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Section 1
Purpose
Rationale

The development of the Framework of Involvement is underpinned by the National Drug Strategy 2009-2016 and its focus on the development of “Service User Involvement and Empowerment “across a number of actions and objectives. The NDS itself contains within it five key areas in relation to service user involvement, they are as follows:

1. Service User Involvement/Input to improve clinical governance
2. The involvement of Service Users in their own care (NDRIC)
3. Service User involvement in strategy and policy development (Service User Fora)
4. Involving Service Users in the development of peer education and prevention initiatives
5. Service user involvement as a measure of quality standards (QUADS)

This framework has been developed with the assistance of a literature review on international best practice by the Health Research Board, and consultations with the HSE, Mental Health Commission, HIQUA and Involving Expertise (Glasgow Homeless Network). The common theme that emerged from this consultation and review of evidence based literature was that if Service User Involvement and ultimately the development of Service User Fora are to be meaningful in terms of “achieving change”, then the opportunities for change must be facilitated and incorporated within the operational culture of our services and coordinating structures. Opportunities for involvement and empowerment are essential throughout the different levels of service provision and strategic decision making.

The framework is based on the following premise /points

- For Service User Involvement to be meaningful it must provide opportunities for involvement and change at all levels i.e. Individual, Service and Strategic Levels
- Service Users are “stakeholders” in our services, and their views are essential to the provision and development of services, policies and strategies
- Service User Involvement ultimately means “change” and therefore it needs to have measurable “outcomes” and clearly defined “processes” and “roles” for Service Users
- The development of “Fora” in the absence of opportunities for involvement in the services they receive, may initially lead to an increase in Service User Activity without a real tangible outcomes for service users.
- Once the framework has been put in place the development of Regional Service User Fora will involve Service Users, who through involvement in their own services have developed the necessary skills, experience, willingness and support to become involved in and take part in Regional/National Policy Implementation and Strategic Decision making.
Levels of Involvement within the Regional strategy

Individual level
This entails the involvement of individuals in their own care. Service Users will actively participate in their own care, treatment and rehabilitation.

Service level
This entails Service Users providing suggestions about how to improve the service they are attending, participating in activities to facilitate feedback and discussion on satisfaction in individual services. This may include but not be limited to, attending service user support groups, talking with new service users about treatment and participating in events to offer views, suggestions on improvement in services, setting priorities and addressing gaps and unmet needs in the service that they attend.

Strategic level
This entails participation in partnership with all other agencies and the Regional Drug Task Force and relevant sub-groups. This involves participation and consultation at a wider strategic level of planning, reviewing and developing of services.

Service User Involvement Strategy will be based on the following premise/points
- For Service User Involvement to be meaningful it must first take place at service level
- Service User Involvement ultimately involves a change in culture where Service Users are perceived as stakeholders in service provision and development from within our services/structures
- Once this cultural shift has taken place Service Users who will have developed the necessary skills, experience, willingness and support through the opportunities in and with the services they have received will become involved in a forum of Service Users in their region and take part in Regional Policy Implementation and Strategic Decision making

The Role of services

Individual level
Services have a key role in consulting with service users on an individual level about the care and treatment they have received. It is expected that this direct involvement will be concerned with decisions of treatment, care plan and goals of care and or treatment and progress in treatment. This type of involvement will usually be between the service user and the individual’s key worker and/or practitioner. Key workers have a role in inducting service users to the service on first contact and for new episodes.

Service level
Each service has a role in seeking the views of service users and should draw up its own action plan and strategy for involving service users in day to day issues of the service. This includes issues relating to the service only. It is outside the remit of this toolkit to prescribe to services how they should involve service users in their own service delivery issues.
It is hoped that this will include some of the following issues, such as consulting with service users on

- The therapeutic programme
- Open times
- Waiting times
- Information for service users
- Refurbishment
- Service/organisational changes
- The care and treatment they receive
- Unmet needs

This can be achieved through a variety of methods such as questionnaires, suggestion boxes, and regular meetings and can be on a one-to-one and/or group basis. Each service should nominate one staff member who leads on Service User Involvement issues on behalf of the service. Ideally each service should identify a person to provide support to the lead person and to co facilitate at meetings.

Services have a role in engaging service users in participation at a service level, such as seeking views on appropriate information. This could be easily viewed by all if it is displayed on notice boards. All service users should be invited to attend service user groups held within each service. At a service level, staff may wish to involve service users in their wider organisational issues. This would be as invited by their organisation and therefore if payment agreed and / or travel expenses paid, this is an arrangement between the service and the service user. Services should also provide information to service users about other lobbying groups for service users as requested, such as UISCE and Citywide

**Strategic level**

Each service has a role in preparing an annual plan on service user involvement and reporting on activities. The services also have an important role in supporting Service User Representatives who are aligned with their service and who are participating in the strategic work. This involves identifying new recruits to service user representative roles, supporting and guiding service user representatives, monitoring the activities of the Service User Representatives and supporting and facilitating them to participate in activities. Services have a role in identifying individuals within services who might wish to be considered as Service User Reps and participate in the wider strategic issues and represent the service at the County /Regional Service User Forum. It is recommended that each service identify two service users who would be interested in this type of consultative work to be nominated or put themselves forward as SU Reps. The two SU Reps can then share the workload of meetings, groups and activities, so that one person is not overburdened. The service mentor will be responsible for supporting these individuals and managing which person undertakes which activities based on availability, areas of interest and skills/experiences. It may be appropriate for both Service User Reps to attend certain core activities and meetings. The service lead has a role in informing other staff in their service about Service User Reps and the remit of their role.

**Service Users**

**Types of involvement**

There are a variety of ways that service users can get involved.
**Individual level** - All individuals attending services should participate in discussion about their own care within the service they attend. This is part of routine treatment and good practice. Individuals will be invited to participate in this way. Services should provide service users with the opportunity to provide constructive feedback on both positive and negative experiences of attending the service.

**Service level** - Each service will also encourage activities and processes for inviting service users to comment about the services they provide, such as opening times, types of groups, furnishings etc. Individuals will be invited to participate in this way (service level) if they choose. This is also part of routine activities, and individuals choose to participate if they wish. This may include giving ideas about what information is required to be placed on the notice board and keeping it updated.

**Strategic level** - Individuals who are currently receiving treatment or who have been in treatment, who wish to contribute to the wider strategic issues, such as attending sector wide meetings such as the SERDTF/SRDTF. At a strategic level, service users will be participating with service providers and planners to review and plan the direction of services. This may include a number of agreed activities.

Laying the Foundation for Participation and Involvement at Service and Strategic Level

Nationally and regionally we have begun the process of implementing the QUADS quality system, the NDRIC Process and the implementation of Action 42 of the National Drug Strategy 2009-2016. Service user participation and continuous improvement are integral to these processes. The driver of all these systems is service user satisfaction. Focusing your planning, development and delivery on your service users’ needs and preferences is essential to delivering effective services. Where improvement strategies are directed by service users’ needs and preferences, the service becomes increasingly responsive and effective, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.

Building an organisational culture and environment that supports and encourages meaningful participation can present a challenge for Services and Project Staff. The SERDTF/SRDTF recognises that many services already have effective engagement and participation practices and active partnerships with service users. This section of the manual has been designed to provide you with a conceptual framework and to assist you to reflect on the ways you engage service users and enable participation, and what you have learnt from your experiences.

As can be seen from this manual there are a range of ways to engage service users and enable them to participate in service planning, development and delivery, from formal participation (e.g. membership on the board of management, surveys) to informal methods of communication and relationship building (i.e. day-to-day interaction with service users). The Snapshot Exercise provides the opportunity to capture both your formal and your informal participation strategies and activities. The NDRIC Process and QUADS Quality Standards contain within them the key principles of service user participation. In order for Service User Involvement to be meaningful it must equal change.

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1. ICDP/Croydon DAAT (2005) Involving Service Users Toolkit pg. 10, 12, 13, 14 (St. George's, University London)
achieve this, each service needs to create an environment for participation. While there are many ways to create such an environment, a framework has been developed for services and task forces based on best practices.

**Implementation framework based on best practice**

Based on the findings of the “*Literature Review on Service User Involvement within the Irish Health Service 2008*” McEvoy, Keenaghan & Murray (2008, pg6) this framework will ensure that;

1. There is a “culture of involvement”, and it is not simply a tokenistic gesture or a “top down” approach. The framework of participation will describe the process of involvement from a lower level of informing through strands of increasing levels of empowerment for the service user.

2. A strategic approach is adopted across the whole organisation with strong leadership. Acknowledging that Service user Involvement is a process for the service and service user, a strategic approach to be adopted which will enable a phased development of service user empowerment and the development of a culture of involvement.

The 4 phases will be

- **Area 1** - Exchange and Provision of Information
- **Area 2** - Consultation and Involvement
- **Area 3** - Planning, Development and Improvements of Service
- **Area 4** - Strategic and Policy Development

3. There is both Community and Organisational development. This will involve the development of Service User forums within funded projects and at Regional Drug Task Force level.

4. Partnerships are formed with other local agencies. Once agreed the strategy will involve funded projects of the task force areas. This process will be monitored, evaluated and developed through the Taskforce.

5. No single approached or technique is taken to constitute service user involvement. In line with the recommendations the provision of different involvement opportunities described in the 4 areas will ensure that all service users have a chance to participate in involvement strategies.

6. Various techniques can be used, chosen according to the purpose of the initiative. Each area of involvement carries with it examples of the type of involvement techniques used to achieve the desired outcome. It is not intended as a prescriptive list but more of a guide for projects and services to implement each area.

7. The resource implications of involvement are acknowledged. Training will be a necessary part of the strategy.

8. There are tangible gains from participating and these are communicated. The process will be monitored, with clear and tangible outcomes.
9. Communication mechanisms are set up to ensure regular feedback in accessible format. This process will be assisted by the HRB and include various means of communication, from suggestion forms to grant aid agreements/service level agreements.

10. Involvement strategies are evaluated and the process is one of continuous learning and dissemination. The use of evaluation measures e.g. Quality Assessment Framework can be adapted or developed as part of the process. The phased implementation of each area of involvement also lends itself to a process of learning, review and evaluation.
Four Areas of Involvement

Area 1 Exchange & Provision of Information

Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Information Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Exit questionnaires,</td>
<td>• Service user handbooks or information packs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regular service user satisfaction surveys and</td>
<td>• Regular newsletters which in some cases are written and edited by service users,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of ideas/suggestions cards.</td>
<td>• Distribution of minutes of project meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Training for Staff on user involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Service User Involvement Notice Boards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes for Service Providers

- Increased Legitimacy and credibility
- Improved public perception and confidence
- Enhanced communication, improved performance and effectiveness.
- Improved health outcomes

Outcomes for Service Users

- Reduction of anxiety
- Empowerment
- Maintain motivation
- Understanding their treatment, its benefits, and side effects;
- Better able to access the help they need
- Knowing their rights

Area 2 Consultation and Involvement

Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open forums</td>
<td>• Service user representatives attending management committee meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion groups</td>
<td>• Service user conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>• Opportunities for Volunteering in the service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups,</td>
<td>• Service users work in partnership with the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers’ meetings or walkabouts</td>
<td>• Involvement in developing Care plans (NDRIC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes for Service Providers

• More likelihood that service users will comply with treatment and care plans
• More effective partnerships of care between service users, carers and professionals
• Utilising the experience of service users to promote services directly to other service users, and ease transition into and between services

Outcomes for Service Users

• The acknowledgement of service user’s Perspective
• Being better able to discuss their circumstances and appropriate treatment/support on a level footing with professionals
• Increase in Confidence and self-esteem
• Better understanding of the services that they use
• promote a sense of belonging and social inclusion

Area 3 Planning, Development and Improvement of Services

Examples

| • Planning and development of the service, | • Evaluating the scope and quality of local provision |
| • Policy development. | • Service User Steering Group |
| • Staff training and recruitment | • Service users co-facilitating training courses for staff |

Outcomes for Service Providers

• Better targeted services based on identified needs
• Ensures that services reflect needs and wishes of the people who use them and creates ownership if the involvement initiatives are sustained by action.
• Service users’ views can contribute to the verification of service performance at service reviews
• The increased likelihood of project success and acceptance

Outcomes for Service Users

• The ability to acquire new skills and further knowledge
• The chance to apply the knowledge and experience gained from having been through the service, and overcoming many of the difficulties caused by substance misuse problems
### Area 4 Strategic and Policy Development

#### Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service User Forums</th>
<th>Service users influencing decisions about services and funding at both operational and strategic levels, at regional and national forums.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service User Advocacy</td>
<td>Service users are involved in the development of support services and regional strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for Service Users on strategic development and policy implementation</td>
<td>Service users are appointed to serve on the sub committees of the regional and county structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of Service Users in Peer research initiatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Outcomes for Service Providers

- Improved and more relevant policies to address health inequalities
- The anticipation of problems during planning
- Better response to health inequalities
- Reduced complaints
- Mutual commitment to support and community development
- Equitable and inclusive services that helped to address social exclusion and poverty

#### Outcomes for Service Users

- Service Users have a communication pathway to national decision makers – government
- Makes service users part of one group, so that all the different groups can work as one team
- Service Users learn from other organisations about good practice. And about bad practice.
- Knowledge of service users can be developed and fed into mainstream policy, practice and debates
The 3 Steps to Implementing the Framework
This section provides a guide for implementing the Framework that includes three generic steps –

**Step (1) Engagement, Participation**
In this step engagement can be seen as implementation of
- Area 1 Information Provision and Exchange and;
- Area 2 Consultation and Involvement.
The engagement process is constant throughout all service user activity.

