How to Involve People who use Services and Carers in Staff Recruitment and Development

A Practical Guide for Employers
Skills for Care: part of the sector skills council, Skills for Care and Development

Skills for Care is the not-for-profit organisation that aims to improve adult social care services across the whole of England by supporting employers' workforce development activity. Our Vision is:

- To put employers in the driving seat on social care workforce issues
- To create a trained and qualified workforce providing high quality care
- To provide an expert voice on the social care workforce

National Office
Skills for Care, Albion Court, 5 Albion Place, Leeds LS1 6JL
Direct Line: 0113 245 1716

Skills for Care Ltd. Registered Charity 1079836 Registered Company 3866683 Vat Registration 853 0479 22
About this Guide

This guide is intended for employers who provide social care services to vulnerable people and their carers. Its aim is to promote the involvement of service users and carers in recruiting, training and developing staff, and to provide assistance for employers to enable them to achieve this. The national policy drive is for users and carers to have more choice and control over the services they receive. This is reflected in National Minimum Standards and taken forward by Options for Excellence.*

As the Transformation agenda progresses, more service users are likely to become employers in their own right. In this instance, advocates or representatives of service users, who are not carers, as defined by Carers UK, may get involved in recruiting and training the staff who work with them. This guide may also be useful to service users who involve advocates or representatives in this way.

In this guide you will find practical information and advice about how users and carers can be involved in recruiting and developing the staff who support them. The guide has 5 sections and within them you will find examples of good practice and details of useful resources where appropriate. At the end of the guide there are several more detailed case studies.

The guide has been developed in collaboration with service users and carers and employers from the statutory, private and independent care sectors.

* National Minimum Care Standards for Care Homes for Adults require that “service users are actively supported to be involved in staff selection”. Options for Excellence sets out the vision for 2020 when “all education and training for the social care workforce will involve service users and be outcomes focused”. The drive to increase the numbers of people with individualised budgets and direct payments means that more service users are becoming employers and are recruiting and developing their own staff.

Acknowledgements

Skills for Care would like to thank the following individuals and organisations who have contributed to the development of this guide;
Jenny Spaull and The Southdowners at Southdown Housing Association, Mick Cooper and John Warwick at The Aldingbourne Trust, Tizzie Coleman, Heidi Edwards at the Alzheimer’s Society and Lorna Cherry and Vincent Francis from Experts by Experience. Vicky Smith at East Sussex County Council, Penny O’Callaghan at West Sussex County Council, L’Arche Bognor, The Laurels, Rosemary Porter at The Richmond Fellowship and Jenni Link from the Young Carer’s Support Project at West Sussex County Council. David Underwood at Mind Western CIC and Jenny Whitfield at Ilfield Park Care Home.

We would particularly like to thank the Workforce Development sub-groups of the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Learning Disability Partnership Boards. Their excellent guide “Choosing my staff; How to involve people with a learning disability in choosing and developing the staff who support them,” has been instrumental to the development of this guide.

If you work with people with learning disabilities and would like to obtain a copy of “Choosing my Staff” then please contact one of the following;

East Sussex; Brian Andrews at brian.andrews@eastsussex.gov.uk

Brighton and Hove:
Kevin Murphy at kevin.murphy@brighton-hove.gov.uk

References


“National Minimum Care Standards for Care Homes for Adults” standard 34.4

“Choosing my staff; How to involve people with a learning disability in choosing and developing the staff who support them”, Workforce Development sub-groups of the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Learning Disability Partnership Boards.
**Definitions**

For the purposes of this guide the following terms have been defined;

**Service Users**
People who are in receipt of a health and/or social care service.

**Carer**
Someone who looks after or provides regular unpaid help to family members, neighbours or friends who are sick or disabled.

**Care worker**
A person who is contracted and paid to provide care to someone who is need in care. This involves a formal partnership with a person who uses services.

**Candidate**
A person who is undertaking an NVQ

**Learner**
A person who is undertaking any learning or training activity. This term can be used to encompass students and candidates as defined above.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why involve users and carers in recruiting and developing staff?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing to involve users and carers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving users and carers in recruitment and selection</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving users and carers in induction and on-going staff development</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving users and carers in giving feedback about staff performance</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies; More examples of good practice</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why involve users and carers in recruiting and developing staff?

