

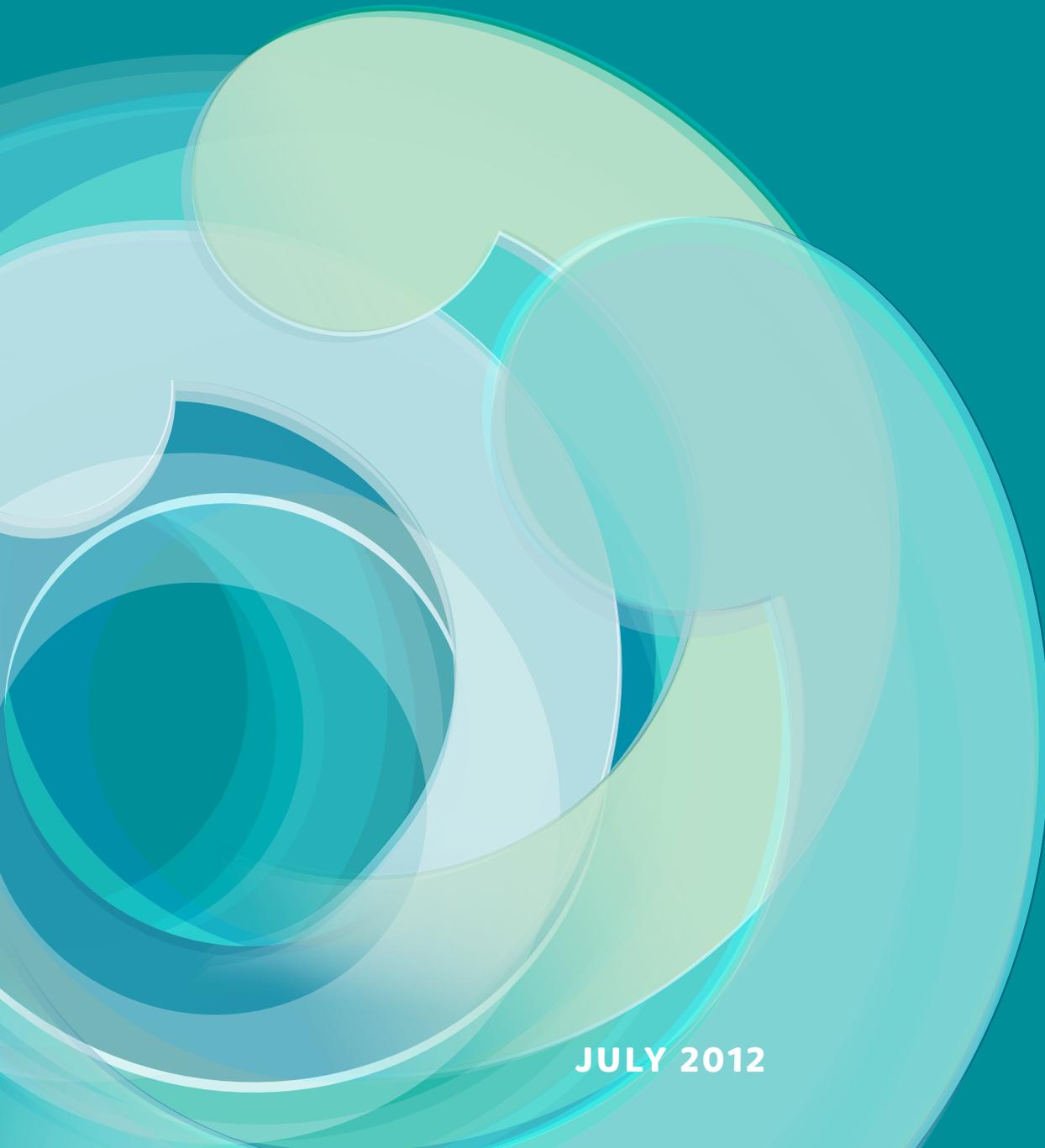
TASKFORCE FOR ACTION ON VIOLENCE WITHIN FAMILIES

INCORPORATING

# *The Voice of Experience*

FAMILY VIOLENCE - SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT GUIDE

JULY 2012



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# *The Voice of Experience*

FAMILY VIOLENCE - SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT GUIDE

**JULY 2012**

# Foreword

This Family Violence - Service User Involvement Guide (the Guide) is an initiative of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families (the Taskforce). As a Taskforce we believe it is vital to incorporate the views of service users who have had direct experience with family violence in all that we do.

Service user input into policy and service development is not a new concept in New Zealand but it is a relatively new movement within the family violence sector.

In 2010, a group of domestic violence survivors presented a discussion paper to government and members of the Taskforce. This paper demonstrated their desire and motivation to be involved positively in improving the response to family violence.



**Richard Wood**  
Chairperson  
Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families

In our 2010/2011 Programme of Action, the Taskforce acknowledged that our work must be informed by the insights of those individuals, families and whānau who have experienced family violence. We acknowledged that service users have the potential to provide an invaluable source of evidence to inform and support the ongoing work programmes of the Taskforce and its member agencies.

The development of this guide has been led by a staff member in the Family Violence Unit, herself a service user.

We hope that this guide provides you with useful information and references to help you to incorporate service users in your work.

# Contents

*This Guide is set out in a number of sections.*

## 1. Introduction

This section describes who this guide is for, how it was developed and the scope of its use.

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## 2. Reasons to involve service users

This section of the Guide outlines compelling reasons for you to involve service users. Evidence suggests that involving service users can lead to higher quality, and more efficient and accessible services. It also has intrinsic benefits for the individual service users who choose to become involved.

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## 3. How to do it: Best practice overview

Best practise in implementing service user involvement is outlined in the following subsections:

- Service user involvement requires an organisational approach
- Service user involvement needs to be planned
- There must be a commitment to act on the knowledge gained by involving service users
- Communication is vital
- Service user involvement needs to be adequately resourced
- Service users need to be compensated and supported to be involved
- Providing a variety of ways to be involved is important
- Service user involvement is an ongoing process and should evolve.

