



**Mind in Croydon
USER INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

These are the general principles which underpin this policy.

- 1.1 Mind in Croydon believes it to be of fundamental importance that the organisation assists people to do things for themselves rather than does things for/to people.
- 1.2 Mind in Croydon therefore believes that service users must be fully consulted on all matters and furthermore must be fully involved in the forming of policy, planning and running of services.
- 1.3 Service users should be empowered to make real decisions about their own lives.
- 1.4 In a "needs led" service it is more important that views and ideas flow "from the bottom up" than from "the top down".
- 1.5 Consultation is an ongoing, two way process. It should not be seen as a series of "one off exercises".
- 1.6 Every service user should have access to clearly understandable information about Mind in Croydon, the services it provides and the organisation's policies and procedures. This information should also be explained verbally to service users to ensure that its contents and implications are understood.
- 1.7 "User friendly" language should be used at all times.

2 RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of every worker, volunteer, service user and committee member to ensure that this policy is put into practice. It is therefore everyone's duty to publicise the policy, ensure that everyone has a copy of the policy and that the policy is explained to people to ensure that they understand its content and implications.

3 SCOPE

Service users should be involved in all decision making at all levels. This will include:

- a) deciding policy
- b) setting budgets
- c) recruitment of staff
- d) adjudicating in the complaints procedure
- e) day to day running of projects

4 POLICY DECISIONS

Mind in Croydon believes that service users have a vital and unique role in deciding policy. They should be involved at every level and at every stage of policy formation and implementation via:

- a) involvement in management committees
- b) individual personal contact
- c) their elected representatives

- d) service user meetings
- e) questionnaires
- f) newsletters
- g) suggestion box
- h) any other method

5 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- 5.1 Mind in Croydon believes it is of fundamental importance that service users have a proper (not token) voice on the Board of Directors.
- 5.2 It is our intention that a minimum of one quarter of the trustees of Mind in Croydon should be people who are or who have been users of mental health services.
- 5.3 Service users must be actively encouraged and supported in performing this role by staff and other trustees.
- 5.4 Resources will be made available for training service users to acquire the skills necessary for performing their role on the Board as effectively as possible. User trustees are expected to make use of the training resources and opportunities available.

6 OTHER COMMITTEES

- 6.1 **Fairfield House Management Sub-Committee:** At least half the membership of this committee should be users of the project.
- 6.2 **Enterprise House Management Sub-Committee:** All members of the project are members of this sub-committee.
- 6.3 **Finance and General Purposes Committee:** The membership of this committee should include at least one service user.
- 6.4 **Fairfield Members' Meetings:** Fairfield "link" trustees (trustees who are members of the Fairfield Management Sub-Committee) should attend at least one member's meeting each year.

7 RECRUITMENT OF STAFF

- 7.1 Service users will be involved fully in the recruitment of paid staff and volunteers. This will include involvement in the following:
 - a) decisions regarding job descriptions/person specifications
 - b) wording and placement of advertisements
 - c) short-listing of applicants
 - d) interview of applicants

8 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If a service user or group of service users feel that decisions are being made without their consultation, or that they are not being properly involved in the decision making process they have the right to use this as grounds for making a complaint against staff, management committee members or other service users.

9 REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Reviewed and Updated by the Board of Directors December 2007