Finding out what service users and carers want from the staff who support them and then using this to inform everything you do, is a key principle for involving people in staff recruitment and development.

Benefits of involving users and carers

Apart from the growing requirement to involve users and carers, there is evidence that there are benefits for all concerned. This is because where people are actively involved they can

- exert greater control and influence over who will support them and this results in better outcomes for them
- provide a unique first hand perspective of what is needed from people delivering care and support
- tell potential candidates about what’s important to them and ask them relevant questions
- judge how well candidates engage and communicate with them
- identify the attitudes and behaviours that are important to them
- gain in confidence, self-esteem and independence
Here’s what some employers say about the benefits of involving users and carers

Service user feedback helps us get a true picture about how staff are performing

We recruit good quality staff

Job specifications can be tailored to reflect the needs and interests of service users

Job applicants get a clearer picture about what the job entails

Opportunities for Involvement

The processes of recruiting, selecting and developing staff provide a range of opportunities for users and carers to participate. The main areas are

Recruitment

Selection

Induction and Training

Feedback about performance
The diagram on page 10 provides suggestions for ways of involving people in these activities. This was developed by the Workforce Development sub-groups of the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Learning Disability Partnership Boards.

Some of the ways in which employers can involve users and carers in these areas of activity are

**Recruitment:** users and carers can be involved in identifying the need for a post and the type of post needed. They can also participate in drawing up the Job Description and Person Specification, designing an advert, and producing recruitment packs and information

**Selection:** users and carers can design questions for use in job interviews and participate in face to face interviews, visits, presentations and in letting successful candidates know they have got the job.

**Induction and Training:** users and carers can be involved in inducting new staff and in their ongoing development and specific training activities.

**Feedback about performance:** users and carers can contribute to staff appraisals, and provide feedback about their performance either directly or through user group meetings

Here is an example of how users and carers are involved in activities in all four areas

**CASE STUDY**

The Aldingbourne Trust provides a range of services for people with learning disabilities. Service users are involved in recruiting and inducting new staff and provide feedback about how they are doing at the end of their probationary period. Tenant forums provide information about opportunities for getting involved and support for people who wish to do so. Service users participate in user-led interview panels supported by a member of staff. Families and friends of service users are encouraged to give feedback about the quality of support provided by staff through regular questionnaires and evening meetings. This is part of the Trust’s quality assurance processes for obtaining feedback about the standard of services provided. The Trust is now planning to incorporate feedback from service users into the process of staff appraisals.
Involving service users in recruitment
Ideas - July 2007

- Ask people in tenant meetings/groups about what they want from the post
- General surveys/research over time about support and how it is provided
- Include people's circles of support when info gathering
- Use info from surveys, etc

- Review person specification each time a vacancy arises
- Ask groups 1/t about what skills/qualities the new person needs
- For people who aren't able to directly say what they want, use observations about their likes/dislikes/circles of support, etc.

- Having 'yes' or '11' can make the advert more powerful
- Can include direct quotes/statements
- Show the printed ad to service users so they can make the connection

- People can help put together info that needs to go out in the job pack
- Send out job packs
- What we want from staff quotes
- Help process the paperwork from applications
- Service users can help write information sheet about the service, etc

- Ask people what they will miss about the person who is leaving
- What kinds of things will they want the new person to do/support them with?
- How they want to be supported in the future?
- Use info to inform steps 1 and 2

- Shortlisted candidates can visit service and meet people
- Further shortlisting after formal interview by service users

1. Identify need for post & type of post needed
2. Job description & person specification
3. Design advert
4. Prepare recruitment pack & information
5. Shortlisting
6. Face-to-face selection process
   - Interviews
   - Visits
   - Presentations
7. Telling successful candidates they've got the job
8. Induction Staff learning & development
9. Appraisal & probationary period
10. Ongoing learning & development
11. Annual appraisal
12. Exit interviews. Getting the views of people who use services about the departing staff

As ideas with step 9 - appraisal and probationary period

Ongoing information gathering about what people want and need. This includes things like communication needs

- Direct feedback from service users
- SU meetings
- Observation of interactions
- Include section in appraisal form

- Induct new staff into service
- Use info from PCCPs, etc to help people introduce themselves
- Staff training video
- Co-training
- SU's lead shadow shifts

- Support service user telephones successful candidate
- Service user writes to them to welcome them to post
Preparing to involve users and carers

It’s important to prepare properly to involve users and carers in staff recruitment and development processes. This will help to overcome potential barriers that can prevent people from becoming involved.

