Handout 3: Developing And Reviewing Policy

How is good policy developed?

1. Issues are identified e.g. a new problem arises for the agency or an existing policy requires an overhaul
2. Then it is time for research and reflection
3. One important method to test the strength and feasibility of a new policy is consultation with all stakeholders.
   - New ideas about how agencies function can be generated.
   - It provides effective ways for client groups to feel empowered
   - There are opportunities for the clients and other stakeholders to have input into policies and programs, which affect them prior to their design and implementation.
4. Coordination of people and resources is now crucial. There may be issues between agencies with similar issues to resolve and a funding budget must be considered.
5. The time for a decision has arrived. At this stage it is necessary to see whether there is too much information and the whole process becomes bogged down or not enough information with which to make a decision.
6. Implementation must follow and then the whole process starts over again.

Reviewing policies

It is crucial that community agencies review their policies at regular intervals
The following points should be taken into account:
   - Has the purpose of the policy been clearly and accurately described?
   - Are its objectives clear and specific?
   - Is it up to date?
   - Do all stakeholders easily understand it?
   - Is it accessible?
   - Have resources been taken into account when writing the policy?
   - Have legal and external accountability requirements been included?
   - Was there consultation with all appropriate stakeholders before the policy was implemented?
   - Is it workable?
   - Are some policies of the organisation in conflict with other policies of the same organisation?