



GET 1 INVOLVED

The Policy Statement

GET 1 INVOLVED: An introduction

The philosophy and theology of this organisation is summed up succinctly in our credo, that we believe in the inherent value of the individual. Because the people we serve matter to us, because they have value, then we want to ensure those people can GET 1 INVOLVED in Chapter 1.

GET 1 INVOLVED: What it means

There is great diversity in chapter 1 meaning GET 1 INVOLVED means different things to different people. This policy defines GET 1 INVOLVED in 3 statements that sum up the views of staff and service users:

- Bringing staff and service users together, strengthening positive working relationships through purposeful, meaningful activities that are for the good of the service.
- Service users having a say and being listened to both in our individual services and the national organisation with the power to cause change when it's needed.
- Building a sense of belonging for service users so that they get the best service possible and they can give back and contribute to the service even after they are no longer a service user.

GET 1 INVOLVED: What it does not mean

Within Chapter 1 GET 1 INVOLVED does not mean:

- Support of service users; it is not a way to support people or help them towards their independence.
 - Chapter 1 delivers a variety of different support services to service users but that is separate from GET 1 INVOLVED.
 - An outcome of people getting involved may be that their support needs are getting met but that is not the purpose of GET 1 INVOLVED.
- Excluding some people and giving special privileges to others.
- Doing an activity for the sake of doing an activity or putting on activities for service users that are held purely to give service users 'an experience'.

GET 1 INVOLVED: Defining a local meaning

Every Chapter 1 service is unique so we want every Chapter 1 service (service users and staff) to develop an understanding of what GET 1 INVOLVED means to them. This means every project can define GET 1 INVOLVED for themselves in addition to having the national definition from this policy. Their definition must not contradict the national definition but enhance it and make it more special to the local service users and staff. The local definition of GET 1 INVOLVED must also not include anything from the above 3 points of what GET 1 INVOLVED is not.

GET 1 INVOLVED: Why we involve service users

We believe service users getting involved leads to:

- Chapter 1 providing the best services possible that deliver value for money to service users.
- Our services users being given the respect they deserve; to have their opinions heard and reacted to.
- Chapter 1 fulfilling our regulatory responsibilities to empower and involve service users.

GET 1 INVOLVED: When service users cannot get involved

Chapter 1 accepts that there are times when service users cannot get involved for instance when service users may be exposed to sensitive information about other service users or staff and this exposure cannot be managed. In such times there should be a clear reason why that has been agreed by the appropriate authority in Chapter 1. Service users can challenge decisions taken to not involve service users through the complaints procedure.

GET 1 INVOLVED: The right to not be involved

It is the right of Chapter 1 service users to not be involved if they don't want to be. No service user should be forced into giving their views, becoming a Rep, attending events or meetings etc. GET 1 INVOLVED is about Chapter 1 service users making a choice to have their say because they have been empowered to do so.

GET 1 INVOLVED: What it looks like in our local services and the national organisation

The practical outworking of this strategy is described in the document, [GET 1 INVOLVED Standards and Procedures](#). The standards describe what is expected of services from January 2012.

Failure to meet the standards will prompt investigation by the relevant person(s) and appropriate action being taken to ensure the standards are met.

GET 1 INVOLVED: Strategic development

[GET 1 INVOLVED](#) is organic, fluid and ambitious. Sitting behind the standards and procedures is a strategy to further improve the opportunities for service users to [GET 1 INVOLVED](#) in Chapter 1. The strategy includes plans to utilise technology and social media more and build a culture where service users can give back to Chapter 1 in a variety of ways and have a clear route to future employment by us. This strategy can be viewed in the document '[GET 1 INVOLVED The Strategy](#)'.

GET 1 INVOLVED: A note on the term 'Service User'

In the consultation process of devising this policy statement and the accompanying standards, procedures and strategy it has been clear that the term service user is inadequate. Both staff and service users are uncomfortable with the term because it seems impersonal and, to some, dismissive of the people we work for and with.

Chapter 1 recognises the inherent value in every person who works or volunteers for Chapter 1 or receives a service from us. As stated, in this policy, we believe the people we serve matter. Regrettably there is a need to sometimes use over-arching terms in policy or other documents for the sake of simplicity. This is not to undermine the value of the individual but simply a matter of practicality.

In this case the decision has been taken to use the term 'service user'. The term refers to any person who receives a service from us whether they live in an accommodation project, are visited in their homes by us, volunteer in our furniture project, attend a contact centre or other circumstance.

Wherever possible it is expected that Chapter 1 will use language that recognises the value of the individual. Whilst it is mostly necessary to use the term service user in national policy such as this, locally, in services, a more appropriate term should be agreed between those receiving and delivering a service.

Richard Cummings
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