



Supporting People

Supporting People Service User Involvement Strategy

Final Version 2
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Supporting People Programme Statement on User Involvement:

Bradford District Supporting People programme values the knowledge and understandings that service users can contribute to designing, delivering and evaluating services. Service user involvement is integral to overall delivery of high quality housing related support services. A major aim of the programme is to maximise opportunities for service users to get involved, be active and make a positive contribution '.

Chapter 1 Aims and goals of the Strategy

The aims of the Supporting People Service User Strategy are to ensure that service user involvement work within the programme delivers:

1. Desired outcomes for service users
2. A broad range of involvement opportunities
3. Better coordination
4. Produces tangible measures of the desired outcomes

The objectives

1.1.1 Desired Outcomes for service users

- Through consultation and involvement in the programme, service users identify their desired outcomes
- Service users lead on developing an action plan with targets to deliver desired outcomes
- The desired outcomes in the Action Plan are embedded with the governance structures of Supporting People and delivered through the Supporting People Team

1.1.2 To develop a broad range of involvement opportunities for service users

- To develop opportunities including informing, consulting, acting together and supporting users own initiatives.
- To develop opportunities for service users to get involved in decisions including related to buying new services and reviewing existing ones
- Enable service users to participate in the governance of the Supporting People programme via the Strategic Core Group and Commissioning Body

1.1.3 Improved coordination

- Supporting People Team to deliver effective consultation and participation opportunities that meets the needs of service users
- Empower service users to undertake a key role in coordinating user involvement work across the programme
- Coordinate service user involvement work to reduce duplication and maximise the impact of consultation
- Develop a culture of learning between providers to improve practice.

1.1.4 Measuring the impact

- Develop measures and targets to evidence the achievement of outcomes

1.2 Goal: An SP programme that is responsive to the voice of service users

The goal of achieving better outcomes for service users can only be achieved if service users are well informed and able to contribute to the programme in meaningful ways. Not all service users will seek to take up intensive forms of involvement. If the views of ALL service users are to shape the programme then opportunities need to include methods that facilitate broad as well as intensive forms of involvement. The range of opportunities needs to reflect 'where service users are at'. The below participatory goals are adapted from Bradford Council's Consultation and Participation Strategy (2002):

1.2.1 Well Informed - All Service users and potential service users are informed of the Supporting People services available and how to access them. Informed service users are the foundation stone of involvement.

Examples: Development of Directories, information leaflets and online resources, Newsletters etc (Note cross over with the Supporting People Communications Strategy)

1.2.2 Well Consulted – All service users have regular opportunities to comment on their experiencing of housing support and related services at both the programme and service level. Consultations have clear outcomes and duplication is managed

Example: Questionnaires and focus groups in cases where more depth required

1.2.3 Deciding and Acting Together – All Service users to have opportunities to get involved in deciding and acting together. However not all service users are expected to take up this option. Issues explored in more depth will involve supporting service users to draw on evidence, the questionnaires and focus groups. The focus of this work is on finding solutions and working with the governance structures of the programme and the Supporting People team to deliver these.

Examples: Service users developing plans and working with others to deliver these. Service users jointly working with others service users to review SP services.

1.2.4 Supporting service user initiatives – Recognising important client group specific initiatives that develop beyond Supporting People and support the incorporation of elements of good practice into the SP Programme

Example: Recognising the value of Charters developed by client groups

2. Chapter 2 Situation prior to strategy

2.1 Strengths

There are many positive examples of **empowering** and **innovative** approaches to User involvement within Supporting People Services in the Bradford District that enable the promoting of good practice. Examples include:

- Service users involved in hostel management committees.
- Providers that use service user forums to inform the delivery of services and policies
- Providers doing exit questionnaires with service users and integrating findings into service delivery.

At the strategic and corporate level:

- Speak Out Homelessness Charter recognised at the national level as pioneering.
- The Communities of Interest Working Group brings together many of the client groups of Supporting People and has developed individual community of interest plans.

