



Eight principles for involving service users and carers

Service users and carers are at the heart of planning and delivering better social care services

If service users and carers are involved in planning and reviewing social care services, those services are more likely to meet their needs. A number of social care organisations believe it is important to involve service users and carers in their work, as it will help to make sure that service users are properly listened to.

The following principles are what any service user and carer can expect when working with:

- **The General Social Care Council;**
- **The Commission for Social Care Inspection;**
- **Skills for Care; and**
- **The Social Care Institute for Excellence.**





We have signed up to these principles as the minimum standards for involving service users and carers in our work.

We believe that these principles support the rights of individual service users and carers to be heard, valued and respected.

Any organisation that wants to involve service users or carers in their work can use these principles.

Statement of purpose

The purpose of this leaflet is to make sure that we share the same principles for involving service users and carers in our work. We have identified eight principles.

We will be clear about the purpose of involving service users or carers in aspects of our work.

This will include:

- identifying the benefits to the organisation and service user or carer of being involved in the work;
- recognising the boundaries to involvement; and
- being open, consistent and clear about these reasons.



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We will work with people who use social care and health services to agree the way they are involved.

This will include:

- involving them in planning and assessing their involvement and the success of the project they are involved in;
- making sure service users and carers have the opportunity to identify their own needs in the work; and
- listening and taking account of what service users and carers identify as being important in the involvement activity.

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We will let service users and carers choose the way they become involved.

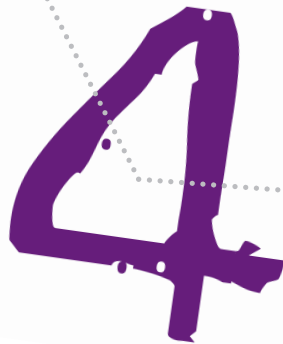
This will include:

- making sure service users and carers fully understand the reasons for the types of activities they will be involved in;
- making sure service users and carers can make informed choices about how to be involved;
- making sure conditions of involvement are clear;
- involving service users and carers in different ways to achieve the most effective outcomes; and
- making sure the task is in proportion to service users' and carers' abilities.

We will exchange feedback about the outcome of service users' and carers' involvement in appropriate ways.

This will include:

- developing a range of tools, materials and resources to provide effective feedback;
- making sure service users and carers are fully included in their involvement; and
- explaining how their involvement has influenced the project.



We will try to recognise and overcome barriers to involvement.

This will include:

- overcoming physical and environmental barriers of access, safety and transport;
- overcoming barriers of procedures and practices that exclude service users and carers, or only include them because they have to; and
- overcoming barriers of attitudes and values in ways that make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to get involved.





We will make every effort to include the widest possible range of people in our work.

This will include:

- developing opportunities to include groups that are 'rarely heard', such as people in prisons, homeless people and refugees;
- developing opportunities to include groups who it is hard to communicate, such as very young children, frail and elderly people, people with learning disabilities, people with limited English, and people who are 'involuntary service users' due to child protection issues or mental problems; and
- acknowledging the difference in power relationships between the organisation and service users and carers.



We will value the contribution, expertise and time of service users and carers.

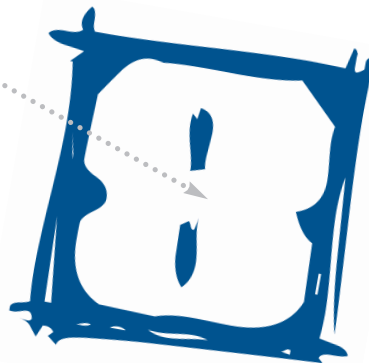
This will include:

- paying service users and carers for their involvement;
- following recognised guidance on paying service users and carers;
- refunding all out-of-pocket expenses; and
- giving reward or compensation for involvement in a fair, consistent and open way.

We will use what we have learned from working with service users and carers to influence changes in our ways of working, to achieve better outcomes.

This will include:

- asking service users and carers to share their experiences of being involved to influence future planning and change;
- setting up audit and monitoring systems to make sure involvement can be formally assessed;
- reporting back to service users and carers about how their contribution was used; and
- sharing learning with other organisations.





The General Social Care Council (GSCC) is the workforce regulator in England responsible for putting all social care workers on to a register.



The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the service regulator in England responsible for registering and inspecting all social care providers.



Skills for Care

is part of the sector skills council Skills for Care and Development, and is responsible for the strategic development of adult social-care workforces in England.



The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) aims to develop good practice across social care for the benefit of all service users.