

Gwent Supporting People Service User Involvement Principles

1. What is Service User Involvement?

- A service user is anyone who has received the service provided to them to assist them in relation to homelessness or receipt of Supporting People services.
- Involvement requires the organisation to actively seek the views of users through means most appropriate for the service user, and to incorporate those views in its service review processes
(WAG Definitions)
- Service User involvement is undertaken by the informed choice of the participant
- The expected benefits of Service User involvement in Supporting People Planning, Commissioning and Reviewing include:
 - Better designed services to meet the needs of users
 - Improved understanding of client group needs
 - Efficiency savings
 - Identification and promotion of good practice
 - More service user confidence in the service
 - Develops service user personal capacity and understanding
 - Improved relationships between users and providers
 - Compliance with the Equality Act 2010

2. When and how will these principles be used in Gwent

- Service reviews and monitoring, through the shared Gwent methodology
- Strategic and operational planning of the Supporting People programme
- Service development and commissioning
- Information sharing about policy and programme updates and news

3. What are the shared Gwent Principles

- A variety of methods will be used to involve service users
- Existing frameworks, networks and methods will be used so as to reduce duplication and minimise resource requirements preferences and abilities
- Diversity issues will be taken into account to ensure that specific groups are not excluded from participating, this includes Welsh Speakers
- Information will be culturally and religiously sensitive
- Literacy issues and sensory impairment will be taken into account when undertaking participation methods to ensure that some people are not excluded by using some paper-based processes
- The location, venue and time of involvement opportunities and events will consider service users access needs, child-care responsibilities, employment and educational commitments as well as transportation requirements
- The use of incentives should be considered to maximise involvement and promote the principle of service user expertise within the involvement framework

- Seek to engage more hard-to-reach groups
- Recognition that service users with *protected characteristics*, as specified in the Equality Act 2010, may have different consultation needs, or a past track record of disadvantage or low participation, that may require additional resourcing for effective participation and inclusion
- We will work towards:
 - Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advancing Equality of Opportunity
 - Fostering good relations
- Where possible to maximise regional events to minimise resource requirements
- Ensure that there is service user consultation in the design, of new accommodation-based services to ensure their experience and expertise is utilised for the benefit of future service users
- Service user views have weighting in the review of services and are used to identify both good practice and areas for improvement in current services.
- Timely feedback on the decisions and actions resulting from service user involvement will be given to service users through methods identified
- We will not over-burden service users with irrelevant information
- Publications and other material will promote diversity and inclusion through the use of photographs, features and a variety of formats.

4. What are the Involvement Methods that will be used in Gwent

- Face to face interviews
- Focus groups
- Links to existing service user forums
- Questionnaires; including on-line options
- SP News in Gwent Newsletter
- Regional Inclusive Forum; where chairs of service user groups are included in initiation
- Annual Regional or local service user events
- Local Complaints policies

5. Background documents

- *Vale of Glamorgan Supporting People Service User Involvement Framework*; April 2010
- *Service User Involvement Framework for users of homelessness services*, Draft Guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government for Consultation; February 2011
- *National Principles of Public Engagement in Wales*, issued by Welsh Assembly Government; March 2011
- The Equality Act 2010, Equality and Human Rights Commission. There are eight protected characteristics of people who use services. These are: Disability, Sex (gender), Gender reassignment , Pregnancy and maternity , Race , Religion or belief, Sexual orientation , Age (expected April 2012)