

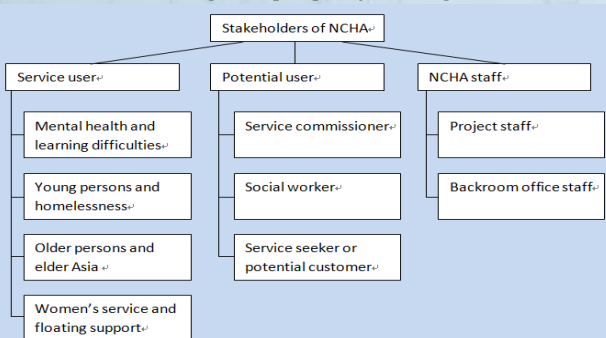
Exploring participative approaches to website design

Purpose and methods

The aim of this project is to understand the information needs of different stakeholders of Nottingham Community Housing Association, and to explore the use of participative techniques to help specify user requirements for a website. NCHA is one of the largest locally-based housing associations in the East Midlands, managing nearly 7,000 properties and housing 10,000 tenants across Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

Main challenges

- Users and service provider views differ.
- Diverse audiences, including:
 - Older people
 - Homeless people and families
 - People with mental health needs
 - Young people
 - People with learning difficulties
 - People experiencing domestic violence
- Provision of broad services, including:
 - Floating support
 - Registered care
 - Supported housing
 - SMART service
 - Housing and property management



Solutions

■ Identify key stakeholders

By doing some brief interviews with senior staff in the NCHA user communities were identified. Workshops with different service users were organised in order to elicit their general needs, their information needs and the implications for the design of the NCHA's website.

■ Using participative approaches to involve users in defining their needs

The workshops were designed to be inclusive and participative. These included workshops with young people, people with learning difficulties and older people and staff in the NCHA. We experimented with a number of participative techniques and requirements elicitation. Participants took an active role defining their needs and developing designs that would meet their needs.