However alongside the strengths there are a number of weaknesses that have limited the impact of service user involvement and the empowerment of service users, including:

2.2.1 Issues related to coordination

- Patchy levels of user involvement across Supporting People providers
 - Previously user involvement not measured as part of the QAF
- Disjointed coordination of user involvement work at the strategic level.
 - Until recently no service user involvement at the programme level
 - A lack of mechanisms that encourage the sharing of good practice between providers
- Consultation has generally been carried out well, but until recently there is little evidence that the knowledge gained through these processes had much influence over the direction of the Supporting People programme
- Service user involvement often developed in relative isolation from the wider programme – an add on or rather than central to it

2.2.2 Issues related to making a difference/ measuring impact of work

- Little systemic collection of evidence of the impact meaning it is difficult to know if consultation has led to improved outcomes for service users or not

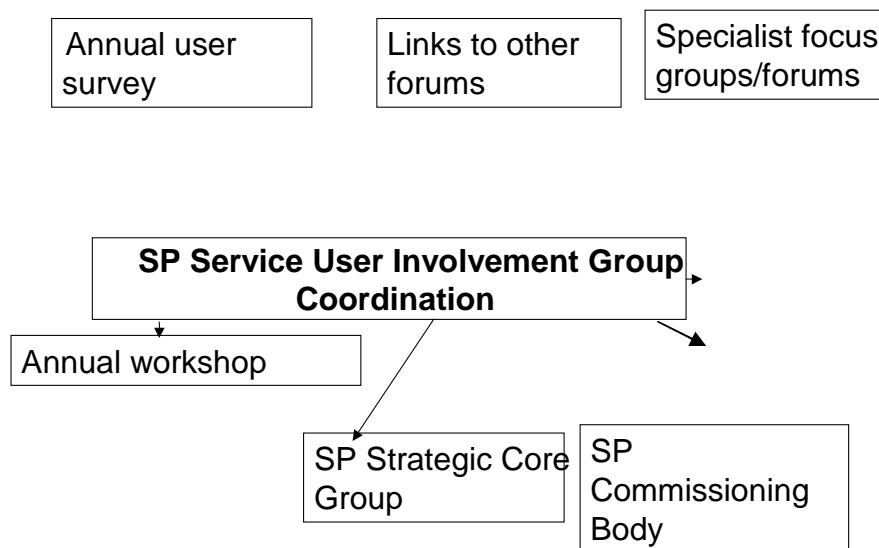
2.2.3 Service users 'expert' knowledge not utilised at the strategic level

- Few opportunities for involvement of service users at the programme level beyond consultation.
- Where service users have been involved in initiatives external to SP these have not always been embedded into the Supporting People programme
 - E.g. The Speakout Charter was developed but not incorporated into SP contract management.

Chapter 3 Strategy Framework and implementation

The table below illustrates the connections between the SP Service User Involvement Group and consultation mechanisms. The top half depicts the consultation mechanisms and the lower part of the diagram illustrates the ways the group fits into the wider Supporting People governance structures.





3.1 Supporting People Service User Involvement Group (The Group)

The role of the Group is to:

1. Ensure SP service users and former users have opportunities to influence the improvement and development of the Supporting People programme
2. Be the conduit for service user issues and ideas into the governance structures of the Supporting People programme
3. Lead the co-ordination of service user involvement work across the Supporting People Programme with support from the Supporting People team

The Group sends members to the SP Strategic Core Group and Commissioning Body. These members feed service user issues into these governance bodies and feedback to the Group.

3.2 Linking with existing forums

The Group maintains contact with relevant forums e.g. disability forum, older peoples forum etc. where members of the Group are involved in these forums they take forward issues themselves and if there are no members involved in the forum then the Service User Involvement Officer does so. This ensures a two way communication process between the forums and the Group. The key to this work is ensuring that other appropriate initiatives that are formed beyond Supporting People are integrated into the Supporting People programme.

3.3 Annual User Survey

An annual broad survey that enables an analysis by SP client groups and also SP commissioned services is undertaken on an annual basis. The survey is sent out to thousands of service users and is the most extensive way of consulting with service users. The survey enables the Group to identify broad themes and quantify users perceptions of aspects of the quality of the service they receive.

3.4 Specialist forums/ focus groups

These will be organised on a needs basis. They will explore specific issues that are raised as areas of concern.

3.5 Annual service user engagement event

This event will ensure that a wider number of service users than those regularly involved in the Group can come together to discuss important aspects of the Supporting People Programme.

Members of the Group will also be invited to contribute their expertise as service users in the following areas:

3.6. Working with service users to develop new services

Service users will participate in the development of new service specifications and the selection of new support providers.

3.7 Working with service users to validate current services

Service users will be encouraged to participate in the validation of existing services to ensure that there is representation in the drive to improve standards.

3.8 Service user contribution to strategic relevance of existing services

Service users will have opportunities to contribute using a range of questionnaires as part of the strategic relevance assessment of current services. The outcome of the results of these questionnaires will help the programme to remodel services and inform the business case for future re-contracting with services. This approach will also be used to set performance indicators for existing services to measure within the overall value for money of services.

Chapter 4 Delivery mechanisms: Action Plan

4.1 The Service User Action Plan

The Supporting People Service User Action Plan is designed to highlight the priorities of service users for action. The Action Plan is organised around five critical issues that have been identified as 'desired outcomes'. The evidence for the selecting of these five desired outcomes comes from the following services: focus group consultations, the annual survey, the SP strategic needs analysis, the Group's meetings and the annual events. In 2008-9 the five desired outcomes in the Action Plan are:

- 1) Choice and Option**
- 2) Information and Communications**
- 3) Quality of services**
- 4) Housing related issues**
- 5) The links between Supporting People and other services**

The Group leads on the Action Plan, including the annual reviewing of performance and updating of actions to meet the desired outcomes. The Action Plan is integral to

the user involvement work and in measuring the impact that the work is having at the programme level.

The Action Plan is updated following each survey with the involvement of the Group. If there is evidence to suggest that any of the desired outcomes are no longer the most significant then these could be removed and replaced by new desired outcomes. If however the results from the survey suggest that despite the successful implementation of actions that the desired outcomes remain then the question will be asked whether or not these were the right actions and therefore develop new actions. The annual survey is a key mechanism for measuring if the Supporting People programme addresses the desired outcomes of service users or not.

The Action Plan is a regular item within The Group's meetings, the Supporting People Team provide regular updates on progress on particular areas and seek the views of service users on these actions.

4.2 Service user involvement at the service level

The programme level involvement work will underpin improvements in user involvement within individual commissioned services. The following are examples of initiatives that will improve the quality of user involvement at the service level:

- 4.2.1 Addition of Empowerment and Independence component in the QAF** (Quality Assessment Framework). The addition of the Empowerment and Supporting Independence component of the QAF will underpin the coordination of user involvement at the service level
- 4.2.2 Findings from the annual survey to be used to develop improvement action plans at the level of individual services**
- 4.2.3 There will be new opportunities created where service providers can share good practice in relation to user involvement and learn from each other**

Chapter 5 Impact the delivery of this strategy will achieve

- The strategic direction of Supporting People will be in line with those of service users
- Improved housing related support services.
- Services more responsive to needs.
- Maximise independence of service users
- Support social network building

5.1 Impact: how we will know the strategy is making a difference

The Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. Within this review the following desired outcomes and associated measures will be appraised.

- 1) Choice and Options:** Achieving the targets set within the Action Plan.

- 2) **Better Information and Communication:** Achieving the targets set within the Action Plan. In relation to this there are two targets one related to general information and the other whether service users feel able to get involved or not.
- 3) **Quality of Services:** Increased number of providers at level A and B on the QAF. The number of services signed up to a Charter endorsed by the Service User Group
- 4) **Address Housing Issues:** Achieving the target set within the Action Plan.
- 5) **Closer Links with Other Services:** Achieving the target set within the Action Plan. This is the number of services validated at A on the new supplementary component of the QAF related to Empowerment and Independence of service users

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