Here are some of the things that you should find helpful

**Think about the culture or ethos of your organisation i.e. the way people go about their day to day business. Ask yourself**

Q. Are users and carers already involved in the work of the organisation in some way? (For example, in a care home service users may contribute to menu planning.) If so, involving people in staff recruitment and development may be a natural progression of their involvement in other areas.

Q. Does your organisation have a policy for involving users and carers? If so does this include people getting involved in staff recruitment and development?

Q. Do people in the organisation welcome participation by users and their carers? It is crucial that managers and staff are committed to the idea of involving people and to making it happen.

The answers to these questions will help you to assess how far users and carers are already involved in decisions about how your service operates.

**Think about the different ways people can be involved.** With the right support, most people can be involved in some parts of the recruitment process. Think creatively about the possibilities for involving people; if someone can’t be part of an interview panel, they may be able to contribute to designing interview questions.

It can also be useful to consider involvement by people in staff recruitment and development as a continuum or a series of steps. The diagram on page 15 illustrates this.

**Involve people in things that are meaningful to them.** It’s important that people are allowed to choose the way they become involved. Do not involve people in things that are not meaningful to them, which they do not understand or that make them uncomfortable.
Talk to your HR/Personnel colleagues. If you work in an organisation that has an HR manager or team, it is crucial to talk to them about involving users and carers in recruitment processes. This will help them to understand what they may need to do differently e.g. altering scoring systems to make them simpler and more meaningful to users and carers. HR colleagues also have an important role in ensuring that everyone involved in recruitment follows equal opportunities and fair selection guidelines. Encouraging them to be part of the process of involving people can help to allay any concerns they may have.

Build in sufficient time for planning and preparation. For involvement to be meaningful, rather than tokenistic, you should set aside time for proper planning and preparation. For example, if users or carers are going to be involved in interviewing job applicants, they should take part in discussions and decisions about assessment criteria and scoring systems.

You will need to brief people properly in advance, allowing time for face to face meetings and correspondence by ‘phone, email or post as necessary. It’s also important to provide opportunities for people to practise what they are going to do e.g. ask interview questions. Role play can be a useful technique here.

Provide structured and planned support. Many users and carers will need support to contribute in a meaningful way. Everyone should be properly briefed and some people may need further support to help them understand the recruitment process and to take part. For example, experienced members of staff may need to support service users to ask candidates questions during an informal visit.

Provide for individuals’ access and personal support needs. It’s vital that you make sure all the necessary practical arrangements are put in place to enable users and carers to contribute effectively. If you know the people who are going to be involved very well e.g. if they are residents in your care home, then you will know what personal support they will require. However, if this is not the case, it is crucial that you find out about individuals’ requirements and plan how you will meet them.
These are some of the things you may need to address;

- **The venue:** is it physically accessible and on a major transport route for buses or trains? Does it have a loop system if required? Do you need to accommodate assistive technology or an interpreter? Is parking available and does this require a permit or payment? What time should the user or carer arrive and who will greet them?

- **Transport:** does the user or carer require transport or help to arrange transport?

- **Timing:** It may not be practical for some users or carers to be involved early or late in the day

- **Personal Support:** you may need to provide a carer to help people with personal care. Alternatively, a service user may be accompanied by a personal carer or assistant who will need to be accommodated

- **Breaks and refreshments:** some individuals may require frequent breaks e.g. when they are using an interpreter. Refreshments should be provided

**Provide training where necessary.** There is evidence that user and carer involvement is likely to be more effective if appropriate training is provided. For example, it can also lead to greater participation by users and carers in the decision-making process about who to appoint. Also, training in areas such as confidentiality and equal opportunities can help to avoid some of the pitfalls.

**Be clear and honest about how much power users and carers really have.** It’s important to establish the boundaries to involvement. How much weight will the views of service users or carers have in the decision to employ people? If, for example, managers make the final decision but the views of users and carers are taken into account, everyone needs to be clear about this at the outset.

