



Volume 4:
**Reviewing
Engagement**

Why Review?

It's important that, once you've done a piece of engagement work, you go back and follow up on it. This:

- Helps you to establish if any new or unexpected data has emerged
- Highlights difficulties you faced, so you can address them in future work.
- Ensures you get a full view of what's been done, and how it seemed to other people.
- Gives you a record of what was actually done, to compare to what was planned.
- Help participants to understand their role in the context of the work as a whole.

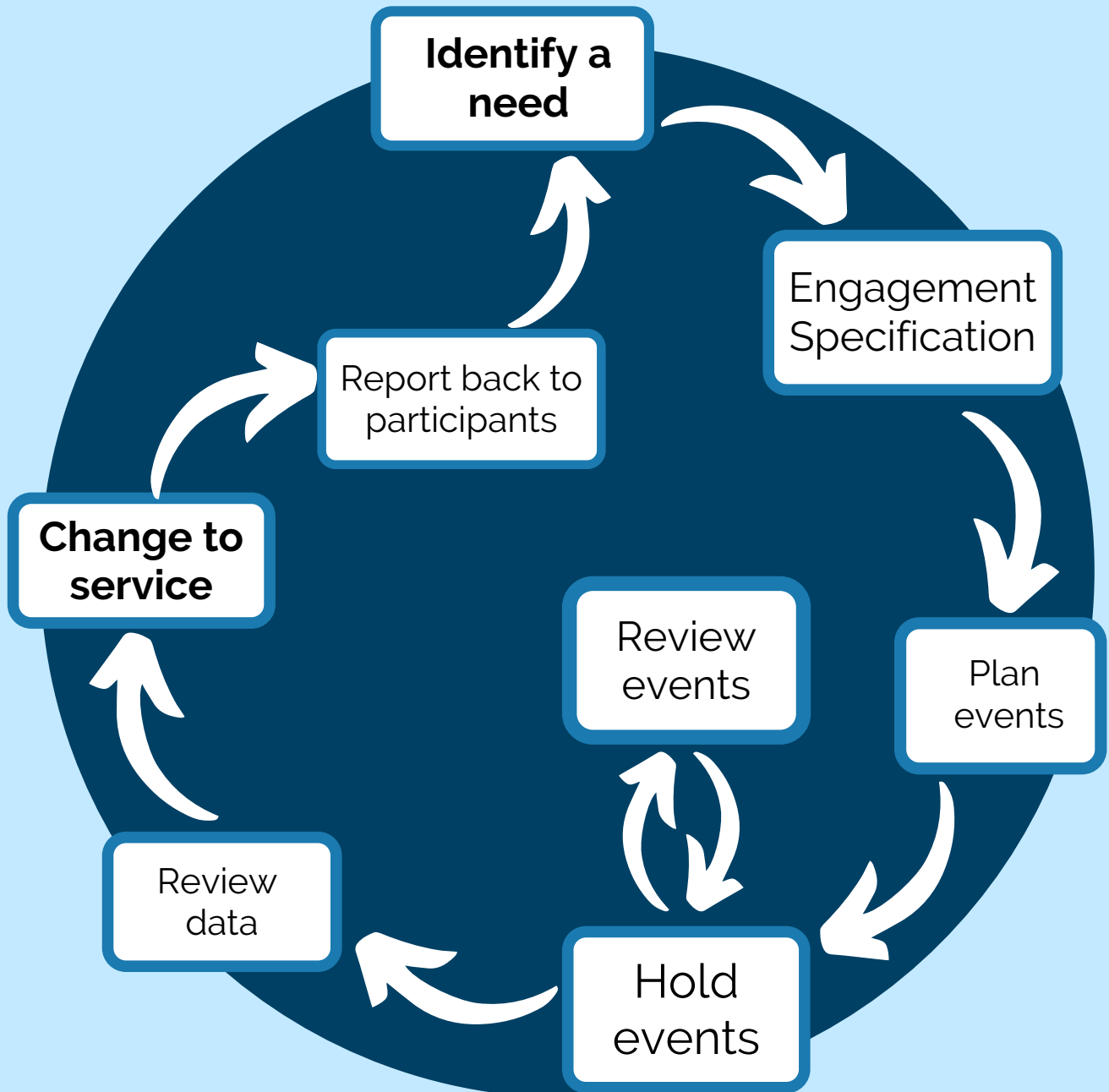
Most importantly, reviews help you to understand and improve on the strengths and weaknesses of your work. Engagement is an ongoing, developing process, and having a written record of how your engagement went and why can not only help you in future engagement, but can also help other people in unrelated projects.

