

REPORT

By: Caroline Highwood – Director of Resources, Adult Services

To: Supporting People in Kent Commissioning Body

19 March 2009

Subject: Service User Involvement and Consultation

Classification: Unrestricted

For Decision

Summary: The report summarises current service user involvement and consultation activities and identifies opportunities for future development.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Kent Supporting People Programme has recruited a Service User Involvement and Consultation Officer. This role is in order to ensure that service user involvement and consultation are centre stage within the programme, and a component part of everything the programme does. The objective is to develop peer-led service user involvement and consultation.
- 1.2 The programme has made considerable progress in developing services that meet the needs of service users via monitoring and review visits which have included ex-service users as service user involvement workers. An ex-service user involvement worker is now a monitoring and review officer within the team. The programme has also achieved service user representation on the Core Strategy Development Group. This was one of the ultimate aspirations of the Audit Commission as expressed in their recommendations.
- 1.3 The Programme has also involved service users in the following ways;
- in tender evaluation
 - in specifications
 - in recruitment
 - in website and leaflet design and content

- service user conferences delivered by service users
- in a service user publication
- in service user qualifications via the Open College Network
- in strategic reviews
- in the previous five-year strategy
- membership of the Core Strategy Development Group

1.4 The next five-year strategy and Strategic Review of Investment will play a key role in determining the future shape of services and will include a role for providers and service users, in shaping it.

1.5 In order to improve and increase the level of service user participation it was identified that a number of areas need to be reviewed and developed.

1.6 The programme will be fully engaging with pre-existing service user and consultation mechanisms, for example the Local Involvement Networks (LINKS) and Kent Health Watch.

2.0 Service User Panel

2.1 The service user involvement and consultation officer has reviewed the role and functionality of the service user panel.

2.2 The current findings are;

- The panel consists of 6 service users predominantly from the Mental Health and Learning Disability client groups.
- The panel does not truly represent the diverse range of 21 client groups currently receiving support through Supporting People funded services.
- The panel has an agreed set of terms of reference for the meetings.
- The meetings are held every 6-8 weeks and follow a set agenda.
- The panel has a chairman but there is no nominated vice chairman.
- There is no distinctive link with service provider's service user groups.
- There is no representation from existing service provider Service User groups.

3.0 The Development of the Service User Panel

3.1 It is proposed that the membership and skill set of the panel is developed by the following actions;

- Create stronger links with existing provider service user groups.
- Utilise these links in order to augment the membership of the service user panel.

- Encourage the chairperson or nominated individual within the provider Service User groups to become active panel members.
- Review and adjust the terms of reference of the meetings to reflect the true purpose of the panel.
- Enable members to develop new skills and knowledge in areas such as commissioning and procurement as identified by the Audit Commission.
- The panel will be encouraged to explore a system of award to recognise the achievement in the development of skills which can be obtained through Service User Involvement. The transferable skills identified and gained will enable service users to increase self esteem and confidence as well as improving future employability prospects. This award is not a substitute for the use of vouchers to acknowledge attendance and the initiative may be linked to the Open College Network qualification already developed and funded by the Kent Supporting People programme.

4.0 Supporting People Service User Panel Open Day

4.1 The Programme is proposing to raise the level of awareness of service users in relation to the Programme and the panel. An Open Day would enable service users to learn about and understand the components of the programme and also how service users can be involved in a variety of aspects of the programme e.g. involvement in the commissioning and design of new services.

4.2 As its objectives, the Open Day would aim to show how;

- The positive involvement of service users can enable them to increase their own skills.
- It can increase an individual's sense of empowerment and confidence.
- A demonstration that the Open College Network accredited training enables participants to become involved in the review and delivery of services.

5.0 The Service User Panel Renewal

5.1 The panel members will receive training and information, which can be cascaded down within their own services and provider organisations to ensure that the programme and the opportunities within the programme reaches a wider audience.

