A guide to

Personal and Public Involvement (PPI)

Recognising the difference between Service User and Carer representation and the Community and Voluntary sector

This guide will help to understand the different aspects of representation within Health and Social Care (HSC).

Involvement can take many different forms. It is important to be clear about the distinction between Service User and Carer representation in comparison to Community and Voluntary sector representation.

HSC organisations are required to involve Service Users, Carers and the public in decisions that affect them. When you seek a representative from a Community or Voluntary sector organisation they will not substitute the need to directly involve people who use HSC services. Inviting Community and Voluntary sector colleagues to participate in a relevant programme will provide an additional perspective to Service Users, Carers and staff.

A Service User	A person who receives services from a Health or Social Care provider.
A Carer	A person who provides regular and substantial unpaid care* to a partner, family member (child or parent), friend or neighbour and who is entitled to a Carer's Assessment by their local HSC Trust. *This includes people in receipt of Carer's Allowance or another related benefit.
The Community sector	Includes smaller more informal organisations and self-help initiatives at community level, for example a local Community Association. This sector may provide services to local communities on behalf of the local HSC Trust, e.g. smoking cessation.

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The Voluntary sector	Organisations that are independent of government and local councils. Their job is to benefit the people they serve and are often referred to as not for profit or the third sector. Both paid workers and volunteers will undertake work in this sector. Social care services are often provided by local Voluntary organisations, by arrangement with the local HSC Trust or with individuals.
	The Voluntary sector also includes 'user-led organisations', which means they are run by and for the people the organisation is designed to benefit - e.g. disabled people.

If seeking a representative to get involved in a programme of work, it is important to consider the different perspectives that Service Users, Carers and the Community and Voluntary sector can bring to a discussion on a particular topic.

The information below will to help distinguish the difference and support an understanding about the difference.

Service User and Carer representation perspective	Community and Voluntary sector perspective
• Provide insight to promote understanding about the needs of Service Users and Carers from their own personal experiences. • Relevant/current experience. • Can use personal experience to look at whole system approach. • Open/transparent in relation to their background and interest to get involved • Ability to deal with strategic problem solving. • Can act as critical conscience of group for wider involvement in the interest of all Service Users and Carers. • One representative does not replace the need for wider Involvement activity.	• Can bring a specific organisation agenda to a discussion. • Staff/volunteers represent group aims rather than Service Users and Carers themselves. • The competitive funding arena can influence discussions, and particularly where funded by HSC organisations, they may not be able to provide a challenge function. • Bring wide experience of a specific sector. • Don't always involve their members which may potentially mean Service Users and Carers are one step removed. • Practice of PPI may not be same as HSC. • Not-for-profit delivering HSC outcomes. • Connections and networks across the sector or community to mobilise action. • Can fail to collate statistically relevant information.

When involving the Community and Coluntary sector, it is recommended and expected that an organisational PPI process is in place, for example Organisation Involvement Policy, Plan or Strategy. This will outline how Service Users and Carers are involved in the organisation and will demonstrate how the organisation is effectively involving the Service Users and Carer voice within their programmes of work.

Guides to virtual involvement have been developed to complement existing guides available on Engage website: **http://engage.hscni.net**

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