

Consumer Participation Resource Kit

for housing and
homelessness
assistance services

A partnership project of



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Introduction



This Kit is intended for organisations providing services to people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or experiencing housing disadvantage. It contains information on ways to engage with service users, to listen to their views, and to develop strategies based on their advice with the aim of improving services.

Considerable work has been done over the past ten years in the health and mental health sectors on consumer participation (CP). As a result there are easily available resources—from Australia and overseas—to involve consumers of health and mental health services in the running and improvement of those services. However there is relatively little available on consumer participation in housing.

This Kit is focused on housing and homelessness services and this differentiates it from other available resources.

The information in this Kit is not intended to be exhaustive. This Kit offers a starting point for organisations looking to develop consumer participation strategies, and provides references to printed and web resources when greater detail is required.

Who the Kit is for

This Kit is primarily intended for staff working in housing and homelessness services, especially those with responsibility for designing and implementing consumer participation strategies within those organisations. It has been designed to be used as a resource, with information that will support staff to make decisions about how to plan, implement and evaluate CP activities within their organisations.

What the Kit contains

Information in this Kit is presented on self-contained information sheets, colour-coded and organised within four main sections:

Section 1 (green)

Introduction, definitions, frameworks, context

Section 2 (blue)

Planning, implementing and evaluating consumer participation

Section 3 (cream)

Consumer participation strategies

Section 4 (white)

Resources

There are numerous strategies which may enable consumers to participate at different levels in organi-

sations: over forty are mentioned in this Kit. Twelve strategies are discussed in detail in Section 3; these were selected based on consumer and service provider input.

The Resources section includes examples of consumer participation survey tools, policies, strategies and terms of reference from a variety of agencies. In addition, the Kit includes two PowerPoint presentations developed to guide the Consumer Participation Resource Kit focus group discussions, and now made available to use (and adapt and improve) in discussions with consumers and staff.

Printed copies of the Kit include a CD-Rom with electronic copies of the information sheets and resources.

While the information in this Kit may be helpful in determining the participation strategies you choose, you are encouraged to undertake further research to make the results of the implementation more successful. This is especially the case if you (or your organisation) have relatively little experience with the strategies being used or with CP in general. To assist you, references are included as endnotes on the information sheets, and the Resources section contains a selected bibliography.



How the Kit was developed

The directions, factors and considerations surrounding consumer participation presented in this Kit are drawn from a review of literature available online (using consumer participation as key words in the search) and on models in use in Australia and overseas. Consultation with consumers, consumer advocates, service providers and others with experience in the area informed and guided the direction taken and the strategies presented.

The views and opinions of both consumers of and people providing homelessness assistance were gathered during a series of focus groups as well as individual discussions. Two focus groups were held with staff of housing/homelessness organisations, and two with consumers (one each metropolitan and non-metropolitan). The results of consultation and research were combined in drafting the Kit. Drafts of the Kit were circulated to relevant stakeholders for comment prior to production of the final version.

Credits and acknowledgements

Auspicing organisations

Rural Housing Network Ltd (RHNL) and HomeGround Services.

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About the auspicating agencies

HomeGround Services

HomeGround is one of Melbourne's largest housing and homelessness organisations. HomeGround's vision is to end homelessness in Melbourne and the organisation's mission is to get people housed and to keep people housed. HomeGround provides a range of services including intensive outreach support to

homeless people; assistance for families and individuals in crisis; supports to help people stay housed after an experience of homelessness; transitional housing services; emergency material aid, and community development initiatives. HomeGround also forms strategic partnerships for social change and conducts community awareness campaigns. HomeGround works in partnership with other individuals and organisations in the provision of services, in research and advocacy. HomeGround is independent, not-for-profit and secular. For more information: <http://www.homeground.org.au>

Rural Housing Network Ltd

Rural Housing Network Ltd is an organisation with a commitment to addressing housing affordability, tackling homelessness, and fostering housing stability, known for a progressive and compassionate approach to working with people experiencing homelessness and housing disadvantage. RHNL is the largest social and community housing organisation within the Hume region of Victoria. For more information: <http://www.ruralhousing.com.au>

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Copyright in the sample policies and other documents in the Resources section is held by the organisations that wrote these documents. Permission should be sought from the relevant organisation(s) prior to reproducing these documents.