**Recognise and value people’s contribution.** It’s very important to show users and carers that you value their involvement. This can be achieved by doing the things set out in the paragraphs above. It’s also vital to thank people for their contribution and provide an opportunity to de-brief.
This means discussing how things went and asking users and carers about their experience of being involved in, for instance, interviewing a potential candidate. Did they enjoy asking questions? Did they feel well prepared and supported to take part? Did they feel they made a difference?

It is a good idea to find a way to reward people for their involvement such as providing a nice meal or gift vouchers as a means of thanking them.

If people are going to incur expenses e.g. for travel or care, it’s important to agree in advance how they will be reimbursed. Users and carers should be paid promptly; most people cannot afford to pay fares or petrol costs and then wait for weeks to be reimbursed.

Where you are paying people for their time and contribution, it’s important to agree beforehand how much they will be paid, and when and how payment will be made e.g. on the day, within 7 days, by cheque, cash or directly into a bank account.

**Ensure compliance with employment legislation.** Recruitment and selection processes must be fair and consistent and comply with relevant legislation e.g. equality and diversity. You will need to find ways of communicating this requirement to users and carers and help them to understand what this will mean in practice. For example

✓ Every candidate must be treated in the same way. This means asking them the same questions and using the same system for scoring their responses

✓ Each candidate must be assessed against each of the assessment criteria, not against each other. It’s vital to be objective throughout the process.

✓ It’s important to avoid personal questions e.g. are you married?

**Useful Resources**

“Paying Service Users and Carers for Involvement in Social Care Education and Training: A Practical Guide”. Skills for Care 2008. Contact Karen Stevens, Regional Development Officer, Surrey & Sussex. Tel: 01932 853500 Email:Karen.stevens@skillsforcare.org.uk
This diagram was inspired by the “Stepping stone involvement model” developed by Southdown Housing Association.
Involving users and carers in staff recruitment and selection

There are a variety of ways in which users and carers can participate in the process of recruiting and selecting the staff who support them. You will need to select the areas of involvement that make sense to users and carers and that are appropriate for your service.

Here are some of the ways in which users and carers can be involved in each part of the process;

- **Identify the need for a post and the type of post needed.** This is a good starting point and means finding out from users and carers what they want from staff. You can do this in a number of ways including;
  - Service user/carers meetings or forums
  - Surveys and questionnaires
  - Speaking to people individually
  - Making a video with users saying what is important to them and what they want from staff. This can be used at recruitment events and as part of induction for new staff

Some users and carers will find it fairly easy to tell you what they do and don’t want from staff, whilst others may need considerable support and encouragement to do so. There is substantial evidence that people with a learning disability will give answers to questions asked by staff because they want to please them. This may well apply to other service users such as frail older people. If you want to find out what people really think and feel you may need to be more creative in your approach.

If you are providing services for people with profound disabilities you can find out what they want from staff by, for example

- Gathering information from the person’s circle of support
- Asking their families and friends
• Asking staff who work with them and others to note what is important to those individuals

• Make a video with parents saying what they want to see from the staff that support their sons or daughters

“Supporting Us” is a film made by The Southdowners, a group of tenants with learning disabilities from Southdown Housing Association in Sussex. They talk about their experiences and what they want from staff. This film is used at recruitment fairs and as part of induction for new staff.

✓ Writing the Job Description and Person Specification
What users and carers want from staff can be incorporated in the Job Description and Person Specification. Users may want staff to be able to do something practical, such as read the newspaper to them. Others may talk about the skills and qualities they want people to have.

Some people will find it helpful to think about individual members of staff they know as a means of identifying the things that are important to them. “We want someone like Jim” can lead to a conversation about what it is about Jim that makes him good at his job.

✓ Designing the Advert
Service users and carers can be involved in designing adverts and these can include statements about what’s important to them. Adverts should promote positive images of users and carers. Where an individual is seeking to employ their own Personal Assistant/Carer, the words “I” and “we” can give powerful messages to potential applicants.

✓ Producing Recruitment Information and Packs
Users and carers can be involved in putting together information for potential job applicants. People can contribute by writing something
themselves or by asking someone else to do so for them, or by saying what they think should be included.

