

Argyll and Bute HSCP

Engagement Framework

Setting out how Argyll and Bute HSCP will engage with people to deliver better health and social care services



Refresh 2025

Inform - Consult - Involve -
Collaborate - Empower

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1. Summary



Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is committed to working with the people of Argyll and Bute to ensure services are responsive and appropriate to the needs of our communities.

An Engagement Framework was implemented in March 2019 to provide clear and consistent approaches to engagement. This has been regularly reviewed to support changes in national guidance. This version reflects recommendations in Planning with people: [Community engagement and participation guidance updated 2024](#).

This HSCP wide approach provides consistency of engagement methods; clearly sets out what activities will take place; states the aims of these activities; and details who will be involved.

The Engagement Framework sets out the intentions of the HSCP to continue to work with people in Argyll and Bute who have an interest in health and social care and provides a comprehensive overview of how engagement will be conducted. It describes a number of complementary documents and processes that support the delivery and monitoring of engagement activity that can be used by HSCP staff, partners, communities and wider stakeholders:

- An HSCP Engagement Framework providing a comprehensive overview and strategic direction for engagement work.
- An Annual Engagement Plan to proactively plan and record engagement activity.
- A Strategic Engagement Advisory Group with key partners to advise the Integration Joint Board (IJB) on engagement policy, strategy and best practice.
- Promotion of engagement methodology eg Healthcare Improvement Scotland.
- An engagement pathway and tools to support managers responsible for local services to engage with people in a clear and consistent way.
- People and communities are actively involved in planning and shaping care services, including any changes (temporary or permanent) which significantly impacts service delivery.

2. Introduction



The HSCP recognises effective engagement is essential to the delivery of health and social care services and fundamental in supporting the HSCP to achieve its vision, ambitions and deliver on key strategic objectives. This commitment is articulated in the [Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025](#).

Effective engagement ensures decisions are informed by community needs and aspirations whilst balanced against available resources. This provides the opportunity for all interested parties to have their voices heard, their views considered and acknowledged, as well as strengthening relationships and building capacity in our communities.



We want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to input into the future shape of health and social care services.

The people the HSCP would like to work with and engage with includes:

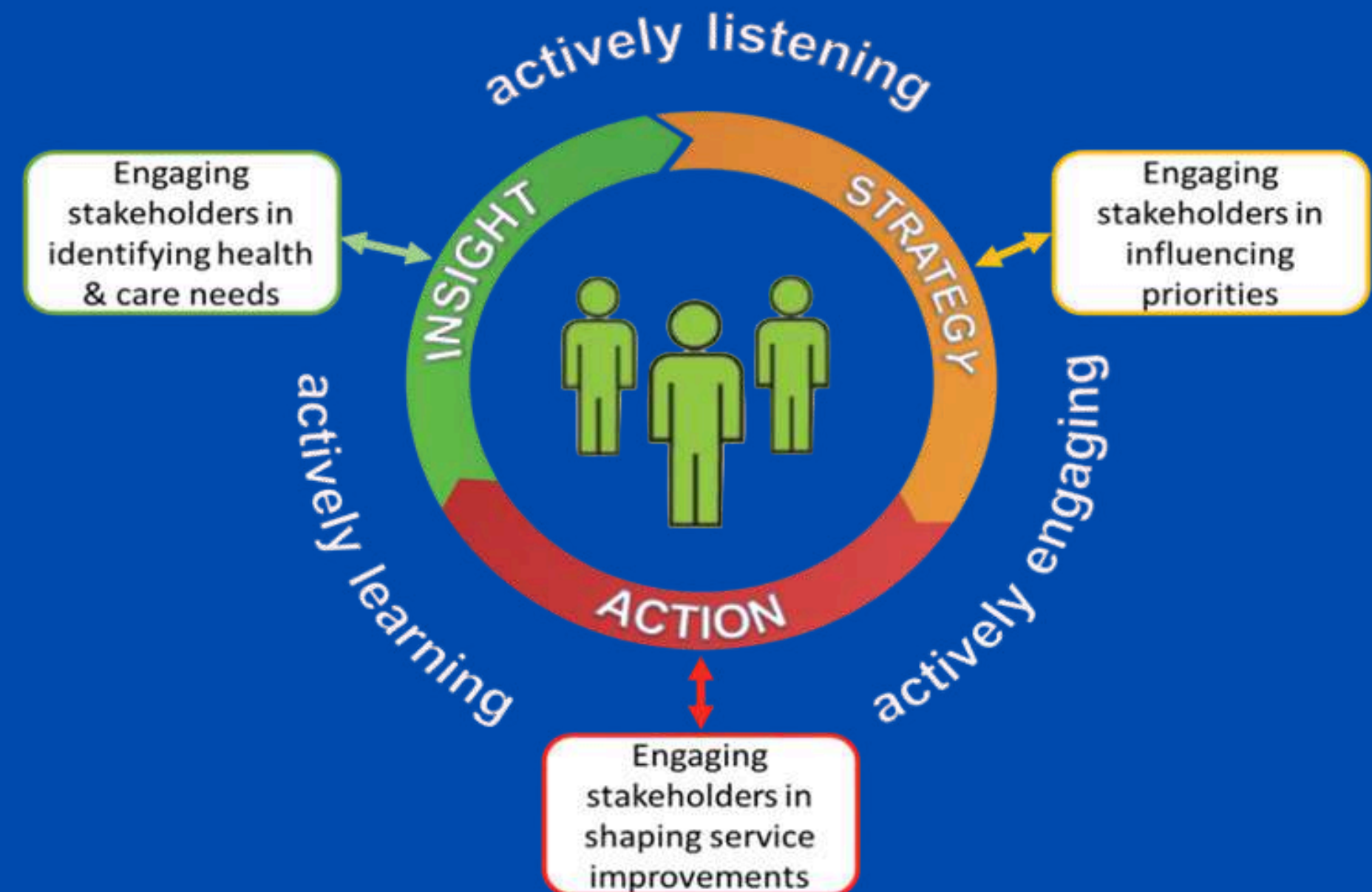
- people who use health and social care services;
- health and social care staff;
- unpaid carers;
- partners, for example the third sector and independent sector; and
- the general public of Argyll and Bute.

