



Service User Involvement Framework

Cwm Taf Supporting People

April 2014

1. Introduction:

The following document outlines the Cwm Taf Service User Framework. It has been developed in order to provide direction for engagements with Service users through consultation, partnership and collaboration and in order to meet Welsh Government requirements.

It is to be adopted by the Cwm Taf RCC, the local Supporting People teams working in the two Local Authorities and the Providers and Landlords providing services through Supporting People funding.

The Cwm Taf approach for the framework must recognise that a range of formal and informal mechanisms will be used to enable people to participate and share their views and experiences. One way, one approach and one process will not be sufficient. Our approach must recognise a range of activities and opportunities. Some will occur naturally whilst others will be planned. Above all what we do to engage with people must be creative and adaptable to meet the service user's needs.

Service user involvement can take many forms and be done in many different ways. However, it is about making sure that the views of the people who use the services have the chance to be heard in order to make real, sustainable changes.

We define Service User Involvement as 'the involvement of service users in the management, design and delivery of services'. This definition emphasises that involvement should encompass the full range of people's experiences, not just the things that providers and commissioners think are important and operates at various levels of involvement: giving people information is a start, but involvement can develop into service users influencing and planning work themselves or delivering services.

Service user participation is both a process and an outcome. It matters how people participate as well as what is achieved as a result of their participation. Participation should be an active process through which Service Users influence policy, shape service design and evaluate its delivery through a range of different methods and mechanisms. However, participation should not be confused with consultation and its outcome must be captured and recorded in order to inform evidence based decision making.

So we can achieve this it is important to highlight the differences between consultation and participation all of which will influence how we do things:

- **Consultation is seen as:** a formal process which asks for the views of interested groups and individuals.
- **Participation is seen as:** people being actively involved in policy development, service evaluation, service improvement, service design and delivery.
- **Tenant participation is seen as:** landlords or their agents working with tenants to agree how their homes and environment should be managed. Identifying what services and service improvements are needed, setting out how they will work with tenants to achieve what matters most and what is a priority.

2. Background

The Cwm Taf Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) is required to 'develop a mechanism/framework whereby service users can be involved in developing, commissioning and reviewing support services'. SPPG Guidance June 2013, Pg 14)

Many projects and many support providers can already demonstrate considerable experience and good practice in relation to user participation. However, there is much variability in the nature and level of involvement activity in some areas. Much of the information service users share is lost or not formally captured to provide an evidence base that can inform service design and feed the commissioning process. This cannot continue and all projects will hopefully play a part in facilitating activities, events, surveys, questionnaires and project meetings that are capable of enabling service users to participate in a meaningful way.

3. Service User Involvement Aims

The Service User Involvement Framework is designed to promote the benefits and opportunities for all service users to participate in the development and delivery of housing related support services at a local, regional and national level.

The service user involvement aims that we have established recognise that involving service users, by systematically listening to their experiences and providing them with opportunities to express their views, ideas and preferences at both an operational and strategic level is an important means of improving services in addition to developing people's confidence and capacity.

The framework aims to:

- Recognise that people should be supported to participate in a variety of ways and make best use of the skills, resources and relationships that support providers have with users of their service
- Ensure information is shared with as many people as possible in an appropriate and meaningful way.
- Ensure shared responsibility for involving and engaging service users in the delivery and development of high quality services.
- Ensure projects support people to participate in shaping and influencing how their projects and the programme operate.
- Recognise support providers have a legitimate role to play in shaping and influencing the programme, by advocating service user's views and supporting them to express their own views and the views of the people they have been asked to represent.

The Cwm Taf Regional Development Coordinator (RDC) organised a Regional Service User event to consult on developing the Service User Framework. A short questionnaire was also completed by service users who attended a Regional Provider service user meeting. The diagram below illustrates the comments made in relation to the below question:

How do you want to be involved with your Support Provider?



Service user consultation has identified the need to consider the above before undertaking any provider meetings, activities etc. These comments should inform the focus for any future service user involvement.

Key:

☐ = The group agreed that these were the comments that were considered as high priority.