Where to obtain the Kit

The Consumer Participation Resource Kit is available online at: <http://cpkit.chp.org.au>

A limited number of printed copies of the Kit will be distributed by:

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Definitions and assumptions

The assumptions and principles that underlie an organisation's approach to consumer participation, and the terms used when discussing it, can be determined in consultation with the people involved: consumers, workers, management, and board members.

'Consumer'

The following definition of 'consumer' is used in this Kit. The definition was developed through consultation with consumers and service providers during this Project.

A consumer is someone who uses, has used, or is eligible to use housing, homelessness and support services, including those refused services and those who have refused services. This may include carers and family members when relevant.

One word doesn't fit all

It is important to be aware that no one word fits well as a label for people who use housing and homelessness assistance services. Consumers expressed a preference to be called a client, service user or participant:¹

"A client is more one on one; consumer sounds like it's a mob."

"Consumer and client are biased, but we all participate."

"A consumer is someone who is buying a product, not getting help."

While some had no problem with the term 'consumer', others felt a focus on the word was important.

"Service recipients, people utilising homelessness services, are marginalised and isolated. The word (used to describe them) has to be welcoming."

Consumers and service providers agreed that the range of consumers' voices must include carers and/or family members who support people receiving services. One service provider commented:

"Carers and family members consume our time and resources"

The term 'consumer' can also include groups of consumers with shared experiences; consumer organisations including advocacy, self-help and consumer network organisations; and potential consumers such as

those with unmet needs or from population groups with particular needs or access issues.

Organisations may vary in the terminology they use to describe consumer participation; the important thing is to clearly define who is participating and why.

After discussing what sort of participation is desired, ask 'consumers' what term they prefer to use.

'Consumer participation'

The following definition of 'consumer participation' is used in this Kit:²

Consumer participation refers to the process of involving consumers in decision-making about a particular service including components such as service planning, policy development, priority setting and addressing quality issues in the delivery of those services.

According to the Victorian Consumer Charter for community-managed housing and homelessness services, consumers can expect to be informed about and given opportunities to contribute their views about the way services are provided and organisations are managed. This resonates with perspectives expressed by consumers:

"I would like to have more voice. I have been through the system. I want a say in where and how funding is spent"

Participation can also be about clients / consumers contributing to the service and organisation in other ways. For example, volunteering their time:

"Little things make you feel proud. For example, my job is to fix the fishing gear for the [Outreach group]. I enjoy doing this for others"

To consumers, participation means involvement, understanding, networking, being together and socialising. While decision-making is part of participation, the social aspect is also very important and should not be overlooked.

Opportunities for participation should be social and enjoyable.



Rights-based approach to participation

This Kit is based on two core assumptions:

- That people have the right to be included in decision-making processes that affect their housing situation;
- That the contribution of consumers in planning, delivery and evaluation of housing and homelessness services will result in ongoing improvements to the service system.

The Victorian Homelessness Assistance Service Standards require organisations providing homelessness services to:

- Demonstrate a clear commitment to the rights of consumers
- Enable consumers to participate in the organisation's decision-making
- Make it easy for consumers to raise issues, make a complaint or appeal a decision
- Ensure that complaints and appeals are dealt with promptly, respectfully and fairly.

(See Information Sheet #5: Consumer Participation and the HAS Standards.)

While the primary purpose of consumer participation is to achieve better and more sustainable housing outcomes, the way the perspectives of consumers are incorporated can either empower or disempower, be inclusive or exclusive. Therefore, "participation strategies need to be underpinned by the principles of empowerment with consumers having greater control over their lives through purposeful engagements and in the context of social inclusion".³

The SAAP Act provides the legislative backing to ensure that principles of empowerment underlie organisations' consumer participation strategies:

"Homeless people form one of the most powerless and marginalised groups in society. Responses to their needs should aim to empower them and to maximise their independence".