3. Purpose of the Engagement Framework



This Engagement Framework describes the HSCP's engagement intentions and aims to:

- Ensure a wide range of views are understood and considered when developing health and social care policy and services in Argyll and Bute;
- Strengthen the relationship between the HSCP and communities by ensuring people are informed about, get involved with, and have their say on matters which are important to them including changes which impact on service delivery;
- Ensure the 'feedback loop' is closed by strengthening communication from the HSCP so that stakeholders know when and how their contribution has been considered and has informed decisions. We call this "You said; we will do."



4. Standards for Community Engagement



The HSCP's engagement approach will be informed by the seven [**National Standards for Community Engagement**](#) published by the Scottish Development Centre for Community Development:



The National Standards for Community Engagement are good-practice principles designed to support and inform the process of community engagement, and improve what happens as a result.

[National Standards for Community Engagement | SCDC - We believe communities matter](#)





4.1 Engagement Principles

The HSCP’s approach to effective stakeholder engagement will meet the following principles:



MEANINGFUL

Purpose of engagement is clear, people are informed about how their involvement will influence the decision-making process and genuine opportunities are created for people to participate.

STRUCTURED

Engagement is built into the planning stages, preferably during the scoping and identification of issues to maximise the level of influence they can have.

FAIR AND EQUITABLE

Different methods of engagement are utilised to ensure feedback is representative, especially from “seldom heard voices”.

USER FRIENDLY

Information about the issue will be easily available to enable people to be fully informed when participating. Plain English will be used and jargon avoided.

ACCESSIBLE

Ensure everyone can access engagement activities, for example, accommodating sensory or physical requirements.