√ Short-listing
Service users and carers can be involved in short-listing. If there are a large number of applicants the Manager can carry out initial short-listing to make further short-listing more manageable.

√ Interviewing Job Applicants
Some users and carers can participate in interview panels directly whilst others can contribute in a different way that means they will still inform the final decision. Whatever the way users or carers will be involved, it’s vital to make sure they feel they are important to the process, not an ‘add-on’, and that their views will be taken seriously.

Here are some examples of how users and carers can be involved in interviewing applicants. They can

❖ Put together some questions that the interview panel will ask

❖ Meet with potential candidates and ask them questions they have prepared in advance. Users and carers can be supported in this activity by staff. Their expressed views are then taken into account by the formal interview panel who will make the final decision

❖ Be involved in part of the management interview panel to ask questions they have prepared in advance. In some instances a video is taken which users then watch with someone to support them. This gives them more time to judge the quality of the answers given by candidates.

❖ Hold a separate user or carer interview panel alongside the management panel. The outcome of this panel may inform the management panel which makes the final decision or it may be given equal weight. In some cases the weight this is given is specified e.g. service users or carers ask 3 questions and this is equivalent to 2 questions from the management interview panel.

❖ Be on the same interview panel as managers

It’s helpful to think about how many users or carers will be on an interview panel to ensure balanced representation. Helping people prepare for taking part in interview panels is very important. Users and
carers should be properly briefed and appropriate training should be provided as necessary. Someone can accompany a user or carer to support them to take part in an interview panel and take notes. However, it is important to remember that it is not their role to influence the user’s or carer’s decision.

At L’Arche Bognor’s residential homes, people with learning disabilities meet together with the manager to design questions that one of them will then ask candidates during job interviews.

Presentations
Where candidates are asked to give a presentation, users or carers can be part of the audience. Alternatively, candidates can be asked to give a presentation to a group of users or carers.

Users and carers can assess the quality of the presentations. If this is the case, they will need to be properly briefed and provided with the right tools and opportunities to practice using them. In other instances the manager may observe how users respond to the presentation and how the candidate answers their questions.

As part of the recruitment process for a new locality manager at West Sussex County Council, users and carers were asked to comment on a presentation given by candidates about self-directed support.
√ Scoring

Systems for scoring how candidates have done should be simple and straightforward. Here are some suggestions;

- A simple score sheet with marks out of 5 for each assessment criteria or question
- A bar chart that ranges from no or poor to very good. Individuals can mark a point on the bar to indicate their judgement.
- Pictures of happy, neutral and sad faces linked to a scale of 1, 2 and 3.
- Pre-defined answers to questions that can be ticked when met
  e.g. Q: How would you support me if I was upset?
  Answer: Talk it through. Be calm and understanding, Give me some space

√ Service Visits

Potential candidates can meet with users in the service. It is important to note that as candidates will not have been CRB checked and references will not yet have been received, they will need to be supervised by staff at all times.

Visits by potential candidates can involve the following

- Service users meeting them and asking prepared questions with staff support. Views expressed by users are then taken into account by the interview panel who make the final decision

- Service users meeting potential candidates and telling them what’s important to them. This can convey messages in a very powerful and straightforward way e.g. one service user who tells candidates that he does not like bossy people and asks them if they are bossy.

- For people who do not use verbal communication, candidates visit the service to meet users and have a cup of tea with them. Users are able to express their needs and staff present can observe how comfortable candidates and users are with each other and whether, from what they know of the service users, they are expressing pleasure or displeasure.
At the Laurels service users meet and greet job candidates and give a tour of the community, home and workshops. They then meet with candidates to ask them pertinent questions, with support from staff. Users then give feedback about candidates to the staff.

The Alzheimer’s Society’s Living with Dementia Team promotes the involvement of volunteers in an informal meeting with candidates. They then give structured informal feedback to the selection panel.

✓ **Telling successful candidates they have got the job.**
Service users or carers can be involved in writing to a candidate to tell them they have been successful.

