

INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

**For people who use social care and support services in
Islington**

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1. WHO ARE 'SERVICE USERS' & 'CARERS'?

These terms are used throughout this Strategy.

They include the following people:

- √ People who use our services because they are ill, frail, are disabled or may be in the future
- √ People who 'look after' or 'care' for family, partners or friends those who use/might use our services. The care they provide is unpaid.
- √ Service User and Carer groups and organisations who support and represent the interests of people using our services
- √ Social Care service providers (Commissioners, Managers and Frontline staff)

2. ABOUT THE STRATEGY

This Strategy is for the people with social care needs who live in Islington and their carers and also the staff that support them.

Involving service users and carers is not new. Social care services in Islington have a long tradition of positive partnership working with service users and carers. This strategy aims to build on our previous work and to help us to develop a more consistent approach to involving service users and carers and move towards genuine 'co-production'.

National Priorities

There has been much legislation and guidance produced to make sure local authorities and their partners consult, involve and engage with the people who live in their local area and do it better. See Appendix 1 for more information

There are also national priorities for agencies who work with us - they are called our 'partners' and include agencies like NHS Islington (the Primary Care Trust), the Foundation Trust (mental health services), and third sector organisations which include voluntary organisations, faith and community groups.

Islington developments

In recent years, Islington Council has produced a range of policies and guidelines that refer to consulting, involving and engaging with local people and communities, including a Consultation, Involvement and Engagement Strategy published in June 2008.

Adult social care services has also developed:

- In 2001 Consultation and Partnership strategy, developed through a user-led conference on consultation, set out in detail how we would consult with each service user group.
- In 2005, User Involvement Framework, setting out the different ways in which service users and carers could get involved in services.

There are also a number of documents which support staff in undertaking consultations, with details of different methods and approaches.

Appendix 2 refers to these documents.

This involvement strategy for social care builds on some of the principles within these, but also to take new factors into account. For example:

- Making the emphasis on *outcomes* and what has changed for service users and carers as a result of their involvement, rather than involvement as an end in itself
- The changing social care environment and philosophy, through personalisation of services, individual budgets, etc
- New national initiatives to enable people to have their say on local services, i.e. LINKs

The strategy therefore seeks to build on our previous work, help us to develop a more consistent approach to continuing involvement, and find ways of getting a wider range of people engaged on an individual as well as collective basis.

Remit for the strategy

- Be accessible to individual service users and carers
- Be clear about the different levels of involvement (from information, through consultation, to involvement in decision-making) and when they are appropriate
- Tell people *how* they can get involved and how they will be supported to do so (including LINK arrangements)
- Tell people what standards they can expect from us
- Include an improvement plan for future user involvement
- Be developed in partnership with service users and carers themselves, staff and partner organisations, formally endorsed by senior management and the Executive.
- Act as good practice guidance for Islington council staff in user involvement.

Who has been involved in this strategy

Input from current and previous service users and carers and

good practice drawn from other council and national strategies have resulted in this Involvement Strategy.

In particular discussions with user groups during 2008/9 and at the Islington Adult Social Services Forum meetings have provided a framework and detail for the strategy.

A user involvement committee has been set up to oversee the strategy. This is made up of representatives from across social care client groups – mental health, physical and sensory impairments, older people, learning disabilities and carers. Members of the committee have produced the examples of good practice in this strategy.

