



'How to' guide for staff

This guide gives an overview of public involvement in social care in Kirklees. It outlines current arrangements for involving people in social care planning, decision-making and ongoing service delivery. It also offers some good practice 'tips' and guidance.

For more information about anything in this guide, contact the Community Partnership team on 01484 225142 or email community.partnerships@kirklees.gov.uk (and please write 'involve' in your subject heading).

An overview: involving people in social care

People who use social care services, and their carers, are at the heart of planning and decision-making in Kirklees. For more than a decade, the council has made arrangements to encourage people to have a say, respond to consultations, take part in commissioning and recruitment, and be involved in ongoing planning. People with social care needs are also involved directly in running activities for others, and more than a hundred user-led community groups receive funding from the council's Community Partnership team each year. Our aim is to make involvement ongoing and 'embedded', rather than something we just do occasionally.

What do we mean by 'involvement'?

We use the word 'involvement' to describe all the activities above, and more. When we say that social care service users and carers are 'involved', we mean that their needs and views are central, that we make an effort to find out these needs and views, and to make sure that people have the opportunity to influence how services are run.

'Involvement' is more than just 'consultation'. It covers a wide spectrum of activities, including formal research and consultation, representation on boards decision-making bodies, encouraging people to join networks and use social media like Facebook, and supporting people to set up and run their own community social care activities.

Why is involvement important?

We are running and commissioning services to benefit the people who use them and meet their needs. We need to listen to what our customers think and improve what we do. Listening and engaging help us to:

- Be more customer focused
- Be responsive to needs
- Be accountable and inclusive
- Find better solutions for problems and challenges
- Prevent, reduce or delay the need for more acute health and social care
- Support individuals and communities to be more independent and in control
- Keep people active, happy, healthy and involved.



People who receive services have first-hand experience of how well those services work for them. Service users and their carers can tell us what works and doesn't work, and can often suggest positive changes. This experience means they may also be the best people to *run* some social care support, especially in local communities.

How are people involved?

Networks

Networks are groups of service users or carers. They discuss the services they receive, share information, plan how they can get involved, and support each other. The Networks address all areas of concern in people's lives, not just social care: for example, members may want to talk about benefits, do something about making transport accessible, or change people's views and perceptions. The Networks are public, so that anyone who identifies themselves as a member of a particular network group may join it. These are some of the Networks now running:

Kirklees Older People's Network is an active organisation which enables older people (aged 50 and over) to be empowered and have an active and collective voice in Kirklees. They organise 50+ Forums to bring people together with services to discuss key issues such as transport, health and social care, housing, and many more. <http://kirkleesolderpeople.wordpress.com/>

Kirklees Involvement Network is a self advocacy group for people with a learning disability. You can contact Sarah Roberts who supports KIN by email: sarah.roberts93@blueyonder.co.uk or by Mobile: **07796 948 736**

Partnership Boards

Some service users and carers from the networks are involved in formal decision-making through the Partnership Boards. The representatives are seen as 'experts by experience'. It is their responsibility to disseminate information through their networks and to the groups and people they represent on the board.

The boards help plan and review social care and health services. Their main roles are:

- Strategy development and implementation
- Joint commissioning, including assessing local needs, identifying gaps, prioritising areas for development and ensuring continuous improvement
- Performance management including ensuring local targets are achieved, reviewing reports on service developments, carrying out local benchmarking exercises.

As well as the user and carer representatives, the boards are made up of 'decision-makers', senior managers from Health and Adult Services, and representatives from other relevant services, including and community organisations.

The Partnership Boards are:

- Learning Disabilities Partnership Board
- Mental Health Partnership Board
- Older People's Partnership Board
- Partnership Board for Physical Disabilities, Sensory Impairment and Long Term Conditions



There is also a Carers Strategy Group, and carers are involved in agreeing the strategy and deciding how the carers' grant is allocated.

Involvement in recruitment and commissioning

Members of the Partnership Boards and Networks often take part in recruitment of new staff and/or the application process for new contracts and commissions. For example, carers recently helped design and evaluate tenders for the new Carers' Support Service.

We are keen to see users and carers involved more often in recruitment and commissioning. If you are recruiting for a post or planning a new service, consider how you could involve the people who will be directly affected.