If users or carers ‘phone successful candidates to tell them they have got the job, you need to be aware that this constitutes a verbal offer of a contract. If they are to be involved in calling candidates, you will need to ensure they receive the right support to do this according to the organisations’ personnel procedures. You may want a manager to share the call with a user or carer.
Involving users and carers in induction and on-going staff development

Employers can provide a range of opportunities to involve users and carers in inducting and providing ongoing development for staff. If you regularly ask users and carers about what they want from staff, you can use this to inform induction and on-going development activities and training. You can also actively involve users and carers in a number of ways that include

- Showing round new staff and talking to them about how they want them to work with them. This could be done individually or by a group of users and carers spending time with new staff talking about what’s important to them. Experienced staff can support users and carers in this.

- Contributing to induction or other training sessions by talking to participants about what they want from staff, or by giving a presentation and answering questions. This gives users and carers a strong voice but does not require them to have skills in facilitation or managing a group.

- Showing a video or DVD in which users and/or carers talk about what they want from staff as part of induction training. This can be used to stimulate group discussion and individual reflection.

- Involving users and carers in staff training e.g. providing person-centred care. People from your own service could take part or you could consider commissioning users and carers who have had training and experience in providing training. Useful contacts are listed at the end of this section.

Where users and carers are formally involved in training or development activities, you need to consider paying them for their contribution. Useful resources are listed at the end of this section.

- Providing feedback about the impact of training and development on staff’s attitudes, skills and behaviours. This can form part of the process of evaluating the quality and impact of training in your organisation. For example, if staff have recently undertaken training in moving and handling, you could ask users about how they are going about this. Are they explaining to users about a manœuvre they are about to perform? Are they...
using equipment such as hoists, correctly? Are they asking users if they are comfortable?

✓ Person-centred plans that say how they would like an individual to support them and what they don’t want staff to do. Plans that are written objectively using the first person “I” rather than “they” can convey individual wishes and needs in a clear and powerful way.

At Ifield Park Care Home, new care workers spend two weeks shadowing different posts after an initial week “off the floor,” learning about the organisation and the job. During these two weeks, new workers spend a lot of time with residents who will comment about their initial impressions of them to the staff. New workers also learn about what’s important to individuals by reading their care plans.

At Mind’s Community Project in Midhurst, service users are part of the induction experience for new staff. New staff meet with the user group to get to know them and to hear about their issues and what they want from staff. This informal approach works well for new staff and for service users who will volunteer feedback to other staff.
Useful Resources

Directory of Trainers and consultants who are carers and people who use health and social care services. Sussex Skills for Care. Contact Karen Stevens, Regional Development Officer, Surrey & Sussex. Tel: 01932 853500 Email: Karen.stevens@skillsforcare.org.uk


Involving users and carers in giving feedback about staff performance

Users and carers can provide helpful feedback about how staff are working with them to provide support and care. This can then be incorporated by managers and supervisors into HR processes for managing individual performance i.e. supervision, appraisal and the review at the end of the probationary period for new staff. Feedback provided by users and carers can also inform discussions and decisions made at team meetings.

Some employers already carry out 360 degree appraisals whereby an individual’s manager, colleagues and junior staff give feedback about how they are doing. Involving users and carers in giving feedback can be viewed as a natural extension of this process. This is shown below

Some of the ways users and carers can provide feedback about how staff are doing include the following;

**Direct feedback.** Questionnaires and surveys are one means of obtaining direct feedback from users and carers. These may be specific; inviting a user of carer to give feedback about a named member of staff. Questionnaires and surveys can also be given to users and carers at regular intervals to elicit feedback about several
areas of service provision, including the quality of support and care provided by staff.

Users and carers can also be invited to comment verbally about a new member of staff prior to the completion of their probationary period or about existing staff to inform the appraisal discussion.

**User or carer meetings.** Many services provide opportunities for users or carers to meet together regularly. These meetings may be led by a user or carer or by a manager and provide a useful forum for discussions about the quality of services and the support and care provided by the staff team.

**Observation of interaction.** Experienced staff or carers can observe how an individual service user behaves when they are being supported by a particular member of staff.

**Case Study**

At the Aldingbourne Trust tenants are invited to complete a questionnaire about how a new member of staff has supported them at the end of their probationary period. This feedback is then used by the manager during the end of probation review meeting with the individual. The Trust is planning to incorporate the feedback questionnaire into their appraisal process in the near future.