**Step (2) Service Planning**
This step will assist with the implementation of;
- Area 3 Planning, Development and Improvements of Service

**Step (3) Service Development and Delivery**
This step will assist with the implementation of;
- Area 4 Strategy and Policy Debate
Activity 1
Definitions

**Service User**
The people who currently use the services, and for whom the service has been created for.

**Empowerment**
The enabling of individuals to exercise their rights, and to achieve their potential and aspirations. This is the principle behind and intended outcome of involvement.

**Service User Activity**
This is any activity that the service user undertakes within the service, which is not designed to change or impact the service itself, for example bingo or football.

**Service User Involvement**
A process that enables people to participate in decisions and actions that affect their lives.

A service user involvement activity is designed to facilitate a change in how a service/policy is delivered or implemented for the individual as well as the service.
**Engagement**

A term used to describe the range of interactions between people (service users, staff, and management). It is an on-going process that can influence people’s interest, expectations and motivation to participate. It can include a variety of approaches, such as informal communication or information exchange, active listening, and relationship management.

**Participation**

A term used to describe a range of ways to engage service users and to enable them to participate in service planning, development and delivery, from informal methods of communication and relationship building (i.e. day-to-day interaction with service users) to formal participation (e.g. membership on the board of management, surveys).
Activity 2
Who to Involve

The most important people you will involve are the people using your service. There are also other people that you will need to involve to make sure that service user involvement in your organisation achieves the benefits at the level you want.

Who you will need to involve to achieve the benefits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person Level</th>
<th>Service users</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice Level</td>
<td>Service users</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Level</td>
<td>Service users</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception level</td>
<td>Service users</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Four P’s

*Person Level* - service users should be involved in their own treatment & rehabilitation plans.

*Practice Level* - service users should be involved in exchanges about how the services they are using are being planned and delivered.

*Policy Level* - service users should be involved in decision and policy making groups within the SERDTF/SRDTF.

*Perception Level* – service users should be involved in activities that challenge myths, stigma and stereotyping. They should gain a greater sense of belonging to their community.

It is useful to identify key named contacts at each level and to tell them about the nature of your service user involvement activity. This will make it easier to feedback and report findings.²

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² *Glasgow Homeless Network Mainstreaming service user involvement Manual (Involving Expertise 2011)*
Key Outcomes for Service User Involvement under the 4P’s

**Person Outcomes**
- Opportunity to exercise rights
- Opportunities to raise issues and communicate ideas
- Opportunities to share expertise
- Develop new skills
- Improve existing skills
- Gain Self-confidence and self esteem
- Build social networks
- ‘Giving something back’
- Enjoy taking part in making a difference

**Practice Outcomes**
- Good business sense (service meets need)
- Better take up and lasting effects
- Open and democratic process
- Quality and effectiveness of service improved
- Statutory/contractual requirement to do so

**Policy/Planning Outcomes**
- Good business sense (services meet needs)
- Assists in decision making
- Identifies gaps
- Informs reviews
- Improves abilities to influence debate
- Ensures provision meets population needs
- Required by various policies and strategies

**Perception Outcomes**
- Challenges myths
- Challenges stigma
- Challenges self-perception
- Challenges assumptions
- Challenges stereotypes
- Encourages sense of community belonging
Types of Involvement

Ladder of Participation

The Ladder of Participation is a model that can be used to examine where you are in terms of service user involvement now and where you want to be in the future:

**Full Control:** Service users control decision making at the highest level.

**Sharing Power:** Service users share decisions and responsibility, influencing and determining outcomes.

**Participation:** Service users can make suggestions and influence outcomes.

**Consultation:** Service users are asked what they think but have limited influence.

**Information:** Services users are told what is happening but have no influence.
Understanding Service Users Perspectives of Involvement

Service Users perspectives of involvement can operate at 3 levels.

**Level 1**  
**Consumer**  
Some Service Users do not wish to become involved beyond their individual use of services even though they might have strong views about them, both positive and negative.

**Level 2**  
**Advocate**  
Some users feel ‘involvement’ is about influencing local services to achieve improvement for all users. They want to be involved in activities such as meetings or responding to documents.

**Level 3**  
**Activist**  
Are concerned with the broader position of users in society and approach user involvement with strong emphasis on civic and human rights.
The Role of the Service User

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.

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 public places 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. It is vital to give service users the chance to find out what is required before asking them to commit to being involved. For example, the service 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 with Substance Misuse issues who sometimes have unsettled lives or for those people who are trying to move on.

Having an 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.

Circumstances can 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 care plan and be included as a means to achieve their goals, e.g. to leave the service or get employment. It is important to 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.
Potential Barriers

What the research says:

**Fragmentation**

Even a strong commitment to user involvement in one part of an organisation can often be undermined by a fragmented structure or approach. Large, national organisations may be unable to coordinate user involvement or to develop an overview which could be used to plan a strategy for change. The fragmentation of user involvement policy and practice can be affected by a number of factors:

- Diversity of activities;
- More than one group of users;
- Complex committee and staffing structures;
- Diversity of priorities, structures, size between counties/regions;
- Disagreement over the meaning of ‘user involvement’ and whether it includes community involvement.

**Consultation Fatigue**

It is not necessarily the case that service users object to being consulted regularly or more than once about the same issue. Rather, ‘consultation fatigue’ can result from people’s experience of being asked their opinion about things, giving it, but then not hearing what the outcome of their involvement has been.

**Burn Out**

Service users can become very committed to involvement which can sometimes lead to burnout. In some situations, issues can arise where people may need support from staff to manage their time and ‘avoid’ burnout.

In particular, burn out can occur when there are a lot of things happening at once, or when service users are asked (or volunteer) to go to or participate in lots of meetings or events.

Burnout can be very frustrating and can be a real barrier to people sustaining their involvement and finding it an empowering or even rewarding experience.
Lack of Appreciation

Service users can sometimes feel unappreciated – this is more likely when the involvement practice is ineffectively planned or where there are issues of burn out. It can therefore be important to thank people for their involvement and to check with them regularly to ensure they are comfortable with their involvement.

It can also be helpful to offer incentives for people who become involved (this should be clearly advertised). Essentially service users are volunteering their time and should be rewarded and valued for their effort.

Incentives can include: cash, vouchers, goody bags, hospitality and at the very least should include any out of pocket expenses i.e. travel or lunch costs.

The role of leaders

The style of leadership (facilitative or controlling) in organisations can be both a benefit and a barrier to effective participation. In most organisations there is not a clear-cut distinction between leaders with controlling or facilitative styles. These leaders, who could be professionals or occasionally users, have many qualities such as, a commitment to increasing user involvement and an abundance of ideas and energy. However, in tandem with, and possibly inextricably linked to, these qualities may be a tendency to retain most, if not all, of the control over decisions on user involvement.

Fear

Staff can be nervous or have concerns about involving service users for lots of reasons.

Staff can have concerns about the outcome of the involvement (especially if it appears to differ from the organisational or individual position) or perhaps there are concerns about people giving them a ‘hard time’ due to perception that active service users may be ‘radical’ or particularly vocal.

Staff may also have concerns about how to best feedback disappointing outcomes for involvement or no outcome at all.
Lack of Skills

Sometimes we may feel that we do not have the range of required skills to involve service users.

It is worth remembering that we can, and have in the past learned and developed new skills.

The key skills required by anyone involved with service user involvement are:
- A positive approach
- Effective communication
- A strong value base

It is worth remembering that the range of skills required for involvement work is usually held by good practitioners.

Lack of management ‘buy in’ for service user involvement

Senior managers or Board Members may not have involved service users before so may need a ‘push’ to get started

Insufficient resources

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.
**Low or slow level of recruitment**

Staff running an SUI project may be disheartened when only a small percentage of service users get involved or SUI is not quickly successful.

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**Tokenism**

This can happen when a service user is nominated (or has nominated themselves) to represent others in groups or meetings. Whilst this can be empowering, if it is tokenism, it is less likely to have that effect.

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**Involvement of the few (cherry picking)**

The involvement of a small proportion of service users could present a barrier to others getting involved. This pattern can occur to different extents in any organisation. Some users can be perceived to be apathetic service users or actively involved users. This perception of apathy can often be based on the experience of trying to get people involved in conventional approaches. With the right opening or activity perceived apathetic service users may begin to speak up and get involved.
**Staff turnover**

Three aspects of staff turnover can affect user involvement:

The departure of staff with specific responsibility for user involvement;

Turnover of staff in small teams or in smaller organisations can take up considerable staff time both covering for vacancies and in recruitment, selection and induction;

Continuity of relationships between staff and service users is crucial. In some organisations support staff act as advocates, interpreters and facilitators; roles that require a good relationships built up over time to be effective.

**Glass Ceilings**

In some organisations service users may not present above a certain level of seniority in democratic membership structures and in senior management. For example, users could be on some sub-committees, but not on the board of management. In some cases, involvement can be limited to periodic consultation about services. Service users may also work as volunteers assisting paid staff but there may be no expectation that they might become employees themselves.
Activity 3
The Process for Service User Involvement

The process for implementing Service User Involvement requires the specification of the following areas:

**Purpose**
- The intent of the Service
- The area of involvement
- The level of change (4P's)
- Potential barriers
- The role of the Service User

**Methods & Investment**
- The methods of Participation
- The methods of Communication & Feedback
- The investment of the service

**Outcome**
- The review of the methods
- The Action Plan
- The Indicators
- The outcomes

**Example**

In order to improve service delivery (the area of involvement), your service is holding a planning day (the Practice Level (4 P's)) and would like to have service users contribute to providing direction and decision making (their role) in Service Planning.

By using your service newsletter (the communication method), you can inform them (raise awareness) of their potential role in the activity and how you will use their contribution (your intent).

You can determine what resources (the investment) are required to support their participation in the activity based on the information you collect through your day-to-day interactions. (The Action Plan).

Results from your annual satisfaction survey (feedback mechanism) can also be used to indirectly contribute to the planning day and assist in measuring (evaluation) the success of the participation activity (Indicators) (Outcome).
# Laying the Foundations

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<td>Regular newsletters which in some cases are written and edited by service users</td>
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<td>Service User Induction Process</td>
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<td>Service users have access to written information on self-help and user advocacy groups on request (QuADS Requirement)</td>
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<td>Service User Charter (QuADS Requirement)</td>
<td>Information on the types of services provided, the standards they can expect and the ways in which they can be involved in the service. (QuADS Requirement) (NDRIC) Screening Assessment (NDRIC)</td>
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<td>Service Users influencing decisions about services</td>
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What the research says

Factors Promoting Change

A focus on user priorities

Change occurred in organisations which not only encouraged users to participate in discussions and decisions, but focused on the issues they identified as important.

This focus operated at three levels:
1. Thinking about users as a stakeholder group;
2. Opening channels of communication;
3. Enabling users to use those channels to communicate their priorities and concerns.

Leadership

The commitment of leaders is important. ‘Leaders’ include chief executives, user representatives, supervisors and middle managers. Change occurs when leaders give a strong enough sense of direction whilst allowing sufficient opportunity for change.

Successful leaders negotiate the principles of user involvement and enable others to translate them into actions.

People in leadership roles who adopt a facilitative rather than a controlling style create the conditions for others to develop and implement change.

User Centred Management

User-centred activity occurs when Manager’s:
• Are committed to making their organisation more user-centred;
• Have a broad vision of what a user-centred organisation would look like;
• Create space for users and staff to debate user involvement and to develop and try out ideas;
• Ask for and listen to a full range of views;
• Encourage and support users and staff;
• Allocate resources for user involvement;
• Learn from and with others;
• Take risks;
• Balance between getting involved and standing back to get an overview;
• Can step aside to make space for individual users and user group
**Presence of users**

The presence of users at an event or meeting or simply through their use of a service does not necessarily mean that they are engaged in or influential in what is going on. However, maximising the presence of users in a variety of settings both enables organisations to change and can represent a significant change in itself for some.