RESPONSIVE

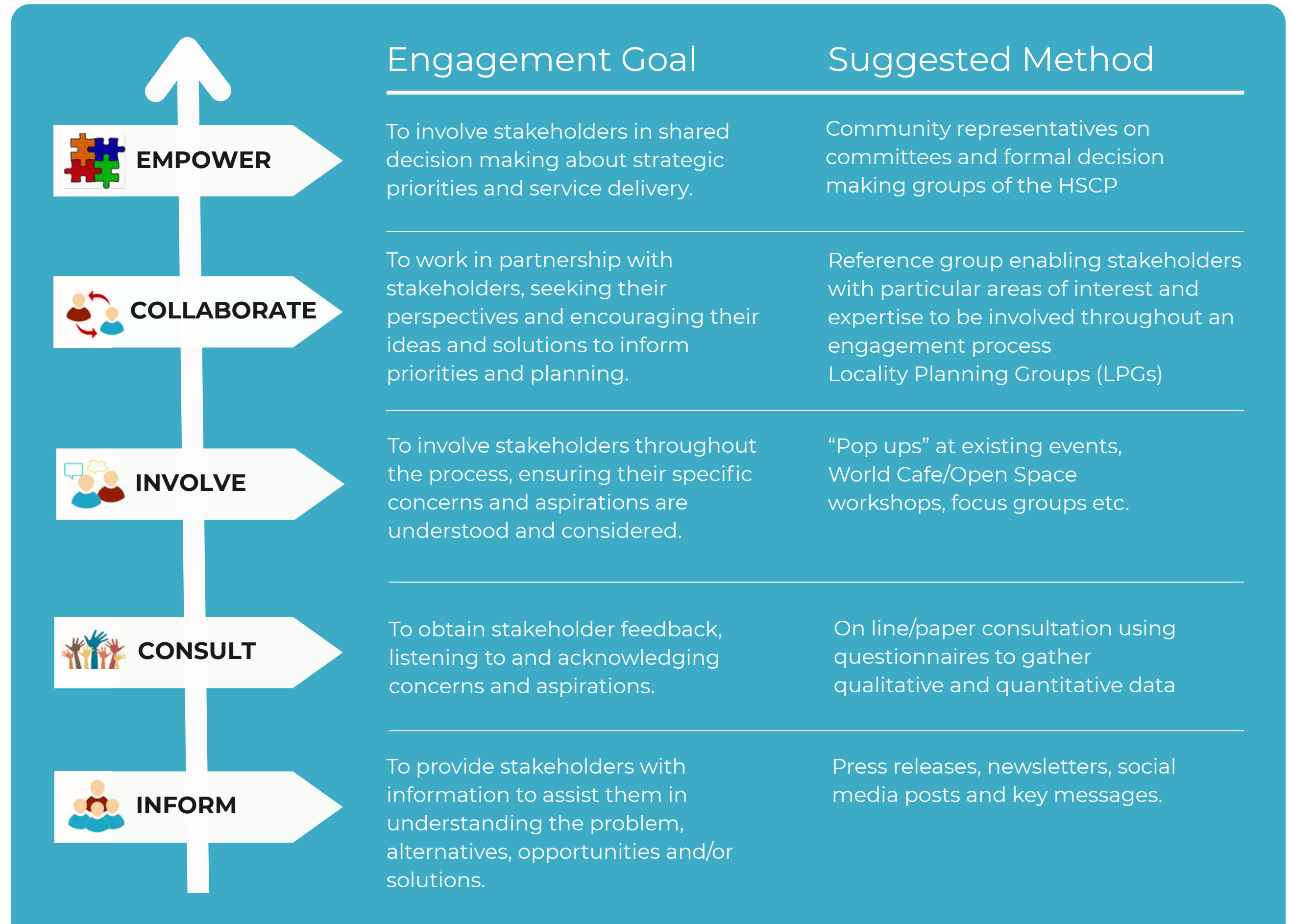
Feedback provided at all key stages.



4.2 Engagement Approaches

The HSCP's approach to effective stakeholder engagement will meet the following principles:

The HSCP's approach to engagement has been informed by [Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Participation Toolkit](#).



5. Changes to Service



Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) has a legal duty to provide an advisory and assurance role to health delegated services delivered by IJBs on engagement and involvement of the public when there are changes made to health services.

This ensures that people and communities are involved in shaping health and care services.



The IJB has a statutory requirement to involve people and communities in planning and development of care services, and in decisions that will significantly affect how services are run.

They should work with HIS to ensure affected communities are well-informed and supported to participate fully in consultations.

Clear communication and early engagement with those potentially impacted is essential.

This includes any changes - temporary or permanent - that significantly affect service delivery.



