



Participation Policy Practice & Procedure

Version Number	2.0	Developed by	Dave Smith
Approval Date	May 2021	In Consultation With	Service User Advisory Group, Service User Forum, The Board
Classification Type - (Confidential, Restricted, Internal use only, None)			None

Policy

Page Number

1. Statement	2
1.1 Who This Policy Applies to	3
1.2 Personalisation and Lived Experience	3
1.3 Fair Access Diversity and Inclusion	3
1.4 Complying with the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard	3
1.5 Participation Practice and Procedures	3
1.6 Senior Leadership Team Responsibilities	4
1.7 Board Responsibilities	4

Practice & Procedure

5



Service User Participation Policy

1. Policy Statement

Framework is concerned to make sure that the people who use Framework services have the opportunity to voice their opinions about the services they receive and the chance to influence changes to those services.

Service user participation is fundamental to Framework's person centred approach to providing housing, health, employment and support and care. Framework is committed to ensuring that all service users have opportunities to influence the operation of services, and participate in the management and development of the organisation in a meaningful way. Framework welcomes all feedback from service users and carers. Framework believes they are the people best placed to help us to continuously improve the quality and relevance of services.

Framework believes that involving service users in decision making about the organisation is consistent with the ethos of our service delivery. We work to build confidence in our service users and support them to have full control over their lives. Being taken seriously as partners in the development of services continues the direction of this work. Framework therefore is committed to enabling service users to participate fully at individual, service and organisational level.

- Framework's commitments are: We will ask service users about what they think about the service that they receive as well as wider issues regarding Framework.
- We will give service users the fullest opportunity to influence Framework's direction, policies and practices at both service and organisational level.
- We will provide a variety of opportunities, appropriate to the individuals and the nature of the service, for people who have experience of using services to play an active part in decisions that affect those services.
- We will give service users useful information about their service and Framework as a whole.
- We will take proper account of the time and resources that we will need so that those who use services can understand and participate in all the decisions and processes that affect them.
- We will provide the people who use the services we are responsible for the right encouragement and help to fully participate.
- Before we make any changes to a service we will explain our plans to the people who are affected, listen to their opinions and try and meet any concerns they raise.

Framework provides a diverse range of services across some very different settings. The issues that matter most to service users will also be very different. This diversity means that the subjects on which we seek service user involvement and the ways in which we can invite that involvement have to reflect the things that concern them.



Framework recognises that individual service users will have aspirations to participate at different levels. The organisation will therefore ensure that a wide range of options are available to enable service users to participate in a way and at a level that maximises their potential to participate. Framework also recognises the validity of someone's choice to not participate if they do not wish to.

1.1 Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to Framework as an organisation and all individual Framework services, including housing, health, employment and support and care. The term service user is used throughout, though different terms may be used in different types of service, for instance tenant, resident, client or patient.

1.2 Personalisation and Lived Experience

Framework believes in as far as reasonably possible empowering service users through offering a personalised approach - shifting the balance of control in decision making and thinking about care and support services in an entirely different way. This means starting with the person as an individual with lived experience, preferences and aspirations and putting them at the centre of the process of identifying their needs and making choices about how and when they are supported.

1.3 Fair Access Diversity and Inclusion

Framework is committed to ensuring all service users have the same opportunity to participate no matter what their needs. We will regularly look at who is participating to ensure this commitment is actually happening in practice and that all service user's voices are able to be heard.

1.4 Complying with the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

Framework is a Registered Provider of social housing and therefore is subject to the Homes and Communities Agencies Regulatory Standards, including the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. This includes ensuring that tenants are involved in:

- formulating housing related policies and strategic priorities
- making decisions about how services are delivered, including setting service standards
- scrutiny of performance and making recommendations about how to improve performance
- managing their homes, where applicable
- managing repair and maintenance services

This policy and the participation structures and methods that follow it will enable Framework to meet this standard.

1.5 Participation Practice and Procedures

Detailed expectations of participation structures, methods and responsibilities at organisational, service and individual levels are set out in Framework's "Service User Participation Practice and Procedures" document.