The presence of users within a range of organisational activities has potential impacts on four levels:

1. opportunities to influence formal decision-making;
2. demonstrating users’ interest in getting involved;
3. opportunities to become part of networks of users and others;
4. opportunities to learn about each other’s experiences and priorities

**Equality of opportunity**

The equality of opportunity for users at all levels within services is a key aspect. This gives a clear message in the organisation that the contribution of service users is needed and expected in all roles.

**Policy and Funding Context**

Policies on user involvement e.g. SLA’s QUADS, NDRIC, National Drug Strategy 2009-2016 can act as a lever for change in organisations. Internal responses to changes in the external environment will vary depending on:

- The organisation’s stage of development of user involvement;
- The intentions of the external agency;
- The degree of commitment to user-centred user involvement on both sides.
- External pressure to demonstrate user involvement can lead to more tokenistic responses
Continuous monitoring and evaluation

Where participants in organisations continuously monitor and evaluate their policy and practice in relation to user involvement this supports the implementation of change. By frequently asking themselves and others what works well and why, users and managers develop systems of continuous feedback which enable them to learn and adapt.
Section 2
Methods & Investment
Tools, Tips and Techniques Manual
## Index of Tools

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Types of Involvement and Tools

The above graph is intended as a guide only. Some of the activities may move from one type of involvement to another. This will be based on 1. The intent of the Service and 2. The role of the Service User.
Great service user involvement is about using a range of tools and techniques to meet the needs of different people and situation. This toolkit contains 23 service user involvement tools, presented in an easy to use format.

The requirements of services vary, as do the needs of service users; the tool template give broad guidelines and therefore may require some extra work in order to achieve best fit for your service.

These have been chosen from the whole spectrum of tools available, as the most common examples that have been tried and tested by a range of services.

You will note that at the back of the toolkit there is a blank template in order for you to ‘tailor make’ any tried and tested tools you may develop yourself.

We are committed to continually improving the quality, quantity and authenticity of service user involvement and would very much appreciate being kept up to date with any learning you may wish to share.
1. Exit Interviews

Exit Interviews provide an opportunity for service users to feedback information on service/s they have used which they are now moving on from. Exit interviews are most likely to be conducted with a service user just prior to them leaving a service or no longer accessing it. They provide an opportunity for the service user, facilitated by staff from the organisation, to review the service/s they received, and to discuss, if and how effectively their needs were met.

Benefits...

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How to do it:

- There is no one size fits all exit interview format. The most important thing to remember is that participation by the service user in the interview must be voluntary and that the process must have a focus.
- Be flexible around when interview takes place; make it as easy as possible for the service user to attend, for example by giving lots of notice or by attaching it to their last day with the organisation.
- Remember, this is about the service user feeding back their views and staff facilitating their reflection, and not about an organisation justifying its services. It would be beneficial for service users and staff to work together to draw up a structured exit questionnaire. If the service user is comfortable, offer them the opportunity to speak with a member of staff who did not directly provide support, or alternatively with an external representative or another trained service user. This allows the service user to speak freely about all aspects of their experience and support in the organisation.
- Check with a wider representation of service users that the questionnaire makes sense and is accessible to all
- Agree with the service user how they would like the interview to be conducted. Make sure that there is plenty of time and space for them to reflect and speak out. In terms of managing the interview, use active listening techniques to gather views and be sure to avoid closed questions (for example, questions that gather yes or no only answers).
- Encourage the service user to initiate discussion topics, although it may be useful to prepare probing questions if necessary. Don’t be defensive about your service! And remember that this process is an opportunity to develop and improve, which ultimately can only benefit the organisation.
- When appropriate, it is good practice to accompany an exit interview with advice and information providing further learning, volunteering, employment or other opportunities.
- Exit interviews may be carried out retrospectively by a service who has received a referral, or to which a service user has progressed, so the new service carries out the interview on behalf of the referral or previous service.
- If possible, you can also offer the choice of using Dictaphone (so the interview feels chattier).
Pros
- Exit interviews provide an opportunity for the service user to reflect on their time using a service; to review what worked for them, what did not work so well, and why.
- The self-reflective nature of exit interviews can have a positive impact on the service user by allowing them to reflect on the progress they have made since their first accessing the service.
- A useful tool for identifying past, existing and future needs and helping to process transition.
- Exit interviews can be a driver for organisational improvement – they can help an organisation assess and improve quality of service/s. as well as develop new strands of work.
- The exit interview process is flexible. It can be as formal or as informal as the organisation and the service user have agreed.
- Carrying out exit interviews on behalf of a previous service is relevant for those which maintain a responsibility for an individual during and after moving onto a new service.

Cons
- Exit interviews can sometimes be viewed as tokenism by both staff and service users. To avoid this it is important to make sure that exit interviews remain as person-centred as possible. Ensure the focus is on the benefits to the service user as this is an opportunity to reflect and for the organisation to continuously improve their practice.
- Exit interviews can also sometimes be viewed quite cynically, for example ‘it’s too late to make changes’. The best way to counter this is to ensure that involvement is integral to what you do, and that the exit interview is simply one stage of an overall process of involvement that has been threaded through the organisation. As with all service user involvement tools, feedback mechanisms should be in place.

Resources
- Low
- Interview facilitator.
- A quiet space where you will not be interrupted.
- Paper and pen.
- Time for a short staff and service user consultation on developing a structured questionnaire.
- Developing resource library for signposting.
2. Forums & Meetings

Regular forums and meetings, whether ‘open forum’ or thematic, can be relatively easy to facilitate and an effective means of service user involvement. For example, they might be residents meetings, or they might be weekly or monthly meetings on issues or themes raised by service users through other types of involvement.

Benefits...

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How to do it:

- Agendas should be set jointly with service users and should be checked for accessibility (no acronyms etc.) and ensure that their items have enough time for discussion.
- Agendas should follow normal standards: Welcome and Introduction (and apologies), Matters Arising and no more than 3 discussion points raised per meeting (particularly in initial or early meetings). There should also be ample time made for Any Other Business and service user feedback and comment. Next meeting dates should be advertised at the end of the agenda.
- The first meeting should ideally begin with an icebreaker and the group agreeing ground rules that ensure everyone feels safe and comfortable within the meeting.
- Introductions should also begin with outlining agenda items so people know in advance when there are opportunities to discuss various issues and when comfort breaks or lunch will be. The introduction should also state clearly what the intended outcome of the meeting is and when people will receive feedback. If possible, ensure that people are aware of what the meeting will potentially influence (generate no false promises!).
- Meetings should be facilitated by a skilled and confident chairperson and a note/minute taker.
- Jargon free notes should be sent out as soon as possible after the meeting in whatever format is easiest for the participant to receive them (i.e. delivered by staff member, email, by post).
- See Focus Groups (p.41)
- An agenda book could be made available between meetings so service users can access and suggest agenda items.
- Service users should be offered the opportunity for training in order to fulfil skills associated with running meetings, e.g. note taking, public presentation, chairing.
- If you have difficulty with regular attendance at meetings, attach the meeting to a nice lunch or a ‘fun’ activity, i.e. bingo, five aside football etc.
- If service users are attending other meetings on behalf of a service group, they should receive training about representation to ensure they are clear when they are putting their own point of view or the group’s point of view across.
Pros

- Forums or meetings often generate more feedback as members opinions can be triggered by discussion points raised by others.
- Forums or meetings can give service providers an opportunity to invite external agencies to the table for discussion.
- Meetings can also be linked to training.

Cons

- Meetings/forums may only uncover a small sample of service user feelings as attendance to these groups is nearly always self-selecting. Organisations should be aware of this and try to use other methods to gather other service users’ opinions.
- There should be a 1:1 option for people not comfortable speaking in groups or in front of other people.
- The group format, particularly as staff are present, may prevent service users from speaking as candidly as they would like.
- Forums and meetings may not be accessible for people who speak other languages.
- Often membership is staff heavy; ensure minimal staff presence which will leads to a service user focus.

Resources

- Low
- Comfortable, accessible meeting room.
- Agendas.
- Minutes of previous meetings.
- Staff time for meeting and carrying out relevant actions.
- Hospitality and expenses.
3. Suggestions & Comment Boxes

Suggestion boxes are a great and easy way to gain feedback about a service. Although they may also be used for complaints we suggest that they are not to be named complaints box in order to ensure that improvements and suggestions are encouraged. It is vital that service users receive feedback from their suggestions.

Benefits...

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How to do it:

- Suggestion boxes should be set up somewhere where it is easy for service users to put comments in without being seen.
- A pen or two should be attached to a string nearby. Paper should also be provided. These need to be checked and maintained on an on-going basis.
- A sign should be nearby, highlighting how often and when the box will be emptied and in what way and when comments will be responded to.
- The option to be responded to personally (if comments are not anonymous) or through meetings or typed response sheets on the wall or in newsletters should be provided and advertised.
- All comments should receive a reply and responses should also let people know when and what changes may or may not happen.
- Care should be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality is protected.
- Some services create a very simple questionnaire (See Surveys & Questionnaires p.17) to be filled out, this can allow service users to say how they would like feedback, and provide their own details if they wish to.
- In larger organisations/services there is no reason not to have several comments boxes.

Pros

- Suggestion boxes offer service users an opportunity to make suggestions for improvements to the service.
- Service users can make suggestions anonymously without fear of being identified.
- Some services have used comments boxes to inform agendas at meetings or focus groups.
- Some services ensure a definite time to open the box and the manager of the service reads out the comments to all (please ensure that service users are happy to share their comments in this situation).
**Cons**
- A dedicated worker must have responsibility for suggestion boxes, to ensure comments are read, directed, feedback is provided and changes are advertised.
- People with literacy issues or who speak other languages may not find this technique accessible.

**Resources**
- **Medium**
- Sturdy and clearly identifiable box.
- Attached paper, pens.
- Staff time to feedback to service users.
- Time to consult service users/staff about how best to develop and advertise comments box and policies on feedback.
4. Talking Walls

A talking wall is simply a large piece of paper put up in a prominent position in a meeting space. It’s a method most often used in conjunction with other involvement techniques (e.g. meetings, focus groups and stakeholder events). However, they offer an excellent opportunity as permanent fixtures in projects as well. They can also be used effectively as an evaluation tool e.g. providing people with an opportunity to comment on how they felt on the day (or how a meeting went).

Benefits...

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How to do it:

- Simply put up a large piece of paper on the wall. Write the question you want to ask people at the top in brightly coloured markers. Or simply write Comments Welcome.
- Make sure you leave lots of markers around the wall so people can comment at their leisure.
- In order for talking walls to be effective they need to put in ‘high traffic’ area where people will notice them.
- If used in meeting/conference/event, facilitators should also make a point of encouraging people to write (or draw) on the wall throughout the day; otherwise they may not be utilised.
- People should be offered post-it notes as this may add an extra element of confidence and privacy.
- Ensure someone is responsible for taking down the talking wall, writing up the comments and feeding back to all relevant stakeholders.
- Can be used in well used areas of projects as a permanent fixture, perhaps consulting on different issues each week.
- Ensure a form of feedback and advertise it clearly.
- May need ground rules e.g. no personal information, racism, swearing.

Pros

- People can take as much time as they need to write.
- People can draw pictures instead of writing.
- Can create an interesting visual that can be displayed in the future.
- Offers an alternative way for people to express their opinions without having to speak up in a meeting.

Cons

- Other people can see you writing – not an anonymous or private method, one possible way around this is to provide post-it notes.
- People with literacy issues or who speak other languages may not find this technique accessible.
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<td>• Frieze or wallpaper.</td>
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<td>• Coloured pens/markers.</td>
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<td>• Post-it notes.</td>
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<td>• Time to follow through and feedback results.</td>
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5. Notice Boards & Whiteboards

Most organisations have notice boards or white boards. They are a great way to advertise service user involvement activities and to feed back within your organisation. They should be displayed in a prominent position, with the majority of information (and the most important information) at eye level. Notice boards should be maintained and the information they hold reviewed regularly to ensure they are kept up to date, with outdated materials removed.

A notice board is a great place to display an organisational chart so people know who’s who and who does what. They can also be used to invite people to consultations and to thank people. Whiteboards should have markers attached by string so they are always available.

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How to do it:

- Ensure that all information is as accessible as possible in terms of colour, plain English, font size, etc.
- Use pictures where possible.
- Sometimes it helps to have clear headings and divisions separating the different types of information advertised. Consideration should be given to the exact purpose of the notice board.
- Assign responsibility for maintaining and reviewing the notice board information on a regular basis. This can also be an opportunity for service users to have responsibility for maintaining and updating information.
- Discard or update old material to prevent your notice boards from becoming overcrowded.
- Inform and remind service users about the whereabouts and purpose of notice boards during induction, and at other meetings.
- Do not reply on notice boards as a sole method of communication, but rather as an extra prompt.

Pros

- Information easily accessed.
- Low cost.
- All stakeholders are able to use them to communicate if they wish.

