

# Service User and Carer Participation Strategy



Sponsored by  
Welsh Assembly  
Government



### **Explaining the language we use**

We are aware that there is always debate about language and the language we use changes over time. We have tried to use the most commonly accepted language in this document and have explained what we mean below.

#### **'We'**

Throughout this strategy 'we' means the Care Council for Wales.

#### **Participation**

Actively working together with a clear purpose to influence change. Some people also use the terms engagement, involvement and partnership.

#### **Service users**

A person who is currently, has in the past, or is likely in the future to use social care services. Service users also include people who are eligible to receive social care services but who may not be receiving them.

#### **Carer**

Carers look after family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability. The care they provide is unpaid.

#### **Strategy**

A plan that states our intentions for the future.

#### **Social care services**

Services which support and help people in their daily lives. Social care services may be provided by local social services departments, private businesses and voluntary groups. In addition to this, carers provide the majority of unpaid care in the community.

# Contents

## Section 1 - Introduction, context and background

Introduction	2
What is the Care Council?	2
Background and context	3
The Care Council's participation progress	4

## Section 2 - Strategy detail

The Care Council's Principles and Standards for Participation	6
Participation Circle	10
Reaching service users and carers	14
Opportunities for service user and carer participation	15
Priority areas	18
Monitoring and evaluating the strategy implementation	18
Implementation documents supporting the strategy	19
References	21
Acknowledgement of partners	23

## Appendix 1 - The matrix model for consultation 24

This document is also available in different formats.

The Care Council for Wales, Southgate House, Wood Street, Cardiff CF10 1EW

Tel: 029 2022 6257

Text Phone: 029 2078 0680

e-mail: [Participation@ccwales.org.uk](mailto:Participation@ccwales.org.uk)

**Further information about the Care Council is on our website  
[www.ccwales.org.uk](http://www.ccwales.org.uk)**

# Section 1

## Introduction, context and background

### 1. Introduction

This Participation Strategy shows the vision and broad priorities for service user and carer participation within the Care Council for Wales (Care Council) over the next five years. The Strategy is based around a set of Participation Principles and Standards and Participation Circle.

This Strategy has been developed and shaped by a large consultation process involving 144 service users and carers across Wales<sup>1</sup>. The process has been steered by a Reference Group of service users and carers who are also publicly appointed Care Council Members.

### 2. What is the Care Council?

The Care Council is the regulatory body for social care workers and social work training. It also has the role of workforce planning and development for the social care sector. It was established under the Care Standards Act 2000 and became operational on 1st October 2001. It is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Our aim is to make sure that children and adults who receive social care services can rely on a workforce that is properly trained, appropriately qualified and effectively regulated.

Our main responsibilities are to improve public protection through promoting high standards of conduct and practice among social care workers and high standards in their training.

---

<sup>1</sup>Have Your Say, A consultation on: Involving service users and carers in the work of the Care Council, February 2006  
Post Consultation Report, Care Council for Wales, July 2006

### **The Care Council's role is to:**

- maintain a Register of social workers and social care workers;
- prepare and review Codes of Practice for Social Care Workers and Employers of Social Care Workers;
- approve social work courses;
- ascertain the training needs of people wishing to become social care workers and promote such training; and
- draw up occupational standards for social care workers.

## **3. Background and context**

### **Why service user and carer participation?**

It is essential that those who use social care services have the opportunity to influence how we regulate social care workers, their practice and conduct, set training standards and develop the social care workforce for the future.

We have developed a participation strategy for service users and carers because traditionally these groups of people have had less influence on policy development, service planning and delivery. Research has highlighted the challenges to be addressed in order to overcome the barriers to achieve meaningful participation. These include providing the right opportunities, information, resources and support to service users and carers to encourage their participation. A review by the Social Care Institute of Excellence<sup>2</sup> highlighted that some people's voices were seldom being heard. This was due to a lack of attention given to diversity of service users and a range of other factors including living in rural communities or residential care. Our strategy acknowledges the need to develop flexible and creative ways to engage a diverse and wide range of service users and carers in particular groups we sometimes find harder to reach.

