

# Public Engagement

## A New Framework

**This framework seeks to provide a starting point for a systemic and coordinated approach to public engagement across the NHS Lothian geographical area. It lays out the principles and strategic steps that will provide a strong foundation for effective engagement in NHS Lothian and beyond.**

**The continued development of our health and care system in Lothian needs to be informed by engagement with those who use our services. The Framework lays the foundations to ensure this happens in a planned and coordinated way.**



### **Purpose of this document:**

- ➔ Increase the profile of engagement across the full range of NHS Lothian's local, regional and national services.
- ➔ Contribute to increased prioritisation of engagement in service redesign, improvement and general development work.
- ➔ Ensure a coordinated approach to engagement across the Board and Health and Social Care Partnerships whenever this will be of value.
- ➔ Provide the conditions for wider and improved engagement by ensuring those who are responsible for services understand the requirements and expectations for engaging with patients and carers.
- ➔ Help to build and embed a culture that embraces engagement as a valuable and integral process supporting service change, development and improvement.
- ➔ Ensure alignment with Scottish Government updated engagement guidance "Planning for People"\*.

## Common Understanding of Public Engagement

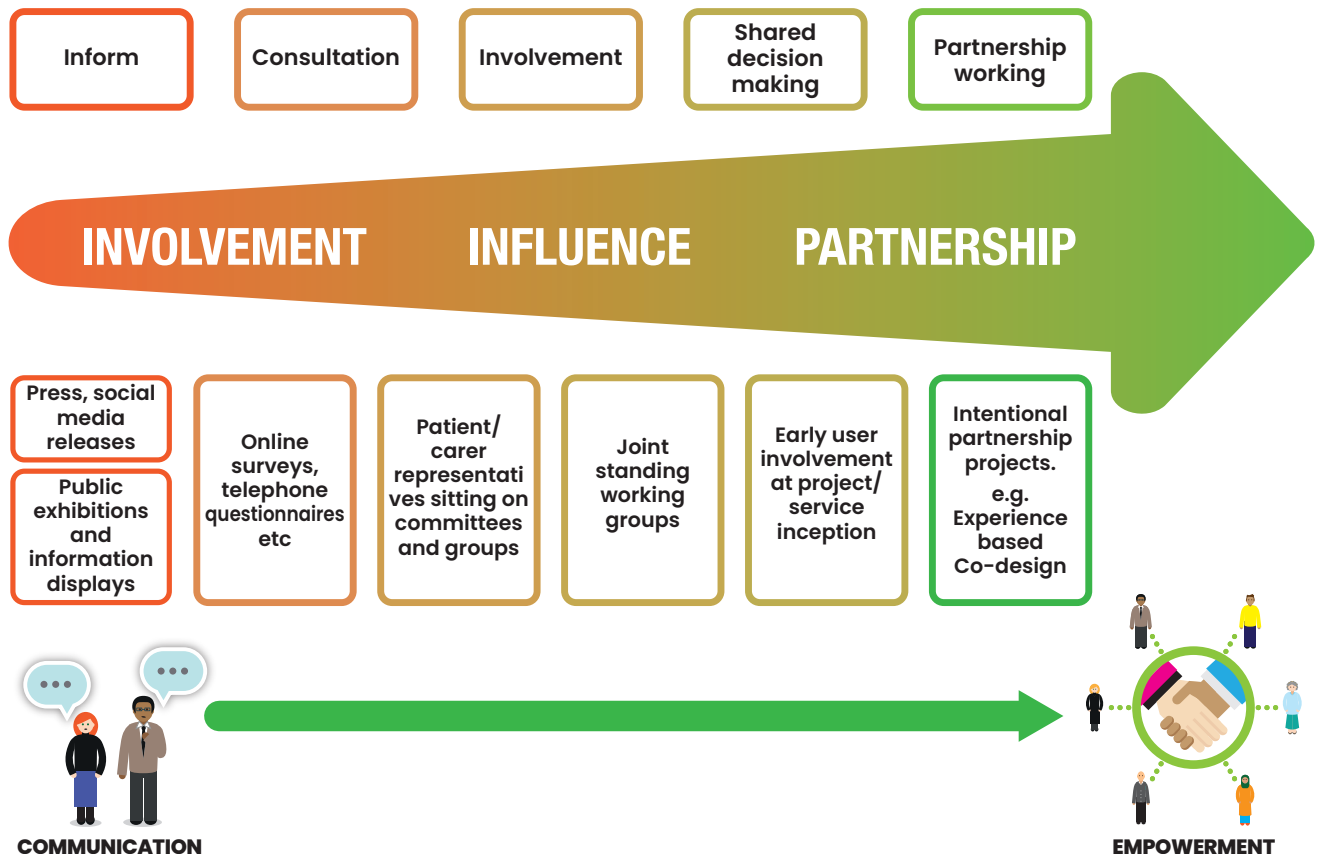
Involving the public takes many forms. It's important to start from the same place when thinking about engagement and the diagram on the following page creates that shared starting point. This is the NHS Lothian Engagement Model.