3. OUR STRATEGY AIMS:

Reflecting Islington's commitment to accessible, appropriate and meaningful involvement, this Strategy has nine main aims:

1. To ensure that service users and carers are involved across all social care departments and services, including recruitment and training of staff and procurement of new services. See Section 6 for more information on ways in which they can be involved
2. To make sure service users and carers from all groups within the community have the chance to be involved. This especially includes working with people who are often left out:
 - √ Non English speakers
 - √ People who are housebound, in nursing or residential homes
 - √ People with complex needs, for example those who are disabled. This includes people with physical and sensory impairments as well as people with mental health problems and learning disabilities
 - √ People who are hidden from services or may feel stigmatised (e.g. refugees and asylum seekers, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities)
 - √ Younger people
 - √ People who don't currently use services but may need to in the future
3. To implement policy to ensure people are recognised and rewarded for their contribution in a range of ways
4. To develop service user and carer support and training so that barriers are reduced, thereby making sure that involvement is meaningful and not just 'tokenistic'
5. To make sure staff know how to work with service users and carers to make the most of their involvement (support, preparation, etc)
6. To provide guidance for service users and carers, and staff on what to do if there are any issues regarding involvement.

7. To continually monitor practices and/or policies and change those which may prevent people from being involved
8. To develop standards of good practice for partnership working, and targets so that our progress can be measured and evaluated.
9. To give regular feedback on the progress made putting this strategy into practice to all groups within the community

The rest of this strategy develops these aims.

4. WHY INVOLVING PEOPLE IS IMPORTANT TO US

There are many good reasons to involve service users and carers.

These include:

- √ To give people a real say in the services we offer and the way we provide them
- √ To better adapt our services to meet peoples' individual needs
- √ To make sure we provide good quality services that are friendly, fair and useful
- √ To make sure our services support people's dignity and independence
- √ To make sure that the services we provide continue to give people the things that they want
- √ To make sure we continue to improve in all areas of our work and development.

Consulting and involving service users and carers is a Council and departmental priority and is important to our strategic and business processes. We need to make sure that involvement is translated into action on the ground and produces real beneficial outcomes for the people who use our services and their carers, to ensure we are meeting their needs.

We report to the Council's Executive and to the Care Quality Commission every year on user involvement and the outcomes achieved. In future we will look at service users themselves can be involved in this reporting.

Making a difference: How we involve service users and carers

Involving service users, carers and local people can make a difference in a number of ways:

In the way services are delivered

We are aware that simple basic changes can often make a big difference to people's lives and new services can be developed. Feedback through customer services (complaints, compliments and suggestions) is important. So too are more formal feedback

mechanisms like individual reviews, surveys etc. or through groups/committees related to services, for example day centres□.

In planning, commissioning and policy making

As a local authority, we need to be fully accountable to local people. Islington has a very diverse population and meeting the needs of the whole everyone and giving them important information can present a challenge. We need to find out what local people want so that different points of view can be taken into account and fresh thinking for future planning and policy making can take place.

□In developing (and sometimes selecting) our staff

We are proud of and want to continue to value our workforce by improving training and induction programmes for better staff development. There are times when the input of service users and carers is useful to the learning process of we are now asking service users and carers to be partners with us in delivering some of our training courses, increasing the learning and awareness of participants. We are also looking at ways in which we can involve service users and carers in recruiting staff.

In the procurement and monitoring of contracts

Adult social services 'buys' some of its services from organisations and agencies which provide care and support. By supporting service users and carers to become involved in these commissioning processes our services are more likely to reflect what local people want. Involving service users and carers in the monitoring process also helps to make sure that commissioned services remain of high quality, take account of needs and provide value for money

In relationships with partners

Relationships with other organisations with whom we provide services can benefit from better communication and understanding of what local people need and what their priorities are. It is important that the discussions that we have are centred on what local people need rather than the interests of different organisations. Large organisations like NHS Islington and the

Foundation Trust have developed their own strategies for User Involvement; these have also been developed in consultation with service users and build on similar principles. Further joint working will underpin service user, carer and public involvement within Islington, which in turn will support work like this strategy.

5. ABOUT INVOLVEMENT

Involving people is about talking and listening to service users and carers, and working in partnership with them to develop that are appropriate to meeting the needs of the local community.

Islington is committed to making sure that its services are of good quality and meet the needs of its residents. To achieve this, it is essential to involve service users and carers in a range of ways, from consulting service users and carers about their views or wishes, through to working in partnership with them to develop projects or services, right up to service users or carers leading projects, services or organisations.

