

Not About us without us: *Themes*

Mike Seal

Themes of the book

- The *first theme* is that workers and clients should work together in developing client involvement, seeing each other as natural allies rather than natural enemies, and in doing so will both benefit from it.
- The *second theme* is that the supported housing sector does not have a good history of client involvement and this has legacies to be overcome in the form of ingrained cynicism, a lack of participatory cultures and a lack of confidence in the area.

- A *third theme* is that we understand and therefore construct clients, and consequently the ways that they are allowed to participate, in certain, often negative, ways that are underpinned by ideologies that we rarely acknowledge.
- A *fourth related theme* is that behind an apparent consensus on client involvement, different stakeholders have different motivations for client involvement that come from different, and sometimes conflicting, ideological bases,

- A *fifth theme* is that client involvement will take time, commitment and resources to be effective. Furthermore, the most important resources are human ones and the most important commitment is to an acceptance of the fundamental changes that will ensue in how the agency functions and relates to its clients.
- A *sixth theme* is that client participation, particularly if it is working, may induce a negative reaction in clients initially and go in ways that we cannot predict and that organisations need to be able to incorporate this.

- A *seventh theme* is that client involvement and participation should not be seen as an adjunct to workers' role in supported housing, but that it is often the most effective, or sometimes only, way of intervening.
- An *eighth, theme* is that in developing client involvement workers should be expedient and work with who is willing to work with us, work on what they want to work on, and worry about being representative later.