1.6 Senior Leadership Team Responsibilities

Senior Leadership will be responsible for:

- Determining and making sufficient provision of staff time and other resources to facilitate effective service user involvement activity.
- Maintaining adequate records of service user participation activities at organisational level
- Ensuring that processes such as internal audit or inspection include assurance that service user involvement is being operated to the standard set out in this policy and in relevant service-specific procedures.
- Making recommendations to the Board for any changes to or development of the policy.

1.7 Board Responsibilities

Framework's Board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that any commitment to direct service user participation in governance is delivered
- Conducting periodic review as to the effectiveness of the service user involvement strategy and any individual element of it.

Procedure below.....



SERVICE USER PARTICIPATION PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

Version Number	1.0	Developed by	Dave Smith
Approval Date	May 2021	In Consultation With	Service User Advisory Group, Service User Forum, The Board
Classification Type - (Confidential, Restricted, Internal use only, None)			None

CONTENTS

Page Number

1. Participation At Organizational Level	3
1.1 Service Use Advisory Group (SUAG)	3
1.2 Repairs Working Group	4
1.3 Service User Forums	4
1.4 Complaints	5
1.5 Independent Advocacy	5
1.6 Lived Experience and the Workforce	5
1.7 Satisfaction Surveys	6
1.8 Service Audits and Peer Reviews	6
1.9 Communication	6
1.10 Digital Engagement	6
2. Participation at Individual and Service Level	7
2.1 Responding to Service Users	7
2.2 Participation in Individual Support	7
2.3 Exit and Other Feedback	7
2.4 Service or Resident Meetings	8
2.5 Communication	8
2.6 Suggestion Boxes & You Said We Did Boards	8
2.7 Recruitment	8
2.8 Innovation	9
2.9 Very Short Term Services	9
3. Supporting Involvement	9



3.1 Resources	9
3.2 Rewards and Recognition	10
3.3 Training for Service Users	10
3.4 Recording and Monitoring	10
4. Responsibilities	10
4.1 Service Managers Responsibilities	10
4.2 Senior Leadership Team Responsibilities	11
4.3 Board Responsibilities	11

Service User Participation Practice and Procedures

1.

PARTICIPATION AT ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

Framework will seek input from Service Users through the following mechanisms that cover all of Framework's services and are available to all Framework service users:

1.1 Service User Advisory Group (SUAG)

The Service User Advisory Group (SUAG) consists of Framework Service Users, ex-service Users and members of the Board. The group meets at least once every three months. The purpose of the group is to ensure that the Board hears directly from the people that Framework supports about their experience of using our services, what we do well and where we can improve.

People that use, or have used, our services are elected to the group by a process that is overseen by Framework's Service User Forum (see below) and the Board. New members are selected every year and as vacancies occur. As far as possible the group seeks to incorporate the widest range of Service Users and their experiences of the organisation. SUAG members will be expected to maintain links to the Service User Forum through attending Forum meetings.

The group has an advisory role and makes reports and recommendations on service delivery to the Board and the Senior Leadership Team. The activity of the group covers all aspects of service delivery, such as:

- Policies and procedures relating to the provision of support, resettlement, treatment, care, training, volunteering and to Framework service Users
- Communication with Service Users including the organisation's Annual Report
- Planning, design and development of new services
- The quality and safety of Framework services and buildings
- All matters involving Service User feedback (i.e. complaints, advocacy services, satisfaction surveys)
- The practical and strategic impact of legislative, regulatory or other external changes

To fulfil its role SUAG may request, through Board members or the Senior Leadership Team:

- Reports covering areas of Framework's operation that are of interest to service users
- Specific responses to queries, areas of concern or actions requested
- Attendance of Framework staff with particular areas of responsibility at future meetings where these areas are to be discussed.

Board members attending SUAG meetings will ensure SUAG receive responses from the Board to issues and concerns raised at previous SUAG meetings.

The SUAG will elect a Chair who will be one of the service user representatives. The Chair and one other service user SUAG member, agreed at the previous SUAG meeting, will attend meetings of Framework's Board. SUAG members attending Board meetings will report to the Board on the activity, issues and concerns raised at previous SUAG meetings.

Minutes of SUAG meetings will be circulated to Framework Board members and a summary of SUAG activity and plans will be prepared and circulated annually.