The more detailed work we do in **reviewing and reflecting** on engagement processes, the more we can continue to improve how we implement engagement, making it better with every project.

It's also important that we **close the feedback loop** - that we reflect the effect of our engagement work back to the people we engaged with. This means not just telling people when their ideas and opinions are implemented, but also explaining why other ideas and suggestions cannot be acted on.



The Engagement Loop



Whatever engagement you are doing, it's vital to keep this loop moving. Improvement is a continuous process - at every stage, you should be watching for any needs that might arise, any changes that might be made, or any concerns that people have.

Engagement is useless if the information you get doesn't change anything. It's important to review engagement so you know what changes can be made, and so that problems and concerns - and good practice, too! - are highlighted throughout the organisation.

After Action Reviews

An After Action Review (AAR) is a structured discussion about a project or activity to review what happened, track progress, correct any mistakes, and make recommendations for the future.

These formal or informal meetings last up to half a day. You should make sure to appoint a trained facilitator, and invite as many people as you can who have been involved in the engagement project.

AARs do not have to wait until after the end of an engagement activity. In fact, they are most useful when they are carried out regularly during a project, so they can inform work as it happens.

The Scottish Health Council provides support and independent facilitators for AARs, so contact them if you need help.

An AAR reviews and assesses:

- The original objectives - were they suitable? Have they been met? Were other objectives added?
- The strengths of your work - what went well? What lessons can you take forwards? What positive impact did your work have?
- The weaknesses of your work - what could have gone better? How could it have been done better, and what would you have changed? What lessons can you take forwards?
- Specific future actions - if you were to do this project again, how would you do it? What practical changes would you make? What would you keep the same?
- 2-3 key lessons