We will also continue to actively engage a broad range of interested people in our work, including social care employers, practitioners, education and training providers and continue to value their contribution to raising standards in the field of social care.

---

<sup>2</sup>Has service user participation made a difference to social care services? Position Paper No 3, Sarah Carr, Social Care Institute of Excellence, 2004

## Wider context

This strategy is compatible with the Welsh Assembly Government's vision for citizen centred public services as set out in Making the Connections<sup>3</sup>, by the Beecham review of public services<sup>4</sup> and the draft 10 year strategy for Social Services in Wales<sup>5</sup>.

In developing this Strategy we have drawn on the considerable experience and research about service user and carer participation within Wales and further a field. This includes linking to various Welsh Assembly Government initiatives in this area, for example the work undertaken by the Participation Consortium and the Participation Unit for Wales to develop national standards for children and young people's participation which are reflected within our principles and standards.

Our strategy is also compatible with the standards being developed by the Welsh Assembly Government's Making the Connections Unit around customer service and engagement.

The strategy fits with our internal policies to promote equality in our work and practice, including the Race Equality Scheme, Welsh Language Scheme and the Disability Equality Scheme.

## 4. The Care Council's Participation Progress

The Care Council's values reflect its commitment to making sure service users and carers are at the heart of the agenda.

The way the Care Council was established is recognised as a groundbreaking development amongst professional regulatory bodies, which are usually run by the professions themselves. We are very different and were set up with service users, carers and members of the public forming the majority of our Council membership.

From the beginning service users and carers have been involved in the work of the Care Council including the full governance structure of the Council, Committees, subgroups and a specific Reference Group steering the participation work.

---

<sup>3</sup>Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services for Wales, October 2004

<sup>4</sup>Beyond Boundaries, Citizen - Centred Local Services for Wales, Review of Local Service Delivery: Report to the Welsh Assembly Government, Sir Jeremy Beecham, 2006

<sup>5</sup>A strategy for social services in Wales over the next decade, Draft for consultation, Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities, August, 2006

In addition to the governance level of service user and carer participation, other examples include their representation on Project Steering Groups, for example to develop the national occupational standards for social work.

Service user and carers have also been involved in steering the development of the standards for service user and carer involvement in the social work degree programmes in Wales thus contributing to the overall quality of Social Work training in Wales.

We have taken steps to make the Care Council's work more accessible, including producing Easy Read versions of the Codes of Practice for social care workers, providing information and reports in different formats such as large print, audio and Braille and ensuring that meetings are held in accessible venues.

Service users and carers have been consulted through various methods about different areas of work and development. The most recent being the consultation around the development of this strategy which has provided the opportunity to consolidate and build on our work to date, strengthen partnerships and establish systems and methods for the future.

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that the Care Council has a rigorous method of ensuring that service user and carer participation is on-going and consistent across all our work areas and that we can measure and evidence participation and its impact.

# Section 2

## Strategy detail

### 5. The Care Council's Principles and Standards for Participation

A set of 4 Principles and 11 Standards underpin the Participation Strategy. They were developed by drawing on best practice, research evidence and a wide consultation with service users and carers across Wales.

The Principles and Standards reflect our commitment to service user and carer participation and our desire to ensure service users and carers are at the heart of our agenda, influencing all areas of our work.

#### **PRINCIPLE 1**

#### **Equality of opportunity and people focused**

All service users and carers have the right to participate.

##### **Standard 1.1**

Service users, carers and other groups' contributions will be treated with equal value and respect.

##### **Standard 1.2**

We respect and value differences and will actively seek the views of people with a range of backgrounds and experiences, including those we sometimes find harder to engage.

##### **Standard 1.3**

We will provide clear information and support for people to make a choice about participating.

### **PRINCIPLE 2**

#### **Openness and Integrity**

We will work in a clear, open and transparent way that promotes trust in the Care Council.

#### **Standard 2.1**

We will provide clear and accessible information.