- 5.2 The objective of the renewal of the Panel and its membership, is to enable service users to become ambassadors for the Kent Supporting People Programme.
- 5.3 This will not only enhance the awareness of the programme throughout Kent, but also raise the profile of the panel and additionally highlight the value of service user involvement and consultation within individual service providers/services.
- 5.4 Integration of existing chairs or nominated individuals from current provider service user groups will enable Supporting People to fully utilise these groups, forums and networks for future consultation, information gathering and dissemination purposes. The Supporting People programme will be acknowledging and supporting the individual contributions of providers to involvement and consultation and utilising these mechanisms where appropriate. This will also enable provider led service users activities to be guided by the service user panel allowing the development of a sustained approach to meaningful service user involvement throughout all service provision, depending on future commissioning decisions.

6.0 Service User Involvement Strategy

- 6.1 There is currently a draft Service User Involvement Strategy. There has been no consultation with service users as yet in relation to this strategy.
- 6.2 The draft strategy consists of two parts:
- **Part 1** consists of an introduction detailing the background of the Supporting People Programme, highlighting the benefits of service user involvement and encompassing the purpose, scope and objectives of the strategy. The strategy includes concise examples of the level of involvement a service user may engage in. Within the initial part of the document priorities for action and the level of commitment towards the improvement of Service User Involvement are clearly stated.
- Part 2** of the strategy consists of sub sections detailing the current position and future development of service user involvement in partnership with providers of supported housing services.

7.0 Future Development of the service user involvement and consultation strategy.

- 7.1 Through the existing panel, service users have been consulted in the production of the latest Floating Support leaflets and there have been consultations relating to the design of the service user specific part of the website.
- 7.2 Service users will continue to be involved in all relevant literature provided by the Programme. This would include reviewing all current information and compiling the literature in appropriate formats which are accessible to all service users.
- 7.3 There will be further development of the website to enable clear and up to date information to be available to all existing and potential service users.
- 7.4 To ensure that all frontline staff both within the council and partner agencies are providing a consistent and informed approach to the programme, a mystery shopping exercise will be carried out. This exercise will enable the identification of gaps in the information available as well as highlighting staff training needs. An appropriate training package will then be designed and could be delivered in conjunction with service users. The training will aim to ensure that staff at access points are well informed and able to refer people to relevant services. Further that staff are equipped to disseminate relevant and accurate information to potential service users.
- 7.3 Service users have been involved in service reviews which sought their views through individual and group interviews. This involvement, acknowledged the need for direct service user input as the information gained centred on the quality of services received.
- 7.4 The programme will continue to involve service users in service reviews.
- 7.5 With specific training panel members will be enabled to become more involved in a variety of processes within the Supporting People programme.
- 7.6 Increased involvement will be in the areas of tendering, strategic reviews of services and the inclusion of service users in the decision-making process for decommissioning and re-designing of services.
- 7.7 There is currently no service user involvement charter for the programme. Some providers have Service User Involvement Charters already. The Programme will learn from these, as well as other good

practice. The intention is to have a finalised Service User Charter by the end of 2009.

7.8 The Service User Involvement Officer will, in conjunction, with the service user panel and through wider consultation of existing service users, develop a charter which encompasses the overall commitment of the Kent Supporting People Programme to involve Service Users in all aspects of the programme.

7.9 Consultation on the draft Strategy will also be carried out and the document will be presented in an easy read format.

8.0 Service User Consultation

8.1 Service users will be consulted with on the current draft service user involvement and consultation strategy and will be involved in devising the Supporting People Service User Charter.

9.0 Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment will be undertaken once the strategy has been agreed.

10.0 Financial Impact Assessment

The financial impact of these proposals is negligible.

11.0 Conclusion

11.1 The current level of service user involvement within the Supporting People programme does not reflect the Programme's ambitions. Through implementing the developments outlined within the report, service user involvement will become an integral and robust part of the Supporting People programme.

12.0 Recommendation

12.1 The Commissioning Body is asked to agree the contents of the report.

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Background Information: None