

# Service user involvement.

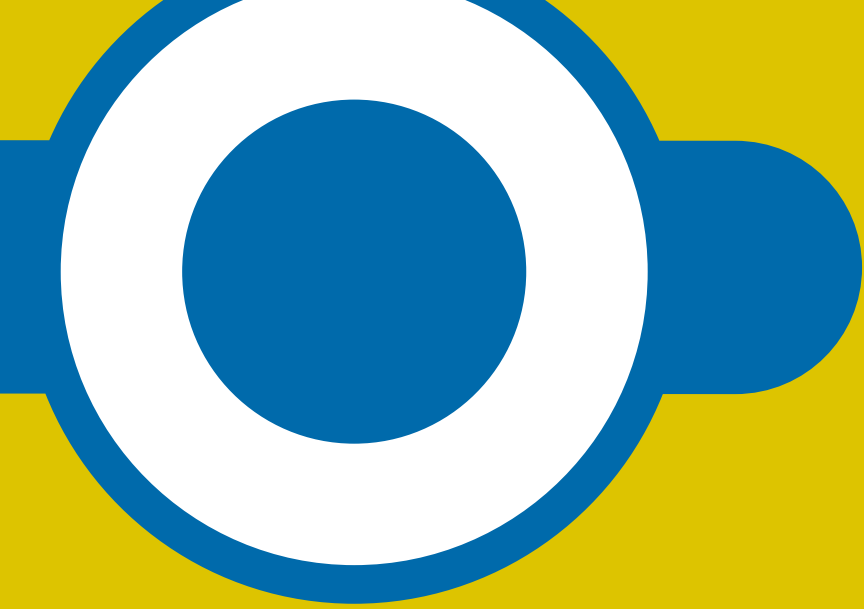


FOR ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH OFFENDERS, EX-OFFENDERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

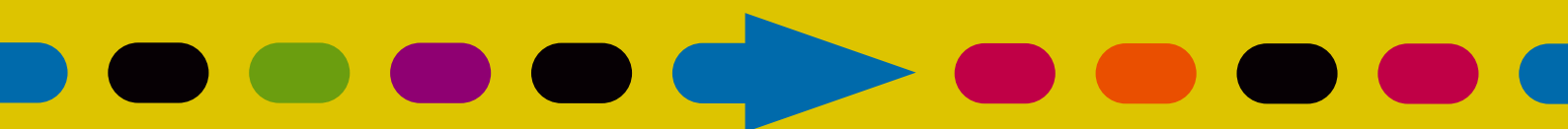
A volunteering and mentoring guide

**CLiNKs**





**Here are just  
some of the  
roles that  
volunteers  
undertake within  
the Criminal  
Justice System...**



## Youth justice

- \* Appropriate adult
- \* Mentor
- \* Youth Offender Panel member

## Restorative justice

- \* Victim-offender mediator
- \* Family group conference facilitator
- \* Community Justice Panel member

## Victims

- \* Witness Service volunteers in Crown and Magistrates' Courts
- \* Victim Support volunteer
- \* Helpline advisor
- \* Counselling

## Probation

- \* Probation Board member
- \* Teaching literacy and numeracy volunteer tutor
- \* Supporting training courses
- \* Mentor
- \* Probation volunteer

## Prisons

- \* Official prison visitor
- \* Custody visitor
- \* Prison visitors' centre (support and advice, assisting with practical tasks)
- \* Play worker for children during prison visits
- \* Literacy, numeracy and basic skills volunteer tutor
- \* Chaplaincy (from the main world faiths)
- \* Volunteer orchestra leader

## Police

- \* Special Constable
- \* Police Cadet
- \* Independent custody visitors
- \* Police support volunteer
- \* Crimestoppers volunteer
- \* Crime Prevention Panel member
- \* Diamond Initiative volunteer

## Other

- \* Independent Monitoring Board member
- \* MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) lay advisor
- \* Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator
- \* Magistrate or Justice of the Peace
- \* Providing helpdesks in Magistrates' Courts
- \* Raising awareness of Prisons Week and Prisoners' Sunday
- \* Community Chaplain
- \* Circles of Support member (working with sex offenders to reduce the risk of re-offending)
- \* Fundraiser for charities and voluntary and community organisations that support offenders, ex-offenders, prisoners, those at risk of offending or the victims of crime
- \* Volunteer for charities and voluntary and community organisations that support offenders, ex-offenders, prisoners, those at risk of offending or the victims of crime
- \* Campaigner
- \* Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel member
- \* Educating young people and promoting preventative measures
- \* Courts Board member
- \* Community Justice Panel member
- \* LCJB (Local Criminal Justice Boards) Independent Advisory Group member
- \* Trustee

## Volunteer roles for prisoners

- \* Participating in park regeneration schemes
- \* Providing Braille transcriptions for blind people
- \* Creating artworks for hospices
- \* Making wheelchairs
- \* Citizens' Advisor (in conjunction with Citizens Advice Bureau)
- \* Peer-advisers
- \* The Samaritans listeners
- \* Acting in plays
- \* Timebanking



# Service user involvement.

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**CLINKS**



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# Foreword

It is now widely accepted that service users are experts through their life experiences. It is important to involve us (the service users) because it helps you (the service provider) to get things right. There are all kinds of benefits for everyone; this guide talks about many of them.

Being involved has given us opportunities we would not have had – for example, we have received training, been involved in research, talked to policy makers and developed this guide. You cannot beat the feeling of being listened to, making things happen and feeling good about yourself.

This guide shows how involvement can work – what to do and what not to do! We hope that, through sharing our experiences and examples of good practice from other organisations, we have created a blueprint that you can use to run your own service user involvement (SUI) projects. We have really enjoyed working on this guide and hope that you and your service users will get as much out of being involved as we do.

This guide is part of a series commissioned by Clinks and funded by the Ministry of Justice. The others produced as part of this project are:

- \* Managing volunteers
- \* Setting up a project
- \* Quality standards
- \* Demonstrating effectiveness

## About Clinks

Clinks is a national organisation that supports the work that voluntary and community sector organisations undertake within the criminal justice system of England and Wales. Clinks' vision is of a vibrant and independent voluntary and community sector working with informed and engaged communities to enable the rehabilitation of offenders for the benefit of society.

## About Revolving Doors Agency

Revolving Doors Agency (RDA) is a charity working across England to change systems and improve services for people with multiple problems, including poor mental health, who are in contact with the criminal justice system. RDA's vision is that, by 2025, there is an end to the revolving door of crisis and crime, when anyone facing multiple problems and poor mental health is supported to reach their potential, with fewer victims and safer communities as a result.

**Colin Burns, Dan Mitchell, Terry Murtagh and Kieran Payne**  
Editorial Advisors

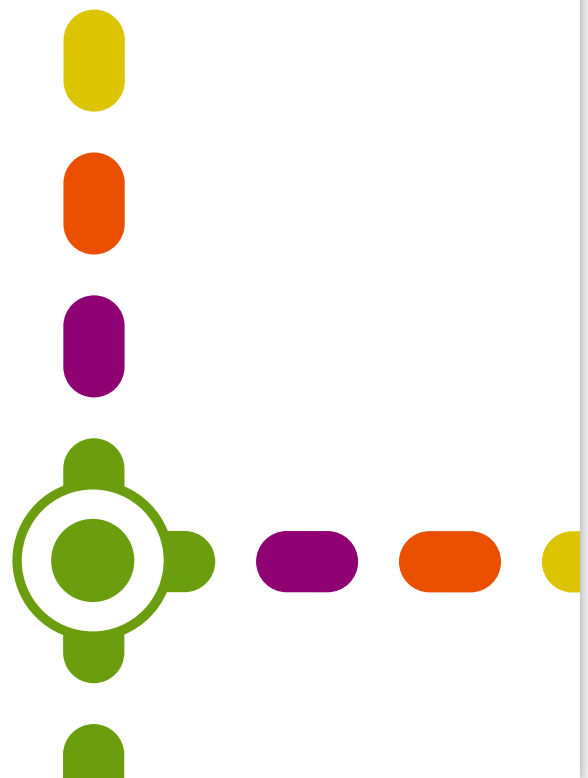
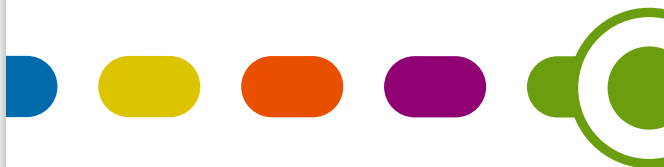




**Terry Murtagh** is an ex-homeless service user who had serious drug issues in the past. He turned his life around through volunteering in service user involvement and was a founder member of Outside-In, St Mungo's very successful service user group. He completed the Enterprise Solutions: Training the Trainers course at Groundswell and then became their office administrator in July 2006. In December 2008, he became the finance officer at Homeless Link. He now works three days a week as service user involvement co-ordinator at Revolving Doors Agency and the other two days a week works as the bookkeeper at Groundswell. Terry also graduated as a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Mathematical Studies from Goldsmiths, University of London.



**Colin Burns** is an ex-service user, due to past imprisonment and alcohol abuse. He has since reformed and was introduced to Revolving Doors Agency (RDA) by his hostel. He has been involved in helping write and create the Clink's Service user involvement guide and is a member of RDA's Young People's Forum. He has taken a keen interest in helping other service users improve their lives and wants them to have more opportunities than he did in order to reform and improve their quality of life.





**Danny Mitchell** got involved with P3 in 2007. From there he was introduced to Revolving Doors Agency as part of their National Service User Forum. This was one of the biggest moves for Danny as he has completed a training the trainer course, taken part in a launch for a document for the Fabian Society and attended the Labour, Conservative and NACRO national conferences. Danny spoke at a Care Matters conference and most recently he was asked to speak on Channel 4 News about an announcement made by Ken Clarke on prison reform. "All this I have really enjoyed and hope to make a career out of service user involvement."



**Kieran Payne** was released from prison in early 2009. He was homeless. Kieran found out about and was accepted for supported housing. His service provider told him about 'client involvement' and invited him to a meeting about it where he was told he could get involved with projects from newsletters to running groups, holding forums and focus groups. "I was at a loss as to what to do with my life and this seemed a very good way of getting to meet new people and receive training." Soon after getting involved, Kieran was chosen to receive two days training on how to set up a mystery shopping project. Having completed the training, Kieran is now heading the running of this project and training other service users to complete mystery shopping tasks. Since getting involved Kieran has "met lots of new people who I class as good mates." He has become involved with other charities, such as Revolving Doors Agency, and has taken part in their projects and received training. "I can honestly say that being involved has changed my life for the better and that last year I couldn't have seen myself doing what I am doing now. It can be stressful at times but I can say that I am really enjoying myself and life could not be better. I have my service provider and RDA to thank for giving me the opportunity to get involved with their projects. I don't know where I would be today if I hadn't started to get involved."





# Introduction.



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## 1.1 About this guide

Voluntary and community organisations, statutory agencies and other groups working with offenders, ex-offenders and their families are constantly looking to improve the services they offer their service users. 'Service user involvement' – where an organisation involves service users in planning, managing or delivering the services that it provides – is recognised as an effective tool to achieve this.

### A USEFUL DEFINITION

*"A process by which people are able to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them; in making decisions about factors that effect their lives; in formulating and implementing policies; in planning, developing and delivering services, and in taking action to achieve change."*

Community participation in local health and sustainable development, World Health Organisation, 2002

There is good evidence that service user involvement (SUI) can make services more effective and there are many different ways to involve service users. SUI can also have positive benefits for the service users involved, from raising self-esteem to opening the door to paid employment.

### Meaningful results

But if you work with people in prison, on probation or in other areas of the criminal justice system, how do you ensure that your SUI project is not just another 'tick box' exercise? What should you be doing to prepare both service users and your own staff to produce meaningful results? What is the right level

of SUI for your organisation? What are the potential problems to look out for – and the possible solutions?

This guide provides a structured and accessible introduction to involving offenders and ex-offenders in your work, including examples of good practice, checklists and signposting to further information and support.



## 1.2 Who is this guide for?

This guide is for managers, staff, trustees and volunteers of any organisation that wants to involve their service users in the management, design and delivery of their services. It will also support service users in their involvement in an SUI project and will be of interest to commissioners and funders.

## 1.3 How to use this guide

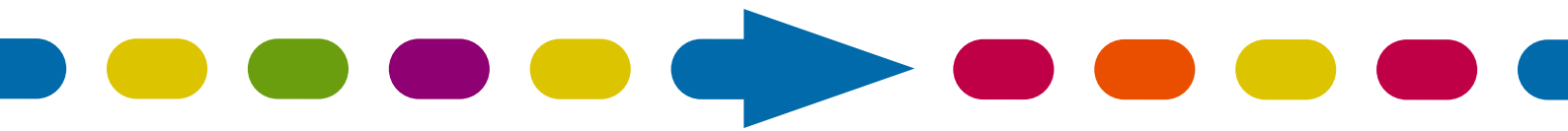
There are six more sections in this guide:

- \* Section 2 gives some **basic information** about what SUI is and why it can help both service users and organisations.
- \* Section 3 explains **the issues** that organisations need to consider before embarking on an SUI project.
- \* Section 4 sets out the **different opportunities** for SUI within an organisation and covers project planning and delivery.
- \* Section 5 covers how to **find, support and retain** your service users.
- \* Section 6 includes **sample policies** and good practice.
- \* Section 7 lists sources of **further information** and support.

