

Involving experts by experience in maternity improvement projects



The London Maternity Clinical Network is committed to enabling women and their families to be involved in co-producing innovative solutions to achieving its over-arching aim of reducing the variation in outcomes and improving experience of care for women and their babies.

Who is this resource for?

This resource is for anyone who is planning a maternity transformation project and wants to involve experts by experience in the design, implementation and review of the project.

What do we mean by co-production?

Co-production changes the power relationship between those involved in leading projects and members of the public, where Project Leads value and acknowledge women and their families as experts by experience and should have an equal role in the process of understanding local need and developing innovative solutions to address them.

Coalition for Collaborative Care defines co-production as “a way of working that involves people who use health and care services, carers and communities in equal partnership; and engages groups of people at the earliest stages of service design, development and evaluation”.



Useful resources to inform local policies and protocols

- [Patient and public participation in commissioning health and care: Statutory guidance for CCGs and NHS England.](#)
- [A co-production model: five values and seven steps to make this happen in reality.](#)
- [NHS England's Working with our patient and public voice \(PPV\) partners – reimbursing expenses and paying involvement payments.](#)
- [National Maternity Voices website.](#)
- [NHS England's Commissioning for effective transformation: What we have learnt.](#)
- [My Health London – Maternity website.](#)

Useful tips and prompts for involving experts by experience in maternity transformation projects

- Using the Ladder of Engagement and Participation in Appendix 1, be clear on how you want to involve women and their families in the project.
- Scope and identify how you will recruit experts by experience onto the project.
- Think about how to get the best out of the skills, knowledge and expertise that experts by experience bring to a project:
 - a) Involve experts by experience at the earliest opportunity in scoping a new project.
 - b) What are the key questions that you are wanting experts by experience to help you answer?
 - c) How will experts by experience be briefed and supported through the project?
 - d) Do you want to have experts by experience who have specific knowledge and expertise in receiving specialist care within the maternity pathway, represent the experiences of a vulnerable group of service users, or have more general knowledge and expertise of the maternity pathway?
 - e) Identify at the earliest opportunity how the project will remove any barriers that prevent experts from experience from actively participating in the project.
 - f) NHS England's *Working with our patient and public voice (PPV) partners – reimbursing expenses and paying involvement payments* sets out NHS England's policy on how they support patient and public voice partners to be involved in its work through reimbursing expenses and in certain circumstances, offering payments.

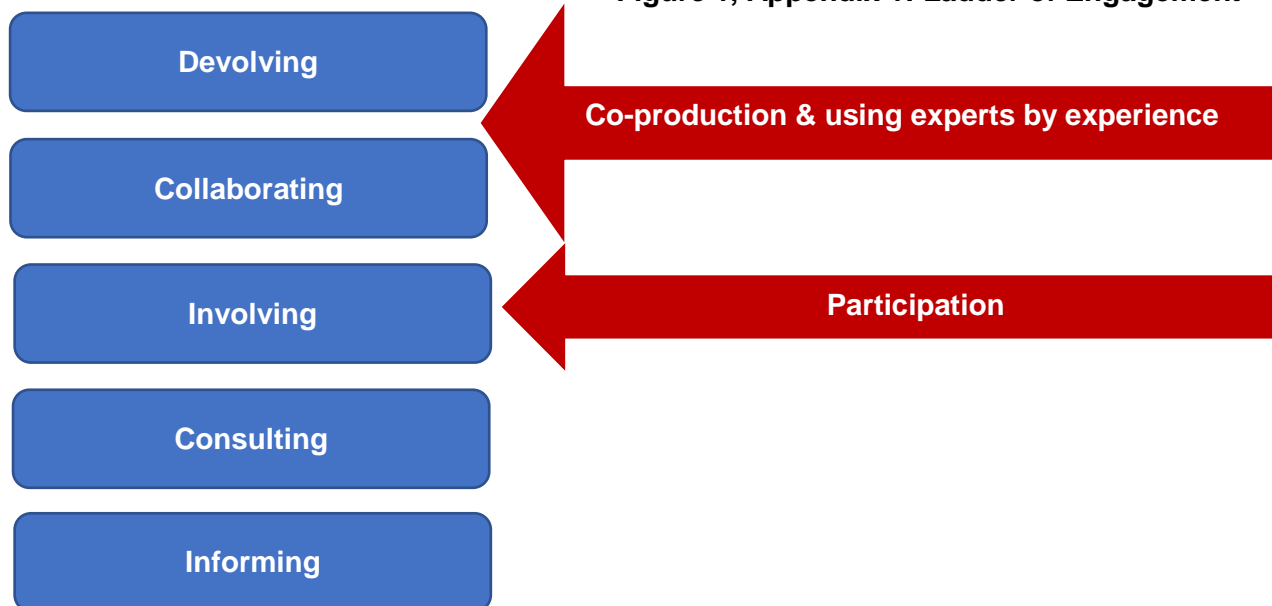
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How can the London Maternity Voices Partnership Strategic Group help in identifying experts by experience?

The London MVP Strategic Group can support the London Maternity Transformation Board, London Maternity Clinical Network, Local Maternity Systems or NHS providers across London in identifying experts by experience through:

- Receiving a clear summary of the project’s aims, objectives, the length of the project, the questions that the Project Lead is wanting experts by experience to help identify solutions to and what they perceive their roles and responsibilities to be. The written information should also provide clarity on how the Project Lead would like to engage with experts by experience (e.g. teleconference, webinar, email, face to face meetings, attending local community group meetings/or MVP meetings) and if meetings/events are being planned to identify their frequency, timing and duration.
- The London MVP Strategic Group will then either use its networks, or sign post the Project Lead to local MVPs or other MVPs in London to identify experts by experience willing to participate in the project.

Figure 1, Appendix 1: Ladder of Engagement



NHS England’s website on [participation resources](#) states that Sherry Arnstein’s Ladder of Engagement and Participation provides a helpful tool for Project Leads to highlight the range of ways in which the NHS undertakes patient and public engagement. With reference to Figure 1, the Ladder of Engagement and Participation shows a hierarchy of engagement starting with informing and ending in devolving. There is a growing amount of evidence that the higher you progress up the ladder the more meaningful and effective the patient and public engagement will be. At both ends of the spectrum there are very different power relationships between the Project Lead and members of the public and how much influence members of the public will have in the decision making process.

Source: Arnstein, Sherry R. “A Ladder of Citizen Participation”, JAIP, Vol. 35, No.4 July 1969 pp 216-224. (Credible Source supporting co-production)