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## 4. Barriers

This section describes the barriers to implementing service user involvement. These barriers may include dealing with the issues of representation, professional agendas and the risk of tokenism, protecting survivors from harm and getting access to service users. You are encouraged to consider these barriers, and ways to mitigate them, in your planning.

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## 5. Mechanisms

The different ways you can involve service users are covered in this section.

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## 6. Working with specific populations

The final section describes specific issues to consider when working with specific populations. These groups include survivors, perpetrators, children, youth, Māori, Pacific and migrant/refugee populations, disabled service users, older people, and the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and intersex (GLBTI) communities.

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### **Appendix A – New Zealand and International Service User Involvement Overview**

In New Zealand and internationally there are increasing numbers of organisations involving service users in their work as part of a wider participation agenda. They have developed a range of resources to support this work. Appendix A provides an overview of some of the relevant documents.

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### **Appendix B – Reviewed Literature**

The literature reviewed consistently describes a number of principles and practices to consider when implementing service user involvement in your organisation. User-friendly examples of tools and lists of things to consider from this literature are highlighted throughout the Guide. Other examples of useful guides are included in Appendix B.

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# Introduction

## Who the guide is for?

The Guide is intended primarily for people in government and non-government agencies who directly or indirectly provide services for those who experience violence within their families. The Guide will also be a useful resource to the service users and service user organisations intending to participate in your organisation's service user involvement programmes.

## How the guide was developed

A wide variety of literature related to service user involvement both in New Zealand and internationally was reviewed as part of the development of the Guide. Throughout the Guide reference is made to specific and detailed resources you can use to support your work. A complete list of all the relevant reviewed documents which may be of use to you is provided in Appendix B.

## Scope of the guide

This Guide focuses on ways to involve family violence service users in your organisation, with a particular emphasis on including service user input into policy and service development processes. The Guide is relevant to agencies developing specific services for survivors or perpetrators of family violence; but it is equally relevant to agencies whose services are aimed at a wider group of users but who wish to consider how those who have experienced violence within their family receive these types of services.

**Family violence** covers a broad range of controlling behaviours, commonly of a physical, sexual and/or psychological nature, which typically involve fear, intimidation and emotional deprivation. It occurs within a variety of close interpersonal relationships,

such as between partners, parents and children, siblings, and in other relationships where significant others are not part of the physical household but are part of the family and/or are fulfilling the function of family. Common forms of violence in families/whānau include:

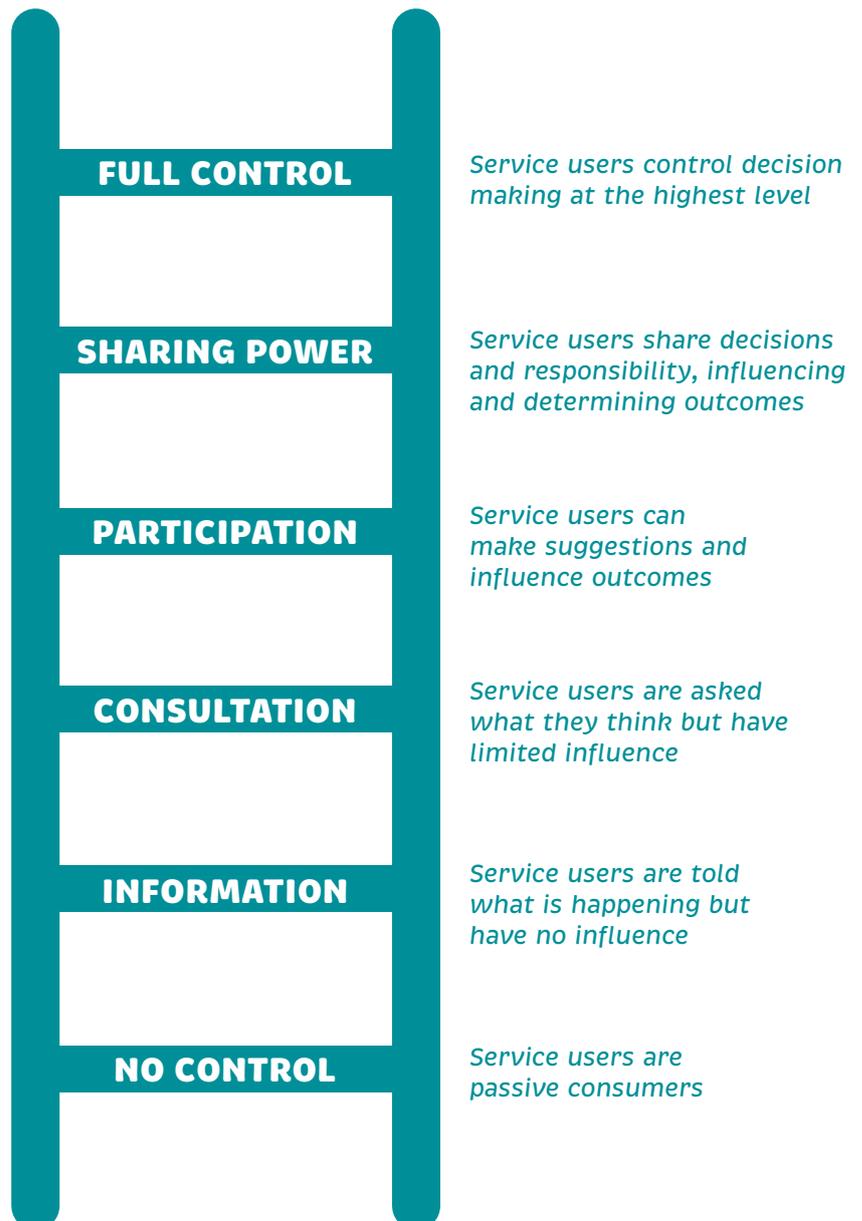
- violence among adult partners (IPV)
- abuse/neglect of children by an adult (child maltreatment)
- abuse/neglect of older people aged approximately 65 years and over by a person with whom they have a relationship of trust (elder abuse)
- violence perpetrated by a child against their parent (parental abuse)
- violence among siblings (sibling abuse).