(SAAP Act; 1994:1-2)

Collaboration, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, Canberra.

3. Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2004). *Taking Young People Seriously: consulting young people about their ideas and opinions. A handbook for organisations working with young people*. Office of Youth Affairs, Department of Victorian Communities, Melbourne. p.1. Viewed December 2007 at http://www.yacvic.org.au/includes/pdfs_wordfiles/TYPSbook1.pdf

Endnotes

1. Unless otherwise noted, quotations in this section are from consumers who participated in focus groups during the course of the Consumer Participation Resource Kit project, 2007.
2. Enduring Solutions (2001). *Consumer participation in accreditation: Resource guide*. Consumer Focus



Benefits of consumer participation

The aim of consumer participation is to include consumers in decision-making processes that affect their housing situations and needs. It is through consumer participation strategies that consumers can contribute to the planning, delivery and evaluation of housing and homelessness services that will result in ongoing improvements to individual organisations and to the service system as a whole. Ultimately, this will result in improved outcomes for consumers and the community.

"Involvement transforms the way people are perceived and the way services are delivered".

While research on the benefits of consumer participation has lagged behind other areas of research in the housing/homelessness field, there is a growing body of evidence that supports consumer participation,

most of it from the United States where consumers have been involved in programs that serve homeless people since the 1980s. For example, one researcher noted:¹

Everyone benefits with consumer involvement in homelessness services:

- *Providers have a chance to increase the quality of services;*
- *Consumers can step up to empowerment through employment and helping their peers; and*
- *Clients can learn the value of peer support.*

Benefits are most likely for all parties when:

1. The main interests agree on the appropriate degree of participation;
2. There is a common language to discuss issues and develop ideas; and
3. Appropriate methods are used to get as much agreement as possible on desired outcomes.

consumers may have the capacity to help in kind or provide other resources;

- Consumers may develop a better understanding of the connection between funding and services and be less likely to express resentment and suspicion of how resources are applied.
- Involvement on one project or program builds understanding, trust and confidence which may be important on other occasions.

According to consumers of Victorian homelessness services, the best reasons for organisations to include them is because they know what the problems are and often have ideas about how to solve them:

"It is important for an organisation to get the participation (views) of the people using the service because they are the experts."

Any organisation about to engage consumers in participation must expect and be willing to embrace change. Things will not stay the same.³



Benefits for consumers

The primary purpose of consumer participation is to achieve better and more sustainable outcomes for consumers. In the health field, consumer participation has been linked with improvement in the quality of health care and improved health outcomes.⁴ This occurs through a range of linked processes.

Improved service system

Increasing consumer participation tends to result in organisational and systemic improvements:

- Higher quality and more responsive services, tailored to clients and their needs;
- Services that are more 'user friendly' or 'consumer-friendly';
- A service system that is more sensitised to the consumer's right to be there, to be heard and to hear how decisions that affect them are made.⁵

Consumer participation associates abstract 'clients' with real people.

Empowerment

Most importantly for people using housing and homelessness services, consumers with 'voice' (the capacity to express their dissatisfaction)⁶ both within and outside an organisation have an alternative to withdrawing from or exiting that organisation. This is important to people who have to rely on publicly

Benefits for organisations

There are many general benefits that may result from involving consumers in your organisation:²

- Consumers who feel they have a say are more likely to be positive about proposals. People are far more likely to be part of a long-term solution if they have some ownership of the early ideas.
- Consumer's ideas and feedback can draw attention to glitches, problems and solutions. Consumers can be a source of fresh ideas.
- Involved consumers are more likely to invest in and commit to supporting agencies' efforts. Understanding of department functions helps build stronger advocates in the consumer pool. Some

funded services because they may have very limited chances to exit; there may be no other services available. In such circumstances 'voice' provides the only mechanism for seeking change in policies, practices or outputs of organisations.