4. Objectives

The Supporting People Programme Grant Guidance states that commissioners and service providers need to:

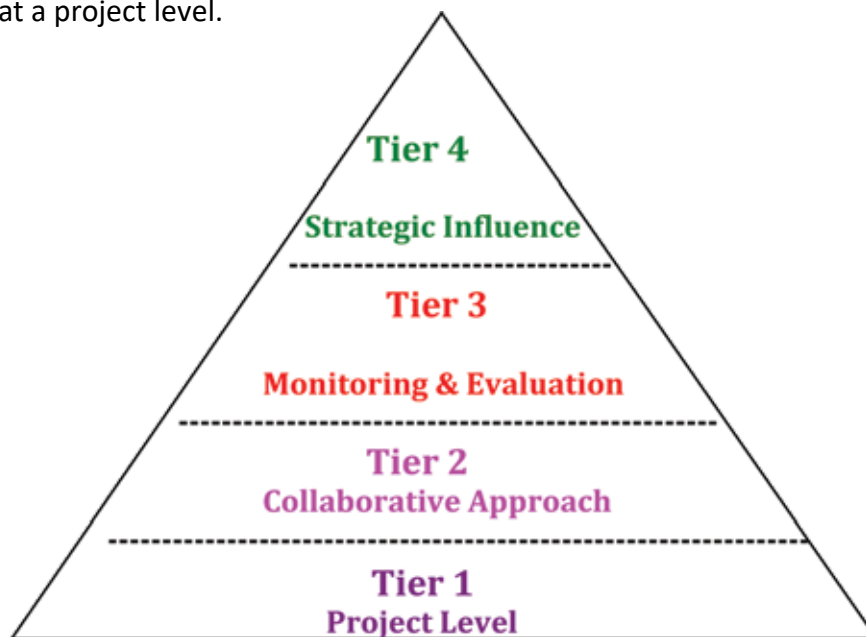
- Ensure Commissioners, Service Providers, and most importantly Service Users, are involved in the planning, development and commissioning of services and service responses that meet identified needs and agreed strategic priorities on a local and regional level. (SPPG Guidance June 2013, page 19)
- Ensure the service user experience contributes to project development and service improvements agreed within the Supporting People Commissioning Plan. (SPPG Guidance June 2013, page 19)
- Ensure commissioners, services providers, and most importantly Service Users assist with the development of local and regional service specifications. (SPPG Guidance June 2013, page 19)

Within and across services there is significant scope for the development of practices and activities that promote user participation in the development and delivery of housing related support services. To support the aims above the following objectives have been outlined:

- To create opportunities for a menu of consultation and engagement activities to be provided to a range of service users with a range of needs
- To offer service providers and commissioners a means of evidencing how the user experience informs service direction and the commissioning process.
- To recognise the support providers role in ensuring service user participation in the development and delivery of services that they and others provide.
- To create an approach that is less centralised and recognises that the projects and the people who run them have the skills needed to ensure people are properly and meaningfully engaged.

5. The proposed approach:

The proposed approach involves a number of Tiers that are ongoing and require innovation and imagination to successfully demonstrate how people are participating in the development and delivery of housing related support services at a project level.



The Proposed Approach Tier pyramid above illustrates the different Tiers of Service User Involvement. These are explained in more depth below:

Tier 1: Project level

This Tier is conducted at project level. It would involve the following:

- Active engagement between support staff and service users at project level
- Collation of Service User's views on the support they receive and improvements they wish to see & evidence of action taken as a result.
- Opportunities for service user's to inform and shape how the project operates
- Opportunities for service users to discuss:
 - o quantitative and qualitative information
 - o development plans
 - o policies and procedures
 - o information about local, regional and national issues

Tier 2: Collaborative approach to needs groups

In the spirit of collaboration Tier 2 is designed to help bring together a range of people who are prepared to share their views and experiences of using different projects or similar projects provided by different support providers.

This Tier involves collaboration between providers who support the same needs groups (i.e. Domestic Abuse) or providers who support similar needs groups (i.e. Physical disability and Chronic Illness) or those needs groups who may have a commonality (i.e. Substance misuse and Alcohol misuse).

It is proposed that organisations will bring service users together to:

- o consider the outcome of any activities that have been undertaken to promote and encourage user involvement and participation at a project level.
- o share their experiences of using housing related support services.
- o consider the overall quality of the service they have received.
- o look at the outcomes that have been achieved to help determine acceptable and appropriate performance.
- o give people an opportunity to identify any barriers to their involvement and participation.
- o ensure service users are more involved in the planning, development and commissioning of services.
- o ensure service users are advised and informed of matters relating to the planned development and improvement of services.
- o ensure peoples experience contributes to project development and service improvements set out in the Supporting People Commissioning Plan
- o ensure service users assist with the development of local and regional service designs and specifications.