**Service user** is the term used in the Guide to describe those people who have experienced violence within families, either directly or indirectly. This includes those people who are survivors (adults and children), perpetrators and family members living with or supporting perpetrators and victims. It also includes those who may not have accessed a service (but could have potentially benefited from doing so). A service user is sometimes referred to as a consumer in other literature referred to in this Guide.

The Guide refers to **involvement** as a process of actively incorporating the views of service users in your organisation's decision-making processes and involving service users in planning, managing or delivering services. Involvement can be thought of as a continuum, as outlined in the following graphic.

.....  
Taken from "Service User Involvement  
Guide", Revolving Doors Agency  
- see [http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/  
documents/service-user-involvement-guide/](http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/service-user-involvement-guide/)  
.....

## The ladder of participation



***The Guide has been designed to support you and your organisation to move further up the ladder of involvement and to more fully incorporate the views of service users in your work.***

It is important to note there is no one right way to involve service users and this document is intended as general guidance only. References to further information in documents and websites are provided if you want to look at this issue in more detail.

# Why involve service users?

*There is growing recognition in the health and social sectors both in New Zealand and internationally that service users are experts by experience.*

Ensuring the voices of service users are heard while planning, implementing and evaluating services and new initiatives creates increased opportunities for you to provide higher quality, and more efficient and accessible services.

Appendix A gives you an overview of health and social sector service user involvement strategies and practices both in New Zealand and overseas. The appendix provides you with links to some useful resources.

Although both government and non-government agencies in New Zealand have spent a lot of time and effort on the issue of violence within families, family violence service users are still reporting difficulties in getting access to responsive services. The rate of occurrence of family violence in New Zealand is still unacceptably high. This raises the question - how can our government and non-government agencies improve their response to keep individuals, families and whānau safe?

International best practice recommends the incorporation of the voice of service users at all

levels of development, planning, implementation and evaluation - to involve those whose lives are most affected in decision making.

There are many myths associated with family violence and this has a negative impact on the quality of the design and implementation of services. Providing an improved family violence service response requires that these myths are replaced by actual service users' experiences. Service user involvement will provide agencies with the evidence they need to make improved decisions on policy and practice. They will be able to evaluate initiatives based on real outcomes for those people who use their services. This will help them to continuously improve their response.

Intimate partner violence specialist agencies continue to receive the best feedback from service users because they listen to them, giving them a voice. As a result they receive the most positive comments from service users regarding service responsiveness and outcomes. This indicates that government and non-government agencies who are not specialists but for which family violence represents only a part of their work also have the ability to use service user involvement to improve their responsiveness and service delivery.

# ***It provides survivors the ability to function autonomously and removes barriers to rebuilding their lives***

As family violence requires a multi-agency service response, service user involvement feeding in to all channels will ultimately provide the best results. A service user voice at the table of family violence collaborations can add value to the collaboration process.

## **Benefits to organisations**

The literature describes a number of real benefits to organisations who involve service users including:

- creating a service that better meets service users needs by being more inclusive, accessible and/or fulfilling the needs of service users more precisely
- improving the quality of the service provided and making it safer for users
- achieving the effective use of resources
- developing outcome measures that are meaningful and relevant to service users themselves
- improved accountability
- improved communication between providers and service users.

## **Benefits to service users**

Service user involvement can lead to an improvement in service response which increases the safety and stability of those experiencing violence. It provides survivors with the ability to function autonomously and removes the barriers to rebuilding their lives. It also helps to prevent intergenerational violence and sends a strong signal of non-tolerance supporting primary prevention. Improved service response is a key benefit to service users because their needs are better met.

Citizens have a right to participate, and service users benefit from being involved in processes that contribute to enhanced service delivery. These benefits include:

- being empowered by having their voice heard
- building confidence, self esteem, skills and self-respect
- feeling included, valued and respected.

# How to do it: Best practice overview

*Service user involvement is more than just implementing a one-off consultation. It is a culture, structure and process that requires time and planning to manage successfully.*

The literature reviewed consistently describes a number of principles and practices to consider when implementing service user involvement in your organisation. Some particularly user-friendly examples of tools and lists of things for you to consider from this literature are highlighted in this section.

Appendix B provides a list of the literature reviewed. It includes other examples of useful guides.

There are a number of issues you will need to look to before you make a start.

## 1. Service user involvement requires an organisational approach

Involving service users requires an organisational approach that is supported at the highest levels in an organisation. The literature suggests that senior management support is vital to achieving meaningful service user involvement within an organisation. You will need to assess the extent to which your organisation's leaders are willing to incorporate meaningful user involvement processes into your organisation's activities before you start.

To be most effective, service user involvement needs to be an integral part of the organisation's whole operation (rather than just an afterthought). It needs to be incorporated into the culture of the organisation. You need a culture of openness, inclusion and partnership to facilitate effective

service user involvement and this may require staff training.

**The Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS)** in New Zealand has developed a Ready Reference Engagement Guide that has a useful section on developing supportive work environments. You can find a copy of the guide here -

[http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/documents/ENGAGEMENT\\_GUIDE\\_FINAL.PDF](http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/documents/ENGAGEMENT_GUIDE_FINAL.PDF)

You will need to develop an overall strategy that outlines the ways service user input will be integrated into your organisation's processes. Service user involvement can occur at many different levels across an organisation including:

- governance and strategic planning
- policy development
- service planning and improvement
- advocacy
- recruitment and training
- the review, audit and evaluation of services.

You will need to consider which areas you will incorporate service user involvement into and ensure it is both integrated and embedded. Your involvement strategy should clearly interface with other organisational strategies such as governance, HR, strategic and work plans.

# To be most effective, service user involvement needs to be an integral part of the whole organisational operation

Your overall strategy should also incorporate a set of principles that guide your work in this area.

