

TOOLS FOR INVOLVING USERS AND CARERS

FOCUS GROUPS

A focus group usually lasts about 1-2 hours, is facilitated and uses prepared questions and themes relating to a topic. Apart from the facilitator it is helpful to have an observer in support.

How to invite people.

A letter of invitation explaining the process, proposed objectives and expected commitment to the project.

Personal invites are also a valuable way to recruit members but needs to be backed up with letter confirming details.

Hints and Tips

Establish funding for paying expenses and protocol for making payment.

Provide refreshments. Drinks on arrival are always welcome and can be a good ice breaker.

Any special needs should be checked in advance e.g. people may not be able to hear, read or see.

Clarify aims, objectives and timing of the group

The ideal numbers are between 6-12

Venue needs to be accessible to all participants

Time of group should be considered in relation to participants.

Ground rules and agenda should be agreed by group at outset

Facilitation should be by someone not directly related to the project

Record meetings either with notes or tape.

Feedback progress to all participants