Tier 3: Monitoring and Evaluation

This Tier will involve evaluation of the service user participation and can be conducted in any of the lower levels or:

- Capture project based involvement of service users.
- Capture people's views on their experiences of being supported by the project and their views on how the services they have received can be improved or adapted.
- Evidence how services have been improved from the views of service users.
- Each project will need to obtain information from and share information with all service users in an appropriate format and through multiple means.

Tier 4: Strategic Influence

Involves Service Users, Support Providers the Supporting People Team working together to capture and highlight the issues that have been raised by each client group.

Such issues will be taken forward to the Cwm Taf Regional Provider Forum, the Supporting People Planning Group and the Regional Collaborative Committee for consideration, information and action.

Service users will have an opportunity to represent themselves and the views of the people and groups they are representing.

Each Local Authority to collect information on the groups / events / meetings that already exist within their Supporting People service providers. This list must be reviewed and updated at least once a year.

A register can then be provided to the RCC which will enable RCC members to visit service providers and service users and will also provide a channel to ask for service user involvement when appropriate.

At this time it is felt that it is not appropriate to have one person representing all the views of service users and former on the RCC. If it is agreed that representation needs to be available at the RCC in the future by people representing the different client groups then the people involved in the events will be asked to nominate a champion to represent them.

6. What does Service User involvement look like in Cwm Taf?

Service user involvement can range from service users being informed about what is happening that may affect them, through to making decisions about a service they receive.

The involvement pyramid below illustrates the varying levels on involvement that is currently happening across the Cwm Taf region.



7. The benefits of participation and continuing practices:

To be of any real benefit user involvement has to be meaningful and sustainable, bringing improvements to the quality of the service and the quality of peoples lives.

Benefits

- Involvement is a positive way of working towards the goal of independence as it helps build confidence and self esteem.
- Involvement ensures that services reflect the needs and wishes of the people who use them.
- Involvement also leads to change and a feeling of ownership and belonging.
- Involvement provides the opportunity to challenge and make changes to the way services are delivered.
- Involvement improves communication by having regular meetings and on going discussions that increase understanding and helps create better relationships.
- Development of new skills, Staff and service users learn more participation skills.
- More opportunities to find out more about how a service is run and what is involved.
- To ensure that services are relevant to local needs.
- Enable service users to voice their opinion on services and identify good practice and areas of concern

8. The Barriers of Service User Involvement

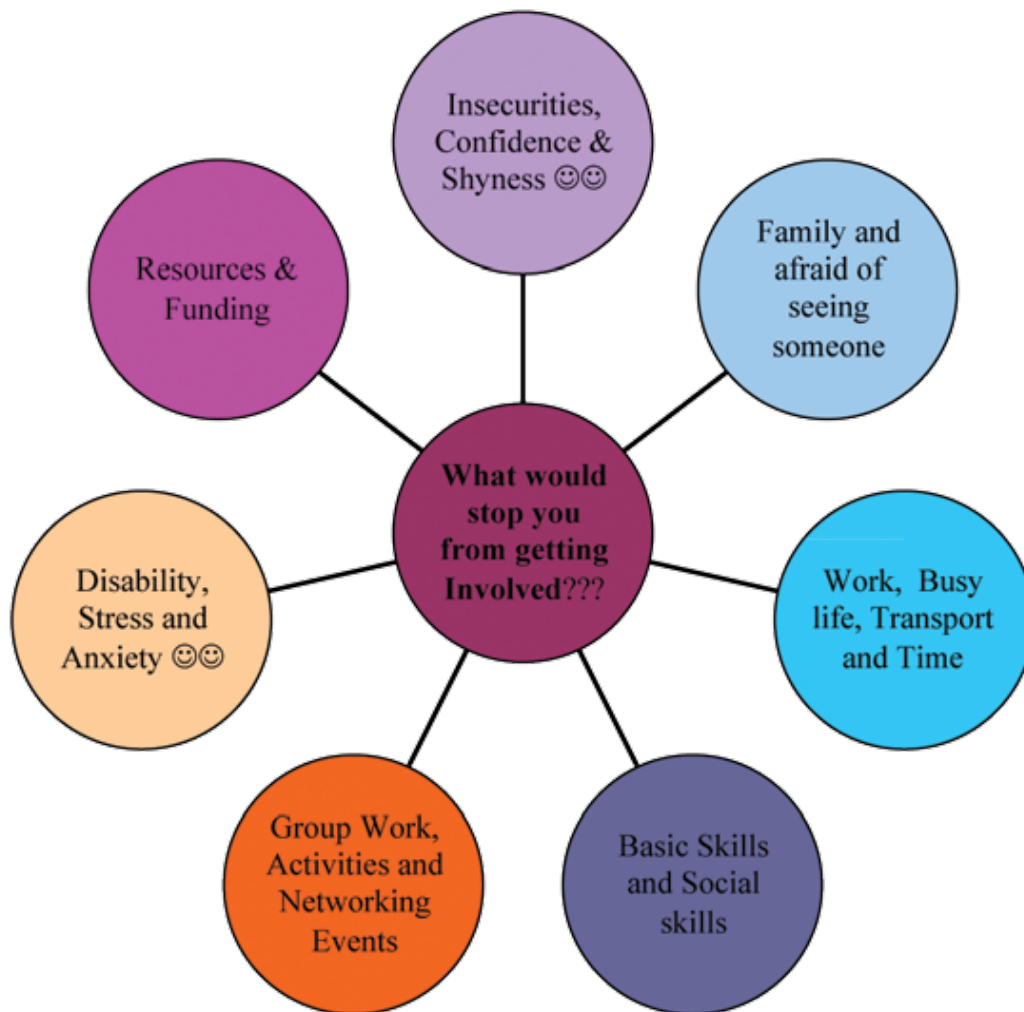
We understand that service users from vulnerable groups may have other more important priorities than being involved in traditional, formal methods of consultation or strategic decision making. This is particularly relevant if service users are in crisis. It is recognised that more creative consultation techniques will need to be used, such as the use of social media. There are also concerns around literacy issues and understanding jargon.

