

Service User Involvement Partnership – Tip sheet No 1

1.0 Preparing for an External Audit of Service User Involvement

- 1.1 Increasingly, organisations with responsibility for auditing and monitoring health and care services are looking for evidence that service users of such services are appropriately involved in their own treatment and care. These organisations can include the Care Commission, NHS Boards, Social Work Inspectorate and other commissioners and funders of services at a local level. In most cases, there is a requirement to **evidence** methods and structures of involvement and participation.
- 1.2 The following paper gives some tips and advice on how services can start to shape their service user involvement practice to ensure that they can be prepared to report on and evidence service user involvement as and when required.

2.0 Be Informed

- 2.1 Information is available from most auditing bodies on their requirements. Make sure you are familiar with any standards, outcomes or targets that you are expected to meet. For example, information on The National Quality Standards for Substance Misuse Services or the new Care Commission Grading System can be downloaded from the internet.
- 2.2 Most auditing bodies cannot advise on or prescribe good practice to services as they would then effectively be assessing their own practice. However, the National Quality Standards for Substance Misuse Services was accompanied by a Good Practice Guide on Service User Involvement to help services meet the Standards. Copies of the guidance can be downloaded from the internet. You could also familiarise yourself with organisations which may be able to provide support and advice on service user involvement such as the Service User Involvement Partnership (Greater Glasgow & Clyde).

3.0 Tips and Advice

- 3.1 In most cases, it is good practice for services to be able to provide evidence that they have considered service user involvement **and** evidence that service users are being involved.
 - Have a service user involvement strategy and/or action plan for the service which is **written down** and can be provided to any interested parties
 - Ensure that there is clear evidence of service user involvement on an individual basis by evidencing service user involvement in **care planning**. This can simply be done by ensuring that each service user signs a copy of their care plan and where possible, receives a copy of their care plan.
 - Show that a **range** of methods of involvement have been considered, and if necessary put in place to ensure that service users have options as to how they are involved

- Involve service users in the development of a range of methods and **evidence the process** for doing this e.g. minutes of meetings with service users
 - Demonstrate methods which allow service users to **comment on the quality of care** e.g. use suggestion boxes, encourage comments on the quality of care in service user satisfaction surveys, bring in independent facilitators to consult with service users on the quality of care
 - Show that **changes in service provision** have resulted from service user involvement by providing regular feedback to service users on how their comments are being responded to by the service
 - Demonstrate that service user involvement is **not a one-off activity**
 - Services may want to consider providing service users with information on standards of care that they should expect e.g. provide information on the National Quality Standards for Substance Misuse Services or on the Care Commission Grading System. Some of the information available is very service focused – services may want to consider **translating the information** into a more accessible format for their service users.
 - **Service user involvement in the recruitment and training of staff** is becoming increasingly important. Services may want to start this process at a basic level to begin with by inviting service users to comment on the Person Specification for particular posts, or by giving service users an opportunity to submit questions that they think should be asked of prospective candidates. Again, the process for involving service users should be evidenced in minutes or notes of meetings with service users.
 - Services looking to access **independent facilitation** at low cost could perhaps seek to make reciprocal arrangements with another service provider from a different organisation. SUIP could also provide this service on request.
 - Try to think creatively with regards to involving your service users, and keep it fresh – what might have worked for one group of service users may not work with another. Service user involvement methods should be reviewed and if necessary revised on a regular basis.
- 3.2 Whatever forms of service user involvement the service employs, make sure that all aspects of that activity are clearly recorded, perhaps in a service user involvement file. Examples might include, records of attendance at relevant training or meetings (staff and service users), minutes of meetings, copies of training and staff service user development activity undertaken, copies of contribution to newsletters, recording of suggestions and service response from suggestion boxes, SU consultations or focus groups, SUI in recruitment or peer support/mentoring activity.