Skills, confidence and psychological well being

Involvement and participation connects people. It provides support, learning, networking and friendships among peers, providers and with policy and decision makers.



The way that 'consumer participation' strategies are implemented, and consumer input is used, can either empower or disempower consumers.

Involvement changes status from consumer to participant. Consumers are listened to and invited to present their point of view. Consumers may gain skills and confidence in a wide range of areas, such as how to run group meetings effectively, how to share information and how to gain

allies for a cause or issue. Learnings from these experiences can transfer to consumer's broader lives and relationships. Job opportunities may become possible.

As a result of all these factors, consumer participation can improve psychological conditions, diminish substance abuse and contribute to housing stability:⁷

"Involvement boosts the esteem of isolated and unemployed persons who face discrimination and stigma on a daily basis. Personally, my involvement acknowledged my value and improved my outlook. It provided hope, which strengthened me."

(Tripp 2005)

Benefits for the wider community

Citizen participation has been found to help build 'stronger local democrac(ies)' through the development of human and social capital, which in turn, lays a platform for collaborative local action for the common good (Cuthill & Fein:64).⁸ These emerging forms of governance involve business and community in decision making. The active citizen is a vocal citizen: people who express their views and participate in democratic decision making.⁹

Consumer participation in publicly funded organisations provides opportunities for participation in democratic decision making. This can build the capacity of people receiving housing and homelessness services to engage as active citizens in other arenas. It is also a chance to strengthen citizens' voices in these new forms of governance.

Endnotes

1. Glasser (1998). *Giving voice to homeless people in policy, practice and research*. Viewed November 2007 at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/homeless/symposium/5-CONSUMR.htm>
2. Benefits viewed October 2007 at <http://www.partnerships.org.au/guide/AZpartic.html#Benefits>. See also Glasser (1998) in Tripp (2005), viewed November 2007 at http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/text_only/tech_assist/transcripts/BenefitConsumerInvolvement_7_2005.asp
3. For information on organisational learning and change management go to <http://www.developmentgateway.com.au/jahia/Jahia/pid/3066>. Viewed December 2007. Or web search using 'organisational change'.
4. Participate in Health Fact Sheet 1. Viewed October 2007 at <http://www.participateinhealth.org.au>
5. Glasser (1998) in Tripp 2005. See above.
6. Baulderstone, J (2004). Ensuring all Voices are Heard. *Parity* Volume 7, Issue 9, October 2004. Council to Homeless Persons, Victoria.
7. Mowbray, C, Moxley, D, Jasper, C & Howell, L (Eds.). *Consumers as Providers in Psychiatric Rehabilitation*. pp.35-44. Columbia: International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services.
8. Cuthill, M & Fein, J (2005). Capacity building: Facilitating citizen participation in local governance. *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 64(4) 63-80: December 2005.
9. Baulderstone, J (2004). See above.





Participation: dimensions and degrees

Being clear about the dimensions and degrees of participation will help to avoid misunderstandings about what consumers are being invited to become involved in.

Dimensions of participation

Dimensions of participation refer to the “who, what and where” of participation.¹

Figure 1: Dimensions of participation

Who is being invited to participate?
Consumer (user and carer/family) Consumer representative Consumer advocate Community member Service provider Service manager Policy maker Researcher
In which organisational systems is participation being considered?
Governance Evaluation and planning Service delivery Care processes / case management Groupwork Research Policy Human resources / professional development Administration
At what level of the organisation is participation being invited?
Organisational governance Program management Individual case management
What degree of participation is being offered?
Information giving Consultation Deciding together Acting together / partnership Independent initiatives Consumer control

Degrees of consumer participation

Tokenism is the main pitfall that both consumers and service providers want to avoid when developing consumer participation strategies. Being clear about what degree of participation consumers are being invited to engage in can help to avoid frustration and accusations of tokenism.

