

Walsall Service Users Empowerment

Unit 1, Talisman House
47 Bath Street
Walsall WS1 3BX

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Walsall Service Users Empowerment Constitution

From

TheFirst..... day of...October..... 2006

A Name The name of our group is

WALSALL SERVICE USERS EMPOWERMENT (WALSALL SUE)

B How it will run

There will be an EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) of executive officers. The number of Executive Officers and how the EC is set up are explained later on. The EC will make sure WALSALL SUE is run the way this constitution says. The EC will deal with things on a daily basis.

There will be a MAIN COMMITTEE (MC). How it is set up is explained later on. It will meet when needed to discuss issues and set directions.

There will be MEMBERS who will get our newsletter, and first choice on things WALSALL SUE does. Membership will be free. Members are not part of the committee and do not attend committee meetings. People do not have to be a member to use Walsall SUE.

C The things we want WALSALL SUE to do

The things we want WALSALL SUE to do are our objectives. They are:

To help people who live in Walsall and use Health or Social care, to get better services and have more say in how services are run.

We will help service users to:

1. give their views on the services they use;
2. get the confidence and skills to be a representative on a committee or group;
3. complain when services are not good enough
4. take part in monitoring, planning, developing and reviewing services;
5. take part in their own assessments and care planning;
6. take more control of the decisions which affect their lives
7. get their benefits or get work
8. get help when they need it
9. take part in society
10. teach staff how to do their jobs better
11. take part in social activities where the needs of service users come first

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D Powers

The Executive Committee (EC) works to meet WALSALL SUE aims. It can:

1. Raise money. Committee members or staff can ask people to give money;
2. Collect items. Committee members or staff can ask people to give things to sell or use;
3. Buy, hire, swap or sell things to help WALSALL SUE meet its aims
4. Make a job for someone to work for WALSALL SUE; and make sure there is the money to pay them and that they get paid.
5. Work with other groups toward getting our aims met;
6. Share information and advice with other groups (by our Data Protection Policy)
7. Set up a subgroup to work for WALSALL SUE, and work in the subgroup
8. Do things, within the law, to get an aim of WALSALL SUE met, if it is WALSALL SUE policy, and has been discussed and agreed at a MC meeting.

Anything to be done that involves any of the above must be agreed at a MC meeting first. No one will use the name of WALSALL SUE in any activity unless the MC agree.

E Who can join Walsall SUE as a Member?

People, 18 or over, who live in Walsall and are or have been a service user (or carer). They must want to help WALSALL SUE meet its aims. Professionals can not join.

The EC can stop a person being a member if there is a good reason. They will discuss it at a meeting. The person will be asked to come to put their side. They can bring a friend, who can not be a professional of any kind, for support.

F Who can be a Main Committee Member

1. Any member of WALSALL SUE who has been active in working for WALSALL SUE for at least 12 months can stand for the Main Committee (MC). At an AGM, members vote on who will be on the Committee.
2. The EC may ask someone to join the MC. It must be agreed by all the EC.
3. MC members must work to help WALSALL SUE meet its aims. They can represent WALSALL SUE and its views at meetings, or help another member do this.
4. An MC member who does not help WALSALL SUE meet its aims will be told to take part or resign. If they still do nothing, they will be removed at the AGM.
5. If there is a reason why an MC member cannot continue on the MC, they must tell the Chairman and resign straightaway. If an MC member finds out someone should have resigned, it must be brought up at the next meeting and the person who should have resigned will be removed from the MC.
6. MC members who do not come to 3 Committee meetings can be voted out by the EC. After 6 meetings, their membership will end anyway, unless there is a reason why they should be kept on.
7. An MC member can resign at a meeting if they tell the Chairperson.