As an example, consider **“Principles for involving service users and carers in social care work”**, developed in 2007 jointly by the General Social Care Council (the workforce regulator in England responsible for registering social care workers); the Commission for Social Care Inspection (the service regulator in England responsible for registering and inspecting all social care providers); Skills for Care (responsible for strategic development of adult social-care workforces in England) and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

<http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/profile.asp?guid=52eb4e93-b2f2-47ea-87c7-f25047e86dba>

## 2. Service user involvement needs to be planned

Involving service users in a meaningful way requires a strategic approach that is well-planned in advance. You will need to be able to clearly articulate answers to the questions posed in the list below.

- What you are involving service users for? What is the purpose of engaging them?
- Who you are trying to involve?
- In what ways will you involve them? What methods will you use? What resources will be required

(human and other) to do this? Do the planned mechanisms fit with the resources you have available to you?

- When will you involve service users? Current or ex-service users? Will you involve them long term or short term?
- Are you ready to make changes as a result of what you have found?
- How will you evaluate success?

You should involve service users in this planning by asking them how they would like to be involved. This establishes a culture of partnership, inclusion and trust from the outset.

The literature suggests the better you plan, the better your service user involvement will be.

**The Revolving Doors Agency** national service user forum developed a user-friendly guide to involving service users in the criminal justice system in 2010. (The Revolving Doors Agency is a charity working across England to change systems and to improve services for people with multiple problems who are in contact with the criminal justice system.)

Page 35 of this guide has a simple planning template you might find useful in the planning process -

<http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/service-user-involvement-guide/>

## How to do it: Best practice overview

### 3. There must be a commitment to act on the knowledge gained by involving service users

Service user involvement requires a commitment to change the way you do things as a result of the input you receive. If you are not willing to make any changes to your policy or service delivery, it is not appropriate to involve service users. It is not appropriate to unnecessarily raise their expectations and then not act on their advice.

You need to be clear about what decision you are making as a result of the service user input and what level of change or influence is possible. You must clearly communicate this to service users so there are no unrealistic expectations set up.

Service users can become cynical and will be less willing to participate and engage with your organisation in the future if prior attempts at engagement have not resulted in any changes being made.

### 4. Communication is vital

Successful service user involvement is based on trusting relationships between service users and organisations. Good communication is vital to ensuring these trusting relationships develop and are maintained. This is an ongoing process and needs to be planned for and resourced as part of your organisation's planning process - you will need to use and build on the people skills and capacities of the staff who are undertaking the user involvement.

Your communication needs to be as jargon-free as it can be. Make it as easy as possible for service users to understand all your communications with them. It creates unnecessary barriers to useful involvement if service users have to negotiate bureaucratic language to understand what is being asked of them.

You need to clearly communicate with your service users at all stages of the process. This involves explaining the conditions of their involvement including the sphere of influence possible, the time commitment and

compensation involved. It also involves communicating the impact of their involvement back to them. Service users need to have as much background information as possible to be able to make an effective contribution.

It is important you give service users feedback on what changes were made as a result of their input, otherwise they will be less likely to participate in the future.

Pages 38 and 39 of the Revolving Door Agency guide provide good practice tips for communicating with service users - <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/service-user-involvement-guide/>

### 5. Service user involvement needs to be adequately resourced

Involving service users in a meaningful way takes skills and resources. You need to ensure you have the appropriately skilled people involved to facilitate the process. These will be people who have a clear understanding of the dynamics of family violence and good facilitation and communication skills (these may come from within your organisation but you may need to resource them externally). You may also require resources to make the process accessible and appropriate for service users (this may include hiring rooms in easily accessible locations, using interpreters, providing information material in accessible formats etc). These will need to be factored into budgets.

It may be a case of matching the scope of the service user involvement you are planning with the resources you have available to you, and building slowly as capacity increases within the organisation.

Page 28 of the Revolving Doors Agency guide provides a list of some common resources you will need to budget for - <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/service-user-involvement-guide/>

## **6. Service users need to be compensated and supported to be involved**

You should not expect service users to provide their time and knowledge for free. It is important to acknowledge their input by at least recompensing them for transport and childcare costs. You should also consider a remuneration policy as part of your overall strategy. Your organisation may have existing policies on this and you will need to adhere to them.

You can find examples of good practice in relation to paying service users on page 49 of the Revolving Doors Agency guide - <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/service-user-involvement-guide/>

It is also important to adequately support service users so they can participate fully, as well as to compensate them. This will involve effective communication, and may involve providing some level of training to service users.

You can find further information on training service users on page 47 of the Revolving Doors Agency guide <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/service-user-involvement-guide/>

## **7. Providing a variety of ways to be involved is important**

There is no one right way to involve service users. They are not a homogeneous group so it is important to be able to offer a variety of mechanisms to suit different people at different times. You will need to choose mechanisms that are most appropriate for the service users you want to involve and the reasons you have for involving them.

It is important to think about all the different types of (potential) service users you may have and to consider ways of making your service user involvement processes as accessible to them as possible. This may mean making sure your involvement process is, for example, accessible to people with disabilities or for whom English is not a first language or who live in rural areas.

You can find useful tips on accessibility on page 37 of the Revolving Doors Agency guide - <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/service-user-involvement-guide/>

Some mechanisms may work for some time and then not be so successful. It is important to be flexible in your approach and to be prepared to consider new mechanisms if this is the case.

A variety of mechanisms that you could choose from is included on page 14 of the Guide.

## **8. Service user involvement processes are on-going and should evolve**

Involving service users should be an ongoing commitment. As much emphasis should be put on the process as on the outcome - developing the quality of the engagement is as important as the outcome of the engagement.

You should aim to build on your service user involvement processes through active reflection and evaluation. Consider what worked and what didn't work and build this into your ongoing planning so you can make small improvements as you move forward.

This UK publication provides a guide to evaluating service user involvement - <http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide20/files/guide20.pdf>

# Barriers to involving service users

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*In developing a service user involvement plan you may come across a range of obstacles or barriers; some of these are practical and some are attitudinal. A number of common barriers are outlined below.*

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It is important to be aware of and to think about possible barriers and challenges when you are planning so you can mitigate them where possible.

## 1. Issues of representativeness

Concerns of how representative a small number of service users are of the whole population is often put forward as a reason not to involve service users.