This is an aspirational model that sees engagement as a spectrum. It is based on existing established engagement models and looks to provide an accessible, easily remembered reference point. "Light" forms of engagement take place at the thin end of the spectrum and the forms of engagement activity become more advanced as the spectrum progresses towards full partnership working on the right side.

People become more empowered to contribute meaningfully to the process as the engagement activities move more in the direction of partnership approaches. At the same time, services benefit from valuable input based on authentic experience, enabling more responsive approaches and improved quality. The intention is that those who undertake engagement work across NHS Lothian maintain a sense of this aspirational model and seek to create meaningful engagement activity that progresses along this spectrum.

A graphical representation of what we want to achieve through engagement is a way of helping staff and users to understand the direction of travel in an accessible and easy to remember way. Also, within the context of NHS services, it aids understanding of the difference between communication and engagement.

### NHS Lothian Engagement Model



## The Three Building Blocks

This framework sets out NHS Lothian’s strategic approach to public engagement. It provides the foundation for more detailed work at local level and sets out a path towards a coordinated approach to public engagement between NHS Lothian, East, Mid and West Lothian and Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnerships.

The key elements described below are based on research by the World Health Organisation\*\*.

### → Enabling Conditions

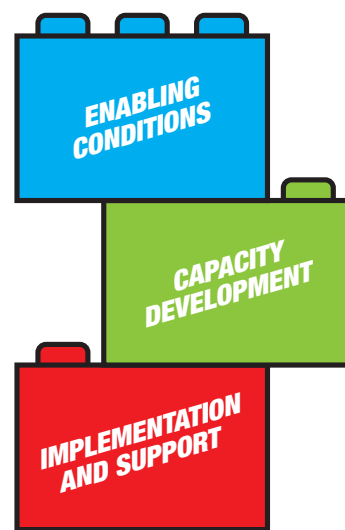
- Leadership, values and shared purpose
- Resources
- A prepared and supported workforce

### → Capacity Development

- Develop “cultural competence”
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Build collaborative structures

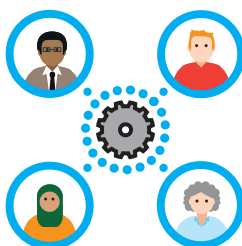
### → Implementation and Support

- Ensure early engagement interventions at strategic planning level
- Develop toolkit to support staff
- Build engagement networks across the region



Each of these elements is explored in more detail below.

## 1 Enabling Conditions



### Leadership, values and shared purpose

A culture of meaningful engagement starts with the commitment of those who lead it. Without this commitment to lead well, engagement will be tokenistic and will risk alienating the public, who quickly see through half-hearted or tick box approaches to engagement and are at liberty to make their observations widely known, thereby also putting at risk organisational reputation.

This commitment is essential to generate the drive and enthusiasm that creates genuine engagement. And it is genuine engagement that drives lasting and successful service transformation.

Putting high quality engagement at the heart of service change and development may require degrees of culture change. While this can appear daunting as

a concept, the rewards are great, with sustainable transformation based on authentic, coproduced solutions; services that are fully connected at multiple levels to the communities they serve; more motivated staff; more “open”, learning based organisations.

This framework begins the work of enabling this culture change.

### **Resources**

Good community engagement is “inherently long term and unpredictable and it is important that resource allocation takes account of these factors” (World Health Organisation).

Alongside the important human resources of commitment, understanding and competence, adequate financial resources need to be provided if public engagement is going to be effective and coordinated.