A training programme on service user involvement for organisations is available through a partnership between Clinks and Revolving Doors Agency. Training is delivered by service user trainers and offers organisations the opportunity to explore the issues covered in this guide.



**For more information contact RDA or Clinks (see Section 7 for details).**



# About service user involvement.

2



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*"It is good for me to use what I have gone through ... and be able to turn it around ... because I am actually using it to put back into the world and to stop people getting there in the first place. It's like something good has come out of it, where at the time I thought it didn't seem like anything could."*

Ex-offender talking about the benefits of service user involvement

*"It's helped me cope with my son in prison and to deal with the problems he's got. It's helped me to learn how to deal with him when he gets out."*

Parent talking about the positive impact of service user involvement

## 2.1 Who are service users?

Service users can be offenders, ex-offenders, their families or carers.

## 2.2 Why should you involve service users?

There is widespread recognition and growing evidence that involving offenders, ex-offenders, their families or carers can improve the services they use.

Because of their direct experiences of services, service users know better than anyone what works – and what does not. Involving them in your work brings unique insights and taps into a valuable resource.

Service user involvement can also have a positive impact on the individuals involved by boosting their confidence and skills. This can lead to other opportunities such as training or employment.

For service users, service user involvement:

- \* Offers them a voice if they have felt excluded
- \* Makes them feel valued and respected
- \* Gives them ownership of the services provided for them
- \* Enhances their understanding of services and how they work
- \* Improves skills and abilities
- \* Builds confidence
- \* Furthers the goal of recovery through inclusion, developing life skills and enhancing self-esteem
- \* Is a way of bringing people together to achieve mutually desirable outcomes.

For organisations, service user involvement:

- \* Can lead to service improvements
- \* Helps to improve the quality of service provision
- \* Adds value to service planning, development and delivery

*"True participation and involvement is about having a voice, being heard and influencing positive change with the aim of developing best practice. Client participation must become part of a daily practice to work, not just a one off activity. It should take place at every level within the organisation and offer something back to the person who has taken the time out to participate."*

Jo Summers - operations director, P3

- \* Breaks down organisational hierarchy
- \* Achieves effective use of resources
- \* Improves communication and understanding between staff/volunteers and service users
- \* Helps staff/volunteers develop their skills
- \* Creates a sense of service ownership, by ensuring that services reflect the needs and wishes of those who use them
- \* Enables your organisation to draw upon and make effective use of people's skills and capabilities
- \* Fulfils funding requirements
- \* Improves your organisation's ability to respond to government strategies (e.g. Supporting People; Improving Health, Supporting Justice)
- \* Helps your organisation to meet its legal duties (e.g. the public sector 'duty to involve' local people in services).

➡ See Section 7 for further reading and resources, including links to government policy mentioned in this section.

## CLINKS SERVICE USER TASKFORCE

The Clinks Taskforce was set up to identify ways in which offenders, former offenders and their families can make a positive contribution to the policies, services and practices that affect them, both in prison and the community.

The Taskforce report published in 2008 – Unlocking Potential – recommended a number of ways to involve service users, including that ex-offenders should be:

- \* Routinely and extensively consulted by government departments, NOMS and individual prisons and probation areas on key aspects of policy
- \* Invited to act as expert inspectors of CJS agencies and institutions

- \* Invited to become members of all probation boards and trusts and youth offender steering groups.
- The report commended existing service user involvement activities. However, it concluded: "There is much more potential for this activity to be more widespread and more systematic in its application."

➡ For more information go see the Clinks website: [www.clinks.org](http://www.clinks.org)

*"Consulting service users means that services meet their needs, organisations develop in the right direction and money is used in the best way. But ultimately, involving, consulting, listening goes to the core of why the voluntary sector exists – to give vulnerable or disadvantaged or disenfranchised people a voice. Excluding beneficiaries from the organisations set up to support and empower them compromises their very raison d'être."*

nfpSynergy report on service user involvement, May 2010

## 2.3 How can you involve service users?

Your organisation can work towards involving service users in every part of the work that you do. A holistic approach will ensure that SUI is not just an 'add on', but an integral part of your systems and services, resulting in more effective service design and delivery. However, it is important that you work towards this and make sure that whatever level of service user involvement you achieve is good quality and well thought through. For this reason planning your SUI is incredibly important.

### 'Whole systems' approach

Ideally, your organisation should take a 'whole systems' approach to achieving service user

involvement. To realise this you will need to think of your organisation as a jigsaw consisting of four pieces.

These are:

- \* **Culture:** the ethos of an organisation, shared by all staff and service users, which demonstrates a commitment to participation.
- \* **Practice:** the ways of making methods for involvement skills and knowledge, which enable service users to become involved.
- \* **Structure:** the planning, development and resourcing of participation evident in an organisation's infrastructures.
- \* **Review:** the monitoring and evaluation systems which enable an organisation to evidence change affected by participation.

### The whole systems approach to participation





*"Nothing about us without us! is a populist slogan used around the world to communicate the idea that no policy should be decided by any representative without the full and direct participation of members of the group(s) affected by that policy."*

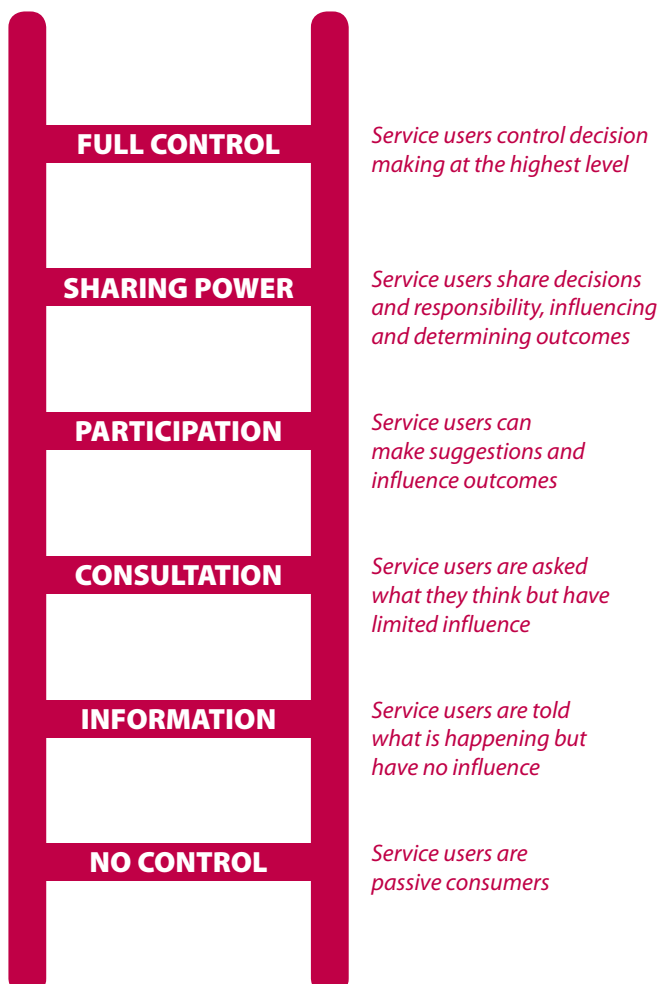
Source: wikipedia.org, 2010

## The SUI journey

Every organisation reading this guide will be at a different stage of its SUI journey. Some will have a long and successful history of involving service users and others will be just starting out. Some may have tried and failed!

Use the model below to examine where you are in terms of service user involvement now and where you want to be in the future. Be honest about what you want to achieve and set yourself realistic goals.

## The ladder of participation



Whatever stage of the journey towards service user involvement your organisation is at, it is vital to think about these questions:

- ✱ **What** are you trying to achieve through service user involvement? Is your aim to improve or change your services? Do you want to show that service users' voices are valued within your organisation? Do you need to demonstrate to commissioners or funders that your practices are inclusive?
- ✱ **Who** are you trying to involve? Do you want to hear the views of a select group of service users (e.g. women, under-25s) or all those who use your services? Do you want to hear from family members and carers?
- ✱ **How** are you going to involve service users? What methods will you use, eg forums, as peer researchers, as trainers?
- ✱ **When** will you involve them? Do you want to involve current service users or ex-service users or both? Will you involve them long-term or short-term?

Once you have a clear idea of why you are doing your SUI project and who you want to involve, you can then start to plan your project, including how and when, and put together the team of people you need to make it happen.

➡ See Section 4 for a planning matrix that your organisation can use to prepare for service user involvement.

➡ See Section 5 for more on how to recruit and support service users.

## 2.4 Involvement ideas

There are many different ways of involving your service users in the work that you do. Every organisation and service user is different. Think about what is appropriate for your service users and consider suitable methods for engaging them. For example, some people may enjoy speaking in public and sharing their experiences; others might be better suited to 'behind the scenes' work such as organising or collecting information. Identify any skills that service users may already have (e.g. in IT, design or photography) and match those with your involvement opportunities.

It is also important to consider what is appropriate for your organisation. It's no good setting up countless focus groups if you haven't got the resources to analyse and act upon the information generated. Think about your budget, your organisation's capabilities, staff/volunteer skills and key organisational priorities before you choose the most effective way to involve your service users.

Here are some examples of involvement methods:

- \* **Peer review and monitoring:** service user reviewers are trained to help the organisation improve services through research/evaluation, mystery shopping, focus groups, telephone/face-to-face surveys, attending team meetings, commenting on draft reports, etc.
- \* **Forums or panels:** a group of service users come together to discuss a specific topic or policy. Can be used as part of your organisation's consultation process.
- \* **Attending meetings or events:** service users can speak at your organisation's events or at external conferences.

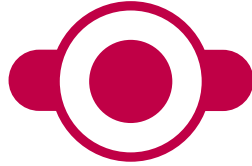
- \* **Training and support:** service users can deliver training to staff and to their peers and offer support to other service users through mentoring or buddy schemes.
- \* **Recruitment:** you can involve your service users in the selection and recruitment of staff and trustees.
- \* **Governance:** service users can sit on your organisation's trustee board or management committee.

➡ See Section 4 for more involvement ideas and information about project planning and delivery.

### Getting it right

With the right planning and delivery, an SUI project can be extremely effective and rewarding for your organisation. Be aware, however, that involving service users can be a complex task for all involved and can take some time to get up and running smoothly. Think about any potential problems and use your expertise to plan how to address them. We would always encourage you to think big but don't be afraid to start small and build your level of service user involvement up gradually.

➡ Use the troubleshooting guides in Section 3 for potential problems and how to solve them.



## VOICES FOR CHANGE: REVOLVING DOORS AGENCY

CASE STUDY

RDA's national service user forum brings together people from different areas of the country who have experienced mental health and other problems and have had contact with the criminal justice system.

Forum members get involved in activities such as research, policy consultations, delivering training, contributing to conferences and raising awareness of the issues they face. Their views feed into policymaking as well as service design and improvement.

RDA provides opportunities for forum members to participate in training courses including 'train the trainer', research skills, questionnaires, media skills and others. These support their personal development and effective involvement in the forum.

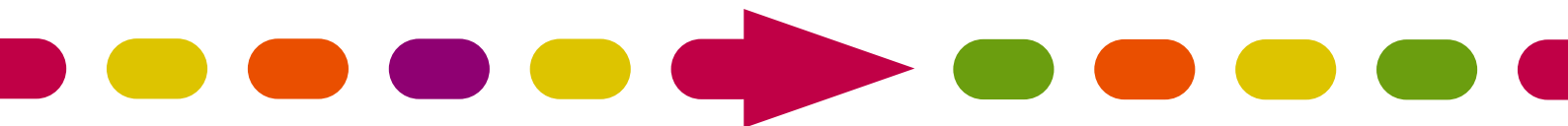
Recently members of the forum have:

- ✱ Helped to develop police guidance on working with people with mental health issues

- ✱ Informed the government's new national framework for mental health
- ✱ Contributed to a service user and carers panel helping the government implement its offender health strategy
- ✱ Participated in the work of the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coalition to influence policy and services for adults with multiple needs and exclusions.

Forum members also played a large part in the development of RDA's new strategy and will be at the forefront of its work over the next five years. Tina Braithwaite, director of service user involvement says: "The forum is integral to our work and we are grateful for the time and effort the forum members put in to ensure that our work is rooted in the reality of people's experience."

➡ For more information go see the Revolving Doors Agency website: [www.revolving-doors.org.uk](http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk)



## UNITED FRONT: T2A ALLIANCE

Young adults aged 16-24 make up 9.5 % of the UK population but commit one third of all crime. Many young people in contact with the criminal justice system experience a range of problems and can get lost in the transition between youth and adult services.

The Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Alliance is a broad coalition of organisations and individuals working to improve the life chances of young people who are at risk of committing crime and falling into the criminal justice system. The alliance's charity members – who include Addaction, Catch 22, Clinks, Revolving Doors Agency and Young Minds – have involved service users in projects to develop best practice in areas such as commissioning and delivering services for young people in transition.