#### **Standard 2.2**

We will ensure that all our areas of work are influenced by service users and carers.

#### **Standard 2.3**

Those who have been involved in a consultation process will be kept informed of the progress and results of their involvement.

#### **Standard 2.4**

We will evaluate how successful we have been at involving people and the difference their participation has made.

### **PRINCIPLE 3**

#### **Valued Partnerships**

We value the knowledge and expertise of service users and carers and want to work together with individuals, groups and organisations to develop meaningful participation.

#### **Standard 3.1**

We will work together with individuals, groups and organisations in a way that recognises their experience and expertise.

#### **Standard 3.2**

Through our partnerships, we will listen and learn, and develop our own and others skills and knowledge about participation.

**PRINCIPLE 4**  
**Striving towards Excellence**

We are always learning and improving.

**Standard 4.1**

We will develop our culture of participation, and ensure the people and resources are in place to achieve it.

**Standard 4.2**

We will test out new ways of involving people and be creative in developing best practice.

### 6. Participation Circle

“Needs to be an explicit on going commitment so that participation genuinely impacts on policy and practice.”

Consultation participant

Our consultation with service users and carers found that we should be clearer about how service users and carers can get involved in the Care Council and what influence they can have.

We have made the commitment in our participation standards that all our areas of work will be influenced by service users and carers (Standard 2.2).

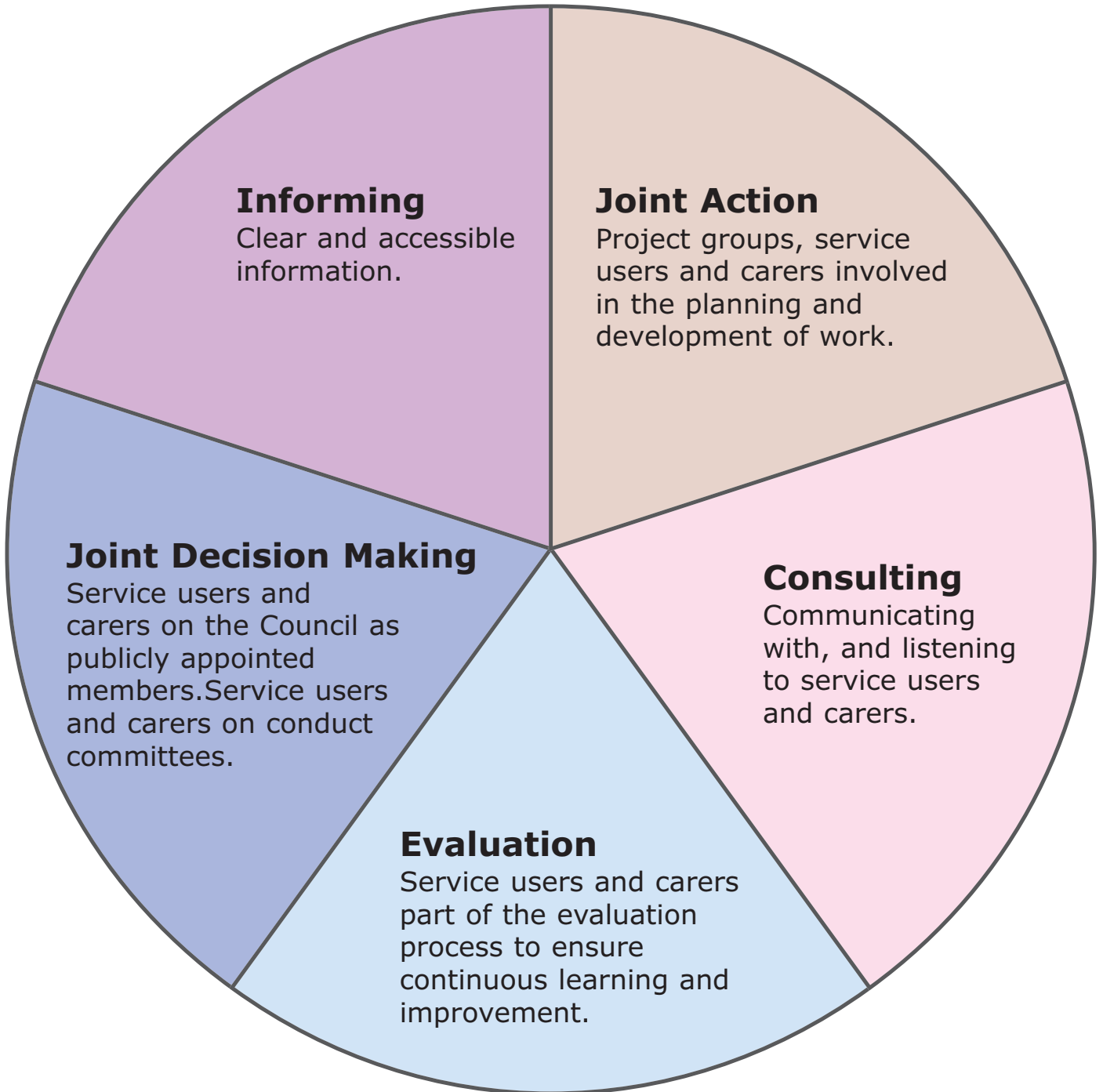
Central to our strategy implementation will be the Participation Circle, adapted from the participation ladder<sup>6</sup>. The Circle demonstrates the importance of achieving participation at all stages of a piece of work and at different levels. All departments will identify key participation work areas and work towards ensuring that within these larger pieces of work, the participation of service users and carers is achieved at each of the stages of the Circle.