One of the strengths of the Supporting People Programme in Wales is the diverse range of individuals and different clients groups supported. There is not a single approach to participation that will be appropriate or effective for every service. There are also different challenges arising from the different lengths of time that individuals engage with projects. The people who use Supporting People services have varied communication skills and some have limited abilities to use spoken language and use signs, symbols and other visual information to replace speech. Providers will need to tailor participation strategies accordingly. There are many different opportunities for engagement and participation ranging from those that are social activity based to more formal approaches, each provider can adopt those that achieve the best fit with the needs of the individual supported and the management style and character of the provider.

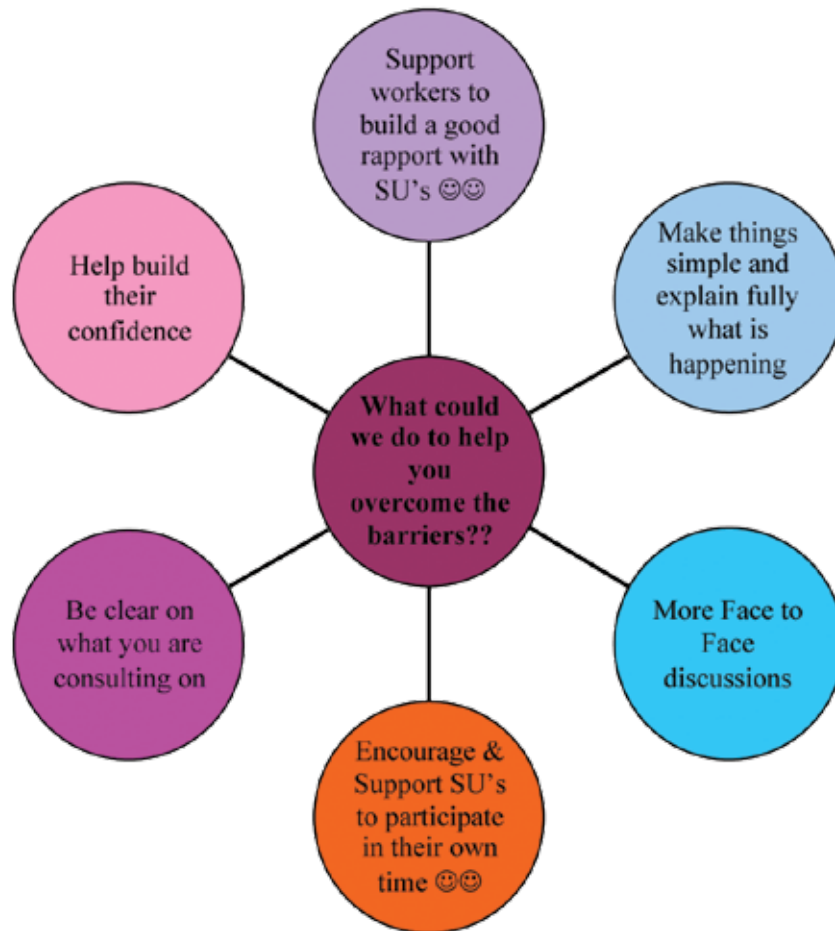
An area reporting difficulties is engaging with people using Floating Support Services. Often this group having been allocated a tenancy and having been helped to put their initial affairs in order will not want to be associated with services and that's ok. To help overcome this it is proposed to pair Floating Support projects with Accommodation based projects serving the same client groups.

