

01

Bite-size guides to patient  
and public participation

# Principles for participation in commissioning

Publications gateway reference: 00986

Why participation?

Core principles

The Engagement Cycle

Practical Steps

Want to learn more?

Other bite-size guides

# Why participation?

The NHS must be more responsive to the needs and wishes of the public, all of whom will use its services at some point in their lives. We need to ensure that public, patient and carer voices are at the centre of our healthcare services, from planning to delivery.

Every level of our commissioning system will be informed by listening to those who use and care about our services. These guides aim to support clinical commissioning groups and others to plan and deliver good patient and public participation. We should work jointly with communities to improve our NHS together.

NHS England has developed this 'Bite-size guide' to principles of participation based on a review of research, best practice reports and the views of stakeholders. The guide also includes some steps you can take to put these principles into practice.

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Other bite-size guides

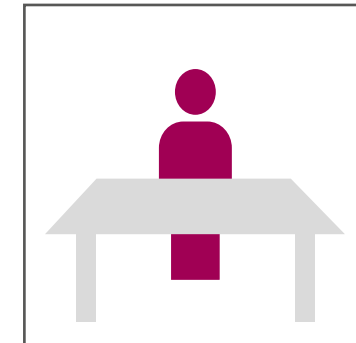
# Core principles



Relationships will be conducted with equality and respect.



Listen and truly hear what is being said, proactively seeking participation from communities who experience the greatest health inequalities and poorest health outcomes.



Use the strengths and talents that people bring to the table.

Why participation?

Core principles

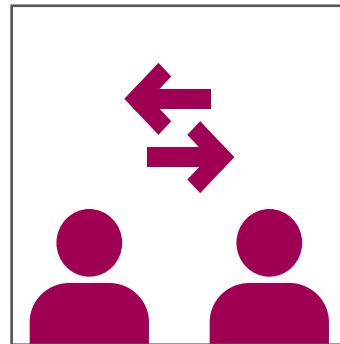
The Engagement Cycle

Practical Steps

Want to learn more?

Other bite-size guides

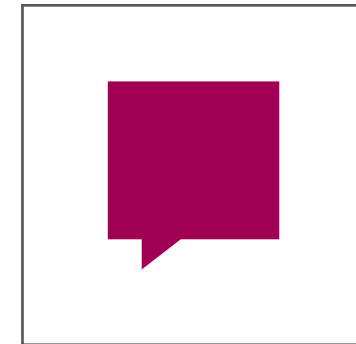
## Core principles



Respect and encourage different beliefs and opinions.



Recognise, record and reward people's contributions.



Use plain language, and openly share information.

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Core principles

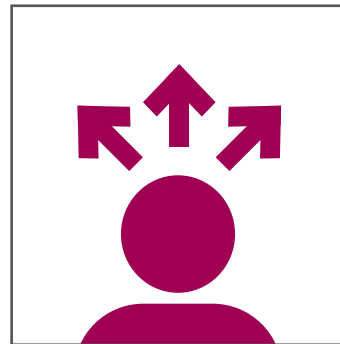
The Engagement Cycle

Practical Steps

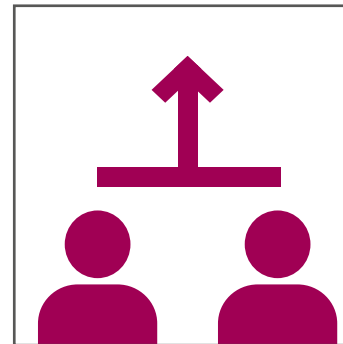
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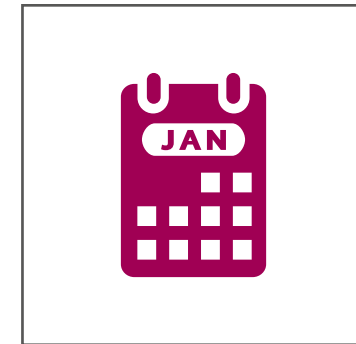
## Core principles



Understand what's worked in the past, and use knowledge that has previously been shared, and consider how to apply it to the present and future.