Cons

- May not be accessible for people with literacy issues.
- People can take things off them or alter information.
- Not always fully utilised
- Often overloaded with information.
Resources

- Low
- Resources should be minimal.
- Staff time to keep up to date.
- Markers, blue tac, drawing pins.
6. Posters & Leaflets

Your own posters and leaflets offer a means of communicating with current and potential service users as well as other stakeholders. They can also be used to encourage participation in service user involvement activities, or to inform service users about consultations and feedback on your organisation’s policy and practice. Posters and leaflets should be developed in consultation with service users. As the consumers of these materials it is ideal that service users test them for legibility, literacy and so on. Service users may also be involved in the production and distribution of posters and leaflets.

Benefits...

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How to do it:

- Involve service users from the beginning.
- Planning communication through posters and leaflets is crucial as mistakes cannot be cheaply corrected once multiple copies have been printed.
- All materials have a ‘shelf-life’ but do minimise this by not using references which will date quickly. For example, including the name of a staff member will mean that the leaflet is no longer current if that staff member leaves the organisation.
- The design and layout of leaflets and posters should take account of potential audiences as some design decisions can exclude people. The use of certain graphics and layout can disadvantage people who are visually impaired or who have literacy issues.
- Fonts should be ‘clean’, clear and of a suitable size. Densely printed areas should be avoided.
- Pay close attention to the use of text with background images, which could make information less accessible.
- The more complex the language (including jargon and slang) the more people will be excluded or will exclude themselves from your potential audience.
- As a general rule – keep it simple. Question and answer formats, clear spacing, and breaking complex processes into smaller steps can all help. Think of your audience and keep it as straightforward as possible.
- Involve service users in checking accessibility and content and ensure that it is clearly understood and attractive. Try and get a range of service users to give you feedback.
- Seek advice from service users on where leaflets and information on the service should be made available (e.g. communal areas).
**Pros**
- Leaflets and posters are a common method of advertising a project, engaging with potential service users and communicating with referrers of service users and others. It is now commonly expected that a project will have such materials.
- A good leaflet not only communicates the information it contains but carries a larger message about the professionalism and values that your organisation wants to communicate to its stakeholders and others.
- This type of involvement means that service users are involved in how your organisation communicates to its own service users, potential service users and other stakeholders.
- Leaflets are an excellent method of feeding back results from service user involvement activities.

**Cons**
- Be sure to develop posters and leaflets to a high standard. Unprofessionally produced promotional materials will send a poor message regarding the competence or quality of your organisation.
- May need to be updated regularly.

**Resources**
- **Low**
- Print costs (internal or external).
- Service user/staff consultations.
- Possibly software – there are very sophisticated free packages available online for graphics and desktop publishing. For some projects Word processing packages will be adequate.
7. Focus Groups

A focus group is a research method in which a specifically selected group of people can be asked about their opinion on a particular topic. Questions and specific discussion points are raised in an interactive group setting, and members of the group are encouraged to talk freely. Ideally a focus group works best with a minimum of 4 people and a maximum of 12 and will last 1-2 hours.

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How to do it:

- Organisers should decide what information they want to gather and who to conduct a focus group with to get required information. Participants of a focus group should have some kind of experience or opinion relating to the subject of the focus group.
- Organisers should find neutral and comfortable meeting place for the focus group.
- The date and time of the meeting should be considered in order to suit the needs of the participants. Ideally, participants should be given 2-3 weeks’ notice and then reminded 1-2 days before.
- Ensure that participants are representative and have relevant experience required to make up the desired target group. When advertising, organisers should clearly state what the subject of the focus group is and who would be suitable to take part.
- Note takers should write clearly on flip charts (checking with participants for clarity) and ensure that everyone’s comments are recorded.
- Organisers should ensure 2 facilitators for a focus group. One should be skilled in strong and fair facilitation skills (able to keep focus and ensure that all have an equal chance to speak), the other should have good note taking skills.
- If necessary, facilitators should be independent of the project.
- At the beginning of the focus group facilitators should ensure that either ground rules are generated or presented and that an agenda for the session is outlined (including comfort breaks). Ensure confidentiality and make no false promises.
- Good to start with an icebreaker.
- The note taker should seek regular clarification from the group regarding notes reflecting what is being said. The focus group should finish with the note taker going over all key points raised during the meeting, ensuring that all participants are aware of feedback mechanisms. Also offer a 1:1 should people wish to put forward a point privately.
- A skilled and confident facilitator should ensure that everyone in the group is given a chance to speak and be heard and ensure a flow of ideas. Outline what the results will be used for before the focus group begins and also at the end of the focus group. If the results published will be compiled in a report ensure that each participant will receive a copy of the report if they leave a contact address.
- See also Forums and Meetings p.31.
**Pros**
- Can trigger a wider and more thorough discussion than one to one interviews.
- Can allow a large amount of information to be generated in a short amount of time.
- At service level, focus group numbers often allow for a representative sample of a project’s population.
- Provides a wealth of information about what people think and also why they think the way they do.
- A relatively inexpensive and easy way to get feedback.

**Cons**
- Participants may feel a pressure to conform to other members' views.
- Participants may feel that they have to express positive views if staff members are present.
- Information gathered during the focus group may be difficult to interpret and record.
- Needs to have a 1:1 option for people not comfortable speaking in groups or in front of other people.
- People with language issues may not find this technique accessible.

**Resources**
- **Medium**
- 2 Staff.
- Flip chart/pens.
- Staff time for printing agenda, ground rules and feedback.
- Incentives & refreshments.
8. Surveys & Questionnaires

Surveys and questionnaires are excellent methods of gathering information around specific areas of a service or organisation. They enable organisations to collect information from or about people and help to describe, compare or explain their knowledge, attitudes or behaviour. By adopting this method any organisation can gain a rich source of data which can be used to improve service and policy delivery. The process has several key stages: selecting objectives for the survey, designing the survey, carrying out the survey, managing and analysing the data and reporting the results. They can also be used across a number of organisations for wider policy or perception consultations. Careful consideration has to be given to expertise around designing the survey. The process of developing appropriate questions is often most successful when service users and staff work together.

Benefits...

| Person | Practice | Policy | Perception |

How to do it:

**Identify survey objectives:** The objectives of a survey can come from a defined need to gather information around service provision. This stage can be carried out by staff or in partnership with service users.

**Design the survey:** Including service users in this stage can be an empowering process for those who take part, although you will have to consider the increased time and resources. When designing a survey, accessibility and plain English should be consistent throughout the design.

**Types of questions:** Questions can take two forms:

i. **Open questions** which allow people to speak in their own words, for instance ‘how, what, why’ help people to express their opinions. Although this may provide useful quotations, themes that arise and information gathered may be difficult to interpret and careful consideration is needed so that misinterpretation does not occur.

ii. **Closed questions** allow respondents to give specific answers, for example, yes or no. These questions may be more difficult to frame but can lead to easier statistical analysis and interpretation.

For your own learning and improvement the final question should always be ‘how did you find the experience of filling out this questionnaire?’

The option to leave personal details (phone numbers or address) or remain confidential should be offered.

**Carrying out the survey:** An interviewer must be able to communicate effectively, and actively listen to pick up meaning when interviewing a participant. If service users are to be involved at this stage adequate training should be provided to ensure that the interviewer achieves a rich source of data. Ensure language or literacy considerations.

**Managing and analysing the data:** This process begins when the surveys or questionnaires are returned. Issues that should be considered include; checking all the questions have been answered, are worded correctly, check service users have demonstrated an understanding of the questions, identify and be skilled in recognising common themes that have been given in answers. If service users are to be involved in this process an organisation should provide adequate training and support to enable them to undertake this task.

**Reporting the results:** After analysis, the results can be disseminated by written reports or orally. Again this can be carried out solely by service users, which can be a very empowering process.
provided they are given adequate support, or in partnership with staff and service users, or solely by staff. Communication and report writing skills are needed, as well as the ability to present tables and figures if necessary. It also helps to have a staff member out with the survey team to critique the initial draft to give an objective view on any report.

### Pros
- Surveys can gather information relating to a specific aspect of a service within an organisation or an organisation as a whole.
- Involving service users in this process can lead to a shared understanding between different stakeholder groups.
- Surveys can give an evidence base for changes to service provision, or make wider policy or perception impacts.
- It can be a very empowering process for service users.
- Questionnaires and surveys can be used in 1:1 interviews, left out with comments boxes, delivered to people's doors, and in telephone interviews (lots of options).

### Cons
- Careful thought has to be given to the survey questions. It is so important that the correct questions are asked otherwise the information needed may not be gathered.
- Organisations should provide adequate resources for carrying out surveys. It may be resource intensive if service users are to be fully involved in the process.
- People with language or literacy issues may not find this technique accessible.
- Time issues, where relevant ethics committee approval may need to be sought.

### Resources
- **Medium**
- Significant time allocation for preparation, printing, consultation and design.
9. Creative Arts

The creative arts in themselves can be used in conjunction with other tools or individually. They are particularly useful when working with language barriers or literacy issues and can be used individually or with groups. They can address sensitive issues that are difficult to talk about and help to engage ‘harder to reach groups’. There are many different ways of using creative arts (i.e. poetry, music, crafts) to involve people. This toolkit provides an outline and ‘starter for 10’ for some ideas to get you started.

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**How to do it:**

It is helpful to begin by taking a flexible approach to sessions in order to take account of different abilities while still retaining a planned structure.

**DRAMA** can bring a complex issue to life, making it emotionally powerful, more interesting, easy to understand and relevant to people’s lives. In many cases, a play is more likely to be noticed and is more memorable than a written piece of work. It can be a useful way to involve a wide range of people with very different levels of analytical skills and experience at local and national levels. Drama by itself can be a powerful way to convey messages and persuade people of our points of view. Its impact can be increased by adding activities that involve the audience.

**POETRY & CREATIVE WRITING** can help people express emotions, talk about issues or find a voice they would not necessarily express verbally. There are many ways of beginning a writing activity; examples include providing a series of words or phrases that can be rearranged into a story or poem; a bag of objects that can be used as a prompt for storytelling or a series of songs or film clips that can prompt writing reviews or fiction.

**ARTS & CRAFTS** sessions can offer therapeutic benefits while helping people develop creative skills. They can also simply be used as a tool for conversation, where service users and staff can sit down and do an activity together and discuss any relevant issues. This way of engaging can seem much less threatening than a more formal meeting. Sessions could include, poster making, glass painting or simple mosaic. As always ensure that this is attached to, or incorporates service user involvement that benefits the person as well as impacting at another level (e.g. the service or policy).

**MUSIC** is universal and most people respond to music in some way regardless of other issues in their lives. Music has an ability to generate an emotional response in the listener. It can promote relaxation and reduce stress. Simply listening to music can be a good way to help develop group cohesion, for example in an icebreaking session where each member chooses their favourite music and discusses what it means to them. Learning to play or make music can also be a useful engagement activity but this will usually require a specialist tutor.

- Be sure you have enough materials for everyone as well as some in reserve. This is to cover for ‘mistakes’ and for those who may finish early and want to do more.
- Advertise clearly the purpose of these sessions.
• For poetry and creative writing – for those participants who may literacy issues other ways to record their work should be provided. This could be a digital voice recorder to record people speaking poetry, or pairing people together where one can scribe for the other.
• Using computers can also be a good way to write as people have the benefit of spell checking, cutting and pasting, and can experiment with colour, fonts and text size.
• If work is to be shared outside of the activity ensure that permission is asked from the service user in advance and ensure that service users also have an opportunity to keep some of their work.

Pros
• These activities can be relatively inexpensive and easy to organise. Many activities can be organised without the requirement for specialist skills or equipment.
• Creative arts can provide a group with a focus and a way to reduce the awkwardness associated with service users meeting for the first time.
• If the group knows each other well, participants can be encouraged to help others who may needs assistance with their task and provide peer support in the activity.
• These techniques can also be used as icebreakers or warm ups for other activities.
• Many people who would not necessarily engage in learning, service user participation or employability activities can be encouraged to attend through the use of creative arts.
• Sessions can build confidence, increase skills and may lead people to become involved in further learning or involvement.
• The arts are an excellent ‘leveller’ across different groups (e.g. addressing age and language barriers).

Cons
• People can feel the activities are not focused enough.
• If delivery is not clear and respectful, some may feel these activities are patronising or too reminiscent of school based activities.
• Consideration should also be given to the possibility that some service users may not initially be comfortable with particularly extroverted group activities.

Resources
• Varying
• Some sessions may require a specialist tutor or equipment.
10. Film Making

The production of a film as an involvement technique can be an excellent method of sharing control of a project. Both the organisation and service users involved can agree on the message that they want to convey through film. Service users can express their own, or others’, opinions and experiences. A film can be used to present these opinions and experiences to a wide variety of people. Adaptations of filming can include: interviews, documentaries, video diaries, dramatisations and role playing.

Service users can be involved either in front of the camera or gain skills and experience by taking a role behind the camera.