We have identified some areas where people can get involved in Section 4, other examples include

- Involving people in decisions about their own social care needs and how these are to be met.
- Asking people for their views on the usefulness, friendliness and accessibility of the information we produce
- Inviting people to take part in service planning/working groups and setting up forums where people can have their say about the services we offer or are planning
- Supporting people to get involved in monitoring the quality of services provided and in how we consult on these services.
- Testing out new ways or working and ideas with service users and carers, and potential users of services

We believe that people have a right to have their say, to enjoy choice and control, and to share in decision making about their services. Where service users and carers work in equal partnership with services providers this is sometimes referred to as co-production.

Barriers to involvement

There are a variety of reasons why service users may lose interest and become disengaged, or may not even get involved in the first place. These are not specific to Islington, but are issues we need to address if we are to achieve genuine involvement or co-production.

Reasons can include:

- not being offered the opportunity to be involved
- not feeling able to give a view, feel listened to, be understood
- lack of understanding about the appropriate type and level of involvement for different situations
- unrealistic expectations or promises being given by professionals
- inappropriate timescales
- inconsistencies in training, payment or practice such as last minute requests
- overuse of jargon and complicated written documents
- lack of communication in appropriate accessible formats
- negative or dismissive attitudes of professionals
- not feeling respected or treated as equals
- lack of support for personal circumstances such as times and venues, flexibility
- lack of help with travel
- lack of support such as training, preparation, debriefing, feedback, ongoing progression
- lack of support with reading, writing, presenting information
- lack of recognition such as payment or thanks
- being 'out of pocket'
- not feeling that their input has an influence or impact

Limits to involvement

At the same time we know that there are limits to this right to be involved, and we must be open and honest about these. For example, elected members of the Council are also involved in decision making and have the ultimate authority in policy making.

Also, the Council has legal duties and responsibilities that it must carry out. Because of this, we may sometimes need to make decisions that may go against the views of service users and carers. If this happens, we will clearly explain our actions as well as people's right to appeal or to make a complaint.

Taking account of these limits to involvement, we are committed to making sure that service users and carers are at the centre of all that we do and the way we do it.

The expertise found in the experiences of people who use our services and their carers is an important added value to our work. It is important to make sure that we acknowledge and value the input from individuals and groups.

Service user and carer involvement is a continuous process, and for social care services it is a continuous process of learning, adapting to changing circumstances, trying out new ideas and working out how to do things better in the future.

As part of this strategy, we will also be looking at what service users and carers can do to get the most out of their involvement, and also what they can do if things go wrong.

6. HOW WE CURRENTLY INVOLVE PEOPLE

Involvement is not always easy and doing it well can be hard. We want to do a good job of involving people.

We have carried out a number of public involvement activities that range from giving people good information directly into their homes to assisting people to influence, both individually and as a group, how services can be developed.

The service user committee overseeing this strategy has come up with some examples of involving service users and carers which have worked well.

Power and Control group

Valuing People (the Government) says services should change so that people with learning difficulties can live more fulfilling lives.

An example of how Valuing People Now tells services how they can make things better, is the Partnership Boards.

Every area has to have a Partnership Board.

The Partnership Board is a big meeting that brings together people that plan, check and provide services for people with learning difficulties.

This means people from social services, health services, housing, education, employment services, parents and carers, people from private and voluntary organisations (like the Elfrida Society, Centre 404, People First, Disability Action Islington) and service users.

The job of people on the Partnership Board is to make sure that services meet the needs of people with learning difficulties in the 4 main ways that Valuing People Now (the Government) says they should – by promoting people's Rights, Independence, Choice and Inclusion.

Every Partnership Board has to have service user representatives. In Islington, the group that represent service users on the

Partnership Board are called the Power and Control group. We have 4 representatives that go to each meeting. They are there to represent the views and needs of service users in Islington.