Have a shared goal and take joint responsibility for our work.



Take time to plan well.

Why participation?

Core principles

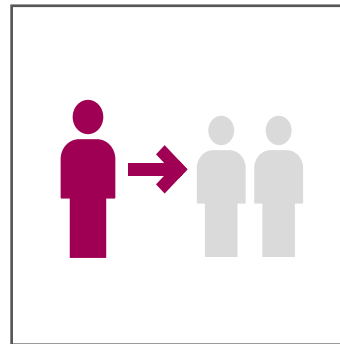
The Engagement Cycle

Practical Steps

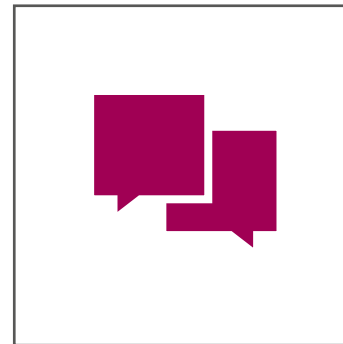
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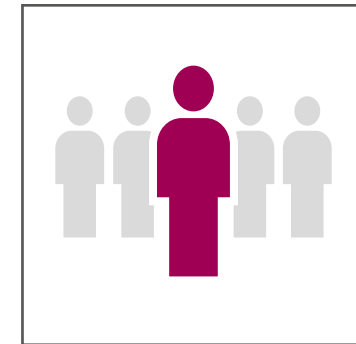
## Core principles



Start involving people as early as possible.



Give feedback on the results of people's participation.



Provide support, training and the right kind of leadership, so that people can work, learn and improve together.

Why participation?

Core principles

The Engagement Cycle

Practical Steps

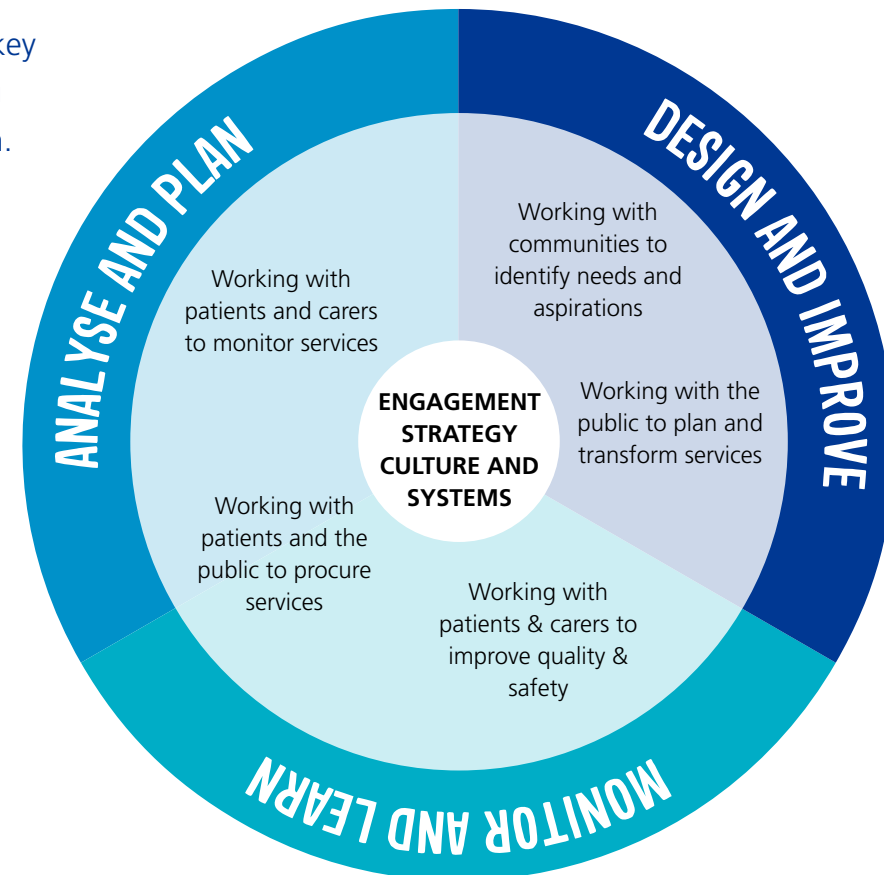
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07 08 09 10 11