In 2010, Revolving Doors Agency (RDA) published Aiming Higher, a good practice guide for

practitioners working with young adults with multiple needs. The guide was compiled using the views of a team of young service users, who participated in RDA's T2A project which visited 15 services to gather information on how they work and what makes them effective.

Tafari Franklyn-Brown, a participant in RDA's T2A project, says: "Visiting the projects made me realise that there is lots of positive stuff going on – I had no idea that some of these services existed. It's good to have knowledge of what is going on around you – lots of people don't know what's out there."

 **For more information go see the T2A website and the Revolving Doors Agency website:**  
[www.t2a.org.uk](http://www.t2a.org.uk) / [www.revolving-doors.org.uk](http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk)

CASE STUDY

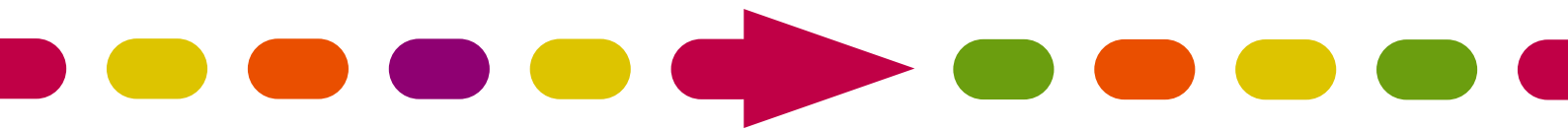


### What service user involvement SHOULD be...



### What service user involvement SHOULD NOT be...





# Getting started.



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*"I feel safe to share my feelings. It's changed my life by giving me more confidence."*

Service user forum member on the positive benefits of involvement

*"Involvement has been a good door-opener for me to better-paid employment in my future."*

Service user on involvement as a route to paid work

### 3.1 Developing a strategy

Ideally, your organisation should have a service user involvement strategy in place before you embark on an SUI project. This will help you to map out what you want to do with SUI and how you want to do it. Think of it as a blueprint for your SUI work: something that will show your entire organisation – including management, staff, volunteers, service users, trustees and external stakeholders – that you are serious about service user involvement.

In reality, you may not have an SUI strategy in place before starting your project. However, the process of developing a strategy will help you to manage your SUI projects further down the line. A strategy will also help you to demonstrate to commissioners and funders that you recognise the benefits of involving service users.

Appointing an SUI 'champion' (for example, a member of the senior management team) whose job it is to promote your strategy will help your organisation to 'sell' the concept of service user involvement more widely and effectively.

It is important whenever possible to involve your service users in developing your SUI strategy. You could consider making it the first project that you and your service users work on together.

At the very least, your SUI strategy should include:

- \* Background information on SUI, including references to local and government requirements
- \* A review of your organisation's current SUI activities (if any)
- \* A summary of planned SUI activities, including methods, aims and how they link to organisational strategy
- \* Details of how you will communicate project activities and outcomes
- \* Information about monitoring and evaluation.

In addition to your SUI strategy, the following may also be useful:

- \* An SUI policy or list of principles (see Section 3.5)
- \* A service user role description and/or group terms of reference (see Section 5.2)
- \* A reward and recognition policy (see Section 5.5).

➡ See Section 6 for a sample SUI strategy.

#### GOOD PRACTICE: SUPPORTING INVOLVEMENT

Clinks recommends that written guidance should be offered to the participant on the implications of being involved in SUI. Its code of practice recommends that organisations should be working towards:

- \* A strategy for involvement of (former) offenders. This should include offender/ former offender consultations, participation and a support mechanism.
- \* A minimum level of support, such as a pre-brief on the role they are about to undertake and what will be expected of them, public speaking practice or training, payment of all expenses and a debrief after the event.
- \* Linking up with other service user forums and/or capacity building organisations such as Clinks, who can offer additional training and support on attending conferences, meetings, being a member of a taskforce, etc.
- \* Allocating a senior member of staff to be an internal and external (former) offender advocate to promote and manage the strategy.

Source: *Engaging the perspectives of offenders and former offenders: a code of practice.* Clinks, 2009



*"Consulting in a meaningful way with the people who use our services means that we can ensure the services we offer are valid, effective and appropriate. We seek the guidance of people who know about the issues from a highly personal perspective. We consult because it's the right thing to do."*

Sean Wimhurst – associate director, P3

*"Perhaps the greatest barrier of all is one of culture and mentality. We need to remove the ingrained resistance to the concept of offenders, former offenders and their families as experts – because in this case, that is what they are."*

From *Unlocking Potential* (Clinks, 2008)

## 3.2 Planning issues

For many organisations working with offenders, ex-offenders and their families, service user involvement is an integral part of their work. For others, the practice is still relatively new. The aim of this section is to help you in your work towards achieving service user involvement by identifying some barriers you might have met already or you might meet, and suggesting some solutions you could try.

Individual service users will get involved for a range of reasons and in a range of different ways. It is therefore important if possible to use a variety of methods and offer a choice of involvement opportunities. See Section 4.1 for ideas.

As Section 2 shows, there are many advantages of service user involvement to both the organisation and individual. But whatever stage of the journey your organisation is at, it is also important to consider the potential barriers to service user involvement and identify ways of overcoming them. This will help your project to run more smoothly and get the best contribution from everyone involved.

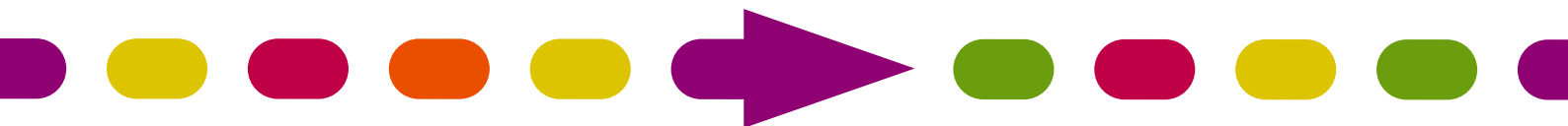
### Troubleshooting guide

Here are some of the most common problems around service user involvement and some practical solutions:

Common problems	Actions
<b>Lack of management 'buy in' for service user involvement</b> Senior managers or trustees may not have involved service users before so may need a 'push' to get started.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Identify key 'champions' who can promote the SUI message</li> <li>✱ Develop an SUI statement or policy for your organisation</li> <li>✱ Identify benefits of SUI to your organisation's work</li> <li>✱ Highlight examples of other organisations using SUI to improve services.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff apprehension</b> Staff can sometimes be wary of SUI because they haven't been consulted themselves, or fear participants will be negative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Hold open discussions about what SUI can offer and potential activities</li> <li>✱ Be clear from the outset about the limits of SUI – what is and is not up for discussion or change</li> <li>✱ Have ongoing communication with staff about project aims and outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>Insufficient resources</b> Lack of proper funding, staff time and access by service users to resources (e.g. computers, printers, the internet) can threaten the success of a project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Include a realistic budget (including admin as well as project costs) and assessment of staff time in your project plan</li> <li>✱ Review resourcing needs on a regular basis.</li> </ul>

See Section 3 for more about resources

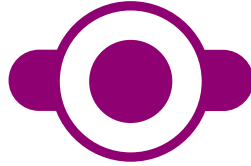
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Common problems	Actions
<b>Staff feel unprepared or unsupported</b> SUI projects require a time commitment and specialist skills that staff may not have, or know how to access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✳ Ensure that your staff members have access to training if needed to facilitate SUI</li> <li>✳ Discuss a staff member's SUI role during appraisals and supervision. Identify where further support might be needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Low or slow level of recruitment</b> Staff running an SUI project may be disheartened when only a small percentage of service users get involved or SUI is not quickly successful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✳ Have realistic expectations – not everyone wants to get involved</li> <li>✳ Ask staff to chat to service users they work with (e.g. during key worker sessions) about involvement and encourage them to participate</li> <li>✳ Incentivise with rewards for taking part</li> <li>✳ Offer training opportunities</li> <li>✳ Get peers or staff to talk about how SUI can enhance future employment prospects</li> <li>✳ Involve peers with SUI experience in your recruitment process</li> <li>✳ Advertise opportunities widely in appropriate settings e.g. at a hostel, in your offices, etc.</li> <li>✳ Designate a named member of staff or volunteer to your SUI project and make sure potential recruits know how to contact them</li> <li>✳ Review your reward and recognition policy (see Section 5) to ensure you are meeting service user expectations.</li> </ul>
<b>Role adjustment issues</b> Staff may feel uncomfortable, or even threatened, by service users voicing their opinions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✳ Communicate clearly across your organisation about why you are doing your SUI project and what you hope to achieve</li> <li>✳ Draw up a job description for the service user, which provides clear guidance on what the role does and does not cover</li> <li>✳ Ensure any staff member involved in an SUI project knows who to contact if they need advice or help</li> <li>✳ Encourage staff to have a positive attitude to service users' comments. Emphasise the link between their input and service improvement.</li> </ul>

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Common problems	Actions
<p><b>Service users feel unprepared</b> Service users may feel that they lack the skills or support needed to participate in an SUI project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Write a clear role description defining core skills and abilities need for the SUI role</li> <li>✱ Match people and tasks, according to abilities</li> <li>✱ Offer access to training and skills improvement opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Concerns over inclusion of 'difficult voices'</b> Some service users may not want to participate in your project if 'difficult voices' such as sex offenders or perpetrators of domestic violence are also involved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Be clear from the start that your project aims to attract a broad range of voices</li> <li>✱ Where service users express real concerns about other participants, consider holding a separate event so more voices get heard</li> <li>✱ Ensure that forum or event facilitators are briefed on the potential problems that can arise from having a wide range of offences represented on a panel or within a room</li> <li>✱ Let all participants know who to speak to if they want to discuss their concerns.</li> </ul>



See Section 4.6 for more troubleshooting tips.

### 3.3 Resources

Like any project, service user involvement will require resources to support it. Don't assume that you can cover the costs from existing funds: you will need to prepare a proper budget for your project and identify funding for any SUI activities.

The more successful that SUI becomes, the more costly it can get. If you're asking your service users to perform more complicated tasks, you will have to reward these higher-level skills with a higher fee. Your costs will also increase as you involve more service users or expand your SUI activities. So your budget for year one may need to increase to reflect this.

As a general guide, SUI projects will require some or all of the following resources:

#### TIME

- \* Staff/volunteer time for project planning, delivery and monitoring
- \* Management time for supervision, writing policies and evaluation.

#### MONEY

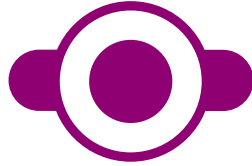
- \* Remuneration and full reimbursement of expenses and travel
- \* Training for staff, volunteers and service users
- \* Event costs e.g. venue hire, catering, publicity
- \* Communication costs e.g. newsletters, reports.

#### OTHER RESOURCES

- \* Internet access for service users
- \* Mobile phones and credit

- \* IT support for staff/volunteers collecting and analysing project data.

➡ See Section 4.2 for more on project costs.



### 3.4 Ethics

It is important that your service users – whether they are offenders, ex-offenders, family members or carers – know that they will be treated in an ethical manner.

You need to be clear that participants in SUI activities are not obliged to divulge anything that they don't want to and you should ask them only to talk about issues of which they have direct personal experience.

The individual should have a good understanding of:

- \* How their views and other input could be used
- \* When their views will be used (as information could be presented at a later date when they might have limited or no control)
- \* How it could be presented, including possible misrepresentation.

#### GOOD PRACTICE: AN SUI POLICY

Use these basic guidelines to formulate your own SUI policy – basically a statement of principles that will govern how service users engage in your project. The policy might cover areas such as:

- \* Recruitment and exit strategy
- \* Training and support
- \* Reward and remuneration
- \* Equality and respect.

#### SUI PRINCIPLES: SHELTER

Shelter's service user involvement team has agreed that the following principles are crucial to SUI. It states:

"All service users have the right to:

- \* Be involved at a level that they feel is appropriate to them and their circumstances at the time
- \* Choose not to be involved and to change their mind if things change for them
- \* The appropriate support to become involved and sustain, develop or withdraw their participation, as they choose
- \* Expect respect for their contribution."

Source: Shelter/Changing Homelessness in Practice

➡ See Section 6 for a sample SUI policy.

➡ More good practice guidance can be found in: **Eight principles for involving service users and carers, SCIE et al, and Engaging the perspectives of offenders and former offenders: A code of practice, Clinks.** See Section 7 for details.

*"It's important for service users to be treated with respect and for organisations to acknowledge that – even if they are poorly advocated – they could still be experts in their field. Life experience counts for a lot and this must be recognised."*

Service user on importance of fair treatment for SUI participants

### 3.5 Equality issues

Effective SUI means involving service users on a level playing field with staff and volunteers. If participants feel that they are being patronised or that their views are being sidelined, then they are unlikely to remain involved in your project.

Make sure that staff and volunteers are briefed on how best to involve service users and bring out their experiences. Some may feel uncomfortable that the 'client-advisor' relationship is changing; they will need to be reassured of their role within the process. Having a clear role description for service users and a SUI plan that covers staff training and supervision can help to tackle these issues.