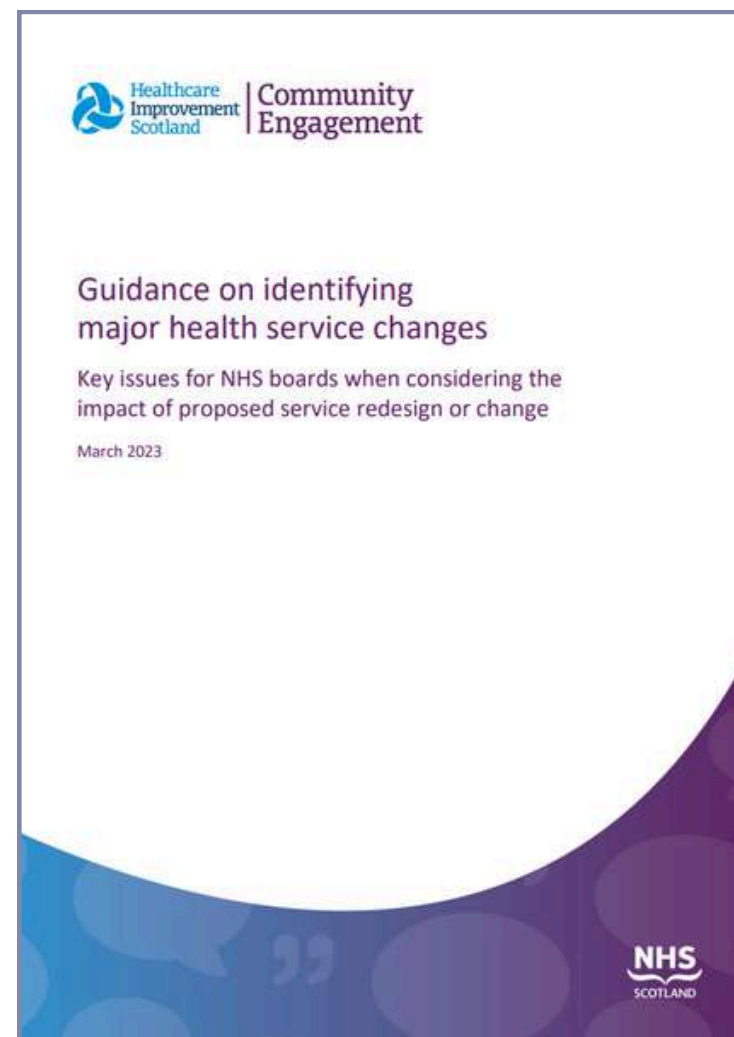
Permanent / Long-term Service Changes

When the IJB identifies a potential need for a permanent or long-term service change, there is a process laid out in the guidance to consider how changes might affect people and communities, to help identify whether this change is a Major Service Change.

Major Service Change can apply to health services delegated to the IJB. HIS can give a view on completion of the major service change template.

IJBs can make a final decision on the **proposals** (whereas NHS boards have to refer to the Scottish Ministers).

The full process of a major service change consultation generally takes a minimum of 3 months.



The IJB has a duty to carry out a formal public consultation for any major service change.

Major Service Change

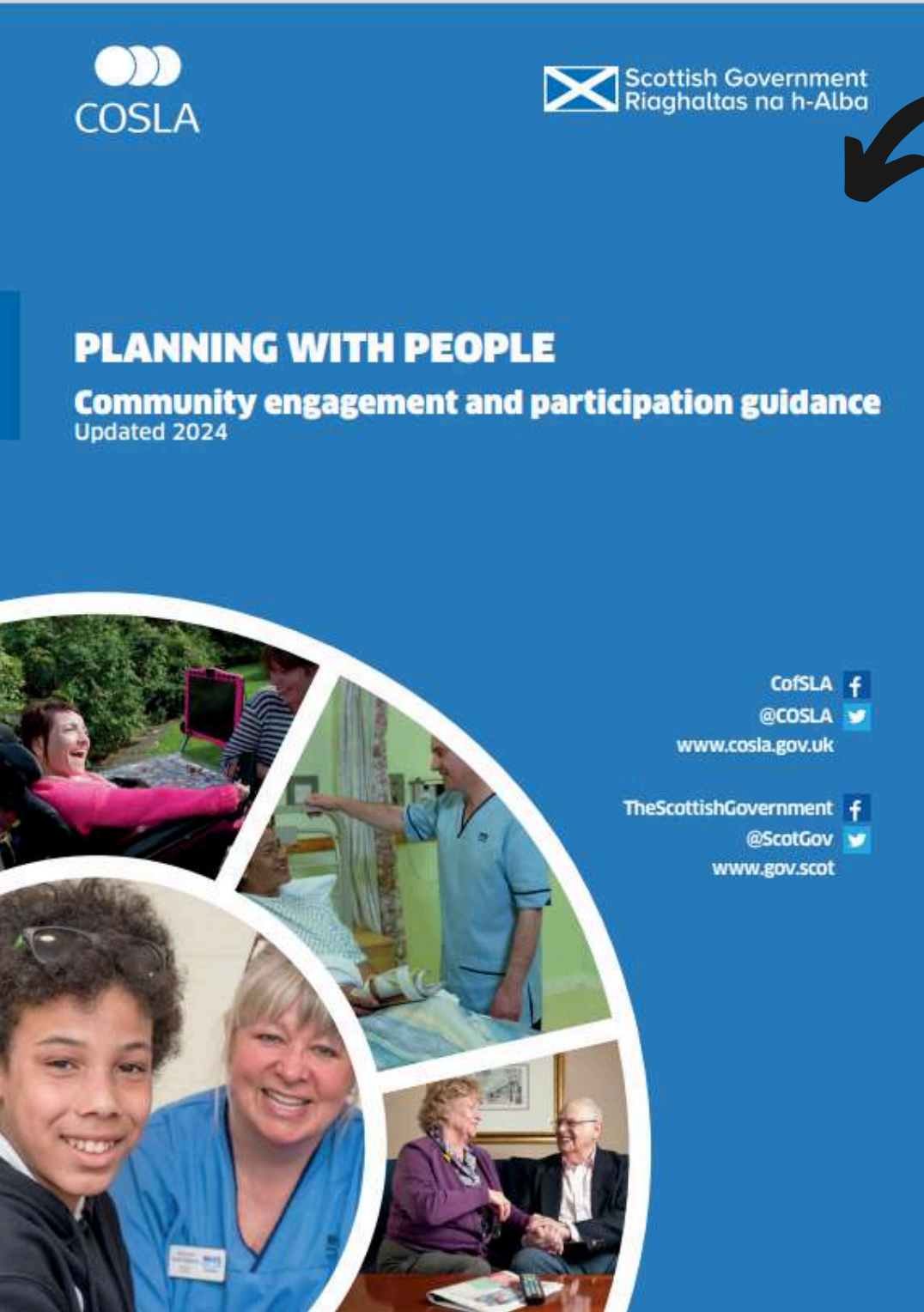
Major service changes are changes which:

-  Impacts patients and carers
-  Changes the accessibility of services
-  Involves emergency and unscheduled care
-  Is of public or political concern
-  Aligns with national policy or professional recommendations
-  Changes the method of service delivery
-  Has financial implications and consequences for other services





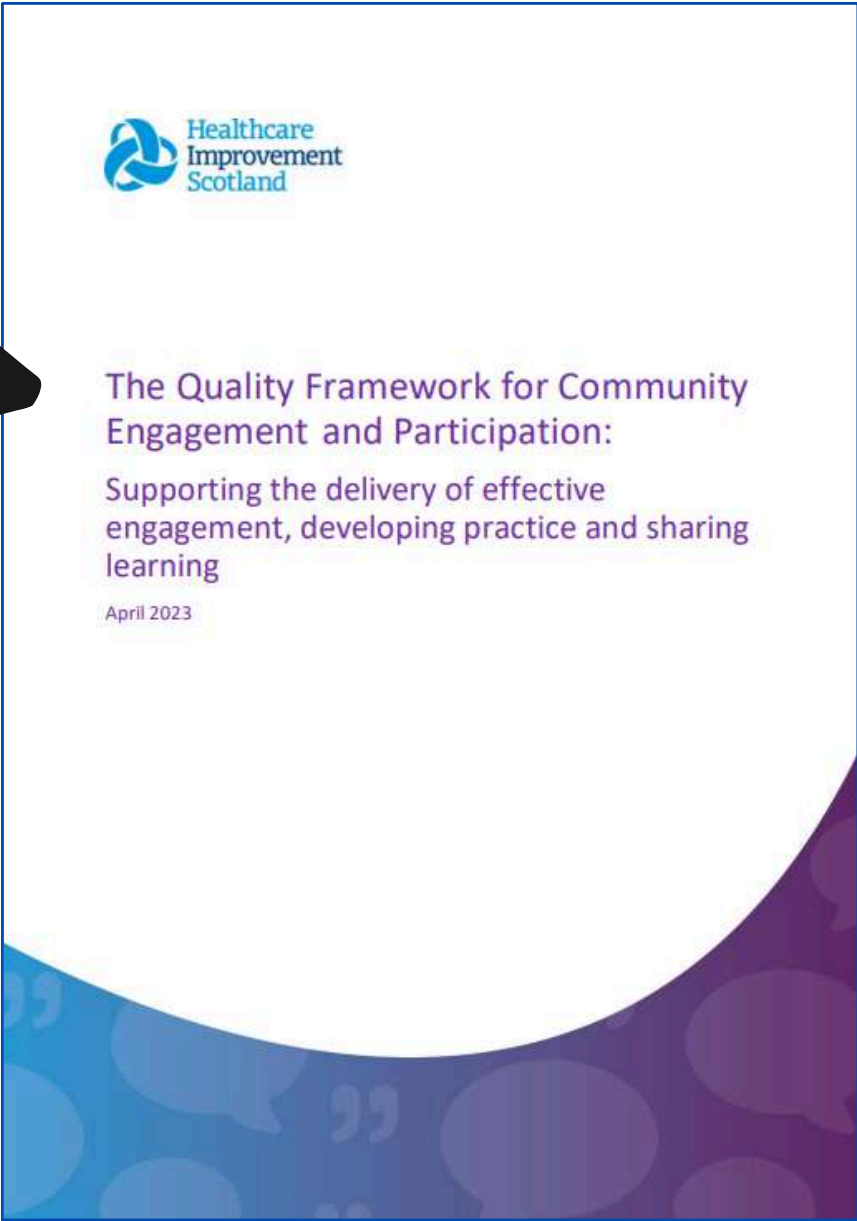
Planning with People - Engagement



Planning with People sets out the responsibilities NHS boards, local authorities and Integration Joint Boards have to community engagement when health and social care services are being planned, or **when changes to services are being considered** and supports them to involve people meaningfully.

Referenced in Planning with People, **The Quality Framework for Community Engagement and Participation** from HIS is an adaptable tool to be used for organisational or service level self-evaluation of engagement.

HIS has a statutory duty to provide assurance and oversight of the **IJB's engagement and involvement of the public** when there are changes proposed for health delegated services delivered by IJBs (not social care services).



5.1 Guidance on Service Change: The Key Steps

(refers to both **temporary** and **permanent changes**)



Acronyms: IJB (Integrated Joint Board); HIS (Health Improvement Scotland)

Start here

Identify potential service change

- IJB discusses the change with HIS
- HIS provides early advice on engagement.

Identify whether proposal for change is a Major Service Change

- IJBs can categorise proposals as major service change themselves, (see **HIS guidance** list of issues to be considered).
- HIS can offer a view on the categorisation of proposals. If a final decision is required, this should be sought from the Scottish Government, by the NHS board or IJB.
- IJB undertakes engagement for potential service change in line with Planning with People (PWP): stakeholder mapping, EQIA, options appraisal.

If it's **not** a Major Service Change or is nationally determined

- For non-major change a proportionate approach may still include a form of consultation on proposals. HIS has developed **a new assurance process for non-major change** which should be discussed before proceeding to the next stage.
- IJB develops engagement plan: HIS provides input and assurance. IJB undertakes proportionate engagement.
