all users and carers are briefed on what is expected of them and given copies of any relevant WBC policies and guidelines.

Some training (e.g. IT skills) is available free of charge for people on benefits through Learndirect. Please contact the Wokingham library for more information, ☎️ 0118 978 1368.

4.4.4. Skills and confidence building

"We could help each other through a buddy scheme and in this way encourage more people to join our partnership board"

Member of Wokingham Ability Partnership

Lack of confidence is one of the barriers to user involvement. Service users can help other users to increase their skills and confidence through a mentoring scheme. Service users who have some experience of user involvement could be paired up with other users to offer them support and guidance. Think of opportunities for service users to take an active role in the organising and running of the event.

4.5. Choice of user and carer involvement opportunities

To maximise interest in user and carer involvement you should give people various opportunities to contribute depending on their ability, availability and preferences. Do not rely on one or two well established methods – try something different.

For example, when consulting on changes to a service, you may wish to organise focus groups, a postal survey, an online questionnaire, a public meeting, an exhibition and one-to-one interviews. Do not be afraid to ask service users what they would prefer.

4.6. Flexibility

When asking users and carers to get involved in a specific project, please remember to take into account their individual needs and circumstances. Some people may have work or family commitments and only able to come to meetings held at a specific time, others may not be able to commit themselves to regular input due to illness or disability.

Be prepared to change the time, location and structure of meetings, adapt format of documentation and give people opportunity to contribute as much as they are able to.

4.7. User led initiatives

Some initiatives may benefit from being solely user led and controlled, particularly when independence from the Council is important. For example, the Quality Audits (users talking to other users about their experiences of a particular service) have to be user led to ensure impartiality of feedback and recommendations.

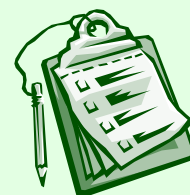
Other user involvement initiatives may need more input from WBC, but users and carers should always be fully involved in the planning and preparation of these project.



SPOTLIGHT ON.... Information day for deaf people

Members of the Wokingham Ability Partnership worked with the Reading Deaf Centre on organising a one day information event for deaf people living in Reading and Wokingham area. WAP members organised the publicity, invited stall holders and interpreters and prepared the venue. The hard work put into organising the event paid off – over a hundred people came along. Feedback from participants was extremely positive – everyone enjoyed the opportunity to get together and find out about local services available for deaf people and their families.

Checklist - How



Resources

- Have you identified help with organising events and meetings?
- Who will perform admin tasks?
- Have you set up a steering group?
- Do you know the cost of support required? (see 4.1.2.)
- What can you use for free and what do you have to pay for?
- Do you have budget to pay for user involvement?
- Do you know which tasks users are entitled to receive payment for?
- Can you share the cost and resources with another organisation?
- Can you apply for a grant?
- Have you contacted Wokingham Employment Service and It's Working?
- Have you asked users and carers if they want to help with setting up the event/project?

Time

- Have you given yourself enough time to perform all tasks? (see 4.2.)
- What tasks do you need to prioritise?

Information

- Is information clear and concise?
- Is it jargon free?
- Is it available in other formats?
- Have you publicised user involvement opportunities widely?

Support for users and carers

- Have you booked interpreters?
- Have you booked an accessible venue?
- Have you provided necessary aids and equipment?
- Have you taken into account dietary requirements?
- Have you provided a respite care if required?
- Have you asked users and carers about their transport preferences?
- Have you booked accessible transport if required?
- Do you know how to reimburse travelling expenses?
- Have you assessed training needs of users and carers?
- Do you know what to do to meet their training needs?
- Who is going to provide coaching / mentoring?

Choice

- Have you provided a range of opportunities for users and carers to get involved?
- Have you publicised these opportunities widely?

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5. Outcomes and feedback

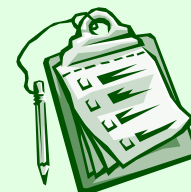
In order for the user involvement to be meaningful and beneficial to all, it is necessary to establish whether the identified objectives have been met (please refer to Section 2 - Why).

Please ask users and carers for their views on being involved in the project.

It is also imperative that users and carers are given feedback on their input. After consultation, you should acknowledge all suggestions that contributed to policy changes or service development. If some of the suggestions are not feasible, please let users and carers know the reasons why you are not able to take them forward. Feedback from users indicated that they often did not get information about the results of the consultation and the impact of their involvement.