Finally, ensure that all service users are able to have a say in your project. This means targeting seldom heard groups; matching SUI opportunities to abilities; supplying information in different formats; offering a range of involvement methods; providing facilities such as child care to make sure individuals aren't excluded.



**See Section 4 for more on accessibility and communication.**

### SUPPORTING ROLE: LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY PANEL

The Lived Experience Advisory Panel has been set up by mental health charity Rethink and Revolving Doors Agency to discuss and advise on the implementation of the government's strategy on mental health in the criminal justice system. The strategy is a response to Lord Bradley's review of this subject, which heard from Rethink members through its service user and carer panel. Lord Bradley found service users' "powerful stories really brought to life the issues" he was investigating and said they had made "an invaluable contribution" to his final report.

The Health and Criminal Justice Programme Board, set up to implement the recommendations of Lord Bradley's review, produced a delivery plan and service users have been invited to advise on this through the new panel. For the introductory session, Rethink and RDA sent panel members a 'briefing pack' including an overview and agenda for the day; map and directions; information about travel, expenses and confidentiality and a briefing about mental health in the criminal justice system. The information set out the topic of discussion for the day – healthcare needs in prison or on secure wards – and covers questions to be discussed so panel members had a chance to think about any relevant experiences before attending the meeting.

Rethink says that, by sharing their experiences and views, service users were helping "to influence plans which could lead to radical improvements".



**For more information see the Rethink website: [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)**

# Project planning and delivery.

## 4



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*"I think that the biggest weakness is that they have set up a forum but they hadn't realised how it would develop. We have grown lots; we now need IT [to support us]."*

Service user on need for adequate resourcing

*"To make service users involvement a success in your organisation, you must have complete staff buy-in."*

Service user on importance of staff support

## 4.1 Choosing your methods

As discussed in Section 2, there are a variety of ways to involve service users in your

work. Some methods are 'safe' or tried and tested; others are more innovative.

Use the table below to identify the methods that might work best for your organisation:

Activity by service user	Examples	Key benefits
<b>Research/evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Peer reviewing</li> <li>* Designing questionnaires</li> <li>* Conducting interviews</li> <li>* Facilitating focus groups</li> <li>* Mystery shopping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Brings different perspectives and questions to review process</li> <li>* More honest and open feedback from service users when they are asked by peer reviewers.</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Forum membership</li> <li>* Prison council membership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Provides an arena for service users to voice concerns, views and ideas</li> <li>* Opportunity for service users to build relationships with others in a similar situation</li> <li>* Keeps service users informed, particularly those without access to email or telephone</li> <li>* Allows for different levels of commitment.</li> </ul>
<b>Representation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Speaking to commissioning bodies or service review panels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Puts across service user issues and concerns in their own words</li> <li>* Demonstrates to service users that their views are valued and respected at the highest level.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivering training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Leading workshops</li> <li>* Running train the trainer events</li> <li>* Training staff</li> <li>* Sharing experiences e.g. media skills, writing questionnaires.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Encourages other service users to get involved because they see their peers involved</li> <li>* Fosters an environment of trust</li> <li>* Offers unique insights into service users' perspectives on good practice.</li> </ul>

continues on page 33



*"I've been involved in a designing and implementing the training for a 'mystery shopping' project, which otherwise [the organisation] would have had to pay a company to do – so it's saved them thousands of pounds."*

Service user on benefits to organisation

continued from page 32

Activity by service user	Examples	Key benefits
<b>Selection and recruitment of staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Writing job descriptions and person specifications</li> <li>* Designing adverts</li> <li>* Short listing</li> <li>* Sitting on interview panels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Demonstrates to service users that their views are truly respected</li> <li>* Improves relationships within your organisation</li> <li>* Gives a powerful message to candidates about the importance of SUI to the organisation</li> <li>* Increases the likelihood of employing staff with the values and interpersonal skills that service users appreciate.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Serving as a committee or board member.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Helps service users to gain a better understanding of your organisation</li> <li>* Brings a unique perspective to board-level discussions</li> <li>* Demonstrates inclusion and equality within your organisation.</li> </ul>
<b>Service design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Sharing views through consultation activities</li> <li>* Project team membership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Harnesses direct experiences of service users to improve services</li> <li>* Offers opportunities for service users to develop specific skills, enhancing self-esteem and employability.</li> </ul>
<b>Service delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Peer mentoring</li> <li>* Developing good practice guides.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Offers a more personal way for service users to get involved</li> <li>* Provides your organisation with unique 'first hand' knowledge and experience</li> <li>* Helps to break down barriers through the service user acting as a 'trusted' link between peers and your organisation.</li> </ul>
<b>Media and publicity work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Addressing events or attending party conferences</li> <li>* Speaking to the press</li> <li>* Featuring in your organisation's magazine or on the website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Highlights 'real life' stories and helps external audiences to better understand issues</li> <li>* Offers service users the chance to develop skills e.g. public speaking.</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Preparing a project plan

The key to a successful service user involvement project is good planning. You should have a clear idea of what you want from the project, what the aims are and a list of specific outcomes.

Your organisation should choose an approach that suits both your service users and recognises the capacity (and culture) of your organisation.

Ideally, you should involve existing service users in any project planning. Of course, if your organisation has never involved service users before, it is acceptable to plan without their input in the first instance. It is good practice, however, to introduce service user involvement into the planning process as early as possible.

### REMEMBER

“Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance!”

#### Specific tasks

The planning matrix on page 35 should help you to put together your outline project plan. Next, you need to think about the specific tasks that you want service users to do.

This will enable you to:

- \* Ask service users which specific task they would be interested in
- \* Identify what is required of your staff
- \* Match your project needs to the skills, abilities and experience of all those involved.

For example, if you want to run a focus group to find out what service users think about one of your services, then the tasks might include:

- \* Speaking to peers to tell them about the group
- \* Acting as a buddy to a new service user
- \* Designing a poster to publicise the activity
- \* Facilitating group discussion
- \* Note taking
- \* Writing up discussion points, collecting and collating feedback
- \* Organising transport
- \* Booking a venue
- \* Arranging refreshments.

Breaking down your plan into tasks may seem like a lot of effort. But putting the work in at the start of your project will save you time and other resources in the long term.



See Section 6 for a sample project plan

## PLANNING MATRIX

**This planning matrix can help your organisation develop a clear project plan**

<p><b>What</b> do you want to involve service users in?  A consultation event, planning group, peer research, staff training?  Something very general of interest to a broad range of service users or something very specific to a particular service?</p>	
<p><b>Why</b> do you want to involve service users?  You want to tell people something? You want to know what people think about something? You want them to help you plan a piece of work. You want to meet funders' objectives?</p>	
<p><b>Who</b> do you want to involve?  Current or ex-users of a service? Specific groups, such as young people or women? People with a geographical connection? Who within your organisation will be involved?</p>	
<p><b>When</b> do you want to do it?  What are your timescales? Do you need to start or finish this piece of work by a certain date? Remember to allow time to plan, for feedback and identify next steps.</p>	
<p><b>Where</b> do you want to do it?  Think of locations – virtual and physical – and accessible venues.</p>	
<p><b>How</b> are you going to do it?</p>	
* How are you going to get answers for the questions above?	
* How are you going to plan for the work?	
* How are you going to recruit service users?	
* Have you thought about what service users might get out of the work?	
* Will service users or staff need training for the project?	
* Do you have a budget?	
* Who is going to do the work?	
* Do you have enough expertise in the workplace?	
* Do you need other expertise, knowledge or skills?	
* How are you going to advertise the work to service users?	
* How will you match service users skills' to the tasks involved?	
* What method(s) of involvement are you going to use?	
* How are you going to write up the piece of work?	
* Who needs to see the outcomes?	
* How are you going to feed back to service users?	
* Who is going to take forward the outcomes?	
* How will you evaluate the work?	

*"If a meeting isn't facilitated well, people might not feel like speaking – because it is quite an effort. And don't ignore service users' comments or pick and choose what you want. Recognise that they are all experienced, they are qualified from life experience."*

Service user on importance of good facilitation

*"Think about timing of transport you book for service users. Booking a cheap train ticket might mean that the service user gets back to their hostel too late at night – most have a 10pm-11pm curfew - by the time they've taken buses etc. They might not want to take part again because this puts them off."*

Service user on need for consideration of restrictions on service users

### 4.3 Costs

It is vital to prepare a realistic budget for your SUI project. This should take into account:

- \* Travel expenses
- \* Accommodation
- \* Subsistence (tea, coffee, lunch, etc.)
- \* Venue hire
- \* Facilitation
- \* Service user payment
- \* Training
- \* Childcare or facilities
- \* Publications
- \* Other service user expenses e.g. mobile phone top ups, internet access
- \* Publicity costs.

➡ See Section 5 for more on training and payments.

### 4.4 Accessibility

To get service users involved, you need to make sure that they find your activities accessible. Discuss access needs at the start of your project. Ask service users whether they need anything else to enable them to participate fully. Remind service users that these facilities are in place and reassure them that it is perfectly fine to take advantage of them.

➡ See Section 6 for meeting tips.



## GOOD PRACTICE: ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

### Here are some ideas for making your event or activity accessible:

- \* Check that the timing and length of your event is appropriate to the needs and lifestyle of the service users you want to reach
- \* Choose a venue that offers the service user easy access, so that they don't have to rely on someone else letting them in or out
- \* Pick a location that is neutral, safe and not in a 'trigger' spot e.g. close to a dealer's patch
- \* Ensure that your venue is served by good public transport
- \* Have regular refreshment/rest breaks at consultation events (every hour is good practice)
- \* Think about whether there is somewhere to smoke and whether your activity can accommodate breaks for smokers
- \* Invite the service user to bring someone with them to the meeting or event if they feel anxious about participating for the first time or about travelling
- \* Offer training e.g. IT skills to make tasks more accessible to service users
- \* Offer special seating or lighting at meetings or events
- \* Offer to provide documents in large print or Easy Read format
- \* Provide a British Sign Language interpreter or induction loop facility for service users with a hearing impairment
- \* Offer childcare facilities.

### Remember:

- \* Use plain language for your communications
- \* Avoid unnecessary jargon
- \* Explain clearly any jargon where unavoidable.

## HALL OF SHAME: LOCKED OUT AND LIVID

"Our first offices not long after we founded our service user group were in a vast old warehouse that had been converted into offices. At the start, we didn't have keys and had to ring the bell then wait and hope that someone in the building would come down and let us in.

"The first time I went there on my own to do some work, the person who answered the door would not let me in because he 'did not know me' – even though he knew we had the offices on the same floor as them.

"The paid service user co-ordinator in charge was on leave and I was about to head back home when I thought 'No, I have made all this effort to come here today. I am going to get in somehow or another.'

"Luckily I had the 'phone number of the person deputising for him and she had to ring up the offices to explain who I was and finally I gained admittance. It was a waste of time trying to do any work that day as I was livid and could not concentrate.

"I think not having our own keys put the group back several months as no one wanted to make the effort to come to the offices and take a chance on whether or not they would be able to get in."

*"Effective information is essential for purposeful and meaningful involvement. P3 will ensure that clients are informed fully around opportunities for participation."*

Mark Simms - deputy chief executive, P3

## HALL OF SHAME: GIVE US A BREAK!

"We were invited to a meeting at a government office as part of a departmental consultation. We'd had to travel a long way by train and were asked to get there at 12.30. We were still waiting at 1pm when someone came to meet us. We were then escorted upstairs – not given any building passes to get in or out – for a diabolical lunch. Then it was straight into focus group questions until 4pm. I didn't even know where the toilet was!

"After two hours, I asked to go out for a cigarette break, which the facilitator obviously wasn't happy with. As I didn't have a pass to get back in, she told me to ring her mobile when I was done. When I did, the phone was switched off. We'd made the effort to go there but I just felt used."

## 4.5 Communication

Good communication is essential to the planning process. If everyone understands what they are expected to do, your project will run much more smoothly.

Don't assume that service users or staff will know what is needed of them. Set up and maintain good channels of communication so that everyone involved knows where to go for advice, additional support or information.

## GOOD PRACTICE: WELCOME PACK

Consider putting together a SUI 'welcome pack' for service users who are joining a new or existing project. This could include:

- \* Background information about your organisation and project partners
- \* Briefing on policy area or topic related to your project
- \* Project summary, including aims and timescale
- \* Role description
- \* SUI group terms of reference
- \* Glossary of terms
- \* Who else will be involved, e.g. staff members
- \* Key contacts
- \* Arrangements for booking travel or reimbursement of expenses
- \* Arrangements for payment if offered.