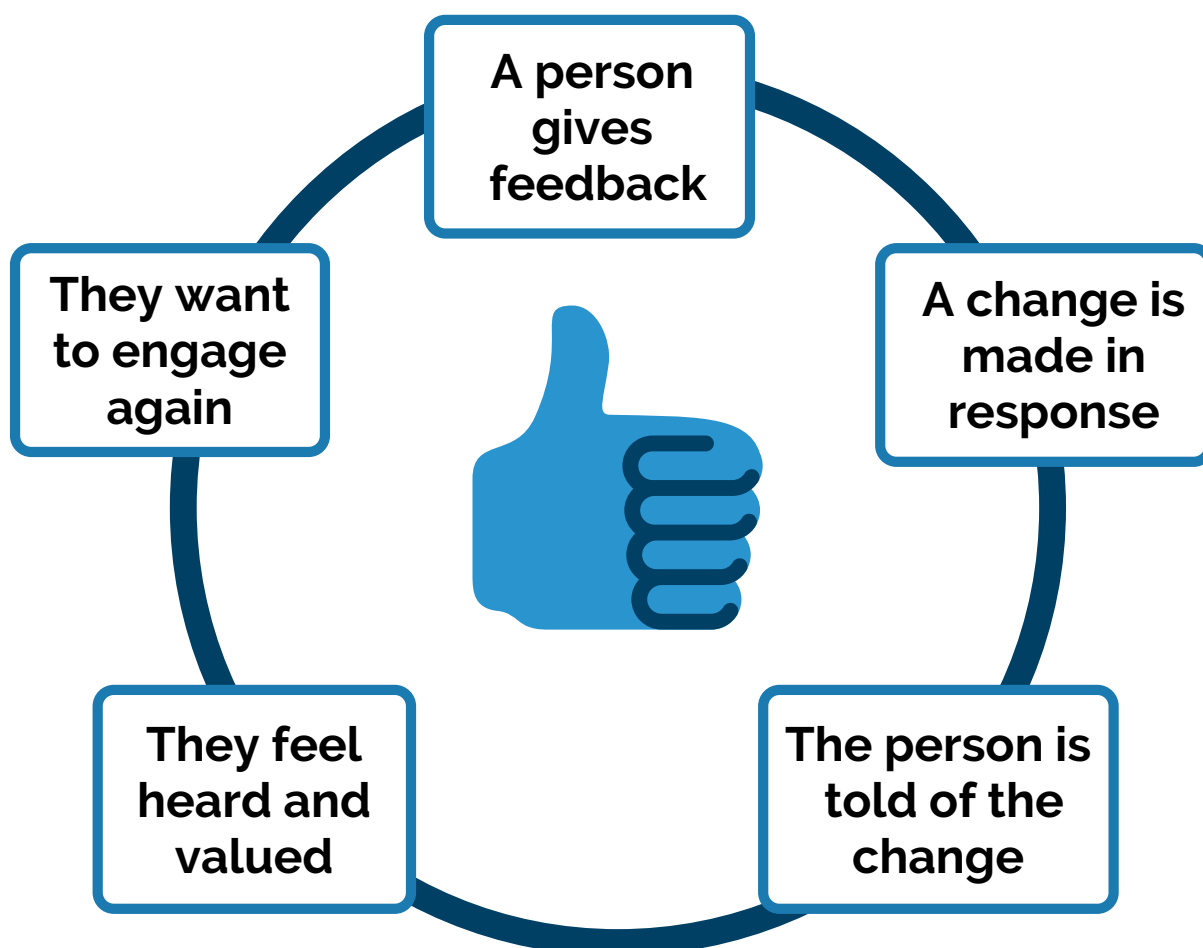
The Feedback Loop

The feedback loop illustrated below is the idea of telling people what is done with their feedback and responses, and keeping them updated on whether it leads to a change. This doesn't necessarily mean that you implement every suggestion - only that you take them on board, give them consideration, and make it clear that you have heard them.

You should plan from the beginning to develop a feedback loop. This might mean publishing your report to the public, or posting to social media about the outcomes of your project; it might also mean contacting people individually after they've engaged to let them know what's new.

It's also important that people can give feedback on the engagement process. One way to do this is to hand out feedback sheets at the end of a session, to see how people feel about it.

If the feedback loop is broken at any point, people feel they are not being heard and they can no longer trust the process. This means they will distrust the organisation as a whole, feel betrayed, and probably not give feedback again in the future.



SHC Guidance on After Action Reviews

Includes some examples and advice for AAR management.

www.scottishhealthcouncil.org/patient__public_participation/participation_toolkit

After Action Review In-Depth Guidance

The original USAID technical guidance for AARs.

pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadf360.pdf

Better Evaluation

An entire website of ways to improve your evaluation skills.

www.betterevaluation.org/en

Survey Monkey

A free online tool which allows you to design a public survey on any subject - for example, to gain feedback on an event.

www.surveymonkey.com/

Focus Group Guide

Focus groups can be a great way to check up on a project before it's fully rolled-out. This resource explains how to organise, manage, and respond to a focus group.

www.shoreline.edu/pscme/reports/Y4/

[FocusGroupGuide.pdf](#)



Engagement Guides

1: What Is Engagement?

2: Planning Engagement

3: Access and Equality

4: Reviewing Engagement

If you need large print or another format, let us know:
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