The Aldingbourne Trust also sends questionnaires to families of service users to gain feedback about the quality of the services they provide. This provides and opportunity for carers to comment on the quality of support provided by staff. The Trust also holds regular meetings with families of users and these may generate feedback about staff. This feedback is then incorporated into individual staff supervision or team meetings as appropriate.

The Tenant feedback form is reproduced by kind permission of the Aldingbourne Trust on the following pages.
SUPPORT STAFF
END OF PROBATION
FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS

Have your say!!!

1. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING SUPPORTED BY THIS MEMBER OF STAFF?

2. WHAT ACTIVITIES OR OUTINGS HAVE THEY HELPED YOU PLAN?

3. DO THEY LISTEN TO WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?
4. DO THEY KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR BEFORE ENTERING?

5. DO THEY TURN UP ON TIME TO SUPPORT YOU?

6. HOW DO THEY SUPPORT YOU WITH YOUR COOKING?
7. DO THEY HELP YOU SORT OUT YOUR MONEY?

8. IS THERE ANYTHING THEY DO WHEN SUPPORTING YOU IN YOUR HOME THAT YOU ARE NOT HAPPY ABOUT? FOR EXAMPLE, DO THEY HELP THEMSELVES TO YOUR FOOD, USE YOUR TELEPHONE OR YOUR TOILET WITHOUT ASKING?

9. HAVE THEY EVER USED THEIR MOBILE PHONE FOR PERSONAL CALLS WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN SUPPORTING YOU?
10. IF THIS HAS HAPPENED – HAVE THEY ASKED YOU IF IT IS OK AND HOW MANY TIMES HAS IT HAPPENED?

11. WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE WAY THIS PERSON SUPPORTS YOU?

12. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU DON’T LIKE ABOUT THE WAY THIS PERSON SUPPORTS YOU?

Name of Tenant: .................................................................

Name of Staff Member asking these questions: ...........................................

Date: .................................................................
Case Study 1

Blatchford House in Horsham is run by the Richmond Fellowship and is a short term (6-18 months) rehabilitation facility for people who have had mental health problems. The Richmond Fellowship is committed to involving service users in recruitment and offers training in interviewing skills.

When new members of staff are being recruited to the team at Blatchford House, the manager informs service users of this at a community meeting and asks if they would like to volunteer to participate in the interviews. The service users who volunteer are given information about the interviews in advance and agree with a member of staff the 3 questions they would like to ask.

Applicants have a 45 minute interview with staff followed by a 15 minute interview with service users. Staff and service users meet afterwards to discuss the applicants and score the answers. Staff give a lot of weight to service user preferences, particularly where the applicant has failed to engage with them. However if there are differences in scoring of applicants, the reasons behind these are fully explored and may need to be challenged e.g. where they are based on personal preferences or prejudice. The final decision rests with the manager.

Service users are also involved informally with inducting a new member of staff e.g. showing them round and explaining how things are done. With the service user’s permission, he/she may also help to induct new staff into the key worker role.

Here is some feedback from service users who were involved:

‘I found interviewing quite enjoyable and in a way to help the home and Richmond Fellowship by finding the right person to employ. While I was interviewing these people, I found it quite good fun.’

‘Yes it’s good. I enjoy interviewing new staff. I feel I have a role to play.’

Rosemary Porter, Manager of Blatchford House in Horsham.
Case Study 2

Ifield Park Care Home is one of a group of 3 residential and nursing homes for older people in West Sussex. Within the homes, there is a strong ethos of involving service users in many areas of the service, including staff recruitment and induction.

Potential candidates visit the home and meet informally with two residents before being shown round. This provides an opportunity for the residents to tell candidates about the home and ask questions that are important to them e.g. “What is your understanding of providing personal care?” The Manager meets with the residents beforehand to discuss the areas they want to talk about and the questions they will ask.

After this informal meeting the candidate is shown around the home by a Senior Care Assistant who has been in the background during the meeting with residents. Whilst this is going on, the Manager talks to the two residents who met with the candidate to hear their feedback.

Following a formal interview, the candidate is taken around another of the homes and has an opportunity to chat to the residents. The Manager is able to observe how the candidate engages and communicates with them.

At the end of the process, the Manager, Senior Care Assistant and the two residents come together to discuss the candidate and decide whether they should be offered a job. To date, there have been no differences of opinion about who to appoint.