*"What makes a good SUI project is having a good facilitator who emails us and calls us regularly to check our/my progress and to see if I need any guidance or help in any areas. There have been projects that I have not received much guidance on and I have wondered 'Am I overstepping the mark?' or 'Shall I do something this way or another?' and this has hindered my progress, because I don't want to annoy anyone by overstepping the mark."*

Service user on need for good communication

## GOOD PRACTICE: COMMUNICATION TIPS

- \* Make and maintain direct contact with service users. A telephone call from a key worker or chat with another service user is a good way of 'breaking the ice' about service user involvement. This direct approach can be used to follow up participation at events, forums, etc.
- \* Give service users a named contact who is responsible for the project, with a telephone number and/or email address.
- \* Ensure that your communication methods suit your service user. Some might prefer a telephone call. Others might be more comfortable with a text message or email. Some may prefer to be contacted by post. Avoid alienating service users with literacy or similar issues by providing a choice of communication methods.
- \* Offer pre-meetings so that new or difficult issues can be explained and discussed informally, in advance of a more formal meeting.
- \* Send out board meeting or consultation event papers at least two weeks in advance so that service users have sufficient time to read and digest the content. Include a glossary of terms and acronyms.
- \* For meetings or consultation events, provide a pre-meeting pack including a topic or policy briefing; agenda and timings; date and venue (directions and map); dress code; travel and expenses information and contact details for special requests. If you plan to photograph the event or use quotes for publication, make sure your service users know how to opt in or out.
- \* Schedule in enough meeting time so service users have sufficient time to respond to activities and take breaks when necessary. What you might discuss at a two-hour staff meeting may require double the time if you want to fully consult your service users.
- \* Establish some ground rules for meetings.



**See Section 6 for meeting tips.**

## 4.6 Evaluation and reporting

When drawing up your project plan, think about what you want to measure and how this can be done. It is much easier to set up regular monitoring from the start of your project, so factor this into your list of tasks to do throughout the project.

Think about whether involvement has...

- \* Made a difference to the service user, e.g. has it helped them to move into training or more secure accommodation? Has it boosted confidence or skills?
- \* Made a difference to the organisation, e.g. have services been improved?
- \* Made a difference to staff, e.g. do they have a better understanding of service users' needs? Has it improved skills?
- \* Impressed commissioners, e.g. has your evidence of SUI helped your organisation to win a contract?
- \* Influenced policymakers?
- \* Helped to secure funding for services?

### Evaluation methods

There are a number of ways to evaluate your service user involvement project. These include:

- \* A brief questionnaire to service users and/or staff
- \* Focus groups
- \* Feedback forms
- \* Attitudinal surveys (before and after)
- \* Informal conversations.


### Reporting

Always report back to service users. There are a number of other stakeholders that you might need to report to, including:

- \* Senior management team in your organisation
- \* Trustees
- \* Project partners
- \* Funders.

### Be creative!

Think about innovative ways of reporting your SUI activities. You could get SUI project participants to make a short film; design a newsletter or web page; organise an exhibition or give a presentation.

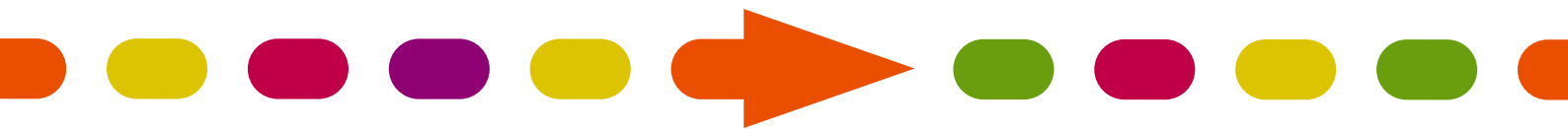
 For more information on evaluation and demonstrating your effectiveness, see the companion guide, *Demonstrating Effectiveness*, Clinks and Charities Evaluation Services, 2010.



## 4.7 Common problems and solutions

Even the best-planned projects can experience the occasional setback. Use the troubleshooting guide below to identify potential problems and solutions.

Common problems	Actions
<b>Personality clashes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Choose staff with the appropriate skills – or train them – to manage different service user ‘voices’ in a group</li> <li>* Designate a member of the project team who service users know they can express their concerns to without fear of repercussions.</li> </ul>
<b>Service users not adequately prepared for involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Establish good communication with keyworker(s) about what is expected of service users</li> <li>* Develop a clear role description – explaining skills required, time commitments &amp; specific tasks</li> <li>* Offer training to service users and ensure that they know who to speak to for support or advice</li> <li>* Establish feedback mechanisms, e.g. mentoring, an anonymous suggestions box.</li> </ul>
<b>Service users feel they don’t have ownership of the SUI project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Involve service users in all aspects of project planning, delivery and evaluation</li> <li>* Maintain clear and regular communication with service users to show how their contributions are being used.</li> </ul>
<b>Project fatigue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Set clear targets for what you want to achieve and by when</li> <li>* Regularly review meeting frequency and effectiveness against your targets</li> <li>* Assess whether your SUI project needs ‘new blood’ and bring in different staff or service users as appropriate</li> <li>* Support service users to ‘move on’ from your project to suitable opportunities, such as volunteering or paid work.</li> </ul>



# Recruitment and support.



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*"If you give a service user a project to do, you must give them clear guidelines on when you want that project to be finished by, and maintain good contact throughout that period."*

*Service user on making involvement effective*

*"Don't give service users false hope. There's nothing worse than a tick-box exercise or feeling like you're just making up the numbers. Involvement has got to have 'teeth' – so you know you can make a difference."*

*Service user on making involvement meaningful*

## 5.1 Service user motivation

In general, people do not get involved in the services they use. For example, few people go to their local NHS Trust annual public meeting or their annual parent governor meetings. Your service users are no more likely to get involved than anyone else. Those who do get involved often do so to improve a previous negative experience.

Do not be disheartened if the majority of your service users do not participate in your project: quality is more important than quantity. Those who do come forward out of frustration with poor services may have difficulty articulating solutions straight away or may at first be negative. This will change as they begin to believe that their participation can make a difference.

Each individual is different therefore his or her motivation will be different. Think about:

*What might prompt them to get involved in your project?*

- \* Chance to 'have a say' or share own experiences
- \* To put/give something back
- \* To change/improve things
- \* Opportunity to develop new skills
- \* Gaining experience to put on their CV
- \* Good preparation for future employment
- \* Potential to meet new people or network
- \* Possibility of voluntary or paid work
- \* Involvement of friends or family members
- \* Influenced by other service users who have been involved
- \* Encouragement by staff who they have a good relationship with.

*What might put them off?*

- \* Peer pressure not to get involved
- \* Negative experiences of involvement
- \* Not having enough information
- \* Concerns that they are being 'used'
- \* Poor feedback about the outcome of their previous involvement
- \* Uninspiring activities or facilitators
- \* Domineering behaviour from other service users involved in SUL.

*What can you offer them in return?*

- \* Direct opportunity to shape services
- \* Access to training
- \* Skills development
- \* Qualifications or awards
- \* Payment.

*Match making*

When you are considering involving service users, it is important to get the right 'fit' for your project. Consider their skills and abilities carefully and think about how to match these with service user involvement activities.

### REMEMBER

**Timing is everything.** Not every service user wants to or is ready to become involved. Some may need encouragement before dipping a toe in the water. Talk to them to assess their own readiness and make sure they know what support is available throughout their involvement.

*"Being approached to speak at the Labour Party conference was a real buzz – it made me feel strong, empowered and valued. I'm interested in policy making and have networked with people at party conferences and events. There's no reason why I can't contact them with my CV. I'm seeing changes in me that I wouldn't have believed three years ago in prison."*

Dan, service user

*"I'm proud of getting involved. My friends laugh or whatever but I know what I'm doing and I'm getting something out of it."*

Colin, service user

## GOOD PRACTICE: EIGHT PRINCIPLES

"We will enable service users and carers to choose the way they become involved. This will include:

- \* Making sure service users and carers fully understand the reasons for the types of activities they will be involved in
- \* Making sure service users and carers can make informed choices about how to be involved
- \* Making sure conditions of involvement are clear
- \* Involving service users and carers in different ways to achieve the most effective outcomes
- \* Making sure the task is in proportion to service users' and carers' abilities."

*From: Eight principles for involving service users and carers, SCIE, et al*

## KEY PERSONAL QUALITIES: GLADA

GLADA (Greater London Drug and Alcohol Alliance) has identified specific personal qualities that are essential to successful user involvement initiatives. These included:

- \* **Energy:** people with high levels of energy are likely to last the distance in developing projects
- \* **Belief in common good:** project participants showed a strong sense of not only being interested in making things better for themselves but for other users as well
- \* **Clear focus on solutions:** relating to solving problems rather than just being aware of them
- \* **Sense of personal responsibility:** seeing themselves as part of the solution.

*Source: Lessons Learned: some approaches, tools and good practice for improving drug user involvement (GLADA, 2005)*


CASE STUDY

➔ See Section 2 for 'Ladder of involvement'.

## 5.2 Role descriptions

It is useful to have a role description that sets out what the service user is expected to do and what skills are needed. Your role description should cover:

- \* What skills are needed
- \* What abilities or interests are required
- \* What tasks are involved
- \* Who else is involved, e.g. if staff are involved, give their role/title
- \* Frequency of involvement or meetings
- \* Duration of project
- \* Remuneration policy.

 See Section 3 for information about an SUI policy.

## 5.3 Recruitment methods

Service users can be recruited in a variety of ways. Common ways include:

- \* Via key workers
- \* Through word-of-mouth recommendation by other service users
- \* Posters in hostel or your offices
- \* Via outreach workshops
- \* Through large-scale events.

Service users, like most of us, want to know what it is all about before agreeing to something. Always give service users the chance to find out what is required before asking them to commit to being involved. For example, you could invite them to an information 'workshop', where they can find out more about SUI without feeling obliged to get involved if they decide it's not for them.

It is also important to let service users know that they can opt out or in again at any point when their lives change. This is particularly important for those people in the Criminal Justice System who sometimes have unsettled lives or for those people who are trying to move on.

### Get creative!

Think about how your organisation can enhance the SUI experience. For example, could you offer alternative therapies or leisure activities alongside focus group meetings? Could you hold an event in an outdoor or seaside setting, to offer service users a change of scene?

*"I was asked to do an interview with 'Panorama' but when the researcher rang to ask whether there was space for all the cameras and lights and stuff in my flat, I thought it was too much. Having a 'panic button' you can press and knowing that you can hit it is important. I felt safe being able to ring Tina and say that I wasn't ready to do it."*

*Service user on the need for support*

## 5.4 Training and support

It is important that both service users and staff have appropriate training and support to achieve effective service user involvement. Ask people what they feel they need to enable them to participate fully.

If you are a small organisation or have limited resources, you may find it helpful to contact a capacity-building body such as Clinks or RDA to access training, development and support.

### For service users

Don't make assumptions about what support – if any – is needed. Ask service users what they need. Examples could include:

#### Support

- \* Mentoring
- \* External supervision
- \* Peer support
- \* SUI team support page on Facebook or similar social networking sites
- \* Access to a password-protected page on your website.

#### Training

- \* Facilitation skills
- \* Committee skills
- \* Team working skills
- \* How to be a representative
- \* Research skills for specific roles/projects
- \* Proposal writing
- \* IT training
- \* Confidence building and assertiveness

- \* Interviewing
- \* Media training.

### For staff

Don't assume that staff or volunteers will have the skills needed to facilitate service user involvement. Think about:

#### Support

- \* Regular meetings to get staff feedback
- \* Discussion of SUI role at supervision and appraisals.

#### Training

- \* Service user involvement awareness for key personnel, e.g. project steering group
- \* Group facilitation skills.

Don't forget! Continuously assess training and support needs for both staff and service users.

## 5.5 Payment and reimbursement

To achieve meaningful service user involvement, you need to make sure that people feel that they, their expertise and their time are recognised and valued. You must always reimburse service users with any expenses incurred because of their involvement. It is also good practice if you have the resources to pay service users for their time. This is particularly important when you are asking them to contribute in situations where other participants are paid staff for instance or where there is a high level of responsibility or skill required.

### Payments

Each organisation needs to decide whether it is going to pay service users for their involvement. If you are going to pay service users, your payment and reimbursement policy needs to take into account that many of them will be in receipt of various benefits. You should signpost them to where they can get independent advice about how receiving payment might affect their benefits and give them time to make an informed decision.

The amount you pay will depend on the type of activity, the skills and experience, the complexity and responsibility that the activity demands. For example someone chairing a meeting should get paid more than someone who is attending the meeting without any special responsibility; a service user delivering training should get paid as much as any other trainer. The pay can be set as hourly, per session, per day or per activity rates or a mixture according to what is most appropriate. It is often more useful for service users on benefits to know in advance the

actual amount so sometimes an hourly rate is not appropriate. However you should bear in mind that you must pay at least the minimum wage hourly rate when you are deciding how much to pay for a session or day. Rates of pay should not be based on the assumption that service users are receiving benefits.

### Vouchers

Some organisations choose to reward service users with a voucher rather than cash. This is sometimes because they believe for benefit purposes this will be seen as a gift rather than a payment. If service users are regularly receiving vouchers for involvement activities, they will be considered as payment in the same way as cash. It is alright to pay by voucher or cash as a one-off payment for a one off (once in a year) activity. Other organisations pay with vouchers because they do not want to give cash to service users who have substance use problems. However, service users can exchange the vouchers for cash if they wish to buy alcohol or drugs. It is important for service users to make the decision about how they wish to be paid and for the organisation to be flexible enough to give that choice. For example, if a service user does not have a bank account then a BACS payment is not possible and cash or vouchers should be offered.