You may aspire to “representativeness”, but delaying action until it is achieved may result in nothing happening at all. While a small number of service users cannot represent the views of all service users, it is better to start small and to build up diverse service user input over time than wait to act until representativeness can be assured.

You should use various methods and approaches to ensure a wide variety of service users can contribute to and nurture service user networks so that input comes more from a collective rather than an individual voice. These are important ways to ensure a diversity of input and to reduce claims of a lack of representation.

## 2. Professional agendas, power relations and the risk of tokenism

Service users can often feel their input is under-valued when compared to professional input. They can feel particularly disempowered if their input has been trivialised.

The literature describes professional power, assumptions about expert knowledge and professional defensiveness as impediments to effective user involvement. In a culture where evidence based practice is valued and in the historical context of providers (and professionals) holding decision-making power on behalf of recipients of services, it can be difficult for service user input to be given the same value as professional input and for more power sharing options to be considered. This is an issue of organisational culture. You will need to consider your organisation’s openness to developing a participatory culture before embarking on service user involvement. Some training may be required to help staff members to see the benefits of service user involvement.

It is important to be aware of the power relationships involved in any user involvement initiative. There is a risk that uneven power relationships may lead to only token

# *There is the need to ensure the safety of service users at all times.*

involvement or a rubber stamping exercise. Planning and implementing approaches that minimise the power differential can lead to real involvement and change. This may include involving service users throughout the planning process, providing training so service users are able to contribute in an effective way (e.g. learning the language and procedures of professionals), ensuring the terms of involvement are clear and the outcome is reported back to the service users.

## **3. Protecting service users from harm**

A related concern may be that service users, especially survivors of violence and children who have witnessed violence, need to be protected from the trauma of reliving their experiences and that they are too vulnerable to participate. The literature states professionals often overstate the case for this and many individuals will find making a contribution is a healing, positive experience.

You will need to ensure the safety of service users at all times (see page 16 for more on this). To avoid seeking input to protect service users from harm is

not a valid excuse for not implementing a service user involvement process.

## **4. Access to service users**

Concerns about being able to get access to service users may act as a barrier to attempting service user involvement. This is particularly true for family violence service users where there are very few organised service user networks or organisations and the problem is often hidden.

You may be able to work alongside local family violence service providers (e.g. refuges, stopping violence services) or local network co-ordinators in your area to help you to get access to service users. Facilitating and nurturing the development of service user networks and groups within the family violence area may provide you with greater access to a range of service users. Providing opportunities for effective user engagement is likely to contribute to a growth in service user networks - one will feed into the other.

Attending to access issues such as providing support and recompense for transport, and childcare, and providing a safe meeting environment and interpreting services etc can also help to encourage participation.

# Mechanisms to involve service users

*The mechanisms or methods you use for service user involvement will depend on the level of engagement you want and the reason for user involvement.*

As outlined earlier, there are many ways you can involve service users in your organisation. This section outlines some of the main ones and refers you to more detailed resources looking specifically at this.

One of the most basic forms of service user involvement is having an effective complaints process. Service user complaints represent valuable information about recurrent problems. They can help you to understand the root causes of service user issues and can help your organisation to target core practises that need improvement. If acted on to improve core practices, service user complaints can be a source of information that can increase efficiency as well as improve services. Best practice for complaints processes include good accessibility and appropriate and timely feedback.

A complaints process only enables service users to comment on current practice and is low on the ladder of participation (refer to page 4). Moving further up the ladder are activities that allow input into service and policy development processes and allow service users to be able to actually influence the activities of the organisations that deliver services to support them. A number of common methods or mechanisms for gaining user input are:

- surveys
- written consultations
- focus groups
- online forums
- service user panels
- journey mapping.

You can find more information about the different mechanisms and their relative advantages and disadvantages in the following useful resources.

The Irish Health Service developed a useful booklet in 2010 entitled “Service User Involvement Methods - A Guidance Document”. This booklet outlines a number of common involvement methods and discusses their suitability for various participant groups, their cost and time requirements, when to use or not to use them and their strengths and weaknesses. The guidance is not specific to family violence service users but it summarises many of the main forms of user involvement.

See - <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/ysys/SUI/Library/Guides/SUIBooklet.pdf>

## **...understanding the root causes of service user issues and help an organisation target core practises that need improvement.**

A UK website called People and Participation.net has an extensive, searchable database of involvement methods. It gives you information on suitable participants, costs, timing, when to use or not to use and strengths and weaknesses as well as case study examples. The site also includes a useful process planner that helps you plan your process and choose suitable methods via answering a series of questions. The site is managed by Involve, a UK not-for-profit organisation that specialises in understanding and promoting public participation. It is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Ministry of Justice and the Sustainable Development Commission in the UK.

See - [www.peopleandparticipation.net](http://www.peopleandparticipation.net)

The New Zealand Good Practice Participate website run by OCVS (mentioned earlier) is a good source of information and relevant case studies in the New Zealand context. It includes links to many other New Zealand and international resources for you to refer to.

See - <http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/techniques/index.html>

There are also a number of other ways in which service users can contribute within an organisation. You may wish to consider if any of the following options are appropriate for your organisation:

- having a service user voice on governance board/ advisory panel
- involving service users in training staff members
- involving service users in recruitment processes
- employing a service user in a service user advisory role
- involving service users in research/evaluation
- involving service users in media and publicity work.

An example of using the voice of experience:

SEEDS (Survivors Empowering and Educating Domestic Abuse Services) is a collective of groups operating in the South West of England. Its aim is to improve services by learning from survivors experiences by working closely with local statutory and voluntary providers. SEEDS members are involved in training, raising awareness, giving presentations, participating in consultation events and conducting research among survivors.

You can find more information at <http://www.seeds-uk.org/about.html>

# Working with specific populations

*This section of the Guide provides more specific guidance about involving particular groups of service users. Relevant literature is referred to where available.*

## Survivors

It is important service users who are survivors of family violence feel they are able to contribute to the improvement of the services they encounter. It is important to note some survivors may still be victims of continued abuse.

