



## User Involvement 'a continuum'

To build partnerships in health and social care, there must be user involvement. Increasingly the government has set requirements for involving users and the wider public in planning for and monitoring the whole range of public services. In health, trusts must have a public involvement strategy, in local government best value must include substantial public consultation.

More and more innovative methods are being used to achieve genuine involvement, especially of service users. For some services there are particular challenges, where people are extremely ill, where they don't want to be service users at all, where they'd rather forget the whole episode. The reading on this topic is wide and interesting - try to access a broad range of material including case studies and experience on the internet. This section offers tools to help you explore different perspectives on achieving genuine user involvement.

Below is a continuum of approaches that can be observed, in terms of how users are involved in services.

Professionals giving users information	Professionals encouraging users to voice their concerns	Professionals replanning the service to improve users' experiences	Professionals eliciting users' views and feeding the information into replanning	Users having a real input into the design and planning of the service	Users defining needs
--	---	--	--	---	----------------------

Figure 4.3: Continuum of user involvement (Marsh and Macalpine, 1995, p 18)

The continuum is framed in terms of professional and users. Of course there may be more groups involved. Equally, different groups of professionals may be operating to different views of how users are or should be involved, i.e. acting from different points on the continuum.

Professionals giving users information	Professionals encouraging users to voice their concerns	Professionals replanning the service to improve users' experiences	Professionals eliciting users' views and feeding the information into replanning	Users having a real input into the design and planning of the service	Users defining needs
Professionals lead	Consumerism	Using information access, choice, redress	Actively seeking views from individuals and groups, and showing how information was used	Users alongside professionals in decision-making	Users drive whole process

Figure 4.4: The continuum and typical actions

In the above figure we sum up what happens typically with each approach.