### **A prepared and supported workforce**

Enabling staff to carry out effective engagement activities is a key principle of this framework. As a function, across the wide range of activities undertaken by NHS Lothian, with widely varying levels of complexity, engagement needs to be carried out at service level. This allows activity to be tailored to specific needs.

NHS Lothian is committed to providing staff with the expertise and know how to carry out these engagement activities. Without the necessary support, placing an expectation to carry out involvement activities on staff whose primary focus is very different to public engagement does not work well. Supporting staff to do engagement well is an essential element of getting good results.

Key elements of this support are described below.

## **Training**

### **NHS Management**

Staff who are responsible for services need to have awareness of the legislative requirements to engage and an understanding of engagement principles and practice.

### **Public**

Ensuring public representatives understand the responsibilities of their role is also important. Being accountable, ensuring contributions are constructive and learning about group interaction and how to influence it as an external voice are all areas where effective training will greatly enhance results.

## **Induction**

Staff responsible for services need to understand the legislative context affecting NHS services with regard to public engagement, in order to ensure the organisation complies with its duties. An awareness among relevant staff and managers about the availability of training and other support to carry out engagement activities will lead to a wider distribution of high quality engagement

activity throughout the organisation. This could potentially be referenced in within the Equalities module of induction programmes.

## Online Resources and specialist support

Staff will have access to support via an “Engagement Learning Zone” on the NHS Lothian website. This will share good practice models, case studies and other advice aimed at creating a supportive environment for staff.

To support this framework, an online, practical tool kit will be available, using existing widely available content as well as specifically designed elements, so that staff have practical support on how and when to carry out engagement activity.

In addition, specialist engagement advice and support is available from the central engagement team at NHS Lothian.

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## 2 Capacity Development



### Developing “Cultural Competence”

Closely linked to leadership and values above, developing cultural competence within organisations to enable good engagement is about creating the conditions for change.

Managers at all levels in the organisation need to understand what public engagement is and the implications of doing it effectively. This will involve openness to change and making the connection between engagement, organisational development and service improvement.

These are wide ranging and far reaching factors, well beyond the scope of this framework. But successful and effective engagement will mean consideration needs to be given to culture change.

### Defining Roles and Responsibilities

Clear definitions of roles along with increased and fit for purpose capacity at local and strategic level are all important aspects of developing a strategy to deliver engagement outcomes that are effective in influencing change.

### **Building Collaborative Structures**

An opportunity exists to coordinate engagement work across NHS Lothian and all the HSCPs. Increased collaboration will:

- Maximise the effectiveness of resources
- Eliminate duplication of efforts to involve people across the region
- Increase credibility of engagement work in the perception of the public and workforce, leading to improved engagement
- Contribute to a more strategic and coherent approach to engagement across the region
- Allow sharing of skills, experience and good practice to support high quality public engagement.



### **Ensure early engagement interventions at strategic planning level**

Reactive and tokenistic engagement efforts can arise from attempts to “bolt on” engagement to planned developments when the opportunity to influence has either passed or is close to passing. Experience shows this tends to happen when staff working on the development realise at a late stage that they will need to undertake engagement activity in order to satisfy funding requirements etc.

This is a failure of engagement strategy linked to existing cultural priorities and would be addressed by the steps outlined in 1 and 2 above.

However, those are medium to long term steps. In the short term, a focus on the mechanisms that lead to the inception of new developments will be helpful. The aim is to ensure engagement is built into the inception process and helps inform the development from an early stage and as it progresses.

If this focus becomes an immediate priority, much more effective engagement will ensue and will provide models for future ways of working.

### **Develop online resources to support staff**

See Online Resources and Specialist Support under 1 – Enabling Conditions

### **Build engagement networks across the region**

Work is ongoing to ensure an inclusive environment exists through extensive networking to create a climate across the Lothians where engagement activity can thrive.

## Summary

This is a framework document which sets out the strategic building blocks and refreshed workflows which NHS Lothian needs to expand and develop in order to achieve effective public engagement across the Lothians. Implementing this Framework will ensure public engagement is:

- Coordinated and rational
- Efficient
- Sensitive to need
- Meaningful for those involved.

\* Community Engagement and Participation Guidance for NHS Boards, IJBs and Local Authorities – ‘Planning with People’, Scottish Government, March 2021

\*\* Community Participation in Local Health and Sustainable Development, WHO, 2002