The Participation Circle will be used as a framework for Care Council departments to plan and report against participation at the different levels. It will also help to identify gaps or areas where we can increase participation opportunities.

We recognise that service users and carers will be interested in different aspects of the Care Council’s work and want to participate in different ways. Some service users and carers may choose to get more actively involved at work planning and development stages whilst others may participate through receiving an information leaflet or taking part in a consultation event. The Circle demonstrates the validity and importance of all participation areas. The challenge is to ensure we get a balanced service user and carer perspective and influence at each of the different stages of participation.

---

<sup>6</sup>Children’s Participation: from tokenism to citizenship, Roger Hart, Innocenti Essays, UNICEF, 1992



### The Participation Circle explained

The participation Circle comprises of 5 stages, Joint Action, Consulting, Evaluation, Joint Decision Making, and Informing. The stages are not meant to be in any particular order. It is likely that any piece of work will involve several stages at once or moving between stages several times. All stages of the Participation Circle must be covered to begin to achieve meaningful participation and influence within the Care Council.

#### Joint Action

At the 'joint action' stage service users and carers will be involved in project groups to influence the development of a piece of work from the early stages.

##### An example

A project group was established to develop the standards for service user and carer involvement in the social work degree programmes. A group of service users and carers worked closely with a consultant to shape and steer the standards' development. The project group also steered the consultation process at the end of the project.

Other project groups may involve a range of stakeholders including service users and carers. It is important that Care Council staff are aware of potential power imbalances within project groups and follow the good practice guidance supporting this strategy.

Project groups will be drawn from a wide range of service users and carers.

#### Informing

Participation is also about providing clear and accessible information for service users and carers to understand what the Care Council is and why it is relevant to them. This is about ensuring that information is available in appropriate formats and disseminated through service user and carer networks.

##### An example

An easy to read version of the Codes of Practice has been developed and is being disseminated through service user and carer networks. This helps service users and carers to know what they should expect from their registered social care workers and what to do if their social care workers fail to reach the standards in the codes.

### Consultation

Consultation is about 'checking out' with wider groups who haven't necessarily been involved in the design or development of the work. The consultation phase should demonstrate genuine communication with and listening to a wide range of service users and carers.

#### An example

The consultation process to inform the development of this strategy was undertaken in partnership with a number of different voluntary organisations who had direct contact with service user and carers. The partners helped to disseminate the consultation documents which were available in different formats. The partners also worked with us to organise discussion meetings across Wales to ensure a wide reach of service user and carers.