Where user involvement project has been successful, do publicise this as widely as possible. Users told us this encourages people to take part in future initiatives.

Checklist – Outcomes and feedback



Achieving the objectives

- Have you gained what you wanted from the service user involvement?
- How are you going to make maximum use of what the service user involvement has contributed?
- What value will you place on the service users' contribution, especially where it may not be in line with professional or institutional views or objectives?
- How will you reconcile differences between user views and aims and those of other stakeholders?
- If the objectives were not achieved, why was this?

Feeding back the results to the people who have contributed

- How will you let users know about how their input has been used and the impact it has had?
- How will you acknowledge/recognise/value service users input?
- How will you evaluate service users' views on how they were involved?
- How will you identify what went well and what didn't and make the most of this?

6. Organising events

6.1. First things first

10 weeks before the event

6.1.1. Steering group

- Set up a steering group of people who are interested in organising the event:
 - Invite service users from partnership boards, service users forums, etc. to join the steering group.
 - Invite representatives from other organisations who may be interested in jointly organising the event.
- Identify a contact person for enquiries
- Identify a person who will open the event, introduce speakers, etc.
- Share tasks with members of the steering group

6.1.2. Aims and objectives

- Set your objectives:
 - What do you want to achieve and why?
 - What are the benefits for the participants of your event?
- Decide how you will measure the event's success (e.g. number of participants, questionnaire, verbal feedback, media coverage, other tangible outcomes)
- Decide who the event is for (your target audience) and how many people you would like to attend

6.1.3. Budget / resources

- Cost the event (see Appendix 3 – Event budget form)
- Consider sharing the cost of the event with other organisations
- Use resources efficiently (e.g. consider using free venues, in-house services, etc.)

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6.1.4. Speakers / exhibitors and programme of the event

- Draw up a list of key speakers / exhibitors, key participants, etc.
- Prepare a back up list in case some of your key speakers / exhibitors, etc, are unable to attend
- Prepare a (draft) programme of the event (prepare a plan B in case a plan A fails!). Make sure you allow plenty of time for comfort breaks and changeover slots for interpreters

6.1.5. Date and time

- Identify the best date and time for your event:
 - Avoid weekends and religious holidays (you will find a list of religious holidays on www.interfaithcalendar.org)
 - Consider specific needs and circumstances of your target audience when setting the time of your event (e.g. working carers may prefer an evening event, etc.)
 - Check the availability of your key speakers / key participants

6.1.6. Venue

- Identify a venue and check its availability.
- Check the accessibility of the venue
- Book the venue if it meets your accessibility requirements

Please refer to the venue accessibility checklist on page 25.

6.2. Preparation

2 months before the event

6.2.1. Inviting key speakers / exhibitors

- Prepare invitations and booking forms (see Appendix 3 Booking Form)
- Invite key speakers / exhibitors, etc. to your event:
 - Consider personal phone approach ahead of a written invitation
 - Send letters / invitations outlining the nature and purpose of the event
 - Include a booking form with the letter / invitation (see Appendix 3 Booking Form) and ask for it to be returned within 4 weeks.

6.2.2. Other tasks

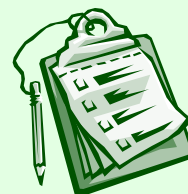
- Finalise the programme of the event – make sure that you include frequent breaks / some degree of flexibility to allow for changeover of interpreters, etc.
- Book caterers
- Book audio-visual equipment (e.g. laptop, overhead projector, flipchart, TV set, DVD player, etc.)

6 weeks before the event

6.2.3. Inviting participants

- Send invitations to service users and other stakeholders
- Monitor responses and keep a record of acceptances / declines

Checklist – Invitations to service users



- Include the following information:
 - Place / venue / directions
 - Date
 - Purpose of the event
 - Timescale for responses
 - Contact details of the event organiser

- Be concise

- Focus on the event's main attractions and benefits to the participants

- Provide the invitations in appropriate formats (see page 23 for further information)

- Let the participants know that the event is accessible and that support / interpreters / transport can be booked.

- Include a response mechanism (e.g. email, telephone, booking form) with deadline to reply at least two weeks ahead of the event.