# The engagement cycle

The 'Engagement cycle' represented here identifies key points in the commissioning cycle for public participation. For further information, see the dedicated website [here](#).



Why participation?

Core principles

The Engagement Cycle

Practical Steps

Want to learn more?

Other bite-size guides

# Practical Steps

- 1. Make sure that participation activities are included in programme milestone planning, from the beginning, with sufficient time to plan and deliver robust participation.**
- 2. Understand who your patient and public stakeholders are.** These may be broad patient groups, the general public, or specific communities. This should include communities who might otherwise be overlooked.
- 3. View your work through an inclusion, equality and diversity lens.** Those who experience disadvantage or exclusion often experience the poorest health outcomes, and are not always heard.
- 4. Think about using a wide range of participation approaches – one size does not fit all!**
- 5. Work in partnership with others, particularly patient and public groups.** The voluntary sector, Healthwatch and local authorities are excellent places to start. Working together brings insight that can be used for joint planning, and makes better use of resources.
- 6. Feed back the outcomes of participation activities to those who took part.**



Why participation?

Core principles

The Engagement Cycle

Practical Steps

Want to learn more?

Other bite-size guides

## Want to Learn More?

[Transforming participation in health and care](#) (NHS England, 2013) is the statutory guidance for commissioners on this subject. It includes a range of resources and case studies demonstrating good practice.

The government's consultation principles and guidance can be found [here](#).

NHS Networks' [Smart guides to engagement](#) series provides straightforward advice on all aspects of patient and public engagement, in an easily digested format. Their [Commissioning zone: working with patients and public](#) offers links to resources and good practice.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission website includes a range of useful [advice and guidance](#).

The [Engagement cycle](#) is an online resource to help commissioners undertake meaningful patient and public engagement, for maximum impact, hosted by InHealth and the Centre for Patient Leadership.

The Equality Delivery System for the NHS – EDS2, is a facilitative tool that helps NHS organisations to improve their equality performance, in full collaboration with their patients, communities and staff. More information about the Equality Delivery System can be found [here](#).

Why participation?

Core principles

The Engagement Cycle

Practical Steps

Want to learn more?

Other bite-size guides

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[Compact Voice](#) offers a range of useful resources and voluntary sector information.

[Voluntary sector health and care: strategic partners portal](#) is a source of news, events and resources for and about the sector.

Why participation?

Core principles

The Engagement Cycle

Practical Steps

Want to learn more?

Other bite-size guides

## Other Bite-Size Guides

Click on the links below to download each of our '[bite-size guides](#)' to participation. Additional guides are in development.

[Bite-size guide 1 – Principles for Participation in Commissioning](#)

[Bite-size guide 2 – Governance for Participation](#)

[Bite-size guide 3 – Planning for Participation](#)

[Bite-size guide 4 – Budgeting for Participation](#)

Why participation?

Core principles

The Engagement Cycle

Practical Steps

Want to learn more?

Other bite-size guides

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NHS England's series of 'Bite-size guides' aims to help colleagues plan and deliver the best possible patient and public participation, in line with Transforming Participation in Health and Care.

For further information, please contact [england.nhs.participation@nhs.net](mailto:england.nhs.participation@nhs.net)

***Produced by the Public Participation team at NHS England.***