Service User Involvement Strategy

January 2009- 2012

Introduction

The Sanctuary Trust Limited support programmes provide support and encouragement to homeless and vulnerable people who are seeking to take control of their lives.

These programmes empower and enable service users to understand and achieve greater independence and stability.

This strategy operates from a view that involving service users in the operation and development of our services and programmes is an important means of promoting the independence, teaching transferable skills and improving quality of services of, and for, diverse groups of vulnerable people and helping them to take their full place in society.

It is my intention to make available to all service users the resources to help them realise their potential. Service users past and present have always proved their valuable input to improving our services and this strategy is written to help us maintain that much needed focus for the benefit of service users present and future.

David Lackner-Smith

Executive Director

1. *The scope of the strategy*

1.1.   This draft strategy is intended to cover the current services of the Charity and the services that are currently being worked towards in the Charity's development plan.

1.2.   The strategy will be general in its reference to projects and programmes and will leave specific details of application to local procedure. For example, this document may refer to 'residential projects' when its reference is relevant to residential issues. It may refer to 'Residents' Councils' that may be in operation in residential and non-residential projects, but the practical application of the strategic intentions may differ between residential to non-residential for local reasons, but the ethos, aims and purpose will remain.

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2. *The aim of the strategy*

The primary goals of this strategy are to:

2.1.   Continuously improve our knowledge and understanding of the diverse variables of working with vulnerable people and to improve our ability to positively respond to the changes in our services caused by these variables for the positive benefit of the ever changing service users

2.2.   Provide forums and advocacy for service users to have 'a voice', an input and an impact on society for the benefit of vulnerable people and the services available to them

2.3.   Empower service users to take greater control of their lives by encouraging and supporting their involvement with, and responsibility for service provision. (Supporting People National Strategy - Independence & Opportunity (CLG 2007) for providers & Supporting People teams)

2.4.   Our multi agency protocols are a valuable resource for sharing best practise and improving services. However, this strategy will share best practise through our service users by encouraging and empowering their involvement in developing and reviewing our services and improving quality. (Quality Assessment Framework).

3. *Timescale*

3.1.   The strategy has been time bound to three years in its targets and goals and will be reviewed periodically during that time.

4. *The development of this draft*

4.1.   1st stage – Written by the Assistant Director and endorsed by the Director.

4.2.   2nd stage – Lead by the Regional Services Managers it will be presented to all Project Managers and leaders.

4.3.   3rd stage – consultation with all current service users, past service users that are still in contact and relevant stakeholder agencies for consultation with their service users.

4.4.   4th stage – feedback through the Regional Services Managers to the directors and endorsed by Management Committee.

4.5.   5th stage – amendments will be communicated through this process until a final document is agreed.

5. *Current culture of service user involvement*

5.1.   Service users have always had a substantial input into the development and operation of the Charity's services. In residential projects services users meet on a daily basis to discuss current requirements. This can include issues relating to each other, to staff (individual and general), other agencies, daily needs such as food shopping and menus, social needs such as days out and project culture and general concerns and compliments. These meetings are also a good forum for staff and service users to encourage each other.

5.2.   In larger residential projects a Residents' Council is convened where a Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the service users and they gather information from their peers between meetings in order to compile an agenda and organise meeting protocol. These are formal meetings producing minutes and depending on the level of experience and ability of the current Chair and Vice Chair staff will coach and mentor during the process.

5.3.   Emergency Direct Access projects, due to the large turnover of service users, do not have regular service user meetings. However, service users are regularly asked for their opinions and input and these are communicated to the staff teams through team meetings.

5.4.   Floating support and other non-residential projects and programmes make service user involvement part of the key work and personal development meetings.

5.5.   Minutes to all of these meetings are shared with project staff and management at team meetings and communication remains open.

5.6.   All staff have a responsibility to communicate involvement opportunities available with other organisations, stakeholders and funding providers.

5.7.   Users of the Charity's projects and services will be invited to senior management and Management Committee meetings as stated in the Charity's Service User Participation policy, being mindful of information sensitivity and data protection.

6. *Information and communication*

6.1.   All staff, service users, stakeholders and partners share a responsibility in maintaining open lines of communication of compliments, concerns, complaints and ideas. In respect of the Charity's environment policy digital communication should be used whenever possible in order to reduce paper use and waste, remaining mindful of data protection. All service user involvement will be dealt with primarily at local level. If this does not achieve the desired results it should be given to the relevant Regional Services Manager and then to a member of senior management.

6.2.   Any service user that desires to communicate to, or get involved with any outside or independent agency etc should be encouraged and supported in doing so within the boundaries of team risk, health and safety assessments and individual action and development plans.

6.3.   All service users will be encouraged to actively promote and support the promotion of the charity to potential service users of diverse ethnicity and background

7. *Strategic objectives*

In three years' time we will:

7.1.   Have a Residents' Council in operation in all residential projects

7.2.   Operate a place of meeting such as office space or hired room etc for service users of floating support and other independent or satellite units with a view to developing corporate service user involvement

7.3.   Have diarised appointments for visits to and from partners and stakeholders with Sanctuary Trust service user forums

7.4.   Have 'Responsible Residents' in all residential projects in line with the Charity's Stages System, who will take supporting roles in project operations and development on a voluntary basis

7.5.   Operate effective systems of communication with service users and their forums for the review of company policy, procedure and quality systems with a method of consultation through Regional Services Managers to Directors and Management Committee

7.6.　　Have regular attendance by service users at local authority, partner and stakeholder forums

7.7.　　Evidence outcomes and improvements in Sanctuary programmes and project services as a direct result of service user involvement

7.8.　　Have recognition of the Charity's Residents' Councils and other service user forums by, and as formal routes for communication from, stakeholders and partners as service user participation in governance and partnership arrangements.

8. *Impact on workforce*

8.1.　　Project staff and management may need to review existing programmes and staff/volunteer rotas to accommodate meeting structure.

8.2.　　Training will be required to educate staff, volunteers and service users on meeting agenda and protocol.

8.3.　　Staff, volunteers and service users will need to communicate new procedures and this strategy to partners and stakeholders.

9. *Evaluation and review*

Progress will be evaluated and reviewed:

9.1.　　By Management Committee on a quarterly basis at regular meetings with Service user, Project Management, Regional Services Management and Director input when appropriate

9.2.　　By stakeholders and partners via evaluation forms and meetings/forums with service users

9.3.　　Using statistics on increased stability of service users' lifestyles, decreased negative and unplanned changes in and moves from services and sustainability of consistent progression of service users through project programmes

9.4.　　Through feedback from ex service users as they continue to take and sustain their full place in society after leaving Sanctuary Trust services.