Wanting to avoid putting survivors in a vulnerable position of reliving their trauma is not an excuse for not implementing service user involvement. The literature suggests that for many participation can lead to strength, confidence and control over their lives. You should let survivors judge for themselves when they are able to cope with being involved. They should not be necessarily excluded because they are still in the experience.

Key issues to consider:

- Safety and confidentiality - survivors need to feel safe to contribute. This may involve you considering a neutral venue, setting ground rules regarding confidentiality, ensuring anonymity. You will need to especially consider the way your organisation gives feedback to survivors on the outcomes of their involvement to ensure their safety.
- Use of skilled facilitators - if you are going to be using a forum/focus group/panel approach to involve survivors, you need to make sure the facilitator is experienced in dealing with family violence issues.

- Support available - you will need to ensure survivors have access to support if they require it following involvement.
- Survivors need to be given time in face-to-face forums to be able to tell their story in its entirety. Be prepared to listen even it takes time and may not be directly relevant to the scope of your involvement programme.

A useful resource with tips for survivors on how to speak publically (but would be equally useful for survivors involved in a service user panel, for example).

[http://www.vawnet.org/Assoc\\_Files\\_VAWnet/NRCDV\\_SpeakersGuide-Advocates.pdf](http://www.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/NRCDV_SpeakersGuide-Advocates.pdf)

## Perpetrators

You will need to consider incorporating the voice of perpetrators when making decisions on policy, practice and implementation. It is important to learn from those who have perpetrated abuse, particularly when considering prevention and offender programmes but also when considering the level and nature of response required.

When engaging with perpetrators and when analysing the information you have gathered, it is important to involve people who are expert in working with perpetrators.

## ***It is important that ...survivors ...feel they are able to contribute to the improvement of services that they encounter.***

It is likely you will find the perpetrators you involve may also have been survivors of violence themselves (particularly in childhood). They may require support following involvement if they share this information.

- Use of skilled facilitators - if you are going to be using a forum/focus group/panel approach to involve perpetrators, you need to make sure the facilitator has expertise in this specific field.
- Feedback from this group will require expert analysis.
- Support available - you will need to ensure the perpetrators have access to support if they require it following involvement.

### **Children/Young People**

Children and youth survivors (and perpetrators) are an important group to consider in your service user involvement strategy. They will have a unique perspective and you should not assume adults can speak for them.

You will need to consider consent and confidentiality issues carefully when involving children and young people. You may also need to alter your techniques to make them appropriate for a child or young person to actively engage in. Many of the issues outlined in the previous sections apply equally to children and young people as they do to adults (e.g. ensuring clear

communication and feedback, ensuring you have a commitment to use their input).

You may find the following useful resources helpful when you do your planning.

This European resource is specifically about including children who have experienced violence (including, but not exclusively, family violence) in participatory projects. It is both a training and best practice guide and provides detailed information about why the participation of young people is important, how to be an effective facilitator and setting up and delivering effective participation projects.

[http://www.icyrnet.net/UserFiles/File/You%20Respond%20Booklet\(Lock\).pdf](http://www.icyrnet.net/UserFiles/File/You%20Respond%20Booklet(Lock).pdf)

The Ministry of Social Development has a 2003 resource about involving children in decision making. It includes some useful information on ethics, consent and confidentiality and on involving specific groups of children, although not specifically children who have experienced violence.

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/archive/2003-involving-children.pdf>

## Working with specific populations

Similarly, this Ministry of Youth Development resource from 2009 provides general information about involving young people in decision making, although not specifically young people who have experienced violence.

<http://www.myd.govt.nz/documents/working-with-young-people/youth-participation-in-decision-making/keepin-it-real.pdf>

This UK resource developed by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and Barnado's provides information about involving children and young people in developing social care services. It focuses on the culture, structures, practices and review processes required to effectively involve children in social care delivery.

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide11/files/guide11.pdf>

This international resource provides detailed information about monitoring and evaluating children's participation.

<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/content/library/documents/toolkit-creating-step-change-monitoring-and-evaluating-childrens-participa>

## Māori

You need to consider ways to encourage the participation of Māori service users.

Section 2.2 of the OCVS Ready Reference Engagement Guide provides some overall principles to consider when you involve Māori. These principles include:

- Whakamana I te Tangata - respect
- Whakapapa - kinship
- Whanaungatanga - relationship
- Rangatira ki te Rangatira - chief to chief
- Kanohi-ri-te-kanohi - face to face

- Manaakitanga - caring for others
- Kotahitanga - accord; unity.

See section 2.2 - [http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/documents/ENGAGEMENT\\_GUIDE\\_FINAL.PDF](http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/documents/ENGAGEMENT_GUIDE_FINAL.PDF)

In general, you are more likely to use personal approaches to obtain the input of Māori service users. Māori culture is based on a holistic view of life and the world. This holistic worldview can mean participants may raise issues you perceive to be outside your brief. Be prepared to listen and consider these issues before moving to your particular area of focus. Also be ready to follow up on these issues, or to advise on more appropriate contacts if the matter is outside your brief.

## Pacific

The Pacific community is made up of many cultures, languages and practices. It is important to refer to the ethnic-specific Pacific information in the Pacific Conceptual Frameworks for family violence before you design any approaches that involve Pacific service users or before you hold Pacific focused meetings or fono.

The Pacific Conceptual Frameworks can be found at <http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/working-with-us/programmes-services/whanau-ora/pasefika-proud/pacific-cultural-frameworks.html>

Practically you should:

- invest time in building relationships, build links through Pacific people in your agency, through Pacific churches and Pacific community groups
- ensure cultural and spiritual protocols, such as prayer, are observed
- in a face-to-face meeting, try to be introduced by a member of the Pacific community and acknowledge individuals who have cultural status

- where possible involve Pacific facilitators who will bring Pacific cultural understandings and belief systems to the involvement process
- ensure your organisation understands the diversity between different Pacific cultures, with regard to language, customs, traditions and rules of conduct
- ensure your organisation understands the differences between island-born and New Zealand-born Pacific peoples.

