

Clinks guide to service user involvement and co-production:

GOOD PRACTICE: TIPS FOR MEETINGS

Tips for meetings

1. Provide as much information as possible – dates, times (including approximate length of meeting), commitment, who else will attend, purpose. Involve the whole staff team by asking them to publicise the meeting to individual service users during keyworking sessions and provide support if service users want to attend, e.g. help work out transport (if necessary), remind them the day before etc - whatever approach helps the individual person.
2. Try to get a nice venue (if not in the service) that can be easily accessed by public transport.
3. Dates and times – you could send out a brief questionnaire describing the purpose of the meetings and asking people to tick the time of day, day of the week, week of the month that they would prefer and/or ask team members to complete them with individual service users. Go with what suits the majority.
4. Don't start the meeting too early -10.30 at earliest, but preferably later (ask members). Have refreshments/lunch available on arrival.
5. Documents should be checked for ease of reading. Where there is jargon a glossary should be provided.
6. Paperwork should be kept to a minimum and provided in advance of the meetings. Do the minutes in bullet-point form summing up the main points. Use colour to make them look more attractive and larger print, eg Arial 12 point. Alternatively minutes could be presented in a 'newsletter' format.
7. Plan in something else as well as the business of the meeting, e.g. speaker, Q&A session, social opportunity, talent/skills exchange.
8. Keep the agenda manageable. If agenda is full, prioritise things that have a timescale/deadline and defer others to another meeting. Present the agenda in an attractive way e.g. colour, graphics or a border, use larger print.
9. Encourage willing service users to take on roles. Describe the roles and the commitment. Provide development opportunities if they want to learn new skills.

10. Do an icebreaker at beginning of each meeting and a closing exercise, e.g. a round asking how they feel, what they liked/disliked etc. Choose ones that are fun and allow people to get to know a bit about each other.
11. Plan for regular breaks (e.g. every 45 minutes)
12. Do some discussion in groups or pairs rather than everyone always sitting around a table, particularly if there are more than 8 people present.
13. Use a flipchart to record main points/decisions throughout the meeting so everyone can keep track.
14. Sum up decisions/actions at end of meet and help people prepare their feedback if they are expected to give it to other service users/their service.
15. Ask service users what they want on the next agenda.
16. Get more confident service users to mentor/buddy others and/or publicise/talk about meetings etc.
17. For those people interested give them a task to do between meetings.
18. Keep an eye out for service users feeling excluded. Find out why they feel that way and ask them what would help them feel included.
19. Always provide feedback/progress about any issues/ideas/suggestions/changes at the following meeting. Even when nothing has happened, say so and why.
20. Evaluate the meetings – what worked, what didn't, what could be improved. Ask service users for their opinions.