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8. A Committee member who does something which harms Walsall SUE can be voted out of the Committee at a secret ballot
9. WALSALL SUE needs at least 8 MC Members at a meeting to make decisions. At present, the most is 20, including Honorary Officers and EC members.
10. A person can join the MC as a 'co-opted member' if WALSALL SUE need them for special work. Co-opted members will come to MC meetings to talk about the work they are doing for WALSALL SUE, but they can not vote. They can only speak about what they are doing for WALSALL SUE

G Honorary Officers

WALSALL SUE needs a **chairperson**, a **Vice Chairperson**, a **secretary**, and a **treasurer**. At the Annual General Meeting (AGM), MC members will vote who will do these jobs. At the AGM, the people already doing these jobs have to resign, so others can have a chance to do them. The people who resign can put themselves up to do them again if they want to, and the MC votes for them. The person who is voted to do these jobs must say they agree to do the job, and will do their best for WALSALL SUE. They must agree not to do anything which will harm WALSALL SUE. This will be written down in the notes of the meeting.

I Committee Members are not to have a personal interest in Walsall SUE

1. No Committee member may own or share things that belong to WALSALL SUE.
2. Committee members are not paid to attend Committee meetings, but their expenses are paid back when they do work for WALSALL SUE.
3. If something is discussed which affects a committee member, they should say so straight away.

J EC Meetings

1. There will be 10 MC meetings each year; more if needed.
2. One of the EC can ask for an extra committee meeting at any time. MC members must be told about the meeting in enough time for them to arrange to get there. They need at least 10 days notice.
3. WALSALL SUE's Chairperson will chair MC meetings. If they are away, one of the EC will do it. If none of the EC is there, the first thing to do is agree who will chair the meeting, or if it should go ahead.
4. A quorum is the least number of people needed at a meeting for decisions to be made. Our quorum is one third of the MC. If none of the EC is present, no decisions can be made, even if all the MC are there.
5. The MC discuss things that are on the agenda of the meeting. When they agree, no vote is needed. If they do not agree, a vote decides. The majority win. If the votes on each side are equal, the Chairperson casts a vote.
6. Notes must be made at Committee meetings.

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7. The EC can make and change the rules of how WALSALL SUE and its meetings work.
8. Rules can not be made which would be against this Constitution
9. The EC can make a sub-committee. This is a group of 3 or more of the MC to get some particular work done. The sub-committee must report to the MC as required.

K Receipts and expenditure

1. WALSALL SUE money will be paid into a bank account. The EC will run it in the name of WALSALL SUE. All money coming to WALSALL SUE - donations, contributions and anything else for SUE – must go into it as soon as possible.
2. Cheques paid out must be signed by two of the EC.
3. WALSALL SUE money can only be spent on meeting WALSALL SUE aims.
4. Proper accounts must be kept and checked by an auditor at the end of each year

L Complaints

A standing item on the agenda of each Main Committee meeting will be agreeing the action to be taken on any complaints received.

The manager will prepare a report for each AGM of the year's complaints and their outcomes.

M Annual General Meeting

1. We will have an Annual General Meeting each February or soon after. It will be called by the EC. They will tell people at least 21 days before. All members can come and vote. Things to be discussed can be told to the secretary.
2. At the AGM, the first thing to do is say who will chair the meeting.
3. The EC will show a report and accounts for the year gone by.
4. If a member wants to be on the MC or in an Honorary job, they must give their name in writing to one of the EC at least 14 days before the AGM. The members will vote on who should be chosen.
5. All MC and EC members will resign. Those who have done work for WALSALL SUE in the previous 12 months can stand again.

N Special Meeting

The EC can call a special general meeting at any time. If 8 MC members or more want a special meeting, they must say why and it will be called. 21 days notice is needed. The notice must say what is to be discussed.

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O Procedure at General Meetings

1. Minutes will be kept of each meeting.
2. A quorum of at least 1/3 Committee members is needed.
3. If we need to tell a MC member something important, we will write, or use preferred communication. We will use the person's address from our records.
4. Votes may be required at meetings. If a committee member asks, the vote will be by secret ballot, otherwise by show of hands.
5. The Chair may ask for unanimity in a ballot which can be shown by all saying 'aye'

Q Alterations to the Constitution

If 2/3 of the MC, and all the EC, are at a meeting, the Constitution can be changed. 2/3 of the people at the meeting must vote for the change to go through. A letter will be sent before the meeting to say what is to be voted on. The chairperson does not vote.

