



Involving Service Users in Meetings:-

Good Meetings Guide

This is a guide to the good practice principles for staff to use before, during and after meetings where Service Users are involved. The aim is to ensure that meetings are a positive and meaningful experience for all.

More comprehensive details are available in the Checklist for Involving Service Users in Events/Meetings

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Principles of Good Practice when planning meetings with service users

1. Think about **the times of meetings** – they should be carefully planned to ensure that Service Users that want to be involved can be involved.

Meetings involving Service Users should be held between 10.30am and 2.30pm. Outside of these times service user's personal care needs and provided transport issues must be considered. The maximum recommended time for meetings involving Service Users is 2 hours, unless agreed by prior arrangement with them.

2. The Chair/Lead Officer must inform those willing to be involved what they are **committing themselves to**, e.g., duration, length of meetings and their role and responsibility. (*Consider using the Involvement Information Forms for Service Users available from the User Involvement Team*).
3. **Documents** should be provided in appropriate format, produced in plain language and available in good time. (*Service Users want and need to do their homework too*).
4. Make arrangements, and allow time, for all types of **communication needs** such as; producing documents in large print, reformatting of documents, arranging interpreters, Braille, signers and translators.
5. **Use name cards** – These also reminds everyone of the value of involvement. (*Name card template and plastic card holders are available to borrow from the User Involvement Team*).
6. All meetings should be conducted within the specified **Ground Rules**. (*Examples available from the User Involvement Team*).
7. **Transport** should be arranged where necessary. Travel expenses and out of pocket expenses claim forms for Service Users should always be provided. (*Claim forms are available from the User Involvement Team*).
8. All meeting should be developed with clear **Terms of Reference** that states the **Aims and Objectives** of the meeting Service Users should be informed of these in advance.
9. Provide **refreshments** for those Service Users who participate.

Role of the Chair

- Every meeting should begin with **introductions** saying who people are, the organisation they represent and their role. These details should be recorded on the minutes.
- It is the responsibility of the Chair to make sure everyone is keeping to the agreed **Ground Rules**.
- The Chair must remind those present about the importance of matters of **confidentiality**. This relate to personal issues and when matters 'not yet in the public domain' are discussed.
- The role of the Chair is to remind those present that everyone's view is equally important and they have a **right to express** that view.

Nominate a Key/Support Worker

The Chair/Lead Officer should identify a member of staff to act as 'support worker' for service users involved.

- A key/support worker is responsible for **organising, informing and supporting the Service Users** throughout the period of involvement. This includes ensuring their transport collects them. It **does not** include providing for personal care, this should be arranged with appropriately trained staff.
- A key/support worker will need to **'work with' Service Users** and seek clarification for any jargon used in meetings and in minutes/notes from meetings.

After Meetings

- **Minutes**/ record of the meeting should be clearly and briefly documented and sent out in the required formats well in advance of the next meeting.
- Any **action points** should be clearly highlighted in the minutes. -These act as a reminder to everyone for the actions they have agreed to do.