The diagram below illustrates the comments made at the Regional Service User events held to consult on developing the Service User Framework In relation to the below questions:

What would stop you from getting involved?



What could we do to help you overcome the barriers?



Service user consultation has identified the need to consider the above before undertaking any consultation activity. These issues/comments should inform the focus of any future service user involvement.

Key:

☐☐ = The group agreed that these were the comments that were considered as high priority

9. Methods of engagement

It is also proposed that the following practices will continue to be recognised as a legitimate way of engaging with service users through multiple means and different methods:

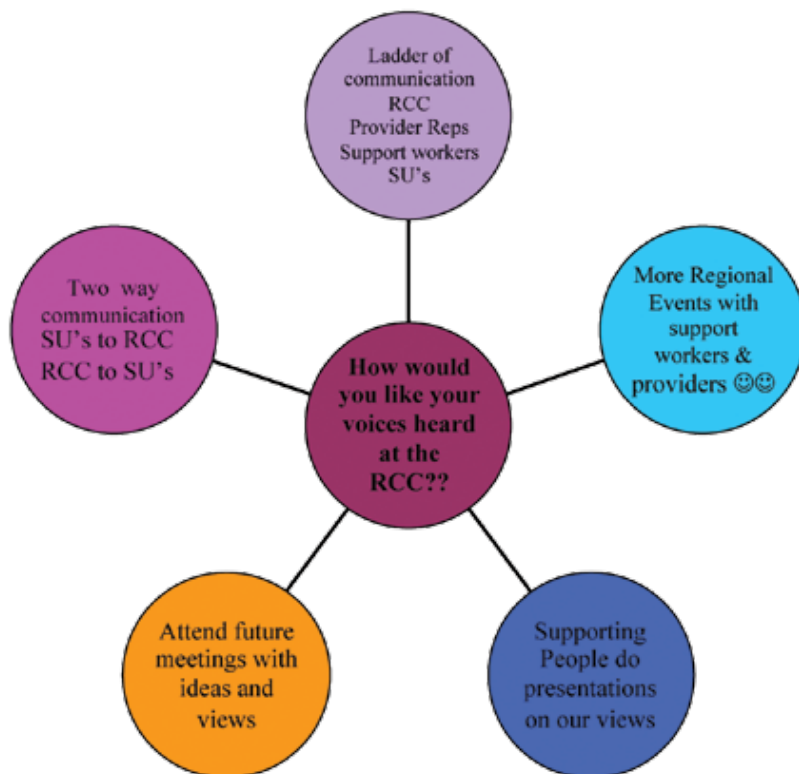
- Specific Project and Service User Focused Events
- Project groups and participation events
- Questionnaires and User Feedback:
- Stakeholder and Staff Events and Forums
- Local and National Research
- Support Provider Review and Quality Assurance

The diagram below illustrates the comments made at the Regional Service User events held to consult on developing the Service User Framework In relation to the below questions:

How do you want to be involved in future planning?



How would you like your voices heard at the RCC?



Service user consultation has identified the need for the RCC to consider the above when consulting with service users on any future developing & planning of services.

Key:

☐☐ = The group agreed that these were the comments that were considered as high priority

10. Next Steps – Action Plan

This document outlines that the RCC acknowledges that service user involvement across Cwm Taf needs to be improved. It recognises that most providers are using service users within their schemes however, local authorities should also be involving service users at the developing, commissioning and reviewing stages of supporting people services.

The RCC will be the platform to promote and monitor service user involvement at local authority level. An action plan will be developed to support implementation of the Service User Framework across the Cwm Taf region. The RCC will ensure that Service User Involvement remains a standing agenda item on the RCC agenda.

The Action Plan aim is to improve the effectiveness of the supporting people programme through increasing the level of service user involvement in decision making processes.