### Migrant/refugee communities

The complexity experienced by migrant and refugee communities demands that you take a more integrated and holistic approach when you plan and deliver services to support those experiencing family violence. Incorporating a perspective from service users will encourage you to take account of the multitude of practical, social, cultural, economic and legal difficulties that can influence the interventions and services provided to the individual communities in this specific group.

To ensure you obtain the voices of migrant and refugee service users you will need to consider issues such as the use of interpreters and translated information materials, and the use of facilitators skilled in intercultural communication who have an understanding of the dynamics of family violence within each particular community.

Standards for Engagement: Guidelines for Central and Local Government, and NGOs Working with Refugee Background Communities is published by ChangeMakers Refugee Forum (a Wellington based NGO) in conjunction with government and non-government agencies.

<http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/documents/standards-for-engagement.pdf>

Case Studies of Community initiatives Addressing Family Violence in Refugee and Migrant Communities (2011) discusses culturally sensitive engagement with communities. Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Women's Affairs.

<http://www.refugeehealth.govt.nz/resources/articles/ministry%20womans%20affairs%20-%20Case%20studies%20FV%20migrant%20&%20Refugee%20community%20projects.pdf>

### Disabled

Disabled people want to be involved with the services that shape their lives. It is now rare for health and social care professionals and managers to ignore them entirely in the planning and delivery process.

The first ever national study in the UK of the needs of disabled women experiencing domestic violence and of the services available to meet these needs was done in 2010. The study found that, in general, support services frequently overlook or respond inappropriately to disabled women in this situation.

People with disabilities are often unseen victims of family violence. It is especially important to ensure your service user involvement processes allow the opportunity for people with disabilities to participate. Attend to issues of accessibility such as:

- physical access - wheelchair accessible venues and special parking for meetings or forums
- using a hearing loop or New Zealand Sign Language interpreters
- having personal assistance available
- accessible information - making documentation in accessible formats for people with visual impairment
- support arrangements - these may include mentoring and training.

## Working with specific populations

Disabled people face numerous barriers to accessing information and relevant services, and they can be potentially marginalised in any strategies for service user involvement. For example, being unable to get access to information is a problem faced in all areas of life by visually impaired people. This may have potentially hazardous consequences and loss of privacy if documents cannot be read by the intended recipient.

The pace of work can exclude many disabled people. Visually impaired people, for example, may need more time to read documents and people with learning difficulties may need help in understanding concepts.

Issues can arise as to whether a person with one type of impairment can represent someone with a different impairment. Disabled people are often challenged about being unrepresentative when they express their views or when they attempt to speak on behalf of other disabled people.

<http://www.radcliffe-oxford.com/books/samplechapter/7084/07%20KeyTopics%20Ch07-536d5000rdz.pdf>

User involvement in services for disabled people. Sally French and John Swain.

## Older People

Elder abuse is the abuse of older people by family members or others known to them. Abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological or financial.

Concern over the mistreatment of older people has been heightened by the realisation that, in the coming decades and in both developed and developing countries, there will be a dramatic increase in the population in the older age segment.

The impact of physical and psychological violence on the health of an older person is exacerbated by the ageing process and diseases of old age. It is more difficult for older people to leave an abusive relationship or to make safe decisions because of the physical and cognitive impairments that usually come with old age. In some places, kinship obligations and the use of the extended family network to resolve difficulties may also lessen the ability of older people, particularly women, to escape from dangerous situations. Often, the abuser is the abused person's only source of companionship. Because of these and other considerations, preventing elder abuse presents a whole host of problems for service providers.

Older people, particularly those with dementia (including those in institutional or residential care) seldom have the opportunity to be heard or to influence service change.

**Disabled people face numerous barriers to accessing ... relevant services, and can be potentially marginalised in any strategies for service user involvement.**

There is currently a shortage of best practice advice on how to directly engage older people in family violence service user involvement. It is an area which needs consideration.

In New Zealand the Office for Senior Citizens and specialist service providers, such as Age Concern, promote the rights and interests of older people.

The Office for Senior Citizens runs the New Zealand Volunteer Community Co-ordinators (VCC) Programme. The VCC Programme is a network of approximately 50 volunteers who have been nominated by a local incorporated society or charitable trust with an interest in older people, to work with the Office for Senior Citizens. The purpose of the VCC Programme is to promote positive ageing and to inform central and local government about matters affecting older people. VCCs bring personal knowledge of their communities enabling them to make a significant contribution to policy development.

<http://www.osc.govt.nz/documents/the-new-zealand-volunteer-community-co-ordinators-programme-2008.pdf>

### Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered and Intersex (GLBTI) Communities

Many GLBTI people do not identify family violence when they experience it because of a lack of recognition of its existence in same sex relationships.

A recent Australian study found the prevalence, types and contextual triggers of violence in male same-sex relationships parallel abuse in opposite sex relationships.

In addition, same sex victims may be particularly vulnerable due to isolation from their support networks. They may feel acknowledging the existence of the violence will further feed any homophobia.

The responsiveness of services is an issue for the GLBTI specific community. It is important that you consider their involvement.

# Appendix A

## New Zealand and international service user involvement context

### Overall policy context in New Zealand

While there is no overarching policy framework guiding service user involvement in New Zealand, there is a move by government to improve the input of citizens and communities in decision making. In mid-2011, the Cabinet endorsed the “2011 Kia Tutahi-Standing Together Relationship Accord” which outlines aspirational principles for community-government engagement. As community members and citizens, service users are a vital component of good government-community engagement. It is important government agencies have processes in place to engage not just with service providers in the community sector, but also with service users themselves.

You can find a copy of the relationship agreement here - [http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/documents/publications/papers-and-reports/Kia\\_Tutahi\\_Standing\\_Together\\_Accord.pdf](http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/documents/publications/papers-and-reports/Kia_Tutahi_Standing_Together_Accord.pdf)

The Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) has produced a Ready Reference Engagement Guide to support government agencies to engage effectively with citizens and communities (including service users). This July 2011 publication outlines elements of good practice government agencies need to follow when engaging citizens and communities

in the development of policy and services. It includes information about planning and undertaking an engagement process, and developing supportive work environments and an organisational culture so effective engagement can occur.

