

Dartford Gravesham and Swanley Mind

Quality Assurance Policy

1. Overview

1.1 Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley Mind is actively committed to being a high quality organisation, both in the way we carry out our business and in the way our services are delivered to the local community.

To this end we will aim to:

- Ensure that our organisation has a strong quality structure
- Ensure that our services are responsive and accessible
- Ensure that our values and principles are upheld in everything we do
- Ensure that our Aims and Objectives are met
- Ensure that we work to the highest recognised standards possible
- Ensure that we are accountable to all stakeholders, especially those who use our services

1.2 To achieve these aims, Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley Mind will continuously assess its work and seek to improve by:

- Having an internal structure to process quality issues
- Being open to external scrutiny by subscribing to relevant national accreditation systems relevant to our work
- Ensuring recruitment processes select the best quality staff and volunteers
- Having a clear system of volunteer and staff supervision
- Continuous Training for staff and volunteers
- Encouraging and listening to feedback from service-users
- Enabling other stakeholders to have their say in our how well they think we are performing

2. Implementation

2.1 Having an internal structure to process quality issues

- The Business Manager is the nominated lead for quality issues
- A Quality Group is established as a sub-group of the Board of Trustees, led by the Business Manager, and formed of participants from throughout the organisation, including service-users and trustees.

2.2 Being open to external scrutiny by subscribing to relevant national accreditation systems relevant to our work.

2.2.1 There are two external quality assurances processes which impact on the organisation as a whole, and to which DGS Mind subscribes. These are:

- Quality Management in Mind:
- Investors in People

2.2.2 For the separate elements of the services we provide there are specialist external quality assurance processes to which we subscribe as follows:

- Housing Services: Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework
- Day Services: Mentoring and Befriending Foundation Accreditation
- Counselling: British Association of Counselling and Psychology (BACP) membership

No National Accreditation System for Services to Carers has yet been identified.

2.3 Ensuring recruitment processes select the best quality staff and volunteers

2.3.1. Volunteer recruitment processes strive to ensure quality of volunteers by:

- An initial screening process
- Mandatory training which also serves as selection mechanism
- References and CRB checks

2.3.2 Staff recruitment processes strive to ensure quality of staff by:

- Shortlisting candidates against agreed criteria
- Interviews conducted by a panel not an individual
- Involvement of service users
- References and CRB checks
- Mandatory induction training
- Probationary periods for new staff

2.4 Having a clear system of volunteer and staff supervision

- All volunteers have named staff supporters who meet with them and discuss progress
- All staff have named supervisors who hold 1 to 1 supervision sessions with them
- Where appropriate DGS Mind will provide specialist external supervisors

2.5 Continuous Training

- Senior Staff conduct a training needs analysis on an annual basis
- Individual training needs of volunteers and staff are identified through the supervision process, and are met as possible within defined training budgets
- Where assessed as appropriate, group training needs are identified and provided to a whole group (Training Days for Counsellors, Day Staff, Volunteer Mentors)
- Whole team training is provided where appropriate, and office services closed for that period of time.

2.6 Encouraging and listening to feedback from service-users

2.6.1 The Complaints System

DGS Mind encourages people to use the formal complaints system as a means to identify where there are shortcomings in our performance. The Finance and Personal subcommittee discuss any complaints received at each meeting.

2.6.2 Feedback Forms

We have formal processes of ensuring we receive written feedback on our services:

- Housing Services issue a feedback questionnaire to tenants every 2 years
- The Counselling Service issues a feedback questionnaire to all clients at the end of their series of sessions
- Community Services: A Feedback questionnaires is issued to participants at the end of series of activities
- Community Services: A Feedback form is issued at the end of each Mentoring relationship
- Caring for Mental Health: A Feedback questionnaire is issued to Carers once a year
- Training: Where we deliver internal or external training, participants are given a feedback form at the end of every course

The results of all these questionnaires/feedback forms are passed on to the Quality Assurance Group

2.6.3 Verbal Feedback

We encourage verbal feedback from those who use our services at all stages, with more structured verbal feedback gained through:

- Housing Services: Through the House Meetings (4 times a year) which are minuted.
- Community Services: Coping with Life Courses. At the end of each course, as a built in evaluation
- Community Services: Drop-ins. Through the Forums which are held in each of the 3 towns once a month, and are minuted
- Community Services: Mentoring. Through contact with the Mentoring Coordinator soon after the beginning of the mentoring relationship, and midway through its progress.

2.6.4 Formal Participation:

We encourage formal participation in the running of services as follows:

- Housing Services: Tenants sit on the Housing Sub-Group
- Community Services: Service users are elected by their peers to sit on the Service User Panel

2.6.5 Enabling other stakeholders to have their say in our how well they think we are performing

- Once a year the organisation will run a programme gathering the views of external stakeholders (GPs, Statutory Mental Health Services, Other Local Voluntary Organisations, Funders) on our organisation.