Knowing about the different degrees of participation

also enables organisations to think about what they are ready for and to take things gradually, rather than “jumping in the deep end” and risking disappointments with the process. Finally, the view of staff and consumers of what is possible can be expanded by considering different degrees of participation, from information giving to partnerships and consumer controlled initiatives.

The following framework of degrees of participation was discussed by service providers and consumers and accepted as simple and applicable to housing and homelessness services. It describes degrees of participation from the least amount of consumer involvement to the most. Some degrees of participation will be more appropriate in some situations than others. A variety of different strategies and approaches will ensure that a variety of different people can participate, and each strategy can be designed to reinforce other strategies.

More or less involvement is not necessarily better; the framework just demonstrates that a range of options exist.



Figure 2: Degrees of participation

1. Information

The organisation provides information—about services, about planned changes—to its consumers; this can support participation. The minimum is that people are told what is planned.

2. Consultation

The organisation provides information to its consumers and seeks their views on that information. A number of options may be presented and feedback is considered.

3. Deciding together

Consumers are encouraged to provide additional ideas and options, and to join in deciding the best way forward. This may be the beginning of a partnership.

4. Acting together / partnership

Consumers decide together with the rest of the organization what is best, and a partnership to carry it out is formed.

5. Independent initiatives

Consumers are helped to do what they want, perhaps within a framework of grants, advice and support provided by the organisation.

6. Consumer control

Consumers control the strategic direction and operational framework of the organisation.

Other frameworks

There are other frameworks for understanding degrees of participation; you might choose another that suits your organisation better. All frameworks to some extent simplify the complexities of consumer participation, however they are still of value in clarifying expectations and processes.

Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

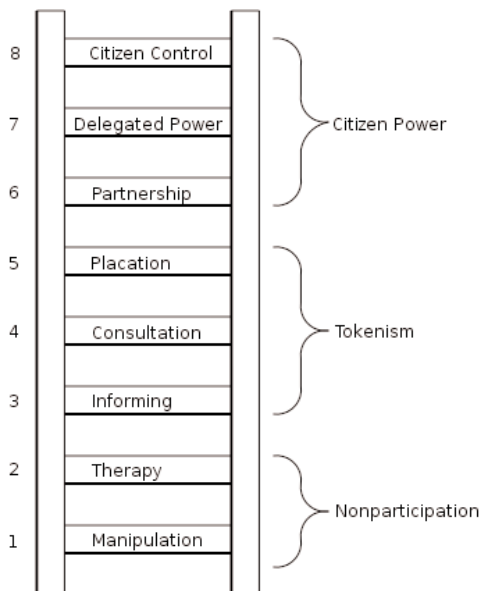
Most frameworks exploring degrees of participation are informed by Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation. In the late 1960s, citizen participation was presented as a way to think about power with the aim to enable 'the have-not citizens', excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future.

"With this understanding, participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the power-holders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo."

(Arnstein 1969)

Arnstein proposed eight levels of participation to help in analysis of power sharing. These are grouped into three sets ranging from non-participation through tokenism to citizen power. For further information, refer to Arnstein's 1969 article.²

Figure 3: Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation



Hart's ladder of participation for young people

Hart's (1992) ladder of participation is designed for young people but is relevant to all consumers of homelessness and housing services. It includes eight levels, which reflect who is driving the development initiative:

1. **Manipulation** - adults use youth to support causes and pretend that the causes are inspired by youth.
2. **Decoration** - youth are used to help or "bolster" a cause.
3. **Tokenism** - young people appear to be given a voice, but have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.
4. **Assigned but informed** - youth are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved.
5. **Consulted and informed** - youth give advice on projects or programs designed and run by adults.
6. **Adult-initiated programs or projects, shared decision-making with youth.**
7. **Youth-initiated and directed** - young people initiate and direct a project or program. Adults are involved only in a supportive role.
8. **Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults** - decision-making is shared among youth and adults. These projects empower young people and also enable them to access and learn from the life experiences and expertise of adults.