### Expenses

You should always reimburse service users for 'out-of-pocket' expenses – i.e. the monies they have spent in the course of carrying out their role. This could include:

- \* Travel expenses
- \* Meals or refreshments
- \* Childcare costs
- \* Other costs related to role, e.g. phone card, stamps, stationery, etc.





There should be a receipt for the expense and the exact amount only must be reimbursed so that service users' benefits or tax are not affected. If an amount is given 'in lieu' of expenses or more is given than the exact expense incurred, this constitutes a payment rather than reimbursement and could affect benefits and tax (see below).

➔ See Section 6 for a sample remuneration policy.

➔ The Department of Health publication 'Reward and recognition' provides guidance on payment and expenses for service users. See Section 7 for details.

## GOOD PRACTICE: PAYMENT

- \* Give service users 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
  - \* Discuss and agree with service users the terms of involvement prior to them committing to it
  - \* Book and pay for service users' travel in advance whenever possible
  - \* Do not leave service users out of pocket or at risk of being financially worse off because of their involvement – always reimburse expenses, in cash, on the day
  - \* If you decide to pay service users, pay them according to open and consistent criteria that take into account the level of involvement, the type of work and the skills and expertise required
  - \* Give service users a choice about the way they are paid
  - \* Make payments promptly and do not needlessly create barriers that deter people from being involved
  - \* Signpost those involved who are in receipt of benefits to information and independent support/advice to help prevent them from breaching the benefit rules
  - \* Regularly monitor and evaluate your payment and reimbursement policy and practice
  - \* Make staff aware of the payment and reimbursement policy and that they follow it in practice
  - \* Where events are held, jointly with other organisations make sure that payment and reimbursement are equal for all participants/contributors.
- Make sure that each service user
- \* Understands and agrees to the terms and conditions upon which they get involved
  - \* Is aware of what is expected of them and what support they are entitled to
  - \* Uses the most cost effective travel available
  - \* Is responsible for seeking advice and keeping to the benefit conditions required by Jobcentre Plus and where relevant declaring earnings to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

*"I was 20 years out of the game. Then I got involved with my hostel provider and was offered £50 to train and deliver a service user audit of services. That was five years ago and now I'm employed by two organisations. I'm off benefits and making a career."*

*Terry, service user involvement co-ordinator*

*"The support, training, and confidence building I got from my involvement has enabled me to expand on my personal and professional development. I really feel that all the volunteering, studying and service user involvement has really been all worth my while."*

*Natalie, ex-service user and now full time employed drug worker*

### HALL OF SHAME: GIVEN THE RED CARD

"I did an interview [for a service provider] and was given a £10 gift card. When I tried to pay with it, it was refused. I couldn't even use it in the Post Office! I spent £2 on a payphone trying to ring the card people to find out what was wrong. In the end, I had to send the card back: the organisation had been told that people could use the card in different shops but they had been mis-sold. It was quite stressful. For some people, [the experience] could even cause a panic attack. Organisations should think about vouchers or cards that are accepted everywhere, especially places like Iceland or Boots which are useful for people if they don't have much money."

➡ See Section 6 for a sample payment policy.

➡ See Section 7 for details of Clinks' code of practice on involving offenders and ex-offenders.

### 5.6 Exit strategy

There are advantages to having service users involved in SUI projects over a period of time. They can assess progress on activities; help recruit other service users; act as representatives for your organisation, become more skilled in the roles and so on.

Bear in mind that circumstances change and a service user might want – or need – to move on from your service. For some service users their involvement could be part of their support plan and be included as a means to achieve their goals, e.g. to leave the service or get employment. Your organisation should provide support when the time is right for service users to exit from their involvement or from the service for example:

- \* Provide a testimonial about the service user's contribution
- \* Help to explain involvement on their CV
- \* Signpost them to other volunteering opportunities
- \* Identify opportunities within your own organisation for different roles, including paid employment.

#### Employment

"Employing service users is not about 'hanging on' to clients or even providing a 'safe haven' for them to work in. It's about acknowledging and developing their talents and experiences and giving them a real chance to be part of a solution rather than a problem. Importantly, it's also about opening up the organisations that provide services to homeless people to a greater influence from those who have been homeless."

*Kevin Ireland, Executive Director, London Housing Foundation, 2009 GROW Business Case*

*"I've been involved with SUI projects with my supported housing provider for just over a year. It's broadened my horizons and boosted my confidence. I've been on several courses and learned a lot of IT and interaction skills. Before, I was worried that I'd never be able to get a decent job, because of my criminal record, making my depression go out of control. I've been facilitating meetings and client involvement forums - things I couldn't imagine doing before. This has opened doors for me to get a decent job; instead of mind-numbing factory and warehouse work, I can now think about jobs that I will enjoy. I really believe that SUI is a great benefit for both service user and service provider."*

*Kieran, service user*

## GROWING THEIR OWN: THAMES REACH

Thames Reach is a London-based charity that helps homeless and vulnerable people to find decent homes and lead fulfilling lives.

Over the past three years, Thames Reach has successfully changed its organisational culture to enable it to employ current and former service users across all teams.

Through the Giving Real Opportunities for Work (GROW) Project, Thames Reach has exceeded its target of 10% of its workforce having an experience of homelessness by 2007. Today, some 20% of the charity's staff have been homeless in the past.

Chief executive, Jeremy Swain, said: "It's time for homelessness agencies to 'walk the walk'. Employing service users demonstrates not only to them, but to everyone who comes into contact with our organisation that we mean business about creating opportunities for homeless people."



**Find out more at: [www.thamesreach.org.uk/what-we-do/user-employment](http://www.thamesreach.org.uk/what-we-do/user-employment)**



# Sample policies and good practice.



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## 6.1 Sample service user involvement policy

### SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Clients are at the heart of [organisation's] agenda for shaping and improving the delivery of its services. It will strive to ensure that clients are empowered and supported in all areas.

This policy statement draws on the key principles of involvement and key messages developed in partnership with clients, the strategic priorities of the business plan and overall strategy of the organisation. It will be reviewed annually in partnership with clients and links with the wider corporate work being undertaken to fully involve clients in the planning, monitoring and reviewing of services.

[Organisation] is committed to ensuring client involvement is both meaningful and successful and will make resources available to support the participation of clients throughout the organisation.

The aims of this policy are to:

- \* Ensure there is a consistent approach to client involvement across [organisation's] services
- \* Promote client involvement as an ongoing and integrated component of organisational activity
- \* Enable clients to have a key role in the process.

### Our vision

To embed client involvement at all levels of consultation, planning and decision making within the organisation. [Organisation] aims to ensure that involvement is conducted in a consistent, robust and meaningful way and strive to make client involvement a part of the culture.

All paid staff have a responsibility to ensure this policy is put into practice and adhered to.

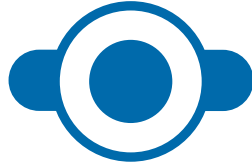
The [senior role e.g. deputy chief executive, head of operations] has overall responsibility to ensure this policy is adhered to.

The Client Involvement Lead will ensure that the Client Involvement Strategy is implemented across the organisation.

Service Managers will ensure that all staff are fully aware of this policy and the Client Involvement Strategy and its implementation at service level.

Service Managers will be responsible for identifying clients who wish to participate at the service's meetings.

Client Contact Workers will provide the link between clients and the client involvement lead. They will provide support to the clients to ensure they are able to participate in a way of their choice. Contact workers and volunteers will also be responsible for helping the client involvement lead to organise local clients meetings and ensuring that dates and minutes of any forums or meetings are distributed to clients and staff at their services.



## POLICY

**[Organisation] will benefit from a combination of client involvement methods to secure the involvement of as wide a group of clients as possible or as many different organisational levels as possible and will ensure clients will be consulted and involved in the following ways:**

### 1.1 Recruitment and selection of staff

[Organisation] has mechanisms in place to ensure clients are involved in every stage of the process of recruitment of new staff.

[Organisation] has a comprehensive training initiative to support clients to enable them to be part of the process.

### 1.2 Induction of new staff

[Organisation] will ensure that clients will always contribute to the induction programme and have developed a training package to provide skills for involvement in the induction and the delivery of training for staff.

### 1.3 Monitoring and audit of [Organisation] services

Clients will be involved in the monitoring and auditing of [Organisation] services to ensure compliance with set standards such as the Quality Assessment Framework.

Training will be provided to service users to enable them to be fully involved.

### 1.4 Client forums

Client forums will provide an opportunity for clients to be consulted on a wide range of issues and also to inform them of any developments, events, training or other participation opportunities.

### 1.5 Reviewing of [Organisation] policies

[Organisation] believes that clients play a vital role in shaping operational policies where applicable. Clients will be expected to be involved at every stage of policy formation, implementation and review through service user forums and/or local service user meetings.

### 1.6 Meetings

In order to achieve the above points, [Organisation] will ensure that specific meetings are in place at each service or corporately. Please see step 3 for further information.

### 1.7 Chairing meetings

Clients are encouraged to chair forum meetings and training is provided to enable those clients who may wish to chair a forum to have the skills and confidence to do so.



## 6.2 Sample terms of reference

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

These terms of reference describe the service user involvement group, who belongs to it and what it will do.

Service user group members will be trained to consult with other service users. This will enable the service user group to improve [specify name or type] services.

The service user group aims to:

- \* Give service users a voice
- \* Influence the planning of [specify name or type] services
- \* Offer a service user perspective to the planning, development and review of [specify name or type] services
- \* Develop effective communication with service users within [specify name or type] services
- \* Work in partnership with service providers to obtain access to service users and service user groups
- \* Collate service user views and feed back how their views have influenced decision making.

### Membership

Members will be representative of our client groups, and aim to be balanced in terms of gender and ethnic origin. We aim to include, e.g.:

- \* Ex-offenders and those at risk of offending
- \* Homeless people
- \* People with drug and alcohol problems
- \* People with mental health problems
- \* People with learning disabilities
- \* Older people

- \* Young people
- \* People with physical and/or sensory disability.

### Review of the terms of reference

The terms of reference and the work programme will be reviewed on an annual basis. The next review will take place by [specify month and year].





## 6.3 Sample project plan

### PROJECT PLAN:

#### Speak Out event

##### What

- \* An event to get service users' view of the service and ideas for improvements
- \* The event will include entertainment, complimentary therapies, information stands, etc.

##### Why

- \* The service is for the people who use it so it is important to hear from them what it is like to receive the service, what works and what does not work and get their ideas for improvements or other things we can do
- \* Our funders require us to involve service users

- \* We want the event to lead to getting service users more involved.

##### Who

- \* Current service users
- \* Senior member of staff (e.g. director of operations, service manager)
- \* Other staff (to be decided).

##### When

- \* Friday 20 October from 12.00 until 4.00pm (provisional date and time).

##### Where

- \* Pleasant venue, away from the service (to be arranged).

##### Estimated cost

Budget: Service user involvement and service evaluation budgets.

Tasks		Who	When by	Comments
<b>Convene a working group to plan and organise the event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Write a brief description of the working group:</li> <li>* Purpose</li> <li>* How often it will meet</li> <li>* How long the meetings will be</li> <li>* How long the group will exist</li> <li>* Information about payment (if any)</li> <li>* Information about reimbursement of expenses</li> <li>* What members of the group could get out of being involved.</li> </ul>	SUI lead	Before May team meeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Explain idea of event to colleagues at team meeting and give them description</li> <li>* Ask for 3 staff volunteers</li> <li>* Ask them to each recruit a service user to come on to the working group</li> <li>* Ask them to give the service users the description.</li> </ul>	SUI lead Staff	May Team meeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Set a date for the first working group meeting</li> <li>* Book meeting room.</li> </ul>	SUI lead	Beginning June	
<b>Pre first working group meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Send out meeting invitation and agenda</li> <li>* Get cash for expenses and cash/vouchers for payment (if any) for SUs coming to working group meeting</li> <li>* Organise refreshments for meeting.</li> </ul>	SUI lead	1-2 weeks before meeting	

Tasks		Who	When by	Comments
<b>First working group meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Check that everyone agrees date and time of Speak Out event</li> <li>* Decide the programme for the event</li> <li>* Decide who to invite to the event</li> <li>* List of tasks to be done (see below sections)</li> <li>* Allocate tasks to members of group</li> <li>* Decide how to evaluate the event</li> <li>* Set dates for working group meetings</li> <li>* Pay fee to SU members of the group and reimburse expense.</li> </ul>	Working group       SUI Lead	       1 July	
<b>Find venue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Visit venues and find out about facilities and accessibility</li> <li>* Get prices and availability</li> <li>* Report back to working group for decision</li> <li>* Book venue.</li> </ul>	Working group	First two weeks July    14 July	
<b>Food and refreshments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Find caterers (if not provided by venue)</li> <li>* Get prices</li> <li>* Report back to working group for decision</li> <li>* Book.</li> </ul>	Working group	By end July	
<b>Contributors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Find and book contributors who give will their time free – music, therapies, etc.</li> <li>* Invite someone to chair/ host the event</li> <li>* Brief contributors</li> <li>* Organise thank-you gifts.</li> </ul>	Working group	By end July	
<b>Design and produce the publicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Make sure service user members of the working group are involved in the content and design.</li> </ul>	SUI lead	Last week August	