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**How to do it:**

- Ensure that everyone involved is aware of the reasons for creating the film and to whom and why it will be shown.
- Each person who appears on film must give written consent for the distribution and use of the recording.
- Ensure that there is clarity on whether people being filmed are representing the wider service user population or just themselves.
- Decide how many copies will be made, and who will receive them, including those who are involved in the production and filming.
- Ensure all are aware of the possible repercussions. For example, although you may guarantee that your organisation will only show the film on certain occasions, once you have given the film to other organisations, or service users, monitoring becomes difficult.
- Make sure that you provide training to ensure no one discloses anything that they may not want recorded in the future (this can also be pulled out during the editing process).
- Make sure you provide training to ensure that people have a chance to practice what they are going to say.
- If a professional production company is recruited to record and edit the film, try and ensure that they are a socially responsible film maker.
- Actual filming time should be kept to a minimum as much as possible as editing can be hugely time consuming.
- Ensure sound quality is good, especially if going to be shown to large audiences.
- Make sure you allow time for further meetings to show the DVD throughout the various stages of the editing process. This allows those who have been filmed to have a chance to ensure that the editing process has adequately reflected what they wanted to say.
**Pros**

- The message portrayed is often more powerful and interesting than conventional presentations.
- Service users who are involved in the production of the film will increase in confidence and gain skills through their involvement.
- Well edited and produced, a film can portray a strong and coherent message.
- A film is more likely to be accessible.
- Excellent for capturing people’s stories.
- Can be used to record processes of work, i.e. a peer research project can be filmed throughout with the results at the end.

**Cons**

- Requires a lot of careful advanced planning.
- Can be costly.
- May need lots of time to get each ‘take’ right.
- Dangers around misrepresentation.

**Resources**

- **Medium/High**
- Realistic costing should be sought from professional film producers. Community based media companies are often reasonably priced and may lower their cost for a socially useful commission.
- The most costly aspect is likely to be editing time which can be considerable.
- In-house production is possible with the use of emerging digital technologies. However, these require skilled use to deliver a professional product.
- Staff time in working with service users to discuss the content.
- Waiver form.
- Venue for filming.
- Hospitality and expenses.
11. Service User Newsletters

A service user newsletter produced by staff to communicate to service users is not a tool for service user involvement. However, a service user newsletter that involves service users in its production and editorial decisions, may well be. With careful planning and adequate resources, service user newsletters can be an empowering means to involve service users and improve services and policies.

A service user newsletter can be used to record people’s stories, advertise service user involvement opportunities and activities, update on current and general news (both internal and external to the service), communicate new developments, feedback on service user consultations and meetings and provide opportunities for issues, personal experiences and opinions to be voiced.

Benefits...

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How to do it:

- It may be worth initially considering publishing a single use issue and then deciding what aspects could be developed for more regular output.
- Involve service users from the start so that they understand and are involved in the boundaries, considerations and decisions to be made.
- It is worth considering and establishing editorial control early in the process. For example, can service users write about any issue and can they express any opinion? Ensure boundaries are clear and established.
- Remember that as a service user involvement tool, you should be deciding what level of impact you want this activity to have. For example, do you just want to provide an opportunity for the service users to volunteer or are you hoping to use the information to influence practice within your service, or wider?
- If there is a lot of service user interest, rotate roles; if people move on, the service will still be able to produce a regular newsletter.
- Ensure opportunities are flexible to allow people to dip in and out at a level or time frame that suit them.
- Where relevant, ethics committees may need to approve work.

Pros

- Service user newsletters create an opportunity for service users themselves to produce their own newsletter and express their opinions, creativity and experiences.
- Allows an opportunity for service user involvement activity to be celebrated and for service users who have volunteered their time to be celebrated.
- Newsletters also offer volunteering opportunities for the service users to learn about IT skills, budgeting, working to deadlines and working in teams.
- Newsletters can be produced on small budgets but can become more expensive as budgets allow – more sophisticated production, colour printing and larger print runs make communication beyond your own service possible.
- Newsletters can allow service users in multi-site projects to communicate with each other and to participate in positive activity and share good practice with each other.
Cons
- Newsletters involve more work and time than many people initially anticipate.
- Keeping ideas fresh and service users involved in regular production can be a challenge.
- Can be time consuming for service users and staff with regular meetings.
- Could become costly.

Resources
- Medium
- Budgeting for external or in house printing.
- Dependent on size of distribution, type of paper, colour.
- You should not have to buy software – there are fairly sophisticated free packages available online for desktop publishing and for many people, word processing packages are perfectly adequate.
12. Open Space

Open Space is an innovative approach which can be incorporated into a wide range of involvement activities, from meetings to events. The idea is that participants in meetings or delegates at events determine agenda items or discussion groups.

A central theme may be set, however a prerequisite of Open Space is that the focus or main issue must be of a genuine concern to all stakeholders involved. Open Space enables a ‘bottom up’, democratic, equality based approach which can determine the focus of meetings, workshops, discussion groups and future planning.

Open Space is structured and planned but creates flexibility to evolve and suit participants wants and needs. Open Space meetings can take place over an hour or even week long events. A condition of Open Space is that participation is voluntary and discussions are always determined by participants and should therefore seek to address their concerns.

Open Space conferences, allow for workshops to be set up not in the traditional manner of standard conferences with pre-determined agendas, but alternatively to provide delegates with space to discuss the issues particularly relevant to them. The aim of Open Space is to allow delegates to customise the standard conference to meet their specific interests and needs.

Various methods can be used to determine the areas of discussion, including small discussion groups, questionnaires, post it notes on talking walls etc. These can be voted on by the wider group to determine the priority areas of focus.

The principles of Open Space can be adapted and implemented in many ways however there are trained facilitators who can be hired with expertise in this area.

Benefits...

- Person
- Practice
- Policy
- Perception

How to do it:

- Book an accessible venue.
- Arrange a skilled facilitator. A trained Open Space facilitator can conduct the event or with careful planning you can do it yourself.
- Generally the day is very structured but the issues are not. The delegates democratically vote on issues that are put forward by participants early on in the day and these are discussed in small working groups/spaces.
- At a later date you may wish to have your staff or service users trained on Open Space facilitation.
- Advertise your Open Space event as widely as possible.
- Speak to service users in advance about the format of Open Space and be sure to stress that this is an opportunity for them to set the agenda.
- Following the event, feedback to participants on any changes made as a result of their participation.
**Pros**

- Allows very large and often very diverse groups of people to get together.
- No speakers are required, just a facilitator.
- Open Space is very effective if a quick resolution is sought from a large number of people.
- Service users ‘vote’ to prioritise the areas important to them.
- Can allow for sharing ideas, pooling knowledge, discussing issues, networking and developing plans for collaborative action.
- Can be adapted to include all stakeholders not just service users, in order to share perspectives and expertise across all levels of work.

**Cons**

- Can be costly for venue size and hospitality.
- Facilitator(s) require a very good understanding of policy, practice and perception aspects of issues being discussed to ensure effectiveness.

**Resources**

- Varied
- An accessible venue.
- A facilitator.
- Advertising materials/costs (these can be simple posters or flyers), right through to major advertising.
- Service user travel costs and hospitality.
- Staff time.
13. Peer Research

Peer research is a method of accumulating information and works on the basis that a peer is more likely to share information with someone who has experienced similar circumstances. Peer researchers are trained appropriately and conduct the research (sometimes with support from staff).

This is particularly effective as it is bottom up approach and should be developed entirely working in partnership with service users. This method of research adopts the standpoint that peers share expertise within their fields of experience and that research should be empowering for all involved.

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How to do it:

- Peers should be involved at every stage of peer research development including the method of research, for example, focus groups, designing and delivering questionnaires or discussion groups.
- A comprehensive training package should be considered, and should cover areas such as confidentiality, boundaries, equal opportunities and research development.
- Staff should have a facilitative role as opposed to leadership role in the process, allowing all work to take a bottom up approach (including data analysis and write up).
- Research can take the form of one or a combination of many of the tools outlined. For example, questionnaires and focus groups. Service users and staff should consider which tool or technique is most appropriate.
- Service users should be involved in writing reports and in dissemination of the research.
- Ensure ethical approval is sought where necessary.
- With an adequate budget, this is also an excellent opportunity for film making. Filming can begin at recruitment stage; record the entire process through training, to interviewing to results. A DVD report is often more accessible than a paper report. Please see our involvement through film making tool for more information on this (p.21).

Pros

- Service users are more likely to share information with someone they can identify as a peer rather than by someone with whom they can make no such identification. This offers added value to the research.
- Empowering for all involved.
- More likely to be supportive and relaxed interviewing for the interviewee.
- Positive effects of personal insight from service user researchers.
- People are given an opportunity to research an issue that particularly interests them.
- Ensures participation is real and not tokenistic.
- If built into the overall process, it may be a good opportunity to produce a DVD of research being carried out.
Cons

- As peer researchers may have little or no experience of conducting research, training may be time consuming and expensive.
- Time constraints with part time volunteers may pose a greater challenge.
- As researchers may share similar experiences with the participants, there may be more of a chance of stimulating emotions and so support considerations are needed. Decide on a buzz word which service users can use to indicate that they would like a break e.g. during interviews or discussion groups.
- People with literacy issues or who speak other languages may not find this technique accessible.
- As with many types of research, subjectivity on behalf of the researcher may affect the objectivity of the research report. Therefore training should consider this.
- Organisations should be aware that peer researchers can get caught in an ‘identity crisis’ when the issue that makes them a peer is no longer a suitable or helpful identity. After a period of time this identity may not only seem less relevant but seem to be ‘holding them back’ from moving on in their lives.
- Peer research often requires reliability and commitment over a long period of time (i.e. only service users who have completed all training can conduct interviews). In some cases it can be beneficial to train up many more interviewers than you will actually need.

Resources

- High
- Time to develop training.
- Training venue.
- Hospitality.
- Expenses.
- Time to develop staff/peer timetable for activity.
- Time to conduct training.
14. Peer Education

Like Peer Research, Peer Education works on the basis that shared experience will provide an added value and expertise. By removing the usual hierarchy of ‘teacher-student’ relationships, learners are more likely to relate to educators and the relevant information they have to impart.

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How to do it:

- Peer Education needs adequate time for thorough preparation at each stage of the process.
- Peer Education materials should be designed and developed in partnership with service users.
- Service users and staff should work together to agree the specific types of peer education techniques to be used.
- Peer educators should be identified and recruited, then trained in peer education techniques.
- Advertising to reach peer learners should be considered and then peer educators should make contact.
- Supervision and support should be on-going for peer educators.
- Several organisations have developed peer educator programmes; it is often helpful to learn from past models. Consider work done in other fields which could be applicable.

Pros

- Peer education is based on the premise that a service user or a potential service user will be more effectively informed by someone they can identify as a peer rather than by someone with whom they can make no such identification.
- A well-managed peer education project offers significant volunteering or employment opportunity to service users and their peers.
- There are significant personal development opportunities for peer educators in terms of self-esteem, confidence, knowledge base and self-awareness.
- Those who are being educated, benefit from having expert advice and information provided in a language and context which they view as credible and reliable.

Cons

- Peer education involves a start-up cost to train a group of peer educators.
- As a new activity, peer education may need new policy and procedures to be considered by some organisations.
- Organisations should be aware that peer educators can get caught in an ‘identity crisis’ when the issue that makes them a peer is no longer a suitable or helpful identity. For example an ex-drug user may feel comfortable identifying themselves as a peer of someone who is using drug services. However, after a period of time this identity may not only seem less relevant but seem to be ‘holding them back’ in moving on in their lives.
**Resources**
- High
- Planning time.
- Adequate time for development and delivery of training.
- Training venue.
- Staff time for supporting peer educators.
- Marketing material costs.
- Hospitality and expenses.
Stakeholder Events

Stakeholder events offer an excellent opportunity for all relevant parties to discuss current issues. These events can be specific to one project or across several projects. With careful organisation, Stakeholder events can be meetings as large as 200 people.

The purpose of these events is to involve service users and other stakeholders and provide the opportunity for communication and understanding. These events recognise that all stakeholders (front-line staff, service users, planners, decision makers) have expertise and perspectives to share and aim to ensure that each has an equal opportunity to put forward their opinion.

Discussion groups, question and answer sessions, Open Space techniques, focus groups and meetings can be used to generate the structure of a Stakeholder event. These can also be interspersed with drama, poetry, art and music workshops. This can ensure that delegates are engaged throughout the day and these are also a fun way to get the work done.

Benefits...