The first three levels are classified as being non-participatory, while the top five rungs of the ladder represent increasing degrees of participation. The value of Harts' ladder of participation is that it clearly spells out the ways that so-called 'participation' can in fact silence and use young people for the purposes of adult agendas. The ladder can also be seen as an aspirational model. For further information, refer to Brophy Family and Youth Services' 2005 report.³

What level of participation is your organisation ready to tackle?



Endnotes

1. Adapted from Johnson, A (2001). *Background paper for the Consumer Participation Reference Group*. Flinders Medical Centre. Viewed October 2007 at <http://www.participateinhealth.org.au/clearinghouse/Docs/fmcbacground.doc>
2. Arnstein, R (1969). A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *JAIP*, Vol. 35 No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224. Viewed November 2007 at <http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.doc>
3. Viewed November 2007 at [http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/vIA/s_aap2/\\$file/brophy_family_report.pdf](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/vIA/s_aap2/$file/brophy_family_report.pdf)



Consumer participation and HASS

Organisations funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide services to people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, are required to achieve accreditation against industry standards: the Homelessness Assistance Service Standards (HASS). The HAS Standards are consistent with Victoria's Consumer Charter for community-managed housing and homelessness services, which states that consumers have the right to:

- make choices that will affect their future
- participate in the decision-making process of organisations providing services to them
- make a complaint or appeal a decision they do not agree with and receive an answer that makes sense to them.

Themes

Four main themes relevant to consumer participation run through the HAS Standards:

1. Organisations must provide consumers with opportunities and support to enable them to contribute to organisational decision-making and planning.
2. Organisations must be accessible to a diverse range of consumers – this is as relevant for consumer participation as for service delivery.
3. Organisations must provide consumers with clear, accurate information about services and organisational processes.
4. Organisations must ensure that consumers are actively involved in case planning processes.

Evidence

The HAS Standards require each housing or homelessness organisation to demonstrate how it fulfils these requirements. Relevant evidence supporting accreditation in this area might include (for example):

- A documented organisational consumer participation plan or strategy;
- Templates used for seeking consumer feedback;
- A position description for a consumer representative;
- Reports on feedback gathered through CP processes;
- Implementation of specific initiatives driven by consumer input.

Standards addressing consumer participation

The following table lists sections of the HAS Standards of direct relevance to consumer participation. For more detail, refer to the HAS Standards, available online at: <http://www.housing.vic.gov.au>.

Table 1: HAS Standards addressing consumer participation

<p>Standard 1.1: Rights-based approach People's rights are all upheld in all aspects of the organisation's work.</p>
<p>Relevant signposts include:</p> <p>1.1.3 People are consistently informed of their rights and responsibilities under the Consumer Charter and the information is presented in an appropriate and accessible way.</p> <p>1.1.4 The organisation has involved consumers in the development of responsibilities and includes consumers in regular reviews.</p> <p>1.1.5 The organisation uses a range of strategies to assist people to exercise their rights.</p>
<p>Standard 1.2: Consumer participation Consumers contribute to determining the way the organisation provides services.</p>
<p>Standard 1.2 states that organisations should include consumers in the development of consumer participation mechanisms. Relevant signposts include:</p> <p>1.2.1 The organisation's written documents reflect a strong commitment to enabling consumer participation.</p> <p>1.2.2 The organisation regularly seeks ongoing feedback from consumers and consults with them whenever it is considering major changes to service delivery.</p> <p>1.2.3 People are informed about how they can contribute to and participate in the organisation's decision making.</p> <p>1.2.4 The organisation has identified and addressed barriers that may limit consumer participation in the organisation.</p> <p>1.2.5 The organisation supports staff to work effectively with consumers.</p> <p>1.2.6 The organisation monitors the level of consumer participation and evaluates how consumer feedback is used in decision making and planning activities.</p>
<p>Standard 1.3: Complaints and appeals Complaints and appeals are addressed promptly, respectfully and fairly without compromising services to the person complaining or appealing.</p>
<p>Complaints mechanisms are one avenue for consumers to provide feedback and input to organisations and are therefore an aspect of consumer participation. Complaints and appeals represent an opportunity to improve service delivery and organisational systems.</p>