Careful attention was paid to how the consultation discussion groups were arranged and facilitated to ensure everyone could have their say.

### Joint Decision Making

This stage refers to the Care Council's governance arrangements. Service users and carers and members of the public make up over half of the Council's membership and therefore have influence at a strategic level.

This joint decision making phase also relates to service users and carers who are appointed to conduct committees as part of the Social Care Workers conduct arrangements.

#### An example

The public appointment process appoints 'members' to the Care Council's governing body.

There are eight places in total on the Council allocated to service users and carers. They are therefore represented through the whole Council and committee structure which governs the Care Council.

Many of the members are also part of the Service User and Carer Reference Group who will have the role of overseeing the implementation of this strategy.

### Evaluation

Our participation standards reflect the need for continuous learning and the need to involve service users and carers in monitoring and evaluating the participation progress. Each participation activity will be reviewed and evaluated. Members of the Service User and Carer Reference Group will oversee the annual review of the strategy's action plan and on-going monitoring of the strategy.

#### An example

During the consultation process which informed this strategy, evaluation and reflection occurred after each consultation event. We also worked with our partners to reflect and evaluate the consultation process. Learning and recommendations were brought together in a final report at the end of the whole consultation process.

## 7. Reaching service users and carers

In developing this strategy we worked through partnerships with established voluntary organisations to reach service user and carer networks and individuals. The feedback was that this method was effective in reaching out to a wide range of service users and carers. When we brought our partners together at the end in a post consultation workshop event, the consensus was that we should use this partnership approach in the future. It was also clear that we needed to reach out wider to individual service users and carers who may not be part of an established group or network.

Our future strategy for reaching out to service users and carers will therefore involve the following methods:

- Use established service users and carer networks through working in partnership with different organisations at national, regional and local levels. (See standard 3.1)
- Build up our links with specific groups who work with service users and carers who we sometimes find harder to reach, for example groups supporting black and ethnic minority people. (See standard 1.2)
- Establish a 'pool' of individual service users and carers who are keen to participate in the Care Council's work on a regular basis.

## Matrix model for consultation

We recognise that it is never going to be possible to involve all service users and carers in Wales. We are aiming for a **representative sample** of service user and carer perspectives within each prioritised work area. We want to ensure that a wide range of service users and carers influence our work, including, children and young people, those with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health needs, older people and carers.

In the past we have used a Matrix approach to ensure our consultations are accessible and at least one service user or carer perspective is reached in each area. This strategy formalises this approach. All consultations in the future will follow the same format, ensuring that different groups are approached each time and consultation discussion groups are held across Wales. (Appendix 1 shows the Matrix approach) This list is not exhaustive and we recognise that other service users and carer groups may be identified during the implementation of this strategy.

## 8. Opportunities for service user and carer participation

The consultation which informed this strategy showed that service users and carers were interested in all areas of the Care Council’s work. The table below highlights our core areas of work and opportunities to achieve participation of service users and carers over the next 5 years.

Corporate Goal	Area of work	Opportunities for service user and carer participation
<b>GOAL 1</b> <b>High Standards in the practice and conduct of social care workers</b>	Codes of practice for registered social workers and social care workers.  Register of social workers and social care workers.  Conduct rules and arrangements for issues about practice.	Promoting the Codes. Reviewing the Codes. Promoting the Register. Promoting the conduct arrangements. Recruiting service users and carers as members of conduct committees.