- Ask people you are inviting if they have any specific needs:
 - Wheelchair access
 - Induction loop
 - Interpreter (BSL or another language)
 - Transport
 - Parking for disabled people
 - Special dietary requirements
 - Information in large print, Braille or audio tapes
 - Information in symbols / photos
 - Accessible transport
 - Sitting service
 - Childcare
 - Advocacy service
 - Other

6.2.4. Inviting facilitators, interpreters, etc.

- Book interpreters (BSL and other languages) – see page 23 for further information
- Book and brief a photographer
- Identify and invite facilitators (i.e. people who will greet the participants, help them move around, etc.)

4 weeks before the event

6.2.5. Key speakers / exhibitors – follow up

- Contact your key speakers / exhibitors by phone if you have not received a reply.
- Follow up acceptances with a courteous letter thanking for acceptance. Include a map and / or directions to the venue, parking details, and any other relevant information.

6.2.6. Promotion and publicity

- Organise the promotion of your event:
 - Prepare publicity materials (e.g. posters, flyers, etc.):
 - Distribute your promotional literature to community access points (e.g. GP surgeries, libraries, community centres, etc.). Contact the Community Care Publications and Promotions Officer for help and further information.
 - Consider holding roadshows to promote the event and / or give out flyers in shopping centres, etc.
 - Publicise your event on the website
 - Promote your event through mail shots, newsletters, etc.
 - Organise press coverage – e.g. press release and radio interviews

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2 weeks before the event

6.2.7. Information for the event

- Prepare information packs containing:
 - Programme of the event
 - Information about key speakers / exhibitors
 - Feedback sheet
 - Any other relevant information
- Information packs and other relevant information should be made available in different formats (e.g. Braille, symbols, etc.) as requested by the participants
- Prepare other documents, signs, etc.
 - A feedback sheet (see Appendix 4 Feedback Form)
 - Name badges
 - Sign-in sheet
 - Signs - clear and printed in dark lettering on light background. Use large print, sans serif font (e.g. Ariel, Tahoma, etc.) with initial capitals and lower-case text.

6.2.8. Other tasks

- Notify final numbers for catering (as per deadline agreed with caterers)
- Book accessible transport (as required)
- Book respite / sitting service (as required)
- Plan an opening speech / introduction to the event
- Plan introduction(s) to the speaker(s)

6.3. Final tasks before the event

1 week before the event

6.3.1. Venue

- Finalise seating arrangements, signing-in areas, place for water bowls for guide dogs and outside area to walk the guide dogs
- Make sure that signs are displayed at a height suitable for wheelchair users
- Identify a person who will inform the participants of the housekeeping arrangements such as toilets, fire exits and fire alarms

6.3.3. Aids and equipment

- Prepare an emergency kit – e.g. pens, blue tack, sellotape, scissors, string, staplers, pins, paper, clipboard and elastic bands
- Prepare flipcharts, pens, audio-visual equipment and other aids

6.3.4. Greeting participants

- Brief staff at the venue and facilitators on how to greet participants who are disabled or have sensory impairments. Main points to consider include:
 - Guide dogs or working dogs should not be patted
 - Make sure that you introduce yourself



Greeting participants

Greeting people with visual impairment:

Ask the individual how you may help them and if you guide them, make sure that you describe where you are going. If there are any stairs, tell them if there is a handrail and if the stairs are going up or down

If you offer someone a seat, guide their hand to the back of the chair, telling them that there is a chair to sit on.

Greeting people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

Ask the person how they would like to communicate as there are many different types of deafness and individuals will have a preferred way of communicating.

Try to establish an eye contact if you are speaking to a deaf person, as they may want to lip read. Do not have your back to a light source. Speak clearly, but do not exaggerate words. Do not cover your mouth.

Greeting people with speech difficulties:

Listen to them carefully. If you do not understand something, ask them to repeat it. Do not try to finish sentences or assume what they are going to say.

Greeting people who use a wheelchair:

Do not move the wheelchair or lean on it.

Try to get to the same level as the wheelchair user, by kneeling down or sitting on a chair.

6.4. At the event

- Identify a person who will be responsible for troubleshooting and ensuring that the event goes smoothly
- Allocate tasks to facilitators (e.g. greeting, signing-in, etc.)
- Let people know about housekeeping arrangements at the beginning of the event (e.g. fire drill, emergency exits, etc.)
- Make sure that key speakers know when and where they are supposed to be
- Make sure that the BSL interpreters are seated where deaf / hard of hearing people can see them
- Give interpreters regular breaks / changeover times
- Ask participants of your event to fill in a feedback form or give you verbal feedback.

6.6. After the event

- Evaluate the event against the objectives you set out at the beginning:
 - Did the event meet all these objectives?
 - Did the event result in unexpected benefits?
 - What would you have done differently?
 - Recommendations for future events

- Analyse feedback and pass results to the participants:
 - personal contact (face to face, phone call)
 - written feedback (letter, report, press release, web page, etc.)

- Write and thank everyone who contributed to your event

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TIMESCALE	TASK	DONE
10 weeks before the event	Set up a steering group	
	Identify a budget	
	Draw up a list of guest speakers	
	Set date and time	
	Check the accessibility of the venue	
	Book the venue	
	Check availability of your guest speakers	
2 months before the event	Invite guest speakers / exhibitors	
	Finalise programme of the event	
	Book caterers	
	Book audio-visual equipment	
6 weeks before the event	Invite the participants	
	Book interpreters (BSL and other languages)	
	Book and brief a photographer	
	Identify / invite facilitators / helpers, etc.	
4 weeks before the event	Contact guest speakers / exhibitors if they have not contacted you yet	
	Send a thank you letter, map and instructions to guest speakers / exhibitors	
	Prepare and distribute publicity materials	
	Promote your event on the website, through newsletters, etc.	
	Organise press coverage	
2 weeks before the event	Prepare: information packs	
	name badges	
	a feedback sheet	
	sign-in sheet	
	signage	
	Notify final numbers for catering	
	Book transport	
	Book respite / sitting service	
	Plan the opening speech, introduction to speakers, etc.	
1 week before the event	Prepare the venue (e.g. seating, signage, etc.)	
	Prepare aids and equipment	
	Brief staff at venue on how to greet participants	
At the event	Allocate tasks to facilitators / helpers	
	Ensure that everyone is where they are supposed to be	
	Let participants know about housekeeping arrangements	
	Gather feedback from participants	
After the event	Evaluate the event	
	Analyse feedback and pass the results to participants	
	Write and thank everyone who contributed to your event	

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APPENDIX 1 - Feedback from user and care involvement focus groups

What works/ has worked well	What didn't work well / needs improving	What opportunities do we provide to get involved?	What opportunities should we develop?	What makes it difficult / prevents you from being involved?	What makes it easy for you to get involved?	What do you get out of being involved in Council services?	Key issues/ themes
Physical Disability Group							
<p>Surveys for getting views on bigger picture</p> <p>Focus groups to look at the detail</p> <p>Involvement/ commitment of senior staff /members</p>	<p>More notice of inspections / consultations etc.</p> <p>Need to "sell" involvement not just publicise it</p> <p>Need to ensure people know their views are listened to and taken on board</p> <p>Making sure people are aware of what's going on</p> <p>Giving feedback on service user input</p> <p>Need to offer and value different degrees of involvement</p>	<p>WAP</p> <p>Surveys – prefer if options are given</p>	<p>Getting more/new people involved.</p> <p>Need good examples of effective involvement to convince people it is worthwhile.</p> <p>Regular meetings with commissioning managers.</p> <p>Single issue focus groups (e.g transport, housing)</p> <p>Opportunities to take part in managing services</p>	<p>Lack of information about opportunities</p> <p>Hard to make a commitment over time</p> <p>Newly disabled often too busy with own issues</p> <p>Poor publicity for Council puts people off.</p> <p>Lack of feedback. Need 2 way communication.</p>	<p>Simple info – no jargon.</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Advocacy</p> <p>Mentoring</p> <p>Opportunities to get involved at different levels.</p> <p>Letting service users take lead organise events and set agenda</p> <p>Chance meetings – informal networks</p> <p>Communication aids</p>	<p>Recognition of skills</p> <p>Self-development</p> <p>Interested in subject area</p> <p>Being able to use past experience</p> <p>Social opportunities</p> <p>Feeling that you have had your say</p> <p>Interaction with people</p> <p>Development of new skills + confidence</p> <p>Peer support</p> <p>Experts by experience</p>	<p>Need good simple info about what is happening and why.</p>
Staff							
<p>Involving service users in writing job description for EMH carers support post</p> <p>Service users on in-house domestic care steering group</p>	<p>Resolving conflicts between users and carers</p> <p>Being clear about weight given to users' views. Who has final say?</p>	<p>Self advocacy workshops</p> <p>Service user audits</p> <p>Staff interviews</p> <p>Partnership Boards</p> <p>Surveys</p>	<p>Training</p> <p>Helping service users to understand what a good service looks like.</p> <p>Involvement in writing service specifications/ job descriptions</p> <p>Involvement in tender processes</p>	<p>Lack of interest in becoming involved</p> <p>Limited time / resources</p>	<p>Using appropriate venues</p>		<p>User involvement takes time. We often do not allow for this in commissioning services, developing strategies, policies etc</p>

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What works/ has worked well	What didn't work well / needs improving	What opportunities do we provide to get involved?	What opportunities should we develop?	What makes it difficult / prevents you from being involved?	What makes it easy for you to get involved?	What do you get out of being involved in Council services?	Key issues/ themes
Carers							
Having options to comment on rather than a blank sheet approach	<p>Letting people know what is happening and why</p> <p>Be aware of impact (i.e anxiety) of new proposals</p> <p>Giving feedback on consultation</p> <p>Don't raise expectations.</p> <p>Keep things simple.</p> <p>Dom care process was poor little info about or notice of changes</p>	<p>Consultation – but implies decision has been made!</p> <p>Carers</p> <p>Seminars</p>	<p>Cold calling for views – by service users</p> <p>Service User/Carers Panel like citizens panel.</p> <p>Involvement in writing service specs and in choosing providers</p> <p>Method for service users to tell us about services (i.e. initiate feedback) rather than WBC asking service users – e.g. feedback forms & comment cards.</p> <p>Informal networks (e.g. coffee mornings)</p> <p>Opportunities for involvement for carers of people who are not eligible for social services</p>	<p>Lack of information /single contact point about opportunities</p> <p>Lack of transport to events</p>			<p>Clear information, simple processes</p> <p>Feedback</p>
Mental Health Group							
CRS drop in Involvement in interviews but training must be provided.	<p>Partnership Board – professional dominated</p> <p>Need to make it a user group to which professionals are invited not vice versa</p>		<p>Mentoring</p> <p>Peer support</p> <p>Advocacy</p> <p>Training – chairing meetings, taking minutes</p>	Lack of support. User involvement development worker post is needed.	Having a social element to activities would encourage more people to take part.	<p>Can be a stepping stone back into work.</p> <p>Helps boost confidence.</p> <p>Giving something back</p>	Need a development worker to co-ordinate opportunities for involvement

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What works/ has worked well	What didn't work well / needs improving	What opportunities do we provide to get involved?	What opportunities should we develop?	What makes it difficult / prevents you from being involved?	What makes it easy for you to get involved?	What do you get out of being involved in Council services?	Key issues/ themes
				<p>People may not want others to know they are service users.</p> <p>People who recover don't want to be associated with service</p> <p>Lack of transport</p> <p>Poor venues (hospital)</p>	<p>User run activities would get more support</p> <p>Confidence building activities</p>	<p>Development of new skills</p> <p>Empowerment</p> <p>Independence and choice</p> <p>Help getting back into employment</p>	
Learning disability group							
<p>CLASP</p> <p>Being able to choose things</p> <p>Able to tell people if not happy</p>	<p>More information on what's available</p>	<p>LD Partnership Board</p> <p>CLASP</p> <p>Hate crime</p>	<p>Interviewing staff</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>Training</p>	<p>Mixing with people</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>Feeling valued</p> <p>Meeting other people</p>	<p>Choice</p> <p>Networking</p>
Older people's group							
<p>Older People's Forum</p>	<p>More information on Council's initiatives</p> <p>Longer time for consultation</p>	<p>Older People's Forums</p> <p>Older People's Partnership Board</p>		<p>Transport</p> <p>Lack of information on what's available</p>	<p>Using local venues</p>	<p>Having a say in issues affecting older people</p>	<p>Information</p>

APPENDIX 2 - Types of consultation

Interviews

These are usually carried on a one to one or two to one basis. They could be structured with pre set questions or an open dialogue.