Table 1: HAS Standards addressing consumer participation - continued

<p>Standard 2.2: Initial assessment Each person approaching the organisation is provided with a timely, quality response in which his or her immediate needs are addressed and an appropriate service is identified.</p>
<p>Provision of accurate, clear information is a basic aspect of consumer participation. This includes information about all services, resources and opportunities that may be available. Relevant signposts include: 2.2.10 The assessment process encourages and supports people to be actively involved in identifying their needs, risk factors and preference for service responses.</p>
<p>Standard 3.1: Providing equitable access to support services People are provided with fair, equitable and transparent access to support.</p>
<p>Accessibility is a key factor for consumer participation in planning and evaluation activities, as well as ability to access services. Relevant signposts include: 3.1.2 The organisation's offices, venues and activities are accessible to its potential and current consumers. 3.1.4 The organisation provides people with clear information about the organisation, the support it offers and any limitations of that support.</p>
<p>Standard 3.2: Engagement, assessment and case planning Each consumer has the opportunity to actively participate in an assessment and planning process that is strengths-based and emphasises long term solutions. Consumers are central to discussions about identifying and meeting their needs.</p>
<p>Assessment and case planning should be driven by the consumer and guided or supported by the case manager. To achieve this, people with high or complex needs may require the support of a friend, family member, advocacy service or carer to assist in advocating on their behalf during the case management process. Relevant signposts include: 3.2.1 The organisation has a documented system for case planning which reflects a commitment to flexible and consumer-centred approaches. 3.2.2 The organisation's documented system for case planning includes ongoing assessment and uses an assessment tool that encourages people to consider their needs within a holistic framework. 3.2.7 Each person is supported to actively participate in the case planning process.</p>

(continued)

<p>Standard 3.3: Responsive support Each person receives appropriate support to achieve the goals of the case plan they have negotiated with the service.</p>
<p>Service provision should place an emphasis on creating a safe environment that enables people to make decisions and take more control over their lives. Relevant signposts include: 3.3.5 The organisation encourages people to drive decision making within their case plan.</p>
<p>Standard 3.4: Exit planning and case closure Each person is supported in developing a plan for exiting the service.</p>
<p>Clear, collaborative planning processes enable people to make informed decisions about their level of engagement with the service and minimise the likelihood of poor or unsustainable outcomes. Relevant signposts include: 3.4.1 The organisation has a documented process for exit planning and case closure that involves the people concerned and is integrated with other case management processes.</p>
<p>Standard 4.1: Supporting parents and accompanying children Parents or carers are assisted in supporting children and young people in their care so that each child's needs are identified and met and their rights are respected.</p>
<p>This standard supports the participation of children and young people in decisions regarding case planning and service delivery. Relevant signposts include: 4.1.6 The organisation supports children to participate in developing their own case planning process in collaboration with their parents. 4.1.10 With the parents' knowledge, the organisation consults children and youth about decisions that will affect them.</p>
<p>Standard 4.4: Providing culturally competent services Each person receives a service that is sensitive to and respectful of their culture and language, including the importance of preserving significant networks and relationships.</p>
<p>Particular attention is required to ensure that consumer participation mechanisms are accessible and appropriate to people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Relevant signposts include: 4.4.1 The organisation's policies and processes reflect a commitment to providing culturally competent services. (This should include encouragement for ethnic or cultural groups to participate in planning and conducting specific events or activities.) 4.4.2 The organisation has clear information about its services available in appropriate community languages or presented in a culturally appropriate way. 4.4.5 Organisations use interpreters as appropriate during each element of case management.</p>