- HIS reviews the IJB report on engagement undertaken and gives feedback as to whether engagement requirements have been met.
- HIS can recommend further engagement or escalation to the Scottish Government where all of the engagement requirements are not met.
- IJB makes decision on proposed service change.

OR

If it **is** a Major Service Change

- The IJB has a duty to carry out **a formal public consultation.**



5.2 Public Consultation for Any Major Service Change

The IJB has a duty to carry out **a formal public consultation** for any major service change.

Before the Consultation

- ✓ The IJB should determine if the proposed change qualifies as a major service change. HIS can advise on this.
- ✓ The IJB should plan engagement with stakeholders and the public by using the ['Planning with People' \(PWP\) guidance](#).
- ✓ The IJB develops an engagement plan which should be submitted to HIS for review (input and assurance).
- ✓ HIS will review the engagement plan and confirm with the IJB that it meets the required standards.
- ! The IJB **must not begin public consultation until** HIS confirms that engagement to date meets [Planning with People \(PWP\) standards](#).

During the Consultation

- ✓ A formal public consultation on the proposed changes will be launched, with the IJB undertaking a minimum of 3 months public consultation on the proposals.
- ✓ The consultation will be accessible, inclusive, and well-publicised.
- ✓ Public responses and feedback will be collected and documented.

After the Consultation

- ✓ Following the consultation, a comprehensive report will be prepared by the IJB, and submitted to HIS.
- ✓ HIS quality assures the consultation process and prepares a report on whether the process has been in line with PWP.
- ✓ **If PWP standards have not been met**, HIS may recommend further engagement or they can escalate the decision to be submitted with supporting documents and evidence to Scottish Government Ministers for a final decision.
- ✓ The HIS report will be presented to a full meeting of the IJB where a formal decision on the proposed changes will be made, informed by the HIS report

Final Approval

- ✓ If HIS considers **PWP standards have been met**, the IJB can make the final decision on the proposals, (unlike NHS boards who have to refer to Scottish Government for a final decision).