Framework is responsible for servicing meeting of SUAG including: booking and giving notice of meeting times & dates; circulating agenda and information before the meeting; noting and distributing a record of the meeting and any decisions taken.

1.2 Repairs Working Group

SUAG will nominate Service user representatives to be members of the Repairs Working Group. The group will also include members from Framework's Property Services Team and management.

The group will meet regularly to look at:

- Repairs service performance
- Repairs satisfaction
- Repairs contractor's performance

The group will also, from time to time, be involved in the processes of appointing repairs contractors.

It will be the responsibility of the Head of Property Services to ensure Working Group meetings are scheduled and serviced.

1.3 Service User Forums

The Service User Forum (SUF) is Service User-led: Service Users decide which issues will be discussed and whether particular people or organisations should be invited to attend. The Service User Forum is open to all Service Users. The SUF is a forum that gives Service Users a voice in the management and development of services.

Framework will regularly review how often and where SUF meetings happen. This will depend on geography and transport links and on Service User demand to attend. Where there are difficulties in physically attending meetings services must consider how to use Group / Resident Meetings or other methods to feed into the SUF. Framework will monitor attendance at Service User Forums.

Issues raised at the Service User Forum may be taken to the SUAG for further consideration and action and if necessary taken via the SUAG to the Framework Board.

A member of Framework Senior Management will always attend meetings of the Service User Forum.

SUF meetings may request, through the Senior Leadership Team:

- Specific responses to queries, areas of concern or actions requested
- Attendance of Framework staff with particular areas of responsibility at future meetings where these areas are to be discussed.

Framework is responsible for ensuring that SUF meetings are properly conducted including: booking and giving notice of meeting times & dates; circulating information before the meeting; noting and distributing a record of the discussion at the meeting, including distribution to SUAG members.

1.4 Complaints

Framework will regard complaints as a positive tool for developing as an organisation, and so will strive to create an atmosphere in which Service Users and their carers can be confident of raising complaints, without fear of being disadvantaged.

Framework has a fully transparent complaints process but it is recognised that sometimes Service Users do not want to make a formal complaint, so an informal route will be available.

Framework will encourage Service Users to be involved in reviewing complaints received by the organisation and planning changes as a result of complaints. Reports collating and analysing complaints will regularly be made to SUAG and the Board.

Framework's Independent Advocacy provider (see below) will also provide to SUAG a regular report detailing the cases it has responded to, their number, the nature of the concerns raised and the outcomes.

1.5 Independent Advocacy

As an organisation providing services to vulnerable people Framework recognises that people may sometimes need help and support to speak out, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain the services they need. To enable people to feel safe in raising concerns with the organisation they may also rely on Framework will ensure Service Users have access to independent advocacy.

Framework will commission an external, independent agency to provide this help and support. The agency will be expected to adhere to the Advocacy Charter in the way it works with Service Users and with Framework. The agency will make regular reports of its activity, including numbers of cases and any themes emerging from those cases, to the Senior Leadership Team, SUAG and the Board.

Staff have a responsibility to make Service Users aware of their right to independent advocacy and will inform Service Users of how to access this, should they require it. All Service Users should be made aware of the existence of the independent advocacy service that is available to them. Service Users wishing to make a complaint will be informed of the advocacy service. Staff should also re-visit this with Service Users at regular intervals - acknowledging that there can be a large amount of information to take on at the beginning of any support being received.

1.6 Lived experience and the workforce

Framework will maximise opportunities for service users and those with lived experience to take up traineeships, apprenticeships and mainstream service staff roles within the

organisation. Framework will aim to increase the number or proportion of people it employs who bring the learning and lived experience of using services themselves.

Framework will consider specifically targeted measures that enable Service Users to better compete for jobs across the organisation or elsewhere. Framework will use its experience and resources from operating its volunteering pathway and its work on employment and training to develop routes into employment and any necessary support systems to ensure sustainability and safety.

1.7 Satisfaction Survey

Framework will conduct a formal Service User satisfaction survey on an annual basis across all of its housing services.

Framework will seek to develop satisfaction surveys to cover the breadth of service-types the organisation offers: employment; health; care.

Within this, Service Users can be asked about service development, design of services and other aspects that may be specific to the services that they are receiving support from.