Tasks		Who	When by	Comments
<b>Invite participants and publicise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Book service manager/ director of operations</li> <li>* Invite staff</li> <li>* Ask all members of staff to hand out publicity, invite service users and encourage them to attend</li> <li>* Distribute publicity in places where service users most likely to see it</li> <li>* Give contact person in case service users need transport arranged.</li> </ul>	Working group staff	By end July  From mid-September	
<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Design evaluation forms for end of event – ask service users what questions should be on them</li> <li>* Record the process of organising the event – what went, well, what not so well</li> <li>* Decide on how to evaluate impact of event on staff, service delivery, service users.</li> </ul>	Working group	By end September	
<b>Other preparations for the day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Get form ready so participants can sign up for future SUI</li> <li>* Ask someone to take notes on the day – brief them</li> <li>* Ask someone to run an icebreaker on day</li> <li>* Purchase name badges and pens so participants can put their name on themselves when they arrive</li> <li>* Flip chart pens, pads, etc., if not supplied by venue</li> <li>* Blu-Tack, Post-it notes, etc.</li> <li>* Organise cash and forms to reimburse expenses</li> <li>* Check transport arranged/booked.</li> </ul>	Working group          SUI lead	First week October	

Tasks		Who	When by	Comments
<b>Collecting views at event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Flip charts around the room with a question on each. Decide questions</li> <li>* Design questionnaire to complete on the day</li> <li>* Split participants into small groups – decide questions to be asked in the group sessions.</li> </ul>	Working group	Beginning October	
<b>On the day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Make sure refreshments are ready for participants arrival</li> <li>* Have someone to greet people at the door</li> <li>* Get room ready</li> <li>* Table for name badges, etc., near door</li> <li>* Put flipcharts up, check plenty of pens, Post-it notes, etc.</li> <li>* Make sure the seating is arranged in a suitable way</li> <li>* Lighting and temperature check</li> <li>* Contributors set up</li> <li>* Find out housekeeping arrangements – toilet, smoking area, fire exits, etc.</li> <li>* Brief chair so they can inform participants at start of event</li> <li>* Check note taker has what they need</li> <li>* Ask someone to collect flipcharts up at the end.</li> </ul>	Working group	20 October	
<b>After the event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Collate the information, analyse it and write a report</li> <li>* Get responses from managers</li> <li>* Add feedback to the report and disseminate</li> <li>* Make sure that all service users get a copy and are thanked for attending</li> <li>* As soon as possible organise another opportunity to involve the service users who expressed an interest at the event.</li> </ul>	Working group     SUI lead	1 November  14 November 20 November  21 November  December	

## 6.4 Sample payment and reimbursement policy

### PAYMENT AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

#### Introduction

The [organisation] is committed to involving people who have personal experience of [eg the criminal justice system, mental health problems, drug and alcohol problems and homelessness]. The [organisation] believes that the expertise service users have gained from their experiences must be used to influence policy and the commissioning, design and delivery of health, social care and criminal justice system (CJS) services.

Government policy actively encourages the involvement of service users in the development and delivery of services [name some policies, etc.].

[Organisation] wants to demonstrate how much we value the contribution of service users by offering them payment for their involvement and providing out of pocket expenses. This policy sets out how [organisation] will do this.

#### Principles

The principles of good practice for payment and reimbursement of service users are:

1. 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
2. [Organisation] and service users will discuss and agree on the terms of involvement prior to committing to it

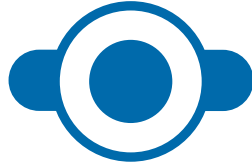
3. Service users are not to be left out of pocket or put at risk of being financially worse off because of their involvement
4. Service users are paid according to open and consistent criteria that take into account the level of involvement, the type of work and the skills and expertise required
5. Payment and reimbursement of expenses are made promptly and must not needlessly create barriers that deter people from being involved
6. Those involved who are in receipt of benefits are signposted to information and independent support/advice to help prevent them from breaching the benefit rules
7. Payment and reimbursement policy and practice is regularly monitored and evaluated
8. Staff are aware of the payment and reimbursement policy and follow it in practice.

That each service user:

1. Understands and agrees to the terms and conditions upon which they get involved
2. Is aware of what is expected of them and what support they are entitled to
3. Uses the most cost effective travel available
4. Is responsible for seeking advice and keeping to the benefit conditions required by Jobcentre Plus and where relevant declaring earnings to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

#### Paid involvement

[Organisation] will offer payment for specific roles to service users who have made an agreement with [organisation] about getting involved on a paid basis. Payment will not be given to



service users who choose to attend a meeting or event they have not been specifically asked to attend or to contribute to by [organisation].

### Rights

Involvement that is intermittent, i.e. not every week, does not usually equate to paid employment. However under employment law there are rights that service users are entitled to despite not being an employee. These are:

- \* The national minimum wage applies.
- \* They have the right to:
  - protection against unfair discrimination
  - health and safety protection
  - working time rights (including breaks, holidays, holiday pay and a limit on the working week) regardless as to whether they claim benefits or not.

### Paid involvement and benefits

Service users will not be asked to commit to being paid for their involvement until they understand how it may affect their benefits so that they can make an informed decision. Service users in receipt of benefits must seek advice about their own individual circumstances. [Organisation] cannot offer this advice. [Organisation] has subscribed to [a free advice service such as the Milton Keynes CAB Involvement Helpline] so that service users can individually get free, independent, confidential advice and support about how undertaking paid involvement may affect their benefits. Service users will be made aware that they are ultimately responsible for keeping within the conditions of their benefit entitlements and that this is not [organisation's] responsibility.

[Organisation] will not identify any individual service user to Jobcentre Plus without their express permission and agreement about what information will be shared with Jobcentre Plus.

### Tax

[Organisation] will ask service users to complete a P46 (if they do not have a P45). This will allow HMRC to issue the correct tax code so that [organisation] can pay people who are on benefits without deducting any tax. Other service users who are not on benefits and have another income, or may have taxable benefits will have tax deducted according to the tax code that HMRC allocates.

[Organisation] will not identify any service user to HMRC without their express permission.

### Payment

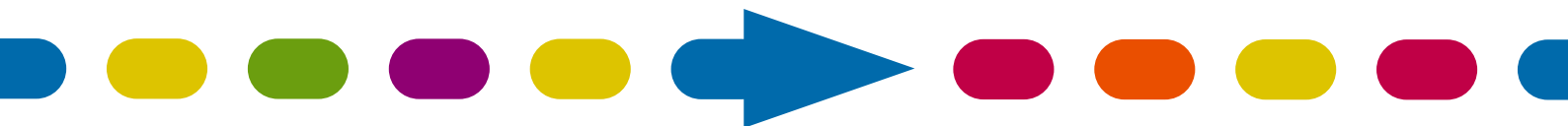
[Organisation's] preferred method of paying service users is through BACS (directly into each person's bank account). For service users who prefer not to receive payment through BACS, payment by cheque, voucher or in cash can be arranged. Service users will be asked to complete a payment receipt form. This will be used for auditing purposes.

### Payment rates

[Organisation] will pay service users for their involvement according to the type of activity, the skills and experience, the complexity and responsibility that the activity demands. [Hourly, per day, per session, per activity rates for each role]

### Voluntary involvement

[Organisation] will offer the option of involvement on a voluntary basis as some members may prefer to offer their skills and time as unpaid.



Service users who receive benefits can do voluntary work or involvement for non-profit making organisations without affecting their benefits.

Service users on benefits who are offered paid involvement but who decline the payment may be treated by Jobcentre Plus as if they had received the money, ie notional earnings. Notional earnings are treated as actual earnings and would be deducted from their benefits. To avoid this each individual service user has to choose to be either fully voluntary or fully paid. [Organisation] will provide a letter to those involved on a voluntary basis that offers the opportunity of voluntary involvement that they can provide to Jobcentre Plus.

Members who receive incapacity-based benefits will not be expected to be involved for more than 15 hours a week to avoid the risk of triggering a review of incapacity by Jobcentre Plus.

### One-off involvement

When people get involved with an organisation on a one-off occasion, eg in a focus group, they can be given a one-off payment with no effect on their benefits provided they have not been involved with the same organisation on a paid basis. One-off payments are not taxable and therefore do not have to be declared to HMRC. Anyone who is involved with [organisation] on a one-off occasion will be provided with a letter of thanks to show Jobcentre Plus if necessary.

Service users who have already been involved with [organisation] on a paid basis will not be given a one-off payment by [organisation] as this may be treated as earnings and may take them over the amount they are allowed to receive.

Service users who have been involved with [organisation] on a paid basis can receive a one-off payment from another organisation they have had a one-off involvement with.

### Reimbursement of expenses

Service users will be paid expenses when they have been invited to take part in involvement activities irrespective of whether they are being paid or not. For instance service users participating in training opportunities will not be paid but will receive travel expenses.

Only actual expenses incurred by being involved will be reimbursed to service users. Set sums of money whether or not expenses have been incurred will not be paid nor will expenses be rounded up: under benefit rules this would be regarded as notional earnings.

[Organisation] will aim to pay expenses in advance, e.g. provide travel tickets, provide cash, and/or reimburse expenses in cash on the day they are incurred, eg taxi fares. Service users must always provide receipts or other proof of expenditure. The relevant expenses form must be completed. These will be used for auditing purposes.

### Travel

For service users doing paid involvement, reimbursement of travel between home and 'work' may be treated as earnings unless their home is the nominated place of work. This may affect their benefits. Therefore travel tickets, travel cards etc will be provided to them by [organisation] in advance.

For service users doing voluntary involvement work, travel expenses between home and work are not treated as earnings.

Service users will receive actual travel costs.





### Subsistence

Food and drink will be offered at all meetings. If meals are required otherwise, e.g. when staying overnight, [organisation] will pay for these directly where possible. Overnight accommodation will be booked and paid for in advance by [organisation] when it is agreed with the [member of staff responsible] as necessary to enable a service user's participation.

### Administrative

Service users will be reimbursed with actual expenses such as phone, stationery, postage, photocopying, used for their role but this must be negotiated in advance with the [member of staff responsible].

### Other costs

Individual service users may incur other costs such as childcare, interpreter, signer, etc. These costs must be discussed with the [member of staff responsible] in advance of involvement.

## 6.5 Sample induction briefing checklist

### INDUCTION BRIEFING CHECKLIST

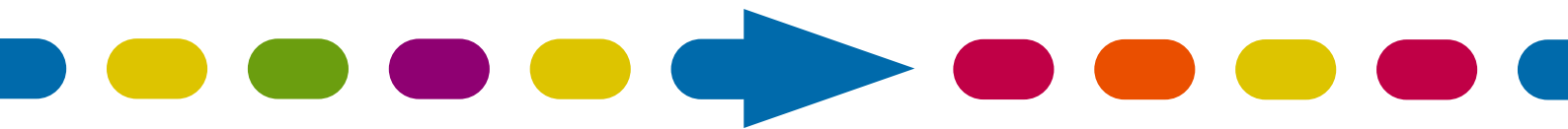
Yes	No	N/A	Checklist
			[Organisation] has given me information about involvement
			[Organisation] has allowed time for me to think about my options
			[Organisation] has given me contact details for [responsible member of staff] if I have any queries or concerns about my involvement
			I am clear about the role(s) and what it involves
			A written copy of [organisation's] payment and reimbursement policy has been provided
			I know how and when I will receive my expenses
			I know I can get my train tickets booked and who to ask
			I have considered whether I want to be paid or to be a volunteer
			I have been told how much I can be paid for each involvement opportunity
			I have been provided with the information and contact number of where I can get advice about payment and benefits
			I am aware it is my responsibility to tell Jobcentre Plus about my earnings either now or before the earnings stop
			I am aware it is my responsibility not to infringe benefit rules
			I have been asked to complete a P46 form
			I have completed a P46 form
			I am not self-employed and [organisation] may deduct tax and NI contributions depending on my tax code and level of earnings
			I am self-employed and am responsible for my own tax and NI contributions



## 6.6 Good practice: Tips for meetings

### TIPS FOR MEETINGS

1. Provide as much information as possible – dates, times (including approximate length of meeting), commitment, who else will attend, purpose. Involve the whole staff team by asking them to publicise the meeting to individual service users during keyworking sessions and provide support if service users want to attend, e.g. help work out transport (if necessary), remind them the day before, etc. – whatever approach helps the individual person.
2. Try to get a nice venue (if not in the service) that can be easily accessed by public transport.
3. Dates and times – you could send out a brief questionnaire describing the purpose of the meetings and asking people to tick the time of day, day of the week, week of the month that they would prefer and/or ask team members to complete them with individual service users. Go with what suits the majority.
4. Don't start the meeting too early – 10.30 at earliest, but preferably later (ask members). Have refreshments/lunch available on arrival.
5. Documents should be checked for ease of reading. Where there is jargon a glossary should be provided.
6. Paperwork should be kept to a minimum and provided in advance of the meetings. Do the minutes in bullet-point form summing up the main points. Use colour to make them look more attractive and larger print, e.g. Arial 12 point. Alternatively minutes could be presented in a 'newsletter' format.
7. Plan in something else as well as the business of the meeting, e.g. speaker, Q&A session, social opportunity, talent/skills exchange.
8. Keep the agenda manageable. If agenda is full, prioritise things that have a timescale/ deadline and defer others to another meeting. Present the agenda in an attractive way e.g. colour, graphics or a border, use larger print.
9. Encourage willing service users to take on roles. Describe the roles and the commitment. Provide development opportunities if they want to learn new skills.
10. Do an icebreaker at beginning of each meeting and a closing exercise, e.g. a round asking how they feel, what they liked/disliked etc. Choose ones that are fun and allow people to get to know a bit about each other.
11. Plan for regular breaks (e.g. every 45 minutes)
12. Do some discussion in groups or pairs rather than everyone always sitting around a table, particularly if there are more than 8 people present.
13. Use a flipchart to record main points/decisions throughout the meeting so everyone can keep track.
14. Sum up decisions/actions at end of the meeting and help people prepare their feedback if they are expected to give it to other service users/their service.
15. Ask service users what they want on the next agenda.
16. Get more confident service users to mentor/buddy others and/or publicise/talk about meetings etc.
17. For those people interested give them a task to do between meetings.
18. Keep an eye out for service users feeling excluded. Find out why they feel that way and ask them what would help them feel included.
19. Always provide feedback/progress about any issues/ ideas/suggestions/changes at the following meeting. Even when nothing has happened, say so and why.
20. Evaluate the meetings – what worked, what didn't, what could be improved. Ask service users for their opinions.