How to do it:

- Service users should be involved in planning of the event from the beginning. Opportunities to get involved can be created throughout the whole process of planning through to dissemination of reports.
- Organisers must ensure that events provide a genuine forum of equality and that everyone present is able to speak freely.
- Planning must incorporate considerations around reaching all stakeholders and aiming for equal numbers of each group.
- Consider what incentives to provide and ensure they are advertised.
- Facilitators should ensure that there are a number of mediums through which people can put forward points of view. For example, discussion groups, talking walls, questionnaires.
- Ideally, discussion groups should contain low numbers making it easier for people to speak up and to allow lots of time to get points across.
- Speakers and facilitators should be provided with briefs (giving time frames, encouraging plain English, acronym free information, etc.).
- The event should be evaluated by organisers and delegates.
- A report should be developed which will not only record the event, important though that is, but also as a call for on-going dialogue, further discussion and action.
- Please refer to tools on Creative Arts (p.45), Focus Groups (p.41) and Forums and Meetings (P.31).
**Pros**
- Stakeholder events provide opportunities for service users to discuss issues with decision makers and make their views widely known.
- Stakeholder events also give planners and decision makers a chance to hear directly what using services are like for those who use them.
- Can help to build social networks.
- Offer a variety of methods to involve and engage people.
- Offer an opportunity to showcase services and provide advice and information.
- Offer volunteer opportunities in planning and developing events.
- Offer an excellent opportunity for understanding and collaboration to develop due to discussions uncovering barriers and gaps that may have been missed if all parties were not present.

**Cons**
- Can be resource intensive in terms of staff time and planning.
- Can be resource intensive in terms of volunteer involvement and training.
- Can be costly in terms of promotion, venue and hospitality and other service user involvement expenses.
- People may not feel safe speaking in front of other stakeholder groups.

**Resources**
- **Medium/High**
  - Costs around focus or discussion groups in the lead up to the main stakeholder event.
  - All resources required in line with the different techniques adopted on the day (for example drama; poetry; creative workshops).
  - All service user expenses will need to be covered (transport, hospitality, interpreters).
  - Promotional costs.
  - Venue Costs.
  - Possible cost of external facilitation.
  - Possible cost of incentives (for example, goody bags or vouchers).
16. Boards & Management Committees

Boards and Management Committees are ultimately accountable for the activities of a charity or voluntary organisation. They ensure that money is properly spent, that actions are legal and in accordance with regulations. They also ensure that the aims and objectives of an organisation are met, and that staff and volunteers carry out their stated duties. Therefore, service user involvement on Boards or Management Committees, if planned carefully, can be a great way to achieve high levels of shared service user control.

Benefits...

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How to do it:

- Avoiding tokenism or perceptions of tokenism is crucial. For it to be meaningful, this process must be planned and carried out carefully. This means that service users must fit the criteria for ‘job descriptions’ on management committees and not be there for tokenistic purposes.
- The organisation and the service user must be clear about the role and legal responsibility of board membership. If it is unreasonable to expect a service user to take on these responsibilities, consider how else service users may become involved. For example, a sub group of the board could meet a service user representation group to discuss developments, consult more widely and report back to the board.
- Clear roles and purpose must be established.
- Service users must be offered training, both formal (as regards the process of meetings, papers etc. as well as legal responsibilities) and informally (to support them where necessary) in order to be able to contribute.
- A full induction process must also take place.
- Service users must be trained in governance issues including the organisation’s vision, aims and purpose, ethical principles and values and strategic direction.
- Training offered will obviously be dependent on roles identified but could for example include understanding financial balance sheets, governance papers and committee reports.
- Service users must be clear of their accountability as a Board or Management Committee member.

Pros

- A very real and genuine opportunity to share power and top level decision making experiences.
- Service users build a range of skills and experience – communication, assertion, negotiation, reflection.
- Can send a strong message about an organisations commitment to service users and service user involvement.
Cons

- If service users take part on Boards or Management Committees without adequate training or skills it will reduce the effective management of the organisation and its ability to achieve its objectives.
- May be resource intensive in terms of training service users.
- May be tokenistic if service users’ views are not genuinely and equally considered.
- People with literacy issues or other languages may not find this approach accessible.

Resources

- High
- Initial and on-going training costs.
- Support costs.
- Expenses.
- Hospitality.
17. Supported Volunteering

Supported volunteering is about involving service users in more formal volunteering activities and ensuring that they are supported to volunteer with their aspirations and needs being met throughout their volunteering experience. Supported volunteering can help to promote independence and can provide structure and continuity for someone who might be experiencing change or difficulty in their life. It can also help service users build up their confidence and self-esteem, acquire new skills and build pathways into employment, create social networks and enjoy new experiences. If a good supported volunteering programme is implemented, then the value to the organisation will, most often, more than outweigh the set up and on-going support and development costs.

Volunteering opportunities present themselves throughout all areas of service user involvement activities. For example, a service user attending a meeting may wish to get more involved in the planning and development of meetings (i.e. chairing, note taking, notes write-up, of feeding back). Supported volunteering is all about creating empowering conditions for people to volunteer in ways that meet their needs and aspirations.

Benefits...

Person ☐ Practice ☐ Policy ☐ Perception ☐

How to do it:

- First and foremost, make sure your organisation, at every level, is committed to the idea and principles of supported volunteering. It is useful, for example, to draw up a policy on supported volunteering that will apply throughout the organisation.
- A list of potential volunteering activities that fit with organisational objectives should be developed in partnership with service users.
- Match the potential volunteer’s needs and interests to a volunteering opportunity within the organisation, if possible. If there is no match, discuss with the volunteer what opportunities they might like to engage in, determine if the organisation can accommodate this. If not, signpost to another organisation that can meet the volunteers’ needs.
- Develop a step by step ‘Volunteer Pathway’ which details movement from recruitment through to registration, induction, goal planning, carrying out tasks, on-going support, feedback and signposting.
- Ensure the volunteer is matched with a specific person who they can go to and who will support them through their volunteering experience. In addition, consider peer support buddies.
- Carry out an induction with the new volunteer, with the process being similar to that of a staff induction.
- The volunteer and staff member should co-create a goal plan for their volunteering, which should take into account what the volunteer wants to get from their volunteering role; future aspirations and support.
- Make sure you plan and carry out volunteer review meetings on an agreed periodic basis to ensure that support requirements are being met throughout the volunteering placement.
• Ensure that you have an appropriate volunteer exit strategy, and that staff conducting the exit strategy have up to date knowledge of opportunities that they can signpost the volunteer to.
• Encourage volunteers to collate a portfolio evidencing their volunteer activities. This could work toward accreditation at a later date.

Pros
• Provides opportunities for developing skills (gaining new ones or brushing up on old ones).
• Provides work experience and routes into employment. Enables the volunteer to play an active part in an organisation and feel a sense of achievement.
• Provides an opportunity to become the provider of a service rather than the recipient.
• Increases self–esteem, confidence and sense of self-worth.
• Develops social networks and opportunities to enjoy new experiences.
• Provides structure and continuity.
• Brings a service user angle to activities, as well as new perspectives and ideas.
• Improves volunteering practice, and general practice within an organisation, by ensuring inclusiveness, diversity and accessibility.
• Provides extra capacity for the organisation.

Cons
• Project funding coming to an end in projects can cause volunteering placements to end earlier and more abruptly than planned, potentially leaving volunteers with a sense of abandonment. Make sure you have considered how you would deal with this situation and how you would discuss this with supported volunteers.

Resources
• High
• A volunteer coordinator or individual/s responsible for supported volunteering.
• Clear policy and procedures on volunteering within the organisation.
18. Media Opportunities
From time to time, service users may be asked to represent themselves or their service in media opportunities. This could be, for example, radio and television or newspaper journalism. In some cases they will be interviewed alone, in others with staff or within other service users. It may be in-house or external to the service.

Benefits...

| Person | Practice | Policy | Perception |

How to do it:
It is very important in all cases that service users are made aware of the possibility of misrepresentation and any other negative repercussions as a result of media work.

- The organisation should develop a waiver if they are asking the service user to do this work.
- Consideration should be given to the planning, preparation and briefing for service users in order to minimise the potential for a service user to feel misrepresented in any resulting media output.
- It is vital that service users are supported throughout this entire process and that organisations are fully aware of their important role as mediators between the service user and the media.
- Investigate the journalist as much as possible to ensure they are socially responsible.
- Ensure that time for both pre and de-briefs is put aside, taking into account realistic deadlines.
- The service user must be made aware of the fact that they have the right to refuse and to stipulate their own conditions.
- Organisations should provide written literature about themselves in order to ensure correct details are included.
- Practice role playing with the service user in advance and ensure they have a plan about what they want to say. Ensure that questions don’t stray from the topic.
- Have an agreement laid out in advance with the journalist before print or viewing, the service user is able to verify that it is correctly representative of their opinion.
- Try to ensure that ‘volunteers’ are compensated with incentives provided either by your service or the journalists (this can be vouchers, cash incentives, hospitality, etc.)
- If possible, try to establish an agreement on behalf of the journalist to supply a ‘copy’ of the material produced for the service user (for example, DVD or newspaper).
- The service user should be informed of the degree of anonymity offered by, for example, pixilation, silhouette, voice distortion. If a service user agrees to this compromise to the terms of agreement, it must be witnessed by a representative of the organisation.

Pros
- Improved perception of service users and possible reduction of stigma of certain groups being represented.
- Experience and skills building for service users.
- Awareness raising and exposure of projects and services.
- Can be an empowering experience for service users.
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<th>Cons</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Potential for misrepresentation by the media: not only can there be misquotes, but addresses or photographs or names printed that the service user may not wish to be made public.</td>
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<td>• Could be disempowering if best practice guidelines are not taken into account.</td>
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<td>• Service users may regret the decision to ‘go public’ in the future.</td>
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<td>• Medium</td>
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<td>• Staff support time and in meeting with the media representatives.</td>
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<td>• Volunteer expenses.</td>
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<td>• Waiver development.</td>
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19. Recruitment of Staff

If facilitated correctly, this is a very meaningful and important area for service users to participate. Involvement in the recruitment of staff offers a significant means of involving service users at shared control levels within the organisation. Involvement should be considered throughout the entire recruitment process, from advertising the post right through to selection and induction. This level of involvement can require a high level of resources, as for involvement to be meaningful it takes more than just having a service user on the interview panel. For example, questions should be representative of a wider group of service users, not just the person on the interview panel asking the question. Further, final decisions need to involve the service users in equal stake hold with staff.

Benefits...

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How to do it:

- Involvement should be considered at every level of the recruitment process from advertising, through to short listing, interviewing and induction.
- Service users need to feel that their contribution at every stage has been valuable and that the outcome has been a team effort.
- Knowledge of the organisation’s recruitment process is fundamental to the whole process – service users should be informed throughout. Pollicises on the selection process need to be familiarised (for example, scoring, a tie situation, reserve candidates, collective decision making and confidentiality).
- A comprehensive outline and discussion on the job role/description being advertised is also important.
- A pre-interview briefing is very important on the day of interview in order to familiarise staff and service users with the questions and help create a comfortable environment.
- Preparation of the room is also important, service users should be involved in deciding room layout, so as both they and the candidate feel comfortable. Drinking water, relevant equipment in workable order, and any paperwork should be made available.
- On the day, it is helpful to divide up tasks and set out who is going to, for example, do the introductions, talk about the job and the organisation, ask which questions and exit candidates in a friendly manner.
- Be aware of possible discomfort service users may feel with the responsibilities associated with making decisions and choosing candidates.
- There are several ways in which service users can be involved in the recruitment of staff, someone involved in one aspect of the process does not necessitate being involved in another. For example, a group of service users may determine the questions to be asked on the day, but not be involved in the interview process itself.
- It is important that service users have the option to be involved in the entire process, or in specific aspects that are most appropriate for themselves and the service.
- Considerations should be taken around how much time and capacity the organisation has towards involving in recruitment. Ideally, service users should be involved in the whole process but if time restrictions make this tokenistic, then time should be spent more on a specific aspect (for example, wider service user consultation on what questions are important to ask).
**Pros**

- Empowering experience and greater understanding and experience of the recruitment process.
- Service users feel valued.
- Service users build a wide variety of skills.
- Great addition for a service user’s CV.
- Enhances interview skills/good listening skills.
- A greater understanding of employer best practice recruitment guidelines.
- New staff members get early insight into the importance of a service user involvement ethos.
- A great opportunity for staff and service users to work together.

**Cons**

- Training needs to be developed and delivered which can be time consuming.
- Service user expenses need to be covered.
- Literacy issues can pose problems.
- Adequate staff time to support process.
- Lengthy preparation time.
- Difficult if staff positions need to be filled quickly.

**Resources**

- High
  - Training time for staff.
  - Training, preparation, practice and role play time for service users.
  - Travel expenses.
  - Hospitality.
  - Preparation time for staff.
  - Space/venue.
20. Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is a 1:1 non-judgemental relationship between a mentor and a participant. The mentor’s role is to help the participant with some aspect of their life. They will listen to the participant, discuss solutions and set goals. Mentors rely upon having had similar experiences to the participant which is more likely to ensure a greater understanding of their issues. The participant will have the chance to share issues with someone who has experienced similar situations. This will encourage sharing, communication and support with future direction and opportunity. A mentor should help the participant to believe in themselves and boost their confidence. A mentor should ask questions and challenge, while providing guidance and encouragement. Mentoring allows the participant to explore new ideas with confidence. The participant has a chance to explore issues, aspirations, opportunities and goals, which can lead to greater self-confidence and self-awareness.