Framework will make the results of surveys available to Service Users, staff and the Board along with any action it intends to take in response to the findings.

1.8 Service Audits and Peer Review

Service Users can also contribute to improving services through involvement in audits and peer reviews.

Peer reviews involve current or former Service Users gathering evidence about a service which could be their own or could be a different service. Peer reviewers then make recommendations on how the service can be improved.

Service Audits and inspections help to assure the quality of service provision. Auditors look at specific questions. If expected standards set are not met then services are required to put in place an action plan within a specified timescale.

Framework will provide training and support to facilitate Service Users taking up opportunities to play a role in peer reviews and audits, including acting as auditors.

1.9 Communication

Framework will publish or distribute to Service Users the details of activity at organisational level. This will include:

- Records of meetings
- Reports regarding complaints
- Reports regarding Service Audits
- Reports regarding Service User satisfaction
- Reports regarding repairs satisfaction

Each year Framework will produce an Annual Report which will be available to service users. The Annual Report will include information about the organisation's performance and achievements. SUAG will be consulted regarding the content and format of the report.

1.10 Digital Engagement

Framework will seek to offer ways in which Service Users are able to participate using digital communication routes. The organisation's services are very widespread geographically and this has made meetings where people need to physically attend more impractical and undesirable.

Increasing availability and uptake of internet enabled phones and mobile devices, including among service users, has opened new possibilities in how the organisation can communicate. Framework will explore and trial options for service user engagement using technology. This may include:

- Video conferencing
- Social media
- Messaging services
- Online surveying

This is however an area requiring a lot of development and potentially significant resources. This area of practice may need updating to reflect these developments.

2 PARTICIPATION AT INDIVIDUAL AND SERVICE LEVEL

2.1 Responding to Service Users

Services have a responsibility to inform Service Users about what scope there is for them to be involved in and how they can influence decision making within the project. Services also need to inform Service Users how their views have been taken into account.

Framework recognises that comments/feedback/suggestions made by Service Users by whatever method require a proper response. Those who contribute will not feel that they have been valued or heard without at least some acknowledgement of their views. Framework will respond to all and any such comments made by Service Users and take action where needed in response to any comments made. This will be done either at service level, or, where appropriate, as an organisation.

2.2 Participation in individual support

For some Service Users, especially those using non-accommodation based services, the best opportunity to participate may come via key work and other one to one sessions. The informal setting of a one to one meeting can be a good opportunity to discuss what a Service User feels about the service being offered and hear thoughts on improvements. Information gained in this way should be collated and considered by managers and teams in the same way as other feedback.

2.3 Exit and Other Feedback

Framework services will provide opportunities for Service Users to provide feedback when they leave a service. This normally takes the form of an exit questionnaire or

interview. Services will be expected to consider the most practical and effective means of gathering this feedback.

Services may also seek feedback from Service Users at other time points in Service Users, use of a service. For instance, after a Service User has used a service for fourteen days or at an approximate midpoint in a Service Users expected engagement.

Feedback should be retained by services and reviewed regularly. This should include at least one annual formal review with findings noted and actions required as a result set out in a time limited plan.

2.4 Service or Resident meetings

All services within the organisation should, where practical, provide some opportunity for Service Users to meet with a view to having some input in the management and development of the service they receive.

Many services have existing forums for Service Users to meet up, such as House Meetings or Client Discussion Groups. These forums should include aspects of management and development of services. Service users participating should be informed that issues arising in these settings can be further raised at SUF.

All services should maintain proper written records of such local Service User meetings. These might take the form of minutes; decisions; reports etc.

2.5 Communication

Services will ensure that whenever possible service users are given notice and details of any planned changes or events that might have an effect on the support they receive. Information should be provided in the most appropriate way given the circumstances and must be clear about:

- What is being planned
- What's the purpose or reason for change and who has made any decisions involved
- Whether service users have any influence or choice in the matter
- Whether the change is temporary, permanent or will be reviewed
- What service users can do if they aren't happy with the change.

2.6 Suggestion Boxes & You Said We Did Boards

Framework recognises that individual Service Users will have aspirations to participate at different levels. With this in mind, Service Users should have the opportunity to make comments, anonymously if needed, within their service.