Pros	Cons
Can explore sensitive topics in safe environment	Interviewers need to be sensitive and may need training.
Can be done as a specific exercise or as part of normal work (i.e. when staff see clients they seek views on particular issues as part of that contact)	Will necessarily only cover a small number of clients
Can ensure views of a wide range of clients is obtained	People may be afraid to say what they really think
Flexible can ask what issues the client wants to discuss	Evidence is only anecdotal and may be unreliable
Service users can take part in <i>conducting</i> interviews, giving the user group a double degree of involvement (as interviewees and interviewers). Other service users being interviewed might be more open in such situations.	
Can give very detailed information about specific issues	Time consuming to do record and evaluate

Do	Don't
Make sure client is happy with subject, venue etc and understands what is happening and why	Ask leading questions or try to elicit specific answers.
Prepare questions in advance and test them on colleagues for clarity	Ask too many questions.
Use reflective questions (What you seem to be saying is....Is that right?) to confirm understanding and answers.	Ask only closed (yes/no) questions. Interviews are for getting qualitative not quantitative data.
Thank the interviewee and say what feedback they will get.	Rush the interviewee. Give people time to think, talk and reflect.
Be prepared to let lines of questions /answers develop if it seems useful information may be obtained.	Delay too long before writing up notes. Try to do this within 24 hours.

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User groups and panels

This is any arrangement where a small group of users (6-12) meets or is asked to discuss or comment on issues. It is usually led by a member of staff or an external facilitator. The group could have a formal membership and meet regularly or operate on an ad hoc basis. Once established, groups can also be consulted by post or telephone.

Pros	Cons
Can get good qualitative and quantitative information	May not be representative
Can explore issues in depth	People with axes to grind may grind them!
Users can stimulate their own debates/thoughts	Members may feel unable to be openly critical of Council's or each other's views
Can target particular groups with specific needs	Providing ongoing support may be time consuming
Easy to give feedback direct to group	Meetings may be difficult to arrange but paper consultation may only produce patchy responses
Can use for one off or ongoing consultations	May be difficult to maintain membership over time if used for ongoing projects

Do	Don't
Think carefully about membership. Is the group balanced with different types of user represented.	Try to set up a tame group. Be prepared to involve unheard, dissident and diverse voices.
Establish rules for discussion (one at time, give everyone a hearing etc) and make sure everyone agrees with and sticks to these	Use too big a group. No more than 12.
Give the group a clear idea of what they should be looking at and why	Let one individual dominate the group. Chair actively and fairly.
Ensure all contributions are valued	Try to unduly influence the discussion let the group be creative and express and develop its own ideas
Be prepared to play "devil's advocate" to stimulate lines of discussion	Make meetings too long or heavy. People are giving up their own time and it is precious.

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Open meetings

These are open to all users and could be either advertised publicly or, if a particular user group is to be addressed, invitations can be sent. The aim is to reach as large number of users as possible and provide an open environment for information and views to be exchanged.

Pros	Cons
Establishes openness in seeking with clients views	Attendees may not be representative can be hijacked by people with strong views
Good opportunity to give as well as obtain information	Not everyone is confident or able to raise issues or make comments in a large meeting
Can provide useful opportunity to reach out to groups to establish relationships	Can be unwieldy if meeting loses direction
Good for getting a feel of opinion on particular topics	May get lots of anecdotal but less hard evidence of problems etc
Sociable	Difficult to report back and evaluate views and findings
Relatively cheap and simple to set up	Success can be too dependent on quality of chairing

Dos	Don'ts
Ensure there is adequate publicity of time place and subjects to be covered	Allow discussions or questions from floor to get out of control. Strong Chairing may be needed to keep discussions relevant
Ensure venue is easy to get to for the target group and adapted for disabled users if necessary	Allow discussions to become confrontational
Brief speakers to keep to subject	Try to cover too many subjects. Identify a target audience and cover issues that are relevant to them
Have a clear idea of the structure of the meeting and how it will be run	Make promises that cannot be kept in response to public pressure
Make sure there is adequate background, backup material for distribution	Become involved in debating individual cases. Keep to general themes and problems
Beware of individuals or pressure groups hijacking meeting. Make sure a wide range of views are represented and expressed.	Turn the meeting into a lecture. Ensure participants can participate.

Surveys and questionnaires (inc feedback forms)

This is any process by which views are sought through asking particular targeted questions either in writing or by telephone.