Power and Control group representatives speak up at meetings to say what service users want from services in Islington. We help to plan services and check if they are good for service users.

Here are some examples of the work we do:

We go on training and also go to conferences for example- We have had training in Makaton, Speaking Up and Forum Theatre

We co chair the Partnership Board meetings and make sure people listen to the views of people with learning difficulties and communicate in a way that we all can understand. We have been part of a review of our Partnership Board meetings to make them more inclusive

We meet up every week.

On Wednesday afternoon, from
2.00 – 4.00 at Hilldrop Rd Community Centre, N7.

We are paid every week for our 2 hour meeting. We are also paid for 4 places at the Partnership Board meetings.

We use the money to pay for things like – training, going on trips in the summer and our Christmas meal!

We work with the sub groups of the Partnership Board. like - Housing, Person Centred Planning, Health, Workforce Development, Getting a Life, Transition and Family Carers

Networking: We go to London Valuing People meetings like the Met Police and London Transport.

We have been involved in interviews for jobs like the Director of Social Care and the Head of Learning Disabilities Service

We have worked with Islington council on making their information more accessible, and how to employ people with learning difficulties.

We have a Big Meeting called a Forum every 3 months. This is for people with learning difficulties in Islington. The forum meeting is a place where people can meet others and hear what is happening in services. We have managers come and give presentations and ask people with learning difficulties what they want from services.

this is a chance for people to listen and to have their say....about services for people with learning difficulties in Islington

In our Big Meetings last year we have talked about Health, Bullying and Hate Crime, Jobs with Islington council and Person Centred Planning.

In our Big Meetings we looked at how people communicate and how we could be better at including everyone.

We are trying to make sure that everyone has a voice and that everyone is listened to!

Mobility forum

The Islington Mobility forum was started only a few years ago in response to the needs of disabled and elderly people who had never really had the opportunity to voice their opinions on matters concerned with their mobility around the borough and transport in general, which was still failing them miserably. It was felt that a forum to allow those who run the services used by impaired and elderly people had the chance to hear and learn where these failure were occurring and redress them. A sort of get together for users and servers.

The idea is that users have a say in how the services are provided by the local authority. It also serves as a conduit to spread the word on how things are changing or may change in the future. It

serves as a way of consultation on future redevelopments across the borough and also as feedback to the council on numerous aspects of mobility around Islington and giving them hopefully an understanding or at least an insight into the very real problems that face impaired people in the course of their daily lives.

It is entirely devoted to mobility and transport issues and any of the services attached to them, such as taxi cards, freedom passes etc.

It also highlights any road repairs tress, that need attention, obstacles in the way of wheelchair users, condition of pavements, parking issues, crossings and lights, traffic calming measures etc. anything that is hazardous such as repair being left unfinished or workers not clearing the area they work in. really anything outside the home may be brought up at the forum.

There are at present 3 sessions a year, which I think should increase to 4 personally. There are two chairs at present. We were elected at the time of the first forum..

The format has been well organised: there is a system whereby we have a surgery hour first thing between 11 –12.noon. Anyone can bring up any problems they have encountered or want to thrash out or highlight in their own road or area or whatever anyone wants to discuss or complain about. Officers from the council and TFL attend this first hour to give accountability and responses to what is raised and to ensure that they will look into the matter, which they do try to do invariably. Then we have a lunch break for one hour.

In the afternoon, we have what we call a themed meeting. We generally try to have this on a subject that has brought up a lot of problems or queries or is about to change or a new service coming in etc. We have council presentations on the subjects. We try to keep each forum to one main theme. This is discussed at length over the next two hours. Then we have a tea break And finally we have a round up and people go home at 3pm. The council will arrange all the transport to bring people to the Forum and take them home again.

