

SCIE Participation: Update

What SCIE has been doing to practice and promote participation?

Practicing participation

SCIE has been doing lots of different things to put participation work into practice:

- SCIE's Board represents a range of key people involved in social care, including service user representation.
- SCIE employs people who have experience of using services and experience as carers.
- The participation team (with a principal adviser and an executive administrator) has been set up to support and advise on the direction of participation work, as well as offer a lead throughout SCIE. It aims to think about participation at all levels of the organisation.
- SCIE's Partners' Council has been set up as an advisory group to SCIE. Forty-five members have been appointed to the Partners' Council. This includes service users, carers, bodies doing research, development, education and training, regulators, staff and employer bodies, and key partners in health. Members are drawn from groups with an interest in SCIE's work in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The council offers a wide range of points of view on SCIE's work and performance, as well as helping the Board and staff to hear from and communicate with the groups who have an interest in SCIE's work.

The Partners' Council aims to work flexibly and creatively, value the contribution of all its members, and develop as SCIE's work changes.

- Quality Assurance Advisory groups are independently chaired and provide a challenge to the way SCIE works and advise on

methods used, relevance and usefulness. They show SCIE's commitment to open and clear working methods and build on existing expertise, with a membership drawn from SCIE's main interest groups.

There are three Quality Assurance Advisory groups: Electronic library for social care, systematic knowledge reviews in social care and development of practice guides.

- High service user attendance at SCIE's annual conference
- Involvement of service users, carers and other key people when SCIE hires or contracts people to carry out work.
- Work on SCIE's practices for paying fees and expenses to service users and carers. A guide to paying service users and carers has been written to make sure everyone in SCIE knows what to do and the same approach is used throughout the organisation.
- Reference groups cover SCIE's work programme areas (themes) and provide a way through which specialists can contribute to projects within a particular theme. The groups act as a sounding board for work in progress with the particular task of working out the consequences of research and information for practice and the best way of matching the messages to the people who need to know. Reference groups look at the content of products within an area of work, whereas quality assurance advisory groups focus on how SCIE works.

Promoting participation

In addition to setting up arrangements for building participation into the different areas of SCIE's work there are a number of other steps that have been taken to promote participation:

- Working relationship with Involve (consumers in health research) and national training organisations.
- Research and publication of SCIE Report 5 'Users at the heart: User participation in the governance and operations of social

care regulatory bodies', which looks at service user involvement in governance.

- Research and publication of SCIE Position Paper No 3 'Has service user participation made a difference to social care services?' and SCIE Resource Guide No 2 'Involving service users and carers in social work education'.
- Partnership agreement with Shaping Our Lives National User Network (SOLNUN), National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) and National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE).
- Development of the Practice Partners Network. This network directly involves practitioners.