Some parts of the Constitution can't be altered without a unanimous vote of all committee and executive committee members. These are –

- a) The name of the group (A)
- b) The objectives (C)
- c) That Committee members must not have an interest (I)
- d) This part (Q)
- e) The way the group can be closed down (S)

R Roles of Honorary Officers

Chair

1. To chair meetings. The chairman will chair the meeting unless they choose to delegate chairing to another committee member
2. The Chair may express their opinion but not vote on any matter unless a vote has been called, a decision is required and the votes for each option are equal. The chair may vote to get a majority (or they may choose to not vote).
3. To sign official letters. Some letters will be sent in the name of the Chair
4. To promote the aims and objectives of WALSALL SUE
5. To appoint and terminate MC members, ordinary members, and staff.
6. To hear appeals, complaints, grievances and disciplinary actions which have not been sorted out already.
7. To co-sign cheques.
8. To receive the auditors report on the accounts
9. To receive the manager's report on complaints
10. To stand-in for other Honorary Officers when they are away.
11. With other EC members, to co-opt people to the MC members, or form subgroups
12. To represent Walsall SUE at Regional or National meetings

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Vice Chair

1. In all roles of the Chair, when the Chair is unavailable, in a planned or unplanned situation, to substitute for the Chair in order that agreed Walsall SUE business may continue

When the Chair is needed and unavailable, efforts must be made to contact the Chair, and the EC agree that the Vice Chair is needed. The Vice Chair should not use their role to change significantly the direction of Walsall SUE, but should enable the carrying out of agreed Walsall SUE strategy.

Treasurer

1. To receive and bank money for WALSALL SUE.
2. To make sure everything to do with money is done properly
3. To make sure WALSALL SUE does not get into financial trouble by spending or borrowing more money that it can afford to pay back
4. To sign official letters. Some letters will be sent in the name of the treasurer
5. To promote the aims and objectives of WALSALL SUE
6. To co-sign cheques.
7. To make a report on the finances of Walsall SUE to EC and MC meetings and other meetings when required.
8. To give the auditor the accounts for approval
9. To stand-in for other Honorary Officers when they are away.
10. To do anything else needed by the Chairman to further WALSALL SUE

Secretary

1. To sign official letters. Some letters will be sent in the name of the secretary
2. To promote the aims and objectives of WALSALL SUE
3. To co-sign cheques.
4. To agree the minutes of the AGM
5. To stand-in for other Honorary Officers when they are away.
6. To do anything else needed by the Chairman to further WALSALL SUE

S Closing down WALSALL SUE

If the EC want to close down WALSALL SUE, they must call a meeting for all members. A letter must be sent to members at least 21 days before the meeting. At least 3/4 of the MC, and all the EC must be there. If 3/4 of those present vote for it, the group will close down. The things WALSALL SUE owns will be sold or given to other community groups. All debt would be paid from money WALSALL SUE has. If there is not enough money to pay all the bills, the Chairman will write to the people WALSALL SUE owes money to and explain. Honorary Officers, MC members and ordinary members are not going to have to pay any debts WALSALL SUE might have when it is closed down.

T Removing an EC or MC member

If a complaint is received by any member of Walsall SUE committee or staff that indicates that the action of a committee member is at fault, the Chair shall order the manager or other suitably senior person, within Walsall SUE, or from a partner organisation, to conduct an enquiry into the matter and report back within an agreed timetable.

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The enquiry is to openly and even-handedly investigate the complaint and establish, as far as possible, whether the complaint is justified or not. The committee member in question is to be interviewed as part of the enquiry. The outcome of the investigation is to include a clear recommendation on the action to be taken both by Walsall SUE as an organisation and by the individual committee member. The report may recommend the resignation of other removal of the Committee Member. The report shall be presented to the Chair, and discussed with the EC, and then with the MC, if necessary at a special meeting. The CM in question may resign or acknowledge the issue and ask for the Committee's support. A vote, which may be taken in secret, shall establish the view of the committee in relation to the committee member.

The committee member in question may resign or be voted off the committee if that is required.

Agreement

This constitution was agreed on the date at the top by the people who have signed below.

Date

Print your name and address, position in WALSALL SUE if any, and sign: