



Case study pro-forma

Case Study Title	Engagement work for Social Services 'Making Things Better' consultation
Partner Organisation (s)	Welsh Government, Gwalia Care & Support, All Wales People's First, Genesis Project Parenting Group, Voices from Care, Community House, Rainbow Drop-in Centre, Heol Islwyn Lunch Club, Wrexham Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support Group, Stonewall Cymru and Unique Transgender Network
Key words	service user / carers engagement, Social Services, complaints

1. Brief Introduction

Participation Cymru was approached by the Welsh Government Department for Children and Social Services to assist in engaging with service users and their carers/support workers with the view to inform the consultation '*Making Things Better: Improving ways we deal with complaints and concerns about social services in Wales*'.

2. Details of the issue addressed

Many Social Services users feel there is a stigma attached to them for being recipients of these services. They do not always realise that they are entitled to a good quality of service and have the right to complain if they are not happy or if they feel they have not been treated fairly. Many people are simply too intimidated by the system to even attempt to complain. Welsh Government is aware of these issues, and aims to improve the complaints process so it is more user-friendly and accessible. Honest feedback from this engagement exercise was crucial for Welsh Government in order to utilise the information collected and incorporate some of it into the new complaints procedure. Participation Cymru carried out the engagement on behalf of Welsh Government, and took upon the role of a trusted intermediary.

3. Actions/approach taken

Participation Cymru endeavoured to reach people from all over Wales. We ran nine focus groups in the consultation period 28 Feb – 30 May 2012. The preferred option was to work with existing groups who meet regularly and who were willing for the focus groups to take place at one of their regular sessions in order to make it easier for people to take part. The focus group questions were developed by Participation Cymru and tested by Gwalia Care & Support users to ensure their accessibility. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, we ensured that people from all protected characteristics were contacted and given the opportunity to be involved. By following the Principles, we enabled participants to have their say, created a safe environment and gained people's trust. As a result we obtained some very honest and useful feedback which was then passed to Welsh Government.

4. Benefits such as: improvements to service, improved dialogue about funding and service planning between third sector organisations and local authorities, in-kind support arrangements etc

Data collected in focus groups was analysed and transcribed into a report which was sent to Welsh Government. The information it contains has already helped to inform the further development of the new social services complaints procedure and will be annexed of the final report, acknowledging the importance of people's feedback.



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5. Sustaining and or building on the benefits realised

One of many key messages arising from this work is the importance of feedback. Participation Cymru stressed this message to Welsh Government. We provided Welsh Government with contact details for our partner organisations in this exercise, and were promised that participants will receive a copy of the new complaints procedure when available and in a format chosen by participants. We shared this information with the groups who participated.

6. How do you feel the approach met the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales?

The Principles were at the heart of this piece of work. Every step was planned to reflect the messages incorporated in the Principles.

7. How would you rate your approach to the project against the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales?

Evaluation

1= very poor: 2 = poor: 3 = average: 4 = good: 5 = excellent

Principle	Evaluation
Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference	5
Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose	5
Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way	4
Work with relevant partner organisations	5
The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable	5
Make it easier for people to take part	5
Enable people to take part effectively	5
Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective	5
People are told the impact of their contribution	5
Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement	5

Contact details

Name: Zuzana Mrazkova
Title/role: Participation Cymru Adviser
Organisation: Participation Cymru
E-mail: zmrazkova@wcva.org.uk
Telephone: 02820 436 596

Useful Links: [National principles for Public Engagement in Wales - Participation Cymru 2012](#)