Benefits...

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How to do it:

For peer mentoring to be meaningful, the programme must be planned with adequate funding in place including capacity for a staff member to coordinate the programme, and cover service user expenses, training & resource materials for mentors.

- The coordinators role should be to fully support the mentors and participants throughout the entire mentoring process.
- It is useful to research other organisations that currently run or have in the past run a peer mentoring programme. Meeting with key members of staff who coordinated this work is hugely advantageous and might help to flag up any potential pitfalls to avoid.
- Recruit mentors. When recruiting mentors, create and follow a list of criteria for the role, for example dedication, reliability, commitment and non-judgemental attitudes.
- It is crucial that these are adhered to in order for the potential participants to feel safe in the developing relationship.
- Training for mentors must be delivered and designed to address varying skill levels and abilities. This training should cover the following topics:
  I. The background and purpose of the project
  II. Specific information relating to the client group
  III. The nature of the mentoring relationship
  IV. The roles and responsibilities of both parties
  V. Vulnerable adult protection and equal opportunities
  VI. Boundaries and confidentiality
  VII. Personal safety
  VIII. Boundaries and confidentiality
  IX. Dealing with challenging behaviour
  X. Listening and communication skills
- Participants should identify goals they wish to achieve initially with the coordinator, and then explore in depth with their mentor.
- Match up mentors with participants with a ratio preferably on a 1:1 (after a mentor has considerable experience this could be increased to a 1:2 ratio).
- Introduce relevant mentor paperwork in relation to supporting and developing their mentee.
• Ensure move on options through signposting and providing information and advice.

Pros
• Encourages people to support each other.
• Participants build confidence, self-awareness and learn new skills.
• The process can be empowering for all involved.
• Participants are given extensive training which can be accredited.
• Can increase individuals’ social networks.
• Participants will learn more about opportunities in their local areas.

Cons
• Resource intensive in terms of staff time and planning.
• Can be difficult to access suitable training programmes both internally and externally.
• Continuous staff support for mentors and mentees should be provided.
• Sufficient literacy skills required for completing necessary documentation.
• Mentors may have shared barriers/experiences and so emotional support may be required.
• Resource intensive staff time in promoting programme/ recruiting.

Resources
• High
• An individual responsible for developing and supporting the programme.
• Developing of training, advertising and recruitment materials.
• Supporting documentation for both mentors and mentees.
• Access to phones.
• Out of pocket expenses.
21. Service User Led Projects/Organisations

This tool provides information and considerations on both entirely service user led organisations and on specific service user led projects within organisations.

A service user led project is a stand-alone work project which is designed, developed and run by service users. They are unlikely to be successfully developed within organisations that have not had considerable experience of service user involvement or with service users who have not themselves been previously involved in service user involvement activities. These projects can form 'organically' at the instigation of service users and could include any of the tools that are outlines in this toolkit.

Service user led organisations are less common however they do exist and some are very successful. Success is often dependent on a host organisation supporting service user groups toward full organisational independence. A service user led organisation is likely to have a service user majority on the management committee and service user responsibility for the recruitment, retention and support of staff.

### Benefits...

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### How to do it:

**Service user led projects**
- The role of the host organisation is simply to support the project and, when asked, assist as service users see fit.
- Training should be provided in order for service users to carry out all the good practice guidelines and tools for service user involvement in addition to any other training needs that may be required.

**Service user led organisations**
- It may be that a host organisation will support a service user organisation until they are able to stand independently. In order to do this as successfully as possible it is vital that communication routes are open at all times.
- Distinctions between service user run and service user led organisations should be considered by all involved. For example, there is no reason why a service user led organisation should not have paid staff who are not service users. However, a service user led organisation should have a board and management made up primarily of service users or ex-service users.
- Considerations in policy development should consider when a service user is no longer a service user.
- There should also be considerations around the reasons why a service user’s particular experience of being a service user or having experience with a service user involvement are relevant to various posts within the organisation and the management committee.
**Pros**

**Service user led projects**
- Service users have ownership over a project which they have instigated and generally such projects are enthusiastically delivered and received.
- Projects provide a wide range of volunteering opportunities for service users.
- Tasks can be widely varied and can help service users gain new skills and increase their confidence.

**Service led organisations**
- Organisations benefit from service user experiences.
- Service user led projects are usually well received and gain extra credibility because they are user-led – they seem as bottom up, as opposed to top down agendas.

**Cons**

**Service user led projects**
- Such projects can be unstable as they are often entirely dependent on volunteers for their management and delivery.
- Truly service user led projects are often poorly funded or completely unfunded.

**Service user led organisations**
- Service users may approach an organisation to seek funding on their behalf. As long as the line of management for the funding is agreed and the service user led nature of the project is understood and agreed by all parties, this need not compromise the project.
- Service user led projects can suffer if funders, organisations and individual professionals are unwilling to support them.
- Can be tokenistic, if service users are in positions on management committees and managerial posts without the necessary skills and experience to fulfil the requirements of these posts.

**Resources**
- High
- These will need to be monitored and reviewed regularly but could largely be around:
  - I. Staff time.
  - II. Work space.
  - III. Administration support.
  - IV. Expenses.
  - V. Hospitality.
22. Care Planning & Review

Person centred care planning and review is integral to what many services do on a day to day basis to support their service users. Care planning allows the service user and the service to identify goals, aspirations, and desired outcomes of their engagement with the service. This information is mainly used by the service provider to plan a programme of treatment and care appropriate to the needs of the service user. Review meetings are held at regular intervals during a service user’s engagement with the service to revisit the care plan, review progress and set new goals. A care plan can be an effective involvement tool, providing it is fully co-developed and service user involvement questions and areas for discussion are built in (Please see the Questionnaires tool for more information).

Benefits...

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How to do it:

- Consider the care planning and review tools that you use. Consider how much scope there is within the tools to discuss and note service users’ desired outcomes, aspirations and reasons for engagement with the service.
- Where possible, seek input from your service users on what should be covered in the care planning and review tools and meetings.
- Alongside the required fields and questions, boxes or sections can be provided within the form to record service user comments during the care planning or review meeting.
- The meeting can be used to explain your service’s approach to service user involvement – any written service user involvement policies or statements could be given to the service user and discussed during the meeting.
- Questions specifically seeking feedback from the service user on their experience of using the service can be added to the care planning and review forms.
- Provide an opportunity during the review meetings to highlight, discuss and record any service user involvement activity that the service user has participated in – this can be a good indication of growth in self – confidence and self-esteem.
- If notes are taken during the meeting these should be read back to the service user to confirm accuracy of recording.
- Ensure that the service users see a final copy of care planning and review paperwork once all discussions and comments have been typed up.
- Care plans and review documents should be signed by both the worker and the service user to evidence agreement.
- Where possible, service users should be provided with their own copies of their care plan and review forms for their own records.
- Consent should be sought from service users before any comments or views expressed during a care planning or review session can be shown to or discussed with anyone else.
- You should make sure that service users fully understand how their comments may be used.
### Pros
- Builds service user involvement into the service from very early engagement.
- Provides one to one opportunity to discuss service users’ views of the service that other involvement methods may not.
- Can be useful in supporting service users to recognise the progress that they’ve made.
- Provides evidence to funders and commissioners of person-centred practice and service user involvement.

### Cons
- Care planning often takes place during the very early stages of engagement in a service therefore service users may be uncomfortable or nervous which may distort responses to questions.
- Depending on the nature of the service, care planning processes can be quite strict for necessary reasons meaning less opportunity to be flexible or to change things.
- Service user involvement information gathered during care planning can only be used with the consent of the service user and must be anonymous.

### Resources
- Low
- Interview facilitator.
- A quiet space where you will not be interrupted.
- Paper/forms and pen.
- Time to carry out a review of current care planning/review paperwork.
23. Involving Through Technology (I.T)

I.T service user involvement tools include: texting, on-line surveys, on-line discussion forums/blogs, social networking, ratings and voting, and electronic voting. Technology has been used in recent years to supplement service user involvement work; for example, surveys can be carried out in 1:1 interviews and then supplemented by those completed through an on-line survey.

- Texting: Short typed messages from phones and computers.
- On-line Surveys: A number of questions to be answered on-line. Links can be posted on websites, a forum, and social networking sites or in an email.
- On-line Discussion Groups/Blogs: An interactive website that can feature video, pictures and information, where comments can be easily left.
- Social Networking: Connects groups of people through a website. When you join you can create your own or a group profile/identity.
- Rating & Voting: Works in a number of ways (such as feedback rating on Amazon or eBay) and can be attached to websites.
- Electronic Voting: Typically used at large events (e.g. ‘Who wants to be a Millionaire’) to collate views, or perhaps check understanding.

Other methods that could be considered are RSS feeds (updates to email), Wikis, Video on demand, Digital interactive T.V touch screens and internet phone (e.g. Skype) or telephone. The choices you make are dependent on the number of people you wish to target; there is a wealth of information about all of these options on-line.

Benefits...

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How to do it:

Each of these tools has a number of considerations; the following points are generalised across all I.T tools:

- Recognise that there will only be a certain amount of people who will be able or want to access involvement opportunities through I.T.
- Check what’s already out there. For example, joining an already established on-line forum as opposed to setting up an on-line discussion forum.
- Ensure feedback mechanisms are planned from the beginning.
- Ensure general agreement and permission from service users with these methods of communication (where appropriate).
- Consider legal issues relating to confidentiality, data protection and privacy.

Pros

- Can be more convenient as service users can participate when it suits them.
- I.T tends to provide faster and more abundant information.
- **Texting**: instant communication as most people keep their phones with them (more have phones that internet access), wide ranging, many are comfortable and familiar with it, can
provide routine information inexpensively, people with uncertain addresses are more contactable. Can overcome problems of burnout and consultation fatigue.

- **On-line surveys**: quick and easy to fill in, avoids printing and postage costs, less time to administer, can easily be made more visibly appealing, people may feel more confident about anonymity, environmentally friendly, easy to analyse returns.

- **On-line discussion groups/blogs**: can be contributed to by one or many individuals, quick and easy to set up (in comparison to a website), useful method of feedback, transparent, great for people who are busy.

- **Social networking**: sharing info an organising meetings made easier, a number of people are familiar with the process already, can communicate with other groups as well as individuals more easily, very popular with young people. Can be adapted to a small or large piece of work.

- **Ratings and Voting**: easy way to get a snapshot of people’s views or feedback, very quick, great if already using website or blog.

- **Electronic Voting**: Many people are familiar with approach from television, very transparent, instant, can be used in a fun manner (even with serious issues), accessible to those who find it difficult to speak or write in public.

**Cons**

- Not ideal means of communication as will not substitute traditional face to face methods of communication.

- Is only successful if used to compliment other tools, the danger is that although these methods can be quick and easy, they will only reach those who find I.T. methods accessible (when working with multiple exclusion issues i.e. literacy, language and I.T inaccessibility, this figure can be very low).

- Costs are often not justified if only targeting small groups of people.

- **Texting**: only short messages can be conveyed.

- **On-line surveys**: they are easily ignored, only likely to be seen by those who use emails regularly, no opportunity to clarify meaning, often have low response rate, may require technical expertise to create and devise analysis.

- **On-line discussion groups/blogs**: needs monitored, needs guidelines for good practice.

- **Social networking**: needs close monitoring, administration rights and restricted information through privacy settings, may have to have advertising on site.

- **Ratings and Voting**: yields very small amount of information. Needs consideration around transparency (if others can see previous votes they may be influenced by them, it could be that you show previous votes only after someone has voted themselves). Consideration also needs to be given to how many times an individual can vote.

- **Electronic Voting**: not necessarily representative as dependent on ability to participate, interest levels and only people attending conference will be involved. Does offer clarity if question not understood, or answer not black and white, requires technical expertise and can be expensive.

**Resources**

- **Low/ Medium/ High**

- Varying resources dependent on IT tool used.

- Technical expertise.

- Technical equipment.

- Staff time for design, analysis, consultation, feedback etc.

- Time to plan with service users to test accessibility.
24. Your Example

Benefits...

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How to do it:

Pros

Cons

Resources

- Low/ Medium/ High
What the research says

**Good Communication**

Good quality two-way communication between users and decision-makers benefit users and promotes change in organisations.

The views of both Service and Service User are equally valid. Often Service Users perceptions of Service Management can be categorised as a “them and us” divide. While inequalities in knowledge, resources and power are undeniable, a conscious effort to put them to one side to enable an honest exchange of views are crucial for enabling change.