Healthcare Improvement Scotland have outlined the appropriate steps to take along with the appropriate timescales in this flowchart: [Service Change: Overview of Engagement Process for Integration Joint Boards](#).

Acronyms: IJB (Integrated Joint Board); HIS (Health Improvement Scotland).

6. Equality and Diversity



The guidance on engagement overlaps with the HSCP's responsibilities on Equality and Diversity.

Whilst planning all engagement activities, it is important to consider how everyone's voice is heard, especially those that are seldom heard.

See here for more information on how the HSCP carries out Equality Impact Assessments - [Equality Impact Assessments](#) | [NHS Highland \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

The HSCP recognises the need to make adjustments to standard approaches to ensure as wide a range of people as possible can take part in engagement activities. This might include:

- ✓ Going to where people are rather than expect them to come to us
- ✓ Provide translations and/or large text
- ✓ Provide interpreters, induction loops etc.
- ✓ Work with community champions and representatives to plan engagement activities
- ✓ Build trust with local communities, for example, by telling them how views and feedback have been used to make a difference
- ✓ Ensure accessible building are used for community events



7. Governance



7.1 Strategic Engagement Advisory Group

The HSCP established a Strategic Engagement Advisory Group consisting of individuals from the HSCP, partners with engagement expertise and community representatives.

This Group has been integral to the revision of structures, approaches and processes outlined in this Framework.

A sub-group of the Strategic Planning Group, this group advises the Integration Joint Board on the following:

- Governance arrangements for effective engagement
- Quality assurance of engagement activity
- Engagement plans and activity





7.2 Quality Assurance

This Framework is supported by an Engagement Quality Assurance process that provides a means of benchmarking and evidencing effective approaches to engagement.

Progress against the quality standards is reported to the IJB periodically.



The HSCP will also utilise the national quality standards framework for [Planning with People: Quality Framework for Community Engagement and Participation](#) | [HIS Engage](#)

Quality assurance focuses on four key standards:






7.3 Annual Engagement Plan

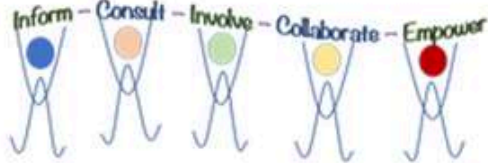
The HSCP produces an Annual Engagement Plan to identify planned engagement activity for the coming year.

This plan describes the purpose, audience, method, timescale and owner for each engagement activity.

This plan is reported to the IJB periodically. Progress on projects where engagement takes place is reported to the IJB in the Annual Performance Report



**Transforming
Together**
Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership



Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership Annual Engagement Plan 2025 - 2026

AREA:

1. Title:

Purpose	Audience	(x)	Engagement Method	Engagement Specification completed
	Service Users			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Carers			Timeframe
	Partners			SLT Lead
	HSCP Staff			Other Leads
	IJB/SPG/LPG			Activity completed Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

2. Title:

Purpose	Audience	(x)	Engagement Method	Engagement Specification completed
	Service Users			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Carers/Parents			Timeframe
	Partners			SLT Lead
	HSCP Staff			Other Leads
	IJB/SPG/LPG			Activity completed Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

3. Title:

Purpose	Audience	(x)	Engagement Method	Engagement Specification completed
	Service Users			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Carers			Timeframe
	Partners			SLT Lead
	HSCP Staff			Other Leads
	IJB/SPG/LPG			Activity completed Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1

This tracker may not capture all engagement activity, for example dynamic feedback that can happen in the course of how we deliver our health and social care services. This is encouraged and can generate rich information for how to improve services.





7.4 Engagement Specification

This template should be used to document how engagement activities will be planned and delivered:

A&B HSCP Transforming Together
Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership

Engagement Specification

The HSCP recognises the importance of engaging with people and communities. This Engagement Specification is for HSCP managers and teams and provides guidance on the steps to be considered when planning effective engagement with citizens, partners and staff. This approach is outlined in the HSCP Engagement Framework and provides a recommended approach to engagement which is based on recognised best practice.

Step 1 Purpose **Step 2 Audience** **Step 3 Level** **Step 4 Approach** **Step 5 Support** **Step 6 Approval** **Step 7 Prepared**

Title of Engagement Activity	
Lead Officer(s)	
Proposed date(s) and duration	

Step 1.
Purpose:
Why do I want to engage?