Jenny Whitfield, Manager Ifield Park Care Home
Case Study 3

The Young Carer’s Support Project regularly involves young carers as part of the interview process for their team, and recently organised a panel for a young carer's manager post. The co-coordinator selected young people who she knew would be mature and capable enough to undertake the role, and explained to them what would be involved. She made it clear that their involvement was voluntary and that it was entirely their choice. The co-coordinator made sure she had a clear understanding of what feedback would be expected from the young people and what areas they should focus on.

Prior to the interviews, the co-coordinator met with the young people who came up with ideas for questions; these were then discussed and changed around until everyone was happy with them. They also planned what order they would ask the questions in and who would ask each question. The co-coordinator typed up the questions on a cue card so that the young people would have them to refer to.

On the day of the interviews, the co-coordinator collected the young people from home and took them to the venue, where drinks and snacks were made available. The other interviewers spoke to the young people and let them know the plan of the day. After each interview, they used flip chart paper to record what was good about each candidate, and any other issues that came up; these were recorded by using a scale of 0-10 for each focus area.

After all of the candidates had been interviewed, the other interviewers spoke to the young people again, went through their comments and asked further questions. Their comments were used to 'double check' the opinions of the interviewers and to check that the candidates could communicate well with service users, as well as in a formal interview. They were later informed about who had been successful.

The young people fed back that it was a good experience, that they felt important in the process and that their views had been taken seriously. Since this occasion, they have all offered to be involved in interviews again.

Jenni Link, Young Carer’s Support Co-coordinator, West Sussex County Council
Case Study 4

Representatives from forums for older people in East Sussex volunteered to take part in recruiting to the post of Involvement Manager for older people at East Sussex County Council.

One representative sat on the main interview panel alongside managers from East Sussex County Council Adult Services, the PCT and Age Concern and asked a series of questions.

Candidates were also required to give a 10 minute presentation to a panel of 3 older people about what they would do in the post if they were appointed. This was a very interactive session and a member of staff from the Adult Care team assisted and took notes.

At the end of the process the interview and presentation panels came together and made recommendations for which candidate should be offered the position.

Vicky Smith, Involvement Manager for Older People, East Sussex County Council

Case Study 5

Here is a carer’s experience of being involved in interviewing potential job candidates for the first time.

“At the Bethlem Royal Hospital, my daughter's psychiatrist asked me if I would consider joining him and two others on the panel to interview 5 candidates for the position of ward manager of the National Psychosis Unit. I was telephoned beforehand and asked to think up 3 questions to ask each one. I felt rather in awe but the occasion was extremely relaxed between the members of the panel. We were given water, coffee and sandwich lunch. The other professionals were friendly and I was given the chance to ask each candidate 3 questions. I was not paid but travel expenses were offered. It was a very good experience and one I would judge any future ones by. All candidates produced a written and power point presentation. As a consequence to the day, the chosen manager greeted me on the ward as if I were his long, lost friend!”

Tizzie Coleman, Carer
Case Study 6

Southdown Housing Association uses a range of different ways of involving people in recruitment, depending on their wishes and capabilities; from service user interview panels through to service users being supported to open the door and greet a candidate.

In one service, a group of service users use pictures to both help them plan what questions to ask and to prompt them to ask the candidates questions. Experienced staff support the service users and prompt them if needed, keeping the process on track. In this particular service, service users are also supported to choose the member of staff who supports them to do specific activities - e.g. when they choose an activity like going to the theatre, they will also choose the member of staff to accompany them, (using pictures to help).

In some services, where service users do not use verbal communication, staff use a checklist to record their observations about how candidates relate to and interact with them. Staff then give feedback to the management interview panel.

New managers undertake two days of employment and recruitment training and the Service User Involvement Co-ordinator contributes to this.

The organisation also provides facilitation training for staff who are going to be involved in supporting service users in recruitment processes.

Jenny Spaull, Training Manager Southdown Housing Association

Case Study 7

Vincent Francis, a service user, recruits his own Personal Assistants. When Vincent wants to recruit a new PA, he involves his experienced PAs in advertising for and recruiting a new worker. They also help to induct and train them. Vincent sees this as being very important to getting the right person because his PAs know him and understand his health and personal support needs, and how he likes people to work with him.

Vincent Francis.