**Resources**

A question often raised by Managers in relation to User Involvement is the allocation of resources to promote User Involvement. While money does help to promote service user involvement, the most important resource allocation to promote user involvement and change in organisations is:

**Staff**
Specialist posts or designated parts of job description that focused on user involvement give a more defined impetus to communication with users.

**Time**
The time, management and front-line staff spend getting user feedback and getting people involved is a key determinant of the breadth and depth of change.
Section 3
Outcomes
Evaluating Service User Involvement

What is ‘evaluation’?
Evaluation can be defined as:
- collecting information that allows an assessment of how well a programme, service or organisation does what it has set out to do, in terms of its effectiveness and efficiency. ³
- a process of assessment which identifies and analyses the nature and impact of processes and programmes. Evaluation ideally starts as the project or programme begins and continues throughout the project’s life (and after). ⁴

‘Realistic evaluation’ is a commonly-used approach to evaluating projects that involve complex interactions between people. It involves looking at three different aspects of the project. ⁵

- Context – particularly the culture
- Mechanism – what methods or processes are used
- Outcome – the impact

This approach does more than identify ‘what works’. It is also able to explain ‘what works, for which people and in what circumstances’. This is crucial to evaluating complex interventions like UI because the attitudes, opinions and motivation of the individuals involved all have a big influence on its success.

Why evaluate user involvement?
Evaluating user involvement means addressing the question: Is user involvement making a difference?
Evaluating user involvement can help:
- identify what works (or not)
- generate evidence of the value of UI – ‘prove that it works’
- celebrate success - recognise achievements
- share learning
- improve the planning of future projects
- provide another mechanism for involving users

Other ways that user involvement is often assessed including:
- Assessing plans for SUI in a project proposal – this is likely to involve using a checklist to assess whether a project proposal has clarified the purpose and aims of involving people and properly planned for their involvement (e.g. budgeted appropriately for users’ expenses).

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- **Assessing whether standards of good practice are being met** – this often takes the form of a self-assessment tool or an independent assessment that uses a checklist of ‘indicators’ to look for evidence of good practice (e.g. checking whether all the people involved have been offered training prior to their involvement).

- **Monitoring SUI** – this involves checking whether agreed plans for UI have been implemented and delivered – ‘did we do what we said we would do?’ It simply involves checking whether actions have been followed (e.g. checking that people did all receive papers two weeks before a meeting).

- **Measuring performance** – either of an individual or of a whole organisation. This involves measuring whether *agreed targets* have been met (e.g. whether for example 80% of all committee meetings are attended by at least two service users/carers) or a whether a desired quality of involvement has been achieved (e.g. whether for example 100% of all the people who were involved feel they have made a difference).

An evaluation may also involve assessing whether good practice was followed and whether agreed actions were taken forward. But the key distinction is that an evaluation goes on to ask – *what difference has this made?*

**What to look for when evaluating SUI in services/projects**

**Context**
- What were objectives of the project?
- How clear were they and how were they communicated?
- How were they set? How much did various stakeholders participate in setting them?
- Have they changed over time? If so, how and why?
- To what extent have the stated objectives been met or fulfilled?
- Is this project part of a wider programme/strategy?
- How does it relate to that larger strategy structurally and informally?
- What other factors have influenced the outcome (e.g. people, groups, budget, organisational policies, professional expectations, and limits to expertise)?
- What impact have these factors had?

**Mechanism / process**
- What is the level of involvement in this project? Is this an appropriate level of involvement for this particular project and circumstances?
- What methods were used? Were these appropriate?
- Were users given training?
- Was each method evaluated and the lessons used to improve future involvement?
- Were users involved in identifying the methods?
- Which users were involved? How many? Which types of people and groups were involved?
- What were their roles?
• Do stakeholders believe these people were representative – e.g. included hard to hear groups.

Outputs
• Where the deliverables delivered – e.g. were reports, events, questionnaires completed, interviews completed etc.

Outcomes
What changes have been achieved as a result of UI including:
• impact on individuals
• groups of people
• institutions and organisations
• immediate or long term change
• small scale or systematic changes
• increased trust amongst stakeholders
• increased level of ownership of process
• increased capacity amongst stakeholders
• changes in values, priorities, aims and objectives
• new relationships formed
• increased openness and transparency

The criteria used to measure outcomes need to be specific to the project.

Measuring impact
Impacts
• Has this initiative encouraged more users to use our services?
• Do more people think the organisation is doing a good job?
• Has it encouraged people to get involved again because they think it is worthwhile?
• Are we now more accountable for the way we spend our money?
• Are we able to reach people from different backgrounds?
• Have we enabled people to make new contacts/ join new networks/ has this increased equality of access to decision-making or services?
• Have we saved money by making services more reflective of users’ needs and not spending money on unwanted services?
• Has it been quicker easier to make decisions about priorities?

As the implementation of this strategy is based on “shared learning” the following may offer helpful criteria for measuring impact

• New decisions - New services influenced by UI Groups/service users
• Changed decisions - Changes to existing services
• Supported decisions - Projects supported by UI groups/service users
• Decisions with no influence - Projects/services/decisions not influenced by UP groups/service users
- **Negative decisions** - Negative decisions from UI groups/service users regarding Action’s activities
Developing Indicators for Service User Involvement

**Definitions**

A performance indicator can be defined as:

An indicator that provides information (either qualitative or quantitative) on the extent to which a policy, program or initiative is achieving its outcomes.

A criterion or measure for monitoring or evaluating the efficiency or effectiveness of a system or service, which may be used to demonstrate accountability and to identify areas for improvement.

There is a lot of overlap between defining good practice, measuring performance and evaluating user involvement, as these often all contribute to a common goal. For example in aiming ‘to increase the involvement of people from new communities’ an organisation might decide to:

- Publicly sign up to the principle of good practice ‘Ensuring diversity amongst the users and carers who get involved’
- Measure performance in terms of the numbers of people from new communities who are involved across the organisation
- Evaluate the success of an outreach post in terms of how well they engage people from new communities

So the same ‘measure’ e.g. ‘the numbers of people involved from new communities’ might be used in a variety of ways for example, to check whether good practice is being followed within a particular department, to measure the organisation’s performance as a whole or evaluate an individual activity or project.

**Performance indicators** are distinguished by the fact that they measure whether an organisation has achieved pre-agreed targets (e.g. 20% of involved users come from new community groups) and tend to relate to the performance of an organisation/department/member of staff as a whole, rather than to individual projects. They are checks and balances that are limited in scope and used only to find out whether progress is being made in the right direction. (In contrast, evaluation tends to involve a more in-depth investigation).

**Examples of Performance Indicators**

These performance indicators are summarised below, grouped into the following themes:

- Organisational performance
- Team/department performance
- Staff performance
- Process – measures of ‘doing it well’
- User views
**Organisational performance**
- An X% increase in the range and type of opportunities for users to get involved
- An X% increase in the number of users involved across the organisation as a whole or in various initiatives/departments

**Team/ department performance**
- User involvement is incorporated into each team or services work plan
- User involvement is incorporated into staff appraisal and personal objectives
- An X% increase in the number of projects that have involved users
- An X% increase in the number of initiatives influenced by users

**Staff performance**
- X% of staff know there is a user involvement strategy and what it means for them
- X% of staff know that user involvement is a corporate objective
- X% of staff know who has the lead for user involvement in their team
- Key training and support requirements identified by staff in the past and present have been responded to
- X% of staff are aware of organisational guidelines on good practice in user involvement and use these guidelines to plan and develop user involvement in their work

**Process**
- Users are involved at early stages when developing plans in X% of projects
- Information about users’ needs is actively sought in advance of every event and meeting to inform planning in X% of projects
- An X% increase in satisfaction levels of ‘good’ or ‘very good’ in event questionnaires
- An X% increase in the number of people from Groups of Interest getting involved
- A minimum of two users are present on all working groups in X% of cases
- User involvement seminars and training days are held annually
- Monitoring of postal, telephone and email correspondence shows that users’ preferred communication methods are used in X% of cases
- Feedback is given to people who have been involved about the difference their involvement has made in X% of projects

**User views**
- An X% increase in positive feedback from users reflecting improved user experience
- An X% increase in users feeling that the organisation takes notice of their views/ that they can influence organisational decisions
- Key training and support requirements identified by users in the past and present have been responded to
**Developing and using performance indicators**

An organisation needs to develop performance indicators that will contribute to its overall mission for user involvement – so it is important to set performance indicators within the current strategic context. For example if an organisation is aiming to shift the level of user involvement, it could think about introducing performance measures that relate to the depth and breadth of involvement e.g. ‘An X% increase in the number of projects that are collaborative rather than consultative’. Some organisations might be more interested in retaining users who are already involved and therefore set a target relating to the % of users channelled into other activities, whilst other organisations might be more interested in increasing recruitment and therefore set a target relating to the number of new users who get involved. Performance indicators are therefore likely to be specific to the organisation.

Setting targets may also require establishing a baseline. For example one organisation might discover that it is only paying users expenses within two weeks in 20% of cases and set a target to increase that performance to 50% of cases. Another organisation might want to increase its target to 90% of cases, having already proved to be successful 70% of the time.

Performance indicators can be changed on a regular basis and targets may be changed annually e.g. 10% increase in year 1, 30% increase in year 2 etc. It is helpful to ensure some continuity in the use of performance indicators to make it possible to observe trends.

Performance indicators are only one part of assessing how well an organisation is involving users. They are particularly useful in revealing where things are not going well. If an organisation finds it is not meeting one of its performance targets, it can investigate the problems in more depth and then determine what changes are needed to bring its performance back up again.

Users can be involved in developing performance indicators, measuring progress against these indicators and reviewing the results to determine subsequent priorities for action.
Activity 4
Activity 5
**Action Plan**

The following steps are those needed to achieve your action. Fill in each section with as much information as possible. You may find it useful to revisit the plan as you carry out your planned action.

**Describe the action**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Type of Involvement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Information</td>
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**Who needs to be involved:**

**Role of service user:**

**How will Service Users be informed about the initiative**

**Investment of the Service Resources needed**

**How will Service Users be selected for the Initiative**

**How will Service users be prepared to take part in the Initiative**

**What needs to be developed and completed prior to the initiative**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What tools will be used</strong></th>
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<th><strong>What are the intended outcomes</strong></th>
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<th><strong>Evaluation Methods and Review</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What tools will be used to evaluate the initiative</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Feedback Communication</strong></td>
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<td><strong>What methods of feedback will you use to report the outcomes to Service Users</strong></td>
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<th><strong>Indicators:</strong></th>
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<th><strong>Timescales:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Area of Involvement</td>
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| Information Provision & Exchange | • Service user handbooks or welcome packs  
• Service User Charter (QuADS Requirement)  
• Information on the types of services provided, the standards they can expect and the ways in which they can be involved in the service.  
• (QuADS Requirement) (NDRIC)  
• Screening Assessment (NDRIC)  
• Service users have access to written information on self-help and user advocacy groups on request (QuADS Requirement)  
• Involvement in developing Care plans (NDRIC)  
• Interagency Case Meetings (NDRIC)  
• Exit Interviews (NDRIC)  
• Service User Charter of Rights and Responsibilities (QuADS Requirement)  
• Care Plan Review  
• Gaps and Blocks (NDRIC) |
| Consultation & Involvement | • Established management mechanism for consultation with/involvement of service users in decision making  
• In terms of Quality Assurance an audit of service user satisfaction is carried out at regular intervals  
• The service policies and procedures are reviewed in consultation with service users  
• governance policies  
• human resource policies  
• service provision policies  
• service user related policies  
• care and case management policies  
• Service users involved in monitoring implantation, and compliance with Assessment, Care-planning, Care Review, Complaints. |
| Planning, Development and Improvements of Service | • Service Users participate in service monitoring and review, which include efficiency and effectiveness (outputs and outcomes).1  
• Our Strategic Plan is reviewed every 12 months as part of the business planning process in consultation with Service Users  
• Service Users participate in the development and review of our services human resource strategy  
• Mission statements are regularly reviewed in consultation with service users  
• Service Users provide training to staff on access issues (e.g. trans-cultural approaches, disability awareness).  
• Service User participation is included in the system for monitoring complaints by number, nature and outcome  
• Service Users participate in the monitoring and evaluating compliance with standards for referral effectiveness |
| Strategic and Policy Development | • Service User Forums and Representative groups  
• Service User reps on Taskforce  
• Service User reps on National/Strategic groups and regulatory bodies  
• SUI in workforce development  
• SU/ Peer research |
The Process for Service User Involvement

**Purpose**
- The intent of the Service
- The area of involvement
- The level of change (4P's)
- Identifying potential barriers
- The role of the Service User

**Methods & Investment**
- The methods of Participation
- The methods of Communication & Feedback
- The investment of the service

**Outcome**
- The review of the methods
- The Action Plan
- The Indicators
- The outcomes
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