Are the aims of the engagement clearly explained?
Prompts:

- Improving/changing access to services
- Understanding service experience
- Influencing service change
- Informing plans/strategies/policies

Step 2.
Audience:
Who do I want to engage with? (Stakeholders)

Prompts:

- The general public and people who use our services
- People who care for others
- Groups with special interests
- Partner organisations
- Elected representatives
- Health and social care staff

Step 3.
Level:
What level of engagement will I use?

Is the level of engagement appropriate and proportionate?
Prompts:

Inform	Provide information to assist stakeholders to understand an issue, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions
Consult	Obtain feedback to inform development and/or improvement
Involve	Engage stakeholders in the process, ensuring their concerns and aspirations are listened to, understood and considered
Collaborate	Work in partnership with stakeholders, seeking their perspectives and encouraging their ideas and solutions to inform priorities and planning
Empower	Involve stakeholders in shared decision making about strategic priorities and service developments, delivery and monitoring progress

Step 4.
Approach:
What methods will I use? (See HiS website below.)

Are the method/tools appropriate for the level of engagement?
Prompts:

Inform	Public meeting; website; newsletter; social media; press article; briefings; presentations; letters
Consult	Surveys; online/paper questionnaires
Involve	Conversation Café; focus groups
Collaborate	VOICES (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement tool); Option Appraisals
Empower	Community Representative/member on decision-making group

Step 5.
Support:
Have I utilised the expertise/support of others?

Is there expertise and support available to prepare and deliver engagement?
Prompts:

- Public Health Team
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland Engagement Team
- Critical friend/sense checking advice

Step 6.
Approval:
Who has given the go ahead for this work?

Are the governance arrangements clear?
Prompts:

- Senior level sign-off
- Links to agreed Committee of Head of Service
- How will the findings be agreed and used

Step 7.
Prepared:
Am I ready to engage?

Are all the requirements in place described in an engagement plan? (Engagement Plan templates are available)
Prompts:

- Timeline
- Agreed method
- Resources/funding/support
- Road testing/pilot approach
- Communication plan
- Approvals and use of the findings

Step 8.
Feedback:
What will I do next?

How will I share the findings?
Prompts:

- With the people who gave their views – YOU SAID, WE DID
- Business papers and reports
- Record how the engagement results informed way forward

TIMELINE		
WHAT	WHEN	WHO

Professional guidance and advice on engagement methods can be provided by the [HSCP Public Health Team](#).

Further information on engagement approaches and methods is available in the Healthcare Improvement Scotland's engagement toolkit here - [Participation Toolkit](#) | [HIS Engage](#).



7.5 Decision Making

The HSCP recognises the importance of clear processes for how the findings from engagement activities are used to inform decision making for how health and social care services are designed and delivered.

Key steps to ensure good decision making include:

- Engagement activity led
- Clear plans drawn up
- Oversight and sign-off of plans in appropriate forum
- Equality Impact Assessment completed
- Feedback to people involved in engagement.
'You said. We will do.'
- Clarity of where decisions are made, for example in the IJB.



8. Key Structures

Effective engagement relies on good communication across a range of structures in Argyll and Bute. The following is a list of structures relevant to Argyll and Bute areas, and their role in health and social care engagement:



STRUCTURE / SETTING	ROLE IN ENGAGEMENT
HSCP Strategic Engagement Reference Group	Oversee and ratify engagement processes and strategy in line with best practice and national guidance.
HSCP Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and other management structures	Develop engagement approaches for Argyll and Bute HSCP in partnership and based on best practice.
Locality Planning (LPGs x 4)	Create an opportunity for HSCP staff to work with partners and community representatives to work on local health and social care plans.
Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership (CPP)	Statutory body to develop a community plan and focus on where partners' collective efforts and resources can add the most value to their local communities.
HSCP Clinical and Care Governance Group	Provides an oversight role in decision making about health and social care services, for example mitigation of risk.
HSCP Staff Partnership Forum	Provides an oversight role of issues that affect staff.
Community Councils	These can be used to cascade engagement information widely.
Argyll and Bute HSCP Public Health Team	Can provide expert guidance on engagement methods.
Community Representatives	The HSCP has a role to have community representatives on various meetings and groups, for example the IJB and SPG. Community rep's are supported in their role and give the HSCP the opportunity to ensure the views of a wide range of people are considered.
Healthcare Improvement Scotland Engagement Team	A national team that provides and guidance on meeting national engagement requirements and takes the role of "critical friend".



Argyll and Bute HSCP Engagement Framework Refresh 2025