All services should provide the opportunity for Service Users to submit feedback or to make comments and suggestions. The format of this can vary – e.g. a 'Suggestion Box', or any other method that provides Service Users with a chance to give feedback as and when they need to.

2.7 Recruitment

Involvement in staff recruitment is a meaningful way of involving Service Users in the development of services.

Those responsible for recruiting to front line posts must always consider how Service Users can be engaged with the recruitment process. Differences in the nature of the service and the vacant role will mean that a variety of practical approaches might be chosen.

Framework will produce written guidance which is made available to all services setting out the procedures to be used and offering suggestions as to the best way to incorporate the opinions and judgements of Service Users in the selection of new staff. (See Recruitment and Selection Procedure)

Service Users can play a part at any or all stages of the recruitment process. This could be indirectly through:

- helping to draft a job description
- agreeing questions for the interview

or directly through:

- being part of the interview or shortlisting panel
- forming a separate interview panel

When directly involved, the role of service users and how their views will be incorporated in making decisions should be made clear. There should be discussions between staff and Service Users to establish this before the process starts.

2.8 Innovation

There are many ways Service Users can participate in a service and Framework will generally encourage staff to consider what works for their service users and to be open to new ideas.

Services need however to consider any risks that might arise and balance these with the benefits for service users and the service. Proposals should always be checked with senior operational staff before proceeding.

2.9 Very Short Term Services

Some of Framework's Service Users engage for very short periods. This can be just for a few hours or a one off "drop in". In these circumstances Service User Involvement would not normally be extensive in comparison to longer term service, though in all circumstances service user feedback should be sought and acted on where relevant.

3 SUPPORTING INVOLVEMENT

3.1 Resources

Framework recognises that Service User involvement will require resources and that it can be time consuming for staff involved. Framework will provide services with sufficient resources and allow them to give sufficient priority to developing and delivering this aspect of the work.

Framework will provide staff with training in areas around participation, involvement and empowerment.

It will be the responsibility of Senior Leadership to determine and make sufficient provision of staff time and other resources to facilitate effective service user involvement activity.

3.2 Rewards and Recognition

Framework will always acknowledge the time and energy contributed by service users who participate in involvement activity. People should feel their input is valued.

This might be reflected in terms of the feedback people receive; qualifications or skills obtained, or reward such as vouchers or credits for the time spent attending meetings and events. As far as possible this should be fair and consistent across all services and will be reviewed regularly.

3.3 Training for Service Users

Framework will make training available to service users who wish to become involved in the organisational-level involvement structures: SUF and SUAG. Services should also provide informal training for Service Users to support greater participation.

Service Users who take part in participation activities can gain valuable skills and experience, which can in turn help them, progress, increasing their employment options, for example.

3.4 Recording and Monitoring

Framework will record and evaluate the implementation and success of individual aspects of Service User involvement and of overall strategy. Framework will be able to offer evidence to stakeholders, including Service Users, that involvement activity has taken place and that approaches are effective. The following mechanisms will be put into place:

Individual services will be responsible for:

- Setting out in writing the service's approach and plans for involving service users and making it available to service users
- Maintaining written records of any Service User involvement at service level
- Maintaining records of any Service User feedback and responses to it.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Service Managers Responsibilities

Service Managers will be responsible for:

- telling individual Service Users about what scope there is for them to be involved and how they can influence decision making within the service
- telling Service Users how their views have been taken into account.



- keeping written records of any Service User involvement at service level
- keeping written records of any responses to Service User feedback

4.2 Senior Leadership Team Responsibilities

Senior Leadership will be responsible for:

- Determining and making sufficient provision of staff time and other resources to facilitate effective service user involvement activity.
- Maintaining adequate records of Service User involvement activities at organisational level
- Ensuring that processes such as internal audit or inspection include assurance that service user involvement is being operated to the standard set out in this policy and in relevant service-specific procedures.
- Making recommendations to the Board for any changes to or development of the policy.

4.3 Board Responsibilities

Framework's Board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that any commitment to direct Service User involvement in governance is delivered
- Conducting periodic review as to the effectiveness of the Service User involvement strategy and any individual element of it.