Pros	Cons
Can get large amount of hard and soft data about services	Can take time to design send out and analyse questionnaires
Does not require direct interaction with clients, who therefore may feel it is less intrusive and more confidential	Respondents are self selected and may be unrepresentative
Questions can be targeted at very specific issues	Whole process takes a long time
Can reach large numbers of clients	Highly dependent on quality of design of study and questions. Forms may be too long or complex, questions may be misunderstood. Expert input may be required.
Can be used in conjunction with other methods (e.g follow up interviews)	Number of responses may be small and disproportionate to effort of setting up.
Can be one off or ongoing/cyclical	Not good for certain groups (poor literacy, English not first language, visually impaired etc.

Do	Don't
Make sure the questionnaire is easy to read and understand (large print, plain English). Use appropriate language. Avoid jargon.	Ask too many questions
Make it easy to reply; enclose sae or put collection boxes at convenient locations	Send questionnaires if they may cause offence (e.g if client is recently bereaved, or if a complaint is in train)
Try the questions out beforehand in a pilot study or with a group of colleagues. Are they easy to understand? Do the answer options match the questions? Is the data useful?	Ask questions about issues that we can't act on (e.g. about issues that are beyond our control such as legislation or activities of other agencies)
Make sure the questions reflect users concerns and will help address real issues	Ask multiple questions (E.g. were you happy with the staff and the service?). Each question should be about a single issue
If the survey is a major undertaking think about whether to involve outside help either from the Council or external consultants.	Expect 100% response. 50% is good. So make sure the initial sample size is adequate.

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APPENDIX 3 – Event budget form

ITEM	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
Key speaker 1 – fee		
Key speaker 2 - fee		
Key speaker 3 – fee		
Venue hire		
Equipment hire		
Paperwork: letters + postage		
handouts		
Publicity: printing		
postage		
Refreshments: drinks		
lunch		
other		
Interpreters		
Sign language interpreters		
Information in accessible formats (e.g. symbols for people with learning disabilities, Braille, etc.)		
Transport for service users / carers		
Respite care		
Other costs:		
Other costs:		
Other costs:		
Total costs:		

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APPENDIX 4 - Booking form for key speakers / exhibitors

CONTACT DETAILS

Name of organisation.....

Address.....

Contact person:

Tel. number:..... Mobile number:

Email address.....

Number of representatives attending:

I confirm that I will / will not be attending the xxxx event.

YOUR REQUIREMENTS

Please indicate number:

- Table
- Power point
- Overhead projector
- Flipchart
- Internet connection Yes No

Please specify any other requirements:

.....
.....

REFRESHMENTS

Please confirm you are able to join us for lunch: Yes No

Do you have any special dietary requirements?

.....

Please return this form to xxxx, address, date

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APPENDIX 5 – Event feedback form

YOUR FEEDBACK

1. How did you find out about this event?

Newsletter Press Radio Poster
Email

Flyer given out in a shopping centre Other

2. Did you find this event useful? Yes No

3. What parts of the event did you find particularly useful / interesting?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

4. What elements of the event did you find less useful / interesting?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. How well were your individual needs met at the event (e.g. access to all aspects of the event)?

Excellent Good Not very good Bad

Your comments.....
.....

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6. What did you think about the venue?

Excellent Good Not very good Bad

Your
comments.....
.....
.....

7. What did you think about the refreshments?

Excellent Good Not very good Bad

Your
comments.....
.....
.....

8. If you used our transport, what did you think of the transport arrangements?

Excellent Good Not very good Bad

Your
comments.....
.....
.....

9. What did you think about the overall organisation of this event?

Excellent Good Not very good Bad

Your
comments.....
.....
.....

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10 Would you be interested in attending an information event in the future?





Yes No

If yes, please give suggestions for themes and future planning:




.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you very much for taking your time to fill in the feedback form. Your comments and suggestions will help us with organising future events.