Social media

Social media like Facebook, Twitter and others are a good way of encouraging public involvement. They are more interactive than leaflets and booklets, and allow people to easily tell you what they think. Social care service users and carers can post and comment on Community Partnership's Facebook group and page, or new website Community Conversations.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/communitypartnerships/>
<https://www.facebook.com/KirkleesCommunityPartnerships>
<http://www.communitykirklees.org.uk/>

If you want to reach service users and carers, share information and encourage regular feedback and conversation, post on these social media sites, and consider starting your own.

Officers who are not used to using social media are often wary, and particularly worried about receiving negative comments and criticism. We know from experience that some people do post negative comments, but this gives services an opportunity to give better information or put things right. The benefits of social media generally outweigh the problems. If you want to know more, get in touch.

Support 'community co-production'

Community Partnerships awards over a million pounds each year to voluntary and community groups that run social care activities in Kirklees communities. Most of these groups are led or run by people who themselves have social care needs. The team also offers some development support if groups need it. This programme of support means that the council is helping communities to help themselves: local people become the 'co-producers' of social care activities in our area.

Consultations

We encourage and support teams to carry out consultations whenever they make changes that might affect people's lives. For example, in the past few months, teams have consulted about community equipment services, the International Day of Disabled people and Connect to Support (the new social care online marketplace)

Consultations should all follow the corporate guidelines set out on the Involve web pages (<http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/involve>). If you are planning a consultation, please remember to add it on Involve.



Good practice

Good practice in involvement

There is a lot of good practice guidance in the Involve pages of the council website, at <http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/involve>.

The Community partnership Team can also give you advice and information about:

- How to reach the right people, through the User and Carer Networks or the informal network of grant-aided community groups.
- Expenses/Payment for Involvement policy
- Running Events Guide - <http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/community/careInKirklees/pdf/runningEventsGuide.pdf> includes timescales, checklist, planning and practical arrangement guidance and useful contacts.
- Involving participants with a Learning Disability - Easy Read Guidance
- Links to partnership boards, networks, engagement and involvement channels/forums
- Case studies/toolkits/Guides

Thinking about social care users and carers

Involving social care users and carers is generally just like involving the general population. However, there are a few 'special' factors you may need to consider:

- Do the users/carers you want to reach have any special requirements/needs?
- Are your methods appropriate to these needs? For instance: social media may not be the best way to reach older people; leaflets and written materials may not reach people who are blind and partially sighted; venues for meetings must be physically accessible if you want to reach disabled people.
- Are any of the people you want to involve especially vulnerable? You must take further advice if so.
- Are you enabling people to have their *own* voice, rather than letting others speak for them?

If in doubt, ask for advice (see contact details below).

Good practice in research and consultation

If you want to carry out research in social care, you need to take certain steps. Good practice means that:

- The outcomes of the consultation or research are of some real use
- Those involved are protected, especially vulnerable service users. This may mean following a 'research ethics' framework (such as ones used by the NHS or Social Research Council)
- We don't duplicate consultation or research that has already been done, which is a waste of valuable resources
- We don't keep consulting the same people
- We use appropriate, effective methods and questions.

Ten top tips and principles for research and consultation:

1. Plan ahead
2. Be clear about your purpose
3. Use resources efficiently
4. Target the right people



5. Use the right methods (considering especially any 'special needs' the people you want to reach may have)
6. Ask the right 'about you' Qs
7. Think about your analysis
8. Respect people's time and opinions
9. Remember to feed back
10. Ask for support if you need it

Some research and consultation needs specialist skills and knowledge. Ask for advice before you begin.

More help and advice

For advice and support for research and consultation activity, contact the council's Corporate Research and Consultation (CRAC) team:

 01484 221748  consultation@kirklees.gov.uk

For more information about research and the Research Governance Framework, contact Jan Ibbotson: 07976 194072 (short code 03072) Jan.ibbotson@kirklees.gov.uk or Helen Gilchrist: 07976194074 (short code 03074) Helen.gilchrist@kirklees.gov.uk

There are further 'how to' guides, case studies, information and advice on the Involve pages of the council website, at <http://www2.kirklees.gov.uk/involve/help.aspx>.

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