You can find a copy of the guide here - [http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/documents/ENGAGEMENT\\_GUIDE\\_FINAL.PDF](http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/documents/ENGAGEMENT_GUIDE_FINAL.PDF)

The OCVS also maintains a comprehensive website entitled Good Practice Participate. This website provides a large number of resources, links and case studies on community participation. It includes information on working with specific groups and specific techniques you can use. It is a valuable one-stop-shop source of information relevant to engaging and involving service users in your work.

You can find the good practice participate website here - [www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz](http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz)

In addition, some organisations have specific consultation policies or guidelines. If your organisation does, you may need to adhere to them in your work in engaging service users. If you are a government agency employee, you can locate these in the Policy Development Toolkit on the Public Sector Intranet.

# ...there is a move by government to improve the input of citizens and communities in decision making.

## Service user involvement in New Zealand

Service user involvement is used across many government and non-government agencies in New Zealand in varying degrees.

For example, the mental health sector has a strong service user movement and there are a number of service user designated roles across the mental health and alcohol and other drug sectors. The Mental Health Commission (MHC) did have a role in strengthening the systematic advisory role of consumers and families on national policy and strategy matters.<sup>1</sup> Mental health and addiction workforce development agencies support the development of the mental health service user workforce as part of their work programmes.<sup>2</sup> A number of district health boards and non-government agencies use a range of mechanisms to involve mental health and alcohol and other drug service users through audit and evaluation activities and service user advisory roles etc.

The health sector also has a proliferation of service user groups (specific to each health issue) and there was some momentum in the past to co-ordinate this activity

via a national body.<sup>3</sup> A National Consumer Summit was held in 2006 to further this. The Health Quality and Safety Commission is the organisation now responsible for consumer (as it is called in the health sector) participation and it has a work programme to improve consumer participation through a National Consumer Network. A directory of consumer organisations, groups and individuals and government agencies with consumer advisory panels has been developed as part of this work.<sup>4</sup>

The youth sector also has a strong level of input from service users (in this case, young people in general). The Ministry of Youth Development has developed a guide to involving youth, and provides a number of opportunities for young people to participate via the Aotearoa Youth Voices network and national advisory groups.

The Young People's Reference Group (YPRG) is a group of young people aged between 12 and 18 years from around New Zealand who provide advice to the Office of the Children's Commissioner. The YPRG informs the Children's Commissioner face-to-face about what is important to young people. They connect with other reference groups and young people, especially in their region. The YPRG meets with government officials to provide input and ideas into government work.

1 The MHC is being disestablished and its core functions transferred to the office of the Health and Disability Commissioner in June 2012. In 2011/2012 changes were made to the consumer and family advisor positions at the MHC. With the transfer of its functions, options will be considered on how to strengthen participation of consumers and families in the delivery of services and how to facilitate their input to inform monitoring and advocacy functions in the new environment.  
<http://www.mhc.govt.nz/moving-forward> accessed Dec 2011.

2 TePou (national mental health workforce development), see - <http://www.tepou.co.nz/improving-services/service-user-influence>, and MatuaRaki (national addiction workforce development), see - <http://www.matuaraki.org.nz/projects/consumer.html>

3 See the New Zealand Guidelines Group 2004 publication "Effective Consumer Voice and Participation for New Zealand" for more detail on this - [www.nzgg.org.nz/resources/161/050511\\_Consumer\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nzgg.org.nz/resources/161/050511_Consumer_Report.pdf)

4 <http://www.hqsc.govt.nz/page/29983/directory-of-consumer-organisations/?tab=3484&section=12384>

## Appendix A

### International situation

In the UK, Ireland and Australia, service user involvement is an accepted part of service development in the health, social care and housing sectors and is being implemented as part of a wider participation agenda. There are a number of examples of planning documents and frameworks that relate specifically to involving service users.

For example, both Ireland and Victoria, Australia have overarching strategies for service user involvement in their health services.

National Strategy for Service User Involvement  
Ireland (2008-2013) -

[http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/Your\\_Service\\_Your\\_Say\\_Consumer\\_Affairs/Strategy/Service\\_User\\_Involvement.pdf](http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/Your_Service_Your_Say_Consumer_Affairs/Strategy/Service_User_Involvement.pdf)

Doing it with us not for us. VicHealth, Australia  
(2010-2013) -

[http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/A6FECA5B2FFB4503CA2578B500229CD0/\\$FILE/1104007\\_DIWUNFU\\_StratDirection\\_FA3\\_web.pdf](http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/A6FECA5B2FFB4503CA2578B500229CD0/$FILE/1104007_DIWUNFU_StratDirection_FA3_web.pdf)

A number of government and non-government agencies in these jurisdictions have also developed useful service user involvement guides in areas such as health, housing, social care, justice, education. Several highlighted examples follow.

Guide to organisations working in the criminal justice system on how to involve service users - developed by the Revolving Doors Agency national service user forum in 2010. (Revolving Doors Agency is a charity working across England to change systems and improve services for people with multiple problems who are in contact with the criminal justice system.)

<http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/service-user-involvement-guide/>

Guide to user involvement for organisations providing housing related support services developed by the UK Office for the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003.

<http://www.housingcare.org/downloads/kbase/2577.pdf>

Guide to involve adult service users and carers in developing social care developed in 2007 by the Social Care Institute for Excellence in England.

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide17/files/guide17.pdf>

Good practice guidelines to support the involvement of service users and carers in clinical psychology services developed in 2010 by the British Psychological Society.

[http://www.recoverydevon.co.uk/download/2010\\_BPS\\_DCP\\_Service\\_user\\_and\\_carer\\_involvement.pdf](http://www.recoverydevon.co.uk/download/2010_BPS_DCP_Service_user_and_carer_involvement.pdf)

The BNCPA Consumer Participation and Training Kit for Service Providers. 2003 -

[http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pccps/downloads/publications/training\\_rit.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pccps/downloads/publications/training_rit.pdf)

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