APPENDIX 6 - Local service user and carer groups

Group	Description	Contact details
Wokingham Ability Partnership (WAP)	<p>WAP aims to raise the profile of services for people with physical and sensory needs and develop and improve these services in line with the needs of local people.</p> <p>WAP meets four times a year. It has a number of subgroups which take forward the development, modernisation and improvement of various services. Some of the partnership work includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information days and roadshows • Deaf issues • Disabled parents • Easy access • Day services • Carers • Employment and volunteering opportunities • Auditing local services 	<p>WAP Development Worker  0778 619 7626 Email: wokingham.ability@gmail.com</p>
Wokingham Access Area Group (WAAG)	<p>WAAG is made up of a small group of private individuals who, because of their own needs or circumstances, have a common interest in the improvement of accessibility for Wokingham borough residents.</p> <p>WAAG meets every two months at the council offices, and new members are always welcome.</p>	<p>WAAG Chairman: chairman@waag.co.uk</p> <p>WAAG Secretary: secretary@waag.co.uk</p> <p>Website: www.waag.co.uk</p>
Westmead Carers Group	<p>Informal group of carers of people with physical disabilities. The group meets every month at Westmead.</p>	<p>Simon Meredith Westmead Manager  0118 989 4032</p>
Local Involvement Network in Health and Social Care (LINKs)	<p>A network of groups and individuals involved in health and social care issues.</p> <p>This local organisation is being currently developed by the Help and Care organisation</p>	<p> 0845 4500 418 Email: contact@makesachange.org.uk</p> <p>Website: www.makesachange.org.uk</p>
Head First	<p>A group of service users and carers who meet on the first Monday of each month at Community Resource Service, 48 Reading Road, Wokingham 5-7pm. Members of the group</p>	<p>Graeme Morrish  0118 989 0707 Email: graeme.morrish@</p>

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Group	Description	Contact details
	<p>discuss relevant issues and input into policy changes as well as look to develop their own services.</p> <p>Head First currently run a brunch at CRS every Friday 10.45am -12.45pm. Other events and activities are being developed.</p>	<p>wokingham.gov.uk</p>
Mental Health Partnership Board	<p>The Mental Health Partnership Board consists of user representatives, Wokingham Borough Council and Wokingham Primary Care Trust staff. The Partnership Board takes forward issues affecting people with mental health problems such as day services, health services and housing.</p>	<p>Christine Dale Head of Mental Health Wokingham Mental Health Services Wallis House 27 Broad Street Wokingham RG40 1AU</p> <p> 0118 936 8667</p>
Older People's Forums	<p>There are 5 local older people's forums - in Earley, Woodley, Twyford and the northern parishes, Wokingham and Finchampstead.</p> <p>Groups regularly invite speakers on topics of local interest or concern as decided by the members.</p>	<p>Amanda Gordon Wokingham Borough Council Community Care Services Wellington House Wellington Road Wokingham Berkshire RG40 1WQ</p> <p> 0118 974 6850 Fax: 0118 979 0877</p>
Older People's Partnership Board	<p>Members of the Older People's Partnership Board include Older People's Forums representatives, service users, voluntary sector organisations, Wokingham Borough Council representatives: Community Care, Leisure / Culture, Housing, Life Long Learning, Transport, Councillors, Older People's Champion.</p> <p>The work of the Older People's Partnership Board focuses on ensuring that older people's issues and challenges receive high priority across the borough.</p>	<p>Amanda Gordon Wokingham Borough Council Community Care Services Wellington House Wellington Road Wokingham Berkshire RG40 1WQ</p> <p> 0118 974 6850 Fax: 0118 979 0877</p>
Learning Disability Partnership	<p>The work of the Partnership Board focuses on improving the lives of people with learning disabilities through partnership working with</p>	<p>Partnership Board Project Worker</p>

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Group	Description	Contact details
Board	<p>voluntary sector organisations, Wokingham Borough Council, NHS and individual users and carers.</p> <p>Members of the Partnership Board must have the power to make the decisions for their organisation. Membership also needs to reflect the cultural diversity of the area, so the needs of people from minority ethnic communities are met. And of course, the Partnership Board needs to have strong representation from people with learning disabilities and their families.</p> <p>The Partnership Board has many working groups focusing on specific areas, such as In-control (individual budgets), self-advocacy and housing.</p>	<p>CTPLD, Wellington House Wellington Road Wokingham Berks RG40 2QB ☎ 0118 974 6832</p> <p>Website: www.wokingham.cswebsites.org</p>
Caring, Listening and Support Partnership (CLASP)	<p>CLASP offers advocacy support and advice as well as information about rights, health, housing, education and work opportunities for people with learning difficulties.</p>	<p>Email: clasp@24aol.co.uk</p>