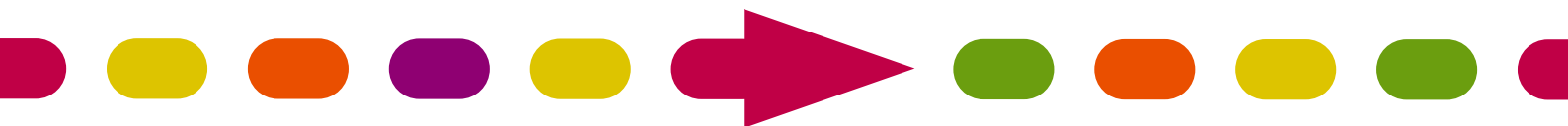


# Resources.



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### Revolving Doors Agency

Revolving Doors Agency (RDA) is a charity working across England to change systems and improve services for people with multiple problems, including poor mental health, who are in repeat contact with the criminal justice system. RDA has a national service user forum and a young people's forum (for those aged 18-28 years).

🏠 *The Turnmill, Units 28 & 29, 63 Clerkenwell Road  
London EC1M 5NP*

☎ 020 7253 4038

✉ [admin@revolving-doors.org.uk](mailto:admin@revolving-doors.org.uk)

🌐 [www.revolving-doors.org.uk](http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk)



### Clinks

Clinks is a national organisation that supports the work that voluntary and community sector organisations undertake within the criminal justice system of England and Wales. Clinks' vision is of a vibrant and independent voluntary and community sector working with informed and engaged communities to enable the rehabilitation of offenders for the benefit of society.

🏠 *25 Micklegate, York YO1 6JH*

☎ 01904 673970

✉ [info@clinks.org](mailto:info@clinks.org)

🌐 [www.clinks.org](http://www.clinks.org)



Clinks wishes to thank Judy Scott, independent consultant, [www.judyscottconsult.com](http://www.judyscottconsult.com), for the guidance on benefits and tax law as set out in sections 5.5 and 6.4 that was originally published by the National Institute for Mental Health in England, Care Services Improvement Partnership and by the Mental Health Research Network [www.mhrn.info](http://www.mhrn.info).

## 7.1 Organisations

### Centre for Mental Health (formerly Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health)

The Centre carries out research, policy work and analysis to improve practice and influence policy in mental health and in public services.

🏠 *134-138 Borough High Street, London SE1 1LB*

☎ 020 7827 8300

✉ [contact@centreformentalhealth.org.uk](mailto:contact@centreformentalhealth.org.uk)

🌐 [www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk)

### MEAM – Making Every Adult Matter

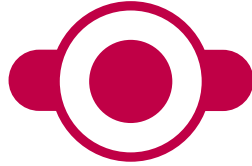
A coalition of four national charities – Clinks, DrugScope, Homeless Link and Mind – formed to influence policy and services for adults with multiple needs and exclusions.

🏠 *50 Hoxton Square, London N1 6PB*

☎ 07810 867190

✉ [oliver.hilbery@meam.org.uk](mailto:oliver.hilbery@meam.org.uk)

🌐 [www.meam.org.uk](http://www.meam.org.uk)



### P3

P3 offers a range of award-winning services for people facing social exclusion, involving service users in design and delivery.

📍 Gladstone House, Market Street, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 5RB

☎ 0115 9306661

✉ info@p3charity.org

🌐 www.p3charity.com

### Rethink

Mental health charity whose service user involvement initiatives include the Lived Experience Advisory Panel, set up with Revolving Doors Agency to discuss and advise on the implementation of the government's strategy on mental health in the criminal justice system.

📍 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP

☎ 0845 4560455

✉ info@rethink.org

🌐 www.rethink.org

### Thames Reach

London-based charity behind the GROW (Giving Real Opportunities for Work) project, which supports the employment of former service users.

📍 Gem House, 122-126 Backchurch Lane, London E1 1ND

☎ 020 7702 4260

✉ enquiries@thamesreach.org.uk

🌐 www.thamesreach.org.uk

### Together

A national charity working alongside people with mental health issues on their journey to lead an independent life. Initiatives include a service user directorate to give people with experience of using mental health services a voice at local, regional and national level.

📍 12 Old Street, London EC1V 9BE

☎ 020 7780 7300

✉ contact-us@together-uk.org

🌐 www.together-uk.org

### Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Alliance

The Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Alliance is a broad coalition of organisations and individuals working to improve the life chances of young people who are at risk of committing crime and falling into the criminal justice system.

📍 Barrow Cadbury Trust, Kean House, 6 Kean Street, London WC2B 4AS

☎ 020 7632 9060

✉ info@t2a.org.uk

🌐 www.t2a.org.uk

### User Voice

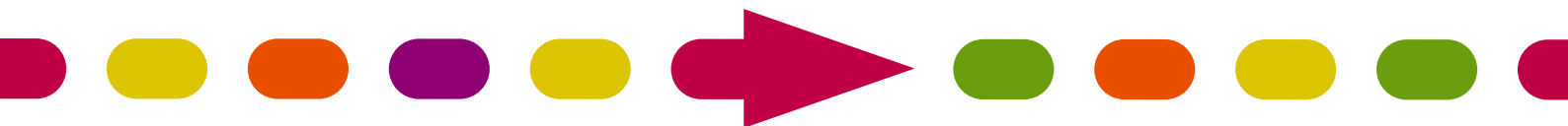
Established by ex-offenders this charity seeks to engage those with past experiences of the criminal justice system at the heart of new policy and new practices that affect offenders and their families.

📍 19 Buckingham Street, London WC2N 6EF

☎ 020 7968 2740

✉ info@uservice.org

🌐 www.uservice.org



## 7.2 Policy

### **Supporting People**

The Supporting People programme provides housing-related support to vulnerable people to enable them to live more independently. Services aim to prevent individuals experiencing crises and requiring more costly service intervention.

🌐 [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

### **Improving Health, Supporting Justice**

Cross-departmental initiative to improve health and social care services for people in the criminal justice system in England.

[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

### **Duty to involve**

Public sector bodies, including local authorities and the police, are subject to a 'duty to involve' local people in service provision, include health and social care services.

🌐 [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

## 7.3 Publications

### **Engaging the perspectives of offenders and former offenders: a code of practice (Clinks, 2009)**

Best practice recommendations on involving service users with experience of the criminal justice system. Includes sections on equality and respect; organisational management; reward, recognition and payment and training and support.

🌐 [www.clinks.org](http://www.clinks.org)

### **Unlocking Potential (Clinks, 2008)**

A guide to the benefits of involving service users in the criminal justice system.

🌐 [www.clinks.org](http://www.clinks.org)

### **Eight principles for involving service users and carers (General Social Care Council, Commission for Social Care Inspection, Skills for Care and the Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2006)**

Best practice guidance on how to involve service users in social care services.

🌐 [www.gsccl.org.uk](http://www.gsccl.org.uk)

### **A good practice guide to valuing, respecting and supporting service-user activity (Together, 2006)**

Guidance for organisations involving people with mental health issues in their services.

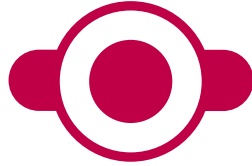
🌐 [www.together-uk.org](http://www.together-uk.org)

### **Brief guide to involving mental health service users in research (Service User Research Group for England, 2006)**

An involvement toolkit produced by SURGE, the service user research group for England and service user arm of Mental Health Research Network.

🌐 [www.mhrn.info](http://www.mhrn.info)





### **Service user involvement in homelessness (Shelter/Changing Homelessness in Practice, 2005)**

Practical guidance on involving users of homelessness services.

🌐 [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk)

### **Lessons learned: some approaches, tools and good practice for improving drug user involvement (GLADA, 2005)**

Best practice based on project work undertaken in three London boroughs as part of the London Drug User Involvement Project.

🌐 <http://static.london.gov.uk>

### **Reward and recognition: the principles and practice of service user payment and reimbursement in health and social care (Department of Health, 2006)**

A guide for service providers, service users and carers on how to pay and reimburse service user involvement.

🌐 [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

### **Service user involvement (nfpSynergy, 2010)**

Research into how voluntary and community organisations can benefit from involving service users in their activities.

🌐 [www.nfpsynergy.net](http://www.nfpsynergy.net)

## **7.4 Websites**

### **Service User Involvement**

This Supporting People online guide to service user involvement includes best practice examples from around the UK, practical help and downloadable resources.

🌐 [www.serviceuserinvolvement.co.uk](http://www.serviceuserinvolvement.co.uk)

### **Invest in Engagement**

Department of Health-funded online resource for NHS commissioners and providers with an interest in patient and public engagement. Includes research sources, case studies, links to policy information and guidance.

🌐 [www.investinengagement.info](http://www.investinengagement.info)

### **Well Scrambled**

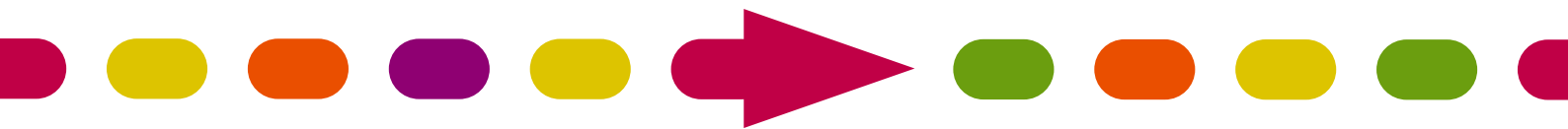
Website run by users of mental health services in Shropshire and Telford and their carers to promote their involvement.

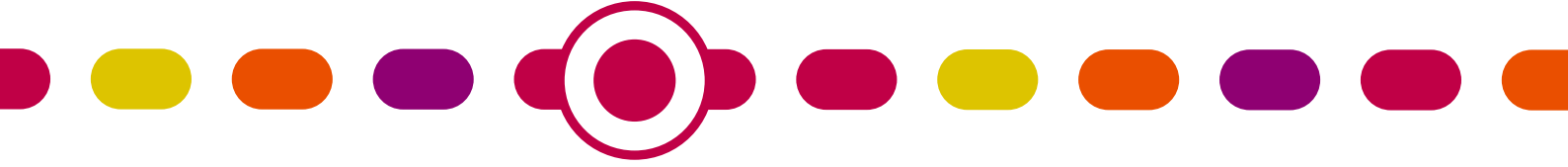
🌐 [www.well-scrambled.co.uk](http://www.well-scrambled.co.uk)

### **User involvement**

Website of the User Involvement in Voluntary Organisations Shared Learning Group, which includes case studies and an extensive resource section with links to free publications.

🌐 [www.user-involvement.org.uk](http://www.user-involvement.org.uk)







Clinks  
25 Micklegate  
York YO1 6JH  
01904 673970  
[info@clinks.org](mailto:info@clinks.org)  
[www.clinks.org](http://www.clinks.org)

Clinks is a registered charity no. 1074546 and a company limited by guarantee registered in England no. 3562176.

Revolving Doors Agency  
The Turnmill  
Units 28 & 29, 63 Clerkenwell Road  
London EC1M 5NP  
020 7253 4038  
[admin@revolving-doors.org.uk](mailto:admin@revolving-doors.org.uk)  
[www.revolving-doors.org.uk](http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk)

Revolving Doors Agency is a company limited by guarantee registered in England no. 02845452 and a charity no. 1030846