



Leicestershire
County Council

