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A bite size guide to:

Working with partners as part of participation

Publications gateway reference: 05424

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To design and deliver high quality patient-centred care, it is vital that public and patient voices are able to shape NHS services. To do this successfully it is important to use the most effective and efficient approaches to participation, including working in partnership with other organisations, at national, regional and local levels.

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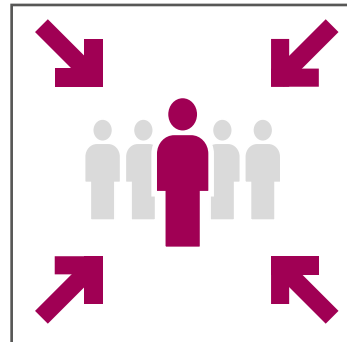
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Through working with partners such as local healthwatch and voluntary groups, providers and commissioners of NHS services can ensure the effective participation of patients, carers, stakeholders and the public.



Partnership working supports a more coordinated and efficient approach to participation, making best use of particular skills and expertise, of available funds and of people's time.



Undertaking participation with partners should support innovation and empowerment, particularly in engaging with communities who experience poorer health outcomes and whose voices we can find harder to hear.

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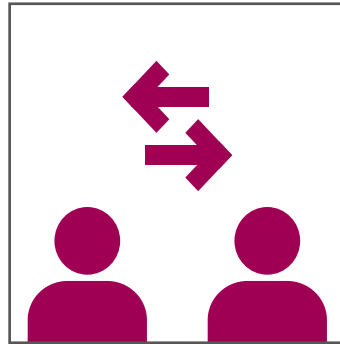
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Relationships with partners should be nurtured, and their contribution recognised. Take time to build productive relationships which extend beyond the timeframe of individual projects

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Case study

Working with partners to involve patients in Dorset

NHS Dorset clinical commissioning group involved service users in developing a new specification for the Community Persistent Pain Service.

A range of mechanisms were used to engage with patients, and patient representatives were recruited through a local patient group seeking to improve pain services and through the Dorset Pain Society. The engagement activity contributed directly to the new service specification.

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- 1. When developing a participation approach or strategy, consider whether there are organisations already working with your ‘target audience’ and / or affected patient groups. They may be able to work with you.**
- 2. Learn from activity previously undertaken by partner organisations, including public sector bodies and charities, to understand the views of your target audience.** Aim to build upon this activity and on these views, not to duplicate.
- 3. Consider involving Healthwatch England and / or local healthwatch.** All NHS bodies have statutory duties to engage with local healthwatch and to respond to their requests and recommendations.
- 4. There will be different partners who are relevant to different activities, and at different geographical levels. Some more key bodies and organisations to consider as partners are national and regional charities working with different patient groups.** These often have local offices and activities that can support in forming excellent partners. Locally, the Council for Voluntary Services or voluntary development organisations are often best placed to identify relevant groups.

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Want to Learn More?

For more information about healthwatch visit <http://www.healthwatch.co.uk>

For a useful guide to working with the voluntary and community sector, produced by Regional Voices visit [http://www.regionalvoices.org/sites/default/files/library/Briefing on VCS for healthwelbeingboards.pdf](http://www.regionalvoices.org/sites/default/files/library/Briefing_on_VCS_for_healthwelbeingboards.pdf)

[Transforming participation in health and care](#) (NHS England, 2013) is the best practice 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](#).

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Want to Learn More?

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](#).

[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.

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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](#)

Guides 5 -15 are also available via the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/participation/resources/>

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www.england.nhs.uk



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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

Produced by the Public Participation team at NHS England.