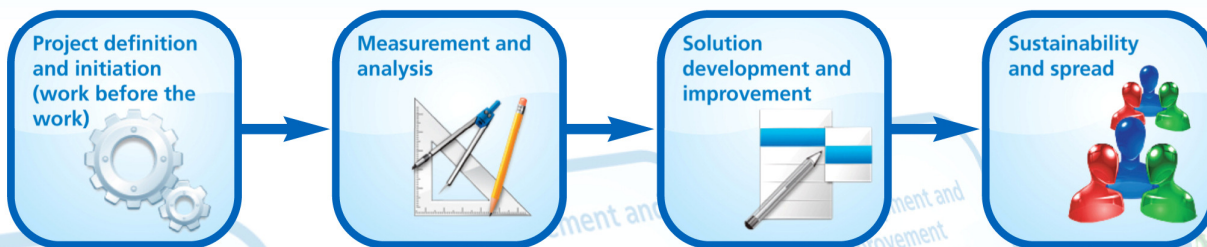




# NHS Improvement Overview – Engaging Primary Care

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Project definition  
and initiation  
(work before the  
work)



Measurement and  
analysis



Solution development and  
improvement



Sustainability  
and spread





## Engaging Primary Care

For a successful improvement project, it is important to engage with stakeholders and partners no matter which sector you work in. However this section will focus on engaging primary care as it is particularly challenging if you are unfamiliar with how it works.

It is now more important than ever, that secondary care engage and communicates effectively with primary care especially as the current emphasis is on GP's having a significant role in the new NHS.

Although initial learning from the project sites and peer support meetings have uncovered benefits, barriers and top tips for engaging with primary care it is about reciprocal learning and understanding, which is essential to establishing trust, rapport and working together. The information below can be adapted and adopted for primary care to engage with secondary care.

### Benefits of working with Primary Care?

There are many benefits to joint working which include:

- Reduced variation in quality of care
- Reduced duplication
- An improved understanding of the services available
- Increased productivity
- Reduced inconsistency in care
- Reduced confusion for patients and staff
- Utilised available skills
- Ability to share learning and skills

### Barriers to Primary Care Engagement?

In the current climate, there are many competing priorities and initiatives for GP Practices' time and attention. With the new NHS structure, the pressure is on GP Practices to learn new skills along with other organisations and departments competing for their time.

When engaging with surgeries, there also needs to be an understanding that surgeries are culturally and structurally separate from other providers due to the practice organisation and funding. Those who have an understanding of the structure and funding are more likely to succeed in the engagement process.



## Where do I start?

The first logical step would be to ask your GP Practices how they would like to be contacted. However, project sites have found this to be easier said than done if they already don't have a relationship with the Practice.

### 1) Start by thinking about what Primary Care want.

Why should your audience listen to you and/or use your new service? Consider what your GP Practices are interested in.

GP practices are likely to be interested in:

- Improved outcomes for patients
- Maintained or increased income
- Reduced workload and or complexity
- Incentives and rewards
- Support and guidance

Once you have decided what your GP's want, plan how you can sell yourself in their terms and clearly state your benefits. Be concise and do not overload with information.

### 2) Choose your approach

This is the 'who' and 'how'. Who are you going to engage with and how are you going to do it?

It is important that you think about building relationships with a range of people in the practice as it is not only the people at the top who can have an influence.

Consider talking to:

- Practice Partners and other GP's
- Locum Staff
- Practice Managers
- Practice Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Reception Staff

"We have hundreds of GP's, I don't have time to see them all..."

Rather than targeting all the practices at once, prioritise the top 5 practices. These might be practices that send you the most referrals, the largest practices, the practices that send you the most inappropriate referrals. Start with a couple of practices and build on them once you have had success with your initial selection.



Unfortunately, sending a letter, email or having an article in the local primary care newsletter about your new product or service will not necessary instigate engagement or change their behaviour to adapt your service/new way of working. To influence and change behaviour more work is required!

### What works?

- Face to face meetings are an effective method of changing behaviour.
- Personalise your approach; think about their benefits, as more people engage when they feel you are talking directly to them about their individual needs.
- Identify common ground
- Invest in a working relationship
- Ensure what you request is realistic and achievable
- Local meetings are beneficial for showcasing your service to a number of different practices. To get an invite to these meeting, try and get introduced to people who attend these meetings or contact the meeting Chair or Secretary.

### Local Meetings

These are some meetings you could attend in your local area:

- Local Medical Committee (LMC) Meetings and Educational Events
- GP Professional Executive Committee (PEC)
- GP Consortia Meetings
- Commissioning Meetings
  - o Practice Based Commissioning Meetings
  - o GP Commissioning Meeting
  - o Acute Commissioning Group
- Specialist Respiratory Groups
- GP Educational Events
- QIPP leads
- Long Term Conditions Leads at SHA/PCT Level
- Practice Meetings
- Manufacturing Liaison Group
- Pharmacy Lead/ Local Pharmaceutical Committee
- SHA Respiratory Clinical Leads
- Practice Manager Forum
- Local Networking Groups
- Hospital Liaison Meetings
- Referral Management Centre Meetings



### Once engagement has been achieved

Once you have built the relationship and engagement has been achieved, continue to work at it by:

- Staying in regular contact
- Keeping involved and updated
- Having meetings with a purpose, actions and outcomes
- Delivering what you have agreed to do



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