

This guide has been produced to give an overall picture of what SUPE is, what it does and how you can get involved. We hope that you find it useful.

For details of any further S.U.P.E. guides or meetings please call SUPE on 08000 197 828.

## What is SUPE?

The Service User Participation & Empowerment scheme (SUPE) is a Framework Housing Association (FHA) scheme that is facilitated by Building Blocks Solutions. Over 3 years ago, the Framework Board & Senior Management Team decided that it was important for them to be able to hear from clients & receive their views about the services that FHA provide.

They recognised that sometimes it can be difficult for clients to feel safe to say what they feel - particularly if it is a bit negative - and so felt strongly that FHA clients should have access to an independent Advocacy Scheme. They also wanted clients to get more involved in the decision making processes of the organisation and it's services- including the running of FHA itself.

So a model of service was developed - which became SUPE. A service specification was drawn up and organisations were invited to apply to run the scheme for FHA. A panel of Senior Managers, Project Managers, Workers and Clients decided after hearing from several organisations that Building Blocks was the one to run the scheme for the next 3 years. It has recently been decided that the contract should run for a further 2 years with 2 conditions. Firstly an evaluation of the service should be conducted next summer (2006) and secondly that the scheme be open to full tender in Spring 2007, ready for a new 3 year contract to start in October 2007.

The SUPE scheme offers Advocacy and Empowerment support to all Framework clients. More than just Advocacy, it aims to provide a range of ways that clients' voices can be heard and can be involved in improving service development. This guide outlines briefly some of the aspects of SUPE. Most of the areas highlighted have their own SUPE guide too, so if you want more information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

## What does S.U.P.E stand for?

The name - SUPE - has presented some difficulties. People do not know what it stands for or even how to say it!

SUPE stands for the **Service User Participation & Empowerment** scheme.

We pronounce it SOO-PEE rather than SOUP for no reason other than we do! The most important thing to remember is that SUPE stands for *Getting Heard, Getting Involved!*



## Client Training

Over the last 6 months we have been developing a range of training events open to Framework clients and staff (but staff are usually only allowed if they bring a client!!). All of our training is designed to help clients get more involved in decision making processes.

So far we have offered workshops in Setting up a TimeBank, Getting involved in Staff Recruitment, Being on a Committee and Setting up a User led Group. In the pipeline are workshops on Being a Chair/Secretary/Treasurer and Planning an Event, as well as repeating some the ones we have done before. We link closely with The Academy to ensure we don't duplicate ideas.

We have been getting good numbers to these events and want to encourage more of these kind of things. We are also open to ideas for developing further workshops. Look out for the Training Programme or contact us if there is something you think would be beneficial!

*The Service User Participation & Empowerment Scheme (SUPE) is a Framework scheme offering advocacy & empowerment services to all Framework clients. SUPE is independently facilitated by Building Blocks Solutions*

## The SUPE Advocacy Scheme...

*"dialogue not confrontation"*

This part of SUPE is to help FHA clients who may be unhappy about some part of the service they are getting. The service is independent of Framework and offers an opportunity to get support in thinking about what you might want to say and how you want to say it.

We believe passionately in encouraging dialogue NOT confrontation & we want clients to talk to their worker about any problems they might be having.

For most Framework clients - & there are over 1400 of them - their experience of Framework is very positive. However, for a few there may be some kind of difficulty.

We promise:

- To help clients be heard
- Not to judge what we hear but to ensure views are accurately conveyed to Framework staff
- To make the process comfortable, clear & safe as far as we can for everyone.

We are not responsible for the outcome of clients' views being expressed. Clearly Framework choose how to respond to what is said.

We would rather things are ironed out with a worker before they become problematic. Our SUPE Guide to Advocacy has some handy hints about getting yourself heard. The SUPE Advocacy worker will support clients, from speaking to their worker, to supporting them through the Framework complaints process.

If you want more information, please get in touch.

## The SUPE Guide to .....

We have started producing a range of SUPE Guides to cover topics that will be of interest to Framework Clients. So far we've produced Guides on SUPE, Recruitment, Ineligibles, Advocacy & Setting up a User Led Group. Over the next few months we will be producing more Guides including ones on the Client Commission, Project Audits & Being on a Committee.

These Guides are written to make sure Framework Clients have access to good information about your rights and the service you should be getting. We speak to Senior Managers responsible for a particular issue to make sure the information is accurate. If you have a topic you'd like to see a Guide on..... Give us a call!

## Going into the projects



Did you know Framework have over 50 different projects around the County & that Framework support over 1400 people at any one time?

SUPE regularly help facilitate client meetings in most accommodation projects and at some of the drop-ins that other projects have. By coming along on a regular basis we can make sure your opinions get heard. We feed back to staff

and get their response to your comments & we give your comments to staff without using your name so clients find it safer to say what they want. We can also help you run your own meetings - look out for training events - you can get to know us and find out more about SUPE.

## How else can you get involved?

Framework are determined that their clients should become more involved in helping them determine the shape and direction of their services. They have started several initiatives that SUPE support clients in becoming involved.

These include:

- THE ACADEMY STEERING GROUP - helping the Framework Academy hear what their clients think of their services & be involved in future service development.
- THE CLIENT COMMISSION - is a panel of FHA clients that investigate a pertinent issue of policy and procedure. They can ask for "expert witnesses", examine current practice and speak to other services about their practice. At the end of their "investigation" the Commission provides a report with recommendations for consideration by the Projects Sub-Committee, part of the FHA Board.
- PROJECT AUDIT - FHA have instigated a series of Project Audits, where the Project Audit Team made up of various workers, visit a service and, using agreed standards, prepare a report about the project's performance. Specially trained clients are encouraged to become part of this process.

We also support FHA clients get involved in the recruitment of new workers.

Want more information..... Get in touch!

Contact us . . . It's free!!



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For up-to-date information about SUPE's activities, look at our website [www.supe.org.uk](http://www.supe.org.uk) or email us at [enquiries@supe.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@supe.org.uk) to be put on our mailing list.

We look forward to hearing from you.