

## Supporting People

# Service User Involvement

## Reward, Recognition and Expenses Policy

### Introduction

*'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'.*

In order to encourage service users to get involved it is necessary to provide incentives and rewards for the contributions they make. These contributions can be recognised and valued in all sorts of ways such as being thanked, positive feedback and acknowledgement, staff time, practical assistance, training, personal development or seeing the impact of the work and changes made as a result of involvement. Payment can also be offered for certain levels of involvement. This policy sets out how Bradford Supporting People will reward and recognise service users for their involvement.

### Background

On 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010 the Bradford Supporting People Service User Involvement Committee reviewed how service users were rewarded and recognised for their involvement of the Supporting People Programme. The changes and updates to this policy were then presented **and agreed with** the main Service User Involvement Group on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2010 for the group to approve. The following ways in which service users are rewarded and recognised for their involvement were approved by the group.

### What do we mean by Service User Involvement?

There are many ways that service users can be involved. Below are some examples of the different ways service users can be involved:

- Attending meetings
- Helping to organise events
- Visiting service user group to encourage people to join the Service User Involvement Group
- Helping write articles for the Service User newsletter
- Mystery shopping
- Surveys
- Conferences/talking to other groups
- Carrying out Peer Reviews

- Representing other service users at decision making meetings
- Taking part in working groups
- Being on interview panels for potential new providers
- Interviewing new staff
- Volunteering in the office to carry out service user involvement work

### **Who gets Involved?**

The purpose of this policy is to ensuring that all SP service users have equal access to involvement opportunities. Some people may face a financial barrier to involvement and therefore Bradford SP is committed to ensuring that service users are not left out of pocket or financially worse off as a result of their involvement.

Bradford Supporting People recognises too that service users will have different motivations for involvement and that some people are happy to give their time and pay their own costs.

### **What are the costs of getting involved?**

Service Users will incur actual costs as part of their involvement activities. The most usual costs are the following:-

- Travel - rail, bus, taxis etc - reasonable costs; minibuses
- Parking and petrol
- Caring costs
- Stationery, postage, photocopying, etc
- Phone calls
- Food costs

Bradford Supporting People will reimburse reasonable out of pocket expenses and aim to do this in cash on the day the expense is incurred, provided that supporting receipts or evidence of expenditure being incurred are attached to the claim forms.

If any involvement activity runs through a meal period then costs for a meal will be provided. Meals may also be provided, where appropriate, as part of the recognition of the importance of the involvement activity.

### **What do we mean by Reward and Recognition?**

This means that service users are rewarded and recognised in some way for their involvement. For example, a reward could be:-

- Choice of voucher or token
- Character references - work, college, training, etc
- Certificates - recognised/accredited
- Opportunities to develop skills and knowledge
- Places on conferences/workshops

### **Recognition could include:**

- A letter of thanks/kindness/being appreciated
- Articles in newsletters

- A nomination for an award
- Space to say things and be listened to
- Payment System and Structure

**What activities should require voucher payments?**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Voucher payment</b>
Decision making meetings for Supporting People (Commissioning Body, Strategic Core Group, Housing Partnership Board, Provider Forum, Regional Action Group)	Yes
Service User Committee meetings	Yes
Visiting other groups	No
Volunteering in the office on committee work	No
Attending SUIG and other SU meetings	No
Taking part in training	No
Attending conferences	No
Surveys	No
Peer review visits	Yes
Interview panel for new provider	Yes
Interview for new staff members of the team	No
Volunteering to organise events	No
Mystery shopping	Yes

The above list may not include all involvement activities and where new activities arise Bradford Supporting People will look to consult the Service User Involvement Group

**Committee to decide an appropriate reward and recognition**

The payments are to reflect role and responsibility and skills, knowledge and experience and expertise as much as time input.

**Suggested payment rate:**

Half day = £10.00

Full day = £20.00

**Impact on Benefits**

Bradford Supporting People recognises that any payments may have an impact on benefits. As such, we strongly advise all service users in receipt of benefit who receive any payment through Supporting People involvement to seek advice from an appropriately qualified advisor before they do so.

**Alternative payments to vouchers**

Bradford Supporting People wants to encourage service users to develop their skills and expertise through involvement activities. Should service users wish to participate in training courses that are of cost to the service user, then this could be used as an

alternative reward to the voucher system. This would have to be agreed on an individual basis and be of similar costing to the reward of vouchers.

For example, as service user could carry out 2 full days of peer reviewing and half a day of Mystery shopping. This would equate to £50 worth of vouchers or a course that would cost approximately £50 to attend.

## **Summary**

- Service users are not to be left out of pocket or put at risk of being financially worse off as a result of their involvement in service improvement.
- Service providers and service users will discuss and agree on the terms of involvement prior to committing to it.
- Service users are given the right information at the right time to be able to make an informed choice about how and on what terms they want to be involved.
- A wide range of service users, with different needs and experiences are encouraged and supported to be involved. The way that payment and/or reimbursement of expenses are settled should not needlessly create barriers that deter service users from being involved.
- Service users in receipt of benefits should be provided with the right information and support to prevent a breach of their benefit conditions.
- Service users are paid according to open and consistent criteria that take into account the level of involvement, the type of work and the skills and expertise required.
- Paperwork to claim payment and reimbursement is kept to a minimum. Where paperwork is necessary to safeguard both the service provider and the service user, it should be accessible and easy to understand.

## **References**

1. 'Contributing on equal terms: Client Involvement and the Benefits System' Social Care Institute for Excellence, October 2005
2. 'Reward and Recognition' 2nd Edition published by Department of Health, August 2006
3. 'Stronger in Partnership 2 Consultation draft: Involving Clients and Carers in the design, planning, delivery and evaluation of Mental Health Services in Wales, Policy Implementation Guidance' Welsh Assembly, August 2007.

Final agreed policy date: October 2010