## Service User and Carer Participation Strategy

Corporate Goal	Area of work	Opportunities for service user and carer participation
<p><b>GOAL 2</b>  <b>High Quality of Social Work Qualifying and Post Qualifying Training</b></p>	<p>Regulation of Social work training.</p> <p>Regulation of Post Qualifying Social work Training.</p>	<p>Approval and review of social work programmes and post qualifying social work training.</p> <p>Review standards for service user and carer involvement in social work degree programmes.</p>
<p><b>GOAL 3</b>  <b>A Skilled and Qualified Social Care Workforce</b></p>	<p>National Occupational Standards (NOS).</p> <p>Qualification Framework.</p> <p>Promotion of social care as a career.</p>	<p>Developing new and reviewing existing NOS.</p> <p>Developing new and reviewing existing Qualification Framework.</p> <p>Development and input into promotional materials.</p>
<p><b>GOAL 4</b>  <b>A confident and valued social care workforce</b></p>	<p>Communications plan and external relations.</p> <p>Bi annual social care accolades.</p>	<p>Service users and carers influence policy development and social care practice.</p>
<p><b>GOAL 5</b>  <b>An authoritative source of advice on the social care workforce</b></p>	<p>Gather social care workforce and training information through the social care register, regulation information and networks and use to influence policy development and inform practice development.</p>	<p>Effective communication and information.</p> <p>Promoting and recognising service user and carer participation.</p>

## Service User and Carer Participation Strategy

Corporate Goal	Area of work	Opportunities for service user and carer participation
<b>GOAL 6</b> <b>An efficient, effective and equitable organisation</b>	Council and committee support.	Input and influence through Council and committee structure.  Service User and Carer Reference Group.

In addition to the core areas of work listed above, there will also be a focus on developing the Care Council's internal capacity and capabilities. These internal support systems will focus on:

Support work area	Department
Maintaining networks, newsletter links etc.	Communications
Co-ordinating the strategy's monitoring and review as part of the annual business cycle.	Secretariat
Co-ordinating corporate staff training.	HR - training
Ensuring participation standards are met through contracts.	Office Services
Database management.	Office Services
Establishing a simple and robust expenses policy and systems for service users and carers who participate.	Finance Department
Website development. Intranet communication.	Information Technology and Communications

### 9. Priority areas

We have identified the following areas for a priority focus over the next 5 years. The detail of these will be drawn out in annual action plans.

#### ■ **Communication and information**

The Care Council will improve its approach to listening and communicating with service users and carers.

#### ■ **Monitoring and evaluation processes**

The Care Council will establish clear systems to monitor the involvement of service users and carers and learn from their experiences.

#### ■ **Training and development of Care Council Staff**

The Care Council will invest in staff training and development to ensure that all staff develop the confidence and skills to support service users and carer participation.

#### ■ **Links to service user and carer networks**

The Care Council will continue to develop its partnership with voluntary organisations and service user and carer networks to reach out to service users and carers.

#### ■ **Promoting diversity**

The Care Council will be pro-active in ensuring that the service users and carers who participate represent the diverse population of Wales, including children and young people, people with learning difficulties, black and minority ethnic people and those from rural Wales and Communities First areas.

### 10. Monitoring and evaluating the strategy implementation

This is a long term strategy and will be reviewed by an external body within 5 years.

This Participation Strategy will link into the Care Council's annual business planning cycle. Annual priorities will be highlighted in our Operational plan and against team and individual work plans. These will be reported against each year and we will publish our progress as part of our Annual Report.

The **Service User and Carer Reference Group** will oversee the implementation and on going monitoring and review of the Participation Strategy.

The Participation Circle will be used as a planning and review tool, to assess how service users and carers were involved at the different stages of the circle in identified work areas and the impact their involvement had.

Implementation tools will offer standardised forms for collecting monitoring data on the range of service users and carers involved in activities. Departments will undertake on-going monitoring and evaluation after each participation activity.

Progress will be monitored mid way through the year and reported back to the Service User and Carer Reference Group. There will be a final review of the annual action plan at the end of the year.

### **Key success indicators will be:**

- Increased number of individual service users and carers on the 'pool' of regular participants.
- Increased diversity of service users and carers participating against the stages of the participation circle.
- Qualitative data from participating service users and carers.
- Qualitative data from staff members. Service user and carer influence and impact on developing work areas.
- Raised profile and understanding of the Care Council amongst service users and carers.