It is one of the best forums in London (we were invited to another London forum to see how they did theirs – which was just a talking shop with no reps from the council and no organisation, The Islington forum is also I believe one of the best-attended meetings

of users in the borough because they have the opportunity to air their views and their individual problems and are listened to by the council. But we do need to ensure that more people know about it.

I also believe that the council takes on board what we say and that it has helped to create a much better working relationship between us all. May it go on and get better as time goes by.

Foundation Trust MH Implementation Group

"Implementation Group Islington", is a good example of a responsible SU led group because:

- It has a lead non S.U. Senior Professional supervisor for support and guidance
- There is equality amongst all of it's members and all sectors that use MH services are represented (The group size however is limited due to lack of big enough rooms to hold bigger meetings.)
- There are no lavish meals, but the funds are fairly spent on rewarding SUs with reasonable levels of SU expenses ie 20-30 pounds, and ensuring the SU feels that their contributions are valued.
- It truly put the S.U. at the forefront of its running. There is no interference from non-service user persons ie, it does not seek to employ non SU persons and utilises the skills resources from the pool of service users, showing a genuine concern for the service user's situation.
- The Implementation Group is simplicity in its element. It selects users from a broad background of Service Usership and from the range of ethnic backgrounds and disabilities or complex/simple needs persons, available to it in the borough

Talking News

This is a very good way of involving and getting news out to blind people.

It's been going for nearly two years now, and goes out every month on CD or tape to nearly 100 people in Islington. It's run by a group of visually impaired people, and supported by a committee of volunteers.

It's been successful in getting funding from local charities, the Community Chest and the Council. And its membership is ever-expanding. A lot of this is down to the dedication of the people that run it – they never turn down an opportunity to promote the News, having stalls at Moorfields Eye Hospital, council events etc.

It aims to tell visually impaired people what's happening in Islington, involve them in local matters, give them usual information, and also things which will make them laugh. All the sorts of things sighted people can get from their daily or weekly newspaper which would otherwise be denied to blind people.

Its membership is growing all the time.

Leafleting for the LINK

How do you reach those people who don't normally come to meetings and haven't thought of getting involved.

One simple way is to put leaflets through doors in your local area. If everyone in a group took a couple of streets, you could get to a lot of people. Especially if it is your local area, people may recognise you and may come to the door. You can then tell them about your group or event – whatever it is you are leafleting them about. People like the individual approach and you may well be reaching those people who don't normally get out of their homes, because they are elderly, frail, disabled, blind etc.

Make your leaflet eye-catching and make sure it has all the details on it, and you're onto a winner.

This worked well when LINK members did this to get people along to the annual LINK fair and other groups are adopting this way of reaching more people.

Social Services Forum

We like coming to the forum because it is a way of us finding out what is going on in social services and speaking to the top people.

It is unlike other forums because there are service users from all different groups there and anyone can come. We can get together to share experiences and raise common issues.

It is good that each meeting has a theme which we know in advance. But we think it would be even better if we had more chance to raise our own issues directly with the key people.

These are just some examples of where things work well.

7. OUR INVOLVEMENT STANDARDS

The principles governing involvement are important as they set a framework, and define standards for all future activity. Involving and consulting people can mean different things to different people and can be done in different ways. Doing things in different ways is fine – as long as all involvement is using the same standards.

In previous strategies, and through various conferences and other activities, some good practice guidelines have already been developed for successful service user and carer involvement.

In its 2008 consultation strategy, Islington Council is committed to developing a set of principles to ensure everyone is included, involvement is clear, timely and appropriate and that feedback is given. These are set out in full in Appendix 2.

Why do we need standards for social care?

It is important to recognise the additional needs that users of social care services and their carers have if they are to be fully involved and to address these specifically.

The following standards have been put together based on the knowledge, skills and experience we have developed through involving service users and carers. The standards cover the things we need to enable all professionals, service users, carers and 3rd party organisations to develop good practice in partnership working..

Over time, these standards will help ensure all involvement and consultation is the best it can be. They could be made into a Charter and used across all Social Care services. It is important that everyone knows about them and works to them as “rules” when they work with service users and carers.

- 1.** Make sure decisions and services are developed in partnership with the people who use them
- 2.** Ask people about the different ways they want to get involved. We will let them know how their involvement has influenced decisions

3. Work with community and voluntary groups and other local groups to involve local people
4. Always think about how we can reach people who are not part of groups or who do not usually get involved
5. Find ways to show how much we appreciate the time and effort local people give in getting involved

Standard 1

Make sure decisions and services are developed in partnership with the people who use them

Working in line with Government policy and good practice guidance we will:

1. Talk to people about ideas or changes from start to finish. Sometimes discussions will be informal, other times formal. We will be clear whether we are just getting ideas or formally consulting.
2. Check with other departments and organisations to make sure our ideas and plans do not copy or clash with other involvement and consultation work that has been done already.
3. Develop clear, accessible plans with local people that say who we are involving, how, and why.
4. Be clear about what can be changed and what cannot, and why. We will be open and transparent about the scope of our involvement and consultation.
5. Say what is expected of those who get involved. We will say if people need to have certain knowledge or skills and how much time it will take. We will provide support and training to help people.
6. Share our plans with as many people as we can, with the resources we have. This will include working with the voluntary sector, putting information on our websites, in newsletters and the press, and in other places, e.g. libraries, GPs, pharmacies, community centres
7. Follow the government's guidelines about written consultations. These say that where possible, 12 weeks should be allowed to give people time to think and reply. When 12 weeks isn't possible we will explain why and give as much time as we can.

Standard 2:
Ask people about the different ways they want to get involved. We will let them know how their involvement has influenced decisions

We will

1. Ask local people and groups about the best ways to involve them. We will include these in our plans
2. Provide information about our involvement and consultation that is clear and easy to understand. We will avoid using jargon, and where this is used provide a glossary to explain it. We will check our information with local people or voluntary organisations for readability.
3. Provide clear instructions on our documents on how to ask for copies in other formats such as large print, easy-read, audio, or other languages. We will provide these other formats on request. Where a consultation is with a group of people who have specific needs we will produce the document in the best format at the start, according to their guidance.
4. When we record views we won't say who said what, but where people do give us their names and address we will let them know what has happened as a result of their involvement.
5. Provide at the end of every involvement or consultation an explanation of our involvement or consultation work. This will include how many people got involved, what they said, what we were able to act on or not and the reasons for those decisions. We will also review the effectiveness of the process of consultation or involvement, in order to make future improvements.

Standard 3
Work with community and voluntary groups and other local groups to involve local people

We will

1. Make contact with the relevant community, voluntary and other groups at the beginning to share and develop ideas for involvement and consultation. This could be a user committee, a carers group, a health forum or a day centre.
2. Get advice to ensure that our plans mean that everyone can get involved if they would like. This will mean making sure that the timing, type or location of our involvement or consultation doesn't stop people from getting involved.

3. Go out to local people where they meet in their community as much as possible. We will also work with local groups to help invite people to special events that we organise.
4. Get the right help to involve people. Involving certain groups and communities can require very special skills. Involving some groups may need a special approach using the right words and methods and means. Where we don't have those skills we will get help from local groups
5. Make sure our staff know and are trained in how to involve people respectfully and effectively

Standard 4

Always think about how we can reach people who are not part of groups or who do not usually get involved

We will

1. Include in our plans lists of communities or groups who don't usually get involved but who we want to include in our involvement
2. Contact voluntary and community organisations to get advice about these communities and groups and how best to involve them.
3. Be as flexible as possible to help people get involved. This might mean producing information in special formats from the outset.
4. Fit our involvement to the needs of the groups or community we are working with, and make sure we are sensitive to the concerns and needs of those people we would want to involve.

Standard 5

Find ways to show how much we appreciate the time and effort local people give in getting involved

We will

1. Make sure that it is as convenient as possible for people to get involved. This means we will
 - give plenty of notice of events
 - hold events in venues that are convenient, accessible and pleasant

- provide clear written information well in advance
 - provide interpreters, loop systems and other support on request
 - provide refreshments
2. Respect the time and effort that people who get involved put in. We will always thank people for their input
 3. Provide training, information and support so anyone who gets involved has all the information they need to do a good job
 4. Reward people appropriately in line with our policy. This could be payment for time, expenses, or supporting the development of transferable skills.
 5. Ask people to tell us what went well and what could be improved at the end of every involvement and consultation.
 6. Provide feedback on what has happened as a result. This should include a summary of people's views, recommendations, how the results will be taken forward to influence policy, service delivery or the decision making process. We will use the most appropriate channels for the audience.

8. HOW MUCH INVOLVEMENT?

Levels of Involvement

We believe that all service users and carers must be given the same chance to participate at a level and a degree that suits them and in issues they choose to be involved in.

Examples of different types of involvement are given below

Minimum involvement		Maximum involvement		
Giving information	Obtaining information	Forums for debate	Participation	Partnership
Exhibitions	Self completion surveys	Existing group meetings	User panels	Board level representation
Leaflets and other written documents	Face to face interviews	Public/ LINK meetings	Working groups	Dedicated User forums
	Mystery shopping	Social Services Forum/ Hands Up!	Recruitment/ tender panels	User committees
	Focus groups	Drama workshops	Training staff	

When inviting service users and carers to get involved Social care services must be clear about what 'level' and type of involvement they are suggesting, and why. They should also ask the people for their views on how they want to be involved, and work with them to agree the most appropriate method.

Service users and carers need to consider:

- how much time will I need to commit?
- will I need to travel?
- will I get any help? (support worker, carer, interpretation)
- will I be on my own or be supported?
- what sort of things will I do?
- will I get feedback from my involvement?
- will my role be clear?

- can I choose how to be involved?
- will I be trained?
- will I understand the written material?
- can I be involved even if I can not get to meetings or groups?
- how will I be kept informed even if I do not come to meetings?
- will I be reimbursed or paid?
- will things change as a result of my involvement?
- what happens if something goes wrong?
- who, in the organisation will provide support for my involvement (liaising with staff, preparing for meetings, handling payments etc)

For some service users and carers, receiving information about services is enough. Others will want to be more actively involved, both by giving their views and expecting to take part in local decision making. Some people may want to take part in decision making about their own services and also take part in the management, planning and development of services for the community.

Others may want to take full control of their services. For instance, some service users take responsibility for managing their own care packages. Opportunity and support is now available for people to decide and define their own agendas, to make recommendations about services that affect them, to identify and carry out their own research and hopefully, and work with us on their own terms.

9. WHO WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN?

All those involved have a role in making this strategy happen:

Service Users and Carers

... are at the heart of this Strategy and have a crucial role to play in helping us to continue to develop services that are user-friendly, fair, and easy to access, as well as engagement that is constructive, effective and beneficial to those involved.

The Voluntary Sector

...already supports lots of user and carer groups. These organisations also have an important role in making sure that involvement happens both within their own agencies and with the statutory sectors. They will continue to challenge the lack of and tokenistic involvement and work with us so we can do it better together

Staff

... are a key part of making the Strategy happen. Staff will make sure that service users and carers are informed of their rights and of the standards we work to and abide by them. Staff will also support service users and carers to take part in their services, to recruit the right staff who will work with them and contribute to the planning and development of services for local people.

Managers

...at all levels will need to make sure that the way we offer services, as set out in our contracts and specifications', include suitable arrangements for service user and carer involvement. They will also make sure that staff receive appropriate support and training in putting this strategy into practice and deal with any problems or issues that may arise.

Our partners

...have a key role in making sure that users and carers are involved 'as a matter of course'. We must all work together to reduce 'consultation fatigue', by sharing our findings. Social care services will also encourage a wider multi agency commitment to the involvement of service users and carers.

The Learning and Development Team

...will work with all those involved to develop and/or support suitable training to ensure the standards are met and appropriate action plans developed.

The User and Carer Initiatives Team

...will take the lead in making sure we continue to work with and encourage the groups who are often left out, that all those involved are supported to make the strategy and involvement happen and to check and report on progress made.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE STRATEGY

This Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan will be checked regularly to make sure that it keeps up with the needs of service users and carers, and also that it is fully up to date with social care policies and procedures.

In keeping with the standards for involvement, individual involvement activities will be evaluated and monitored by those involved for their effectiveness.

The strategy user led committee will be expanded to include more service users, carers and staff. It will monitor and review progress made on the Involvement Strategy, and advise on future action.

Progress made in making the strategy happen will be reported to the Senior Management Team of Housing & Adult Social Services and other Council committees if required.

THANKS

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the strategy, which includes managers and staff, colleagues in the voluntary and community sector as well as services users themselves.

In particular the members of the service users committee who have given up their time to work on this strategy and have provided us with examples of good practice here in Islington.

CONTACTS

These will be inserted in the final document.

Appendix 1

National Legislation and policy background

The involvement of people who use services in the design, delivery and monitoring of social care and health policies is a key government policy, and has been adopted with enthusiasm by many statutory and independent organisations.

The statutory duty to involve and consult commenced in January 2003 and the Department of Health issued *Strengthening accountability – involving patients and the public policy guidance – Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001*.

The Department of Health *Requirements for social work training*, issued in 2002, underpins the new social work degree. This publication specifies that people who use services and carers must be involved in all parts of the design and delivery of social work education and training.

The Disability Equality Duty came into force in December 2006. This new legal duty requires all public authorities to actively look at ways of ensuring that disabled people are treated equally. There is a general duty which applies to all public authorities, and specific duties on organisations such as local authorities, government departments, health trusts and non-departmental public bodies requiring them to produce a disability equality scheme, which centrally includes the involvement of disabled people. As the duty includes encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life, the current benefit barriers to involvement could hinder public authorities from meeting their disability equality duty..

Other relevant documents include:

- "Real Involvement" 2008
- "Communities in Control - real people, real power" 2008
- "Putting People First" 2007
- "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" 2006
- "Citizen Engagement and Public Services - Why Neighbourhoods Matter" 2005
- "Strong and Prosperous Communities" 2006

Appendix 2

Links to council strategy, previous social care strategies, reward and recognition policy etc. will be included in the final document.

Principles from the 2008 Council strategy

1. set out clear objectives for all consultation, involvement and engagement activities
2. identify and seek the views of stakeholders on issues that may affect them
3. take account of the views and input of participants
4. be inclusive by seeking to reach communities and individuals that are seldom heard or have not in the past been engaged with the council
5. use a range of methods and techniques to maximise participation
6. provide sufficient time for people to express their views and engage with the council
7. use and build on existing networks, forums and partnerships
8. collaborate more closely with the community and voluntary sectors to extend our reach into the communities they represent
9. provide feedback to participants and the wider community on the outcomes and decisions taken following consultation, involvement and engagement activities
10. work collaboratively with partners to avoid duplication and overload on participants
11. use plain English, good design and layout, and other appropriate formats in consultation documents and involvement and engagement activities
12. be open and transparent about all consultation, involvement and engagement activity
13. publicise our consultation, involvement and engagement activities to raise awareness and encourage participation
14. brand our consultation documents in accordance with council guidelines
15. respect the confidentiality of respondents
16. seek to earn the trust and confidence of stakeholders in our processes
17. comply with all statutory requirements where these are prescribed by legislation

18. review the effectiveness of our consultation and engagement activities, using the knowledge we gain to improve our approach in the future.