

## **Potential wording to include in the Tendering Documents for Homelessness Services**

### **Adding Value: Tenders for Homelessness Services**

XXX Commissioners are currently inviting expressions of interest/ tenders for the provision of accommodation based/ floating support services for homeless people.

We are inviting providers to consider directly employing service users in the delivery of these services, as one means of demonstrating added value to their bids.

It will be important for providers to clearly demonstrate how they meet the core criteria in the service specification included in the tender documents. However, the commissioners will take into account providers' responses to "adding value" to their tenders through employing service users if other aspects of the proposals are deemed to be of equal quality and value for money.

### **Background: GROW Programme**

The National GROW Programme has been funded by Communities and Local Government. It supports and enables homelessness agencies to increase the number of staff they employ who have been homeless and used services. GROW sees the employment of service users in homelessness organisations as a logical development of user involvement.

GROW aims to get to the position where it is the norm for *all* agencies tackling homelessness to draw their employed staff wherever possible from within those who have themselves experienced homelessness.

GROW is an employment, rather than a service delivery project, and is not suitable for every service user. GROW traineeships give service users the opportunity to undertake on-the-job training, whilst gaining experience of working in the sector. These traineeships are only made available to service users who are close to the labour market and – with the support and training available – can demonstrate the requisite skills and aptitudes to work effectively with homeless and vulnerable people.

### **Outcomes**

The employment of service users can add value to core services, by achieving a range of benefits for both organisations and individuals.

The outcomes achieved by organisations participating in GROW include:

- Ø Examples of service user employees challenging and improving staff practices;
- Ø Raised expectations and respect for all service users in those teams where there is a service user employee;
- Ø Improved knowledge of staff in relation to the realities of homelessness and substance misuse.

The outcomes achieved by and for service users participating in GROW include:

- Ø Enjoying and achieving personal goals and wider community activities
  - o Participating in training
  - o Securing qualifications
- Ø Improved economic well being
  - o Reduced debt
  - o Securing paid work

Commissioners of services for homeless people are therefore inviting tenders to set out the scope for employing service users in the provision of the accommodation based/ floating support services for homeless people that are the subject of this tender.