Service user involvement

Service user involvement is fundamental to Supporting People in Westminster. It is important that service users are given an opportunity to have a say in the services they receive, and more importantly, that their feedback and experiences are valued.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE USERS PANEL

The Panel members say:

“We are a group of people who use mental health housing related support services in Westminster. We work with the council and contribute to extra space developing services people will want to use, now and in the future.

“We come from very different backgrounds so the panel has given us the chance to meet people in other types of housing and share experiences. We have learned a lot from each other – how services are organised and developed – and we’ve had input into how they can be changed, improved or added to. Housing is so central that we talk about things that touch all aspects of our lives.

“We can’t change the world but we do feel more confident dealing with professionals, and less helpless. Otherwise, you don’t know how things work and you just wish you could change things without knowing how to. We are looking forward to being more involved in the tendering process and making the most of training opportunities.”

We are always looking for new members. For more information about this panel please contact Rachel Thorneycroft, Commissioning Manager, Mental Health Related Support Services, 0207 641 3490
**Meet the new Supporting People Provider Forum Chairs**

Elections were held over Christmas to elect three new representatives as the Supporting People Provider forum representatives have moved on. The newly elected forums chairs are as follows:

- Lindsay Ryder – Community Housing Group: lryder@communityhousing.org.uk
- Amina Rahman – LookAhead: AminaRahman@lookahead.org.uk
- Lee Buss – Broadway: lee.buss@broadwaylondon.org.uk

This space is reserved for providers to ask a question about the programme and we will publish a response.

**LEE BUSS, LINDSAY RYDER AND AMINA RAHMAN**

We will contact you with details of agenda items as well as feeding back to the providers prior to the Commissioning Body meeting. If you have any comments or concerns relating to an agenda item, please contact us and let us know.

If you have any issues relating to Supporting People in Westminster, please feel free to contact us to discuss it and we can try to address it with the Supporting People team.

**Question**

Many boroughs have started to consult with providers about the Communities and Local Government’s proposed format for the performance management framework. With the implementation of this likely to be in the spring 2007, what actions will Westminster take to assist service providers to prepare for this?

**Response**

In Westminster we have a well established performance monitoring framework which includes quarterly monitoring meetings, scheme visits, analysis of the performance indicators, Quality Assessment Framework, improvement action plan and the extended mental health monitoring form.

We also have a number of local targets which are regularly monitored including a reduction in the number of rough sleepers and the number of 16 and 17 year olds living in bed and breakfast. We are looking forward to the DCLG outcomes model and will discuss this further at the next Provider Forum meeting.

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**LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS**

The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) recently announced that the Supporting People Programme is to be integrated into Local Area Agreements (LAA’s) from 2009 onwards. The ring-fenced grant for Supporting People is likely to be removed and will be subsumed within the grant funding allocated to all Local Authorities. The idea is that by pooling Supporting People funds within a Local Area Agreement, an authority would have greater flexibility over expenditure within the programme and better integration with other local services. Westminster is beginning to plan how this will work in practice. This will be managed through the well established city council’s Local Strategic Partnership which includes all key stakeholders in Supporting People including the Director of Housing who is the Chair of the Commissioning Body.

**Outcomes**

The DCLG is developing a Supporting People outcomes framework which is based on the Department for Education and Skill’s policy document ‘Every Child Matters’ and will include outcomes on:

- economic well-being
- enjoying and achieving
- being healthy
- safety and security
- social and civic participation

Against each of these five high level outcomes a number of indicators will be listed. Providers will be expected to send a completed client record form to JCSHR who will analyse the data and provide data to CLG and local authorities to measure outcomes in a consistent way.

There are a number of mini pilots underway to test the proposed outcomes approach and training is being arranged by the DCLG for providers and local authorities.

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**LONDON RESETTLEMENT HOUSING CONFERENCE 2006**

London Probation hosted its first housing resettlement conference at HMP Holloway to raise awareness of the lack of housing for women leaving prison. The event illustrated how the Supporting People programme can work in partnership with London Probation colleagues to enable greater access to provision to reduce re-offending. Over 100 delegates attended on the day including representatives from the Greater London Authority and the DCLG.