## **11. Implementation documents supporting the strategy**

This Strategy shows the vision, principles, standards and broad priorities for service user and carer participation over the next 5 years.

Additional internal documents and resources are available to support the implementation of the strategy, these include:

### **An annual action plan**

The Action plan will link the Participation Principles and Standards through to departments with clear actions, accountability and timescales. The action plan will be integrated into the Care Council's business cycle and reported against within its Annual Report.

### Toolkits/resources for participation

There are a number of resource toolkits which will support the Strategy implementation. These have been informed by best practice examples and the strategy consultation process and have been developed with a staff working group.

#### Resources include:

- Guidance on how to involve service users and carers - linking to Wales and UK wide good practice examples.
- Network maps of service user and carer groups.
- Standardised forms for monitoring and recording the range of service user groups and carer participation.
- Departmental planning and review tools linked to the participation circle.
- Resource guide on easy read and accessible formats.
- Evaluation guidance and tools.

# References

Below is the list of references and other good practice guides used during the development of this strategy.

### **Welsh Assembly Government publications**

Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services for Wales, October 2004

Delivering the Connections: From Vision to Action, June 2005

Making the Connections: Building Better Customer Service - Core Principles for Public Services, consultation document, July 2006

Beyond Boundaries, Citizen-centred Local Services for Wales, June 2006

A Strategy for Social Services in Wales over the next decade: Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities, Draft for Consultation, August 2006

### **Good practice participation guidance produced in Wales**

Too Many Pages, Scovo's Guide to Involving Service Users to Make Services Better, August 2000

Make it accessible, A guide to making information accessible for communities in Wales, RNIB, February 2004

Having a Voice - Having a Choice, Draft Standards for Children and Young People's Participation, The Participation Consortium and Participation Unit for Wales, 2006

EngAGE, Involving Older People in Wales, Draft, Age Concern Cymru, March 2006

Breathing Fire into Participation, the funky dragon guide, good practice guidelines on supporting groups of children and young people to participate, Funky Dragon/ the Children and Young People's assembly for Wales, 2002

Overcoming barriers to involvement-some suggestions, Conwy Connect

### **Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) publications**

Doing it for themselves: participation and black and minority ethnic service users, participation report 14, July 2006

Has service user participation made a difference to social care services? Position Paper No 3, Sarah Carr, 2004

Contributing on equal terms: Service user involvement and the benefits system, adult services report 08, October 2005

How to produce information in an accessible way, Scie accessibility guidelines, June 2005

How to make events accessible, Scie accessibility guidelines, June 2005

### **Other**

Children's Participation: from tokenism to citizenship, Roger Hart, Innocenti Essays, UNICEF, 1992

User Power, National Consumer Council, October 2004

Listen Hear The right to be heard, Report of the commission on Poverty, Participation and Power, UK coalition against poverty, 2000

Measuring the Magic? Evaluating and researching young people's participation in public decision making, Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 2002

Hear by Right: Setting Standards for the Active Involvement of Young people in Democracy, Wade, H., Lawton, A. and Stevenson, M. Local Government Association/ National Youth Agency, 2001

# Acknowledgement of partners

We worked in partnership with the following voluntary organizations to organise and run the consultation process which informed this strategy;

- Disability Wales
- Taran Disability Forum
- Wales Council for the Deaf
- Wales Council for the Blind
- Crossroads Wales
- Help the Aged
- Mind Cymru
- Children in Wales
- Voices from Care Cymru
- Learning Disability Wales

# Appendix 1

## The matrix model for consultation

The matrix model will help to ensure that that consultation discussion groups are held across Wales and we achieve a spread of service user and carer perspectives including; children and young people, those with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health needs, older people and carers.

Each different consultation will aim to reach different groups, for example if older people were consulted in South East Wales during the last consultation, the next consultation will aim to reach older people in another part of Wales.

	North East	North West	Mid Wales	South East	South West
Older people				X	
Mental health service users					X
Adults with learning difficulties			X		
Children and young people	X				
Carers including young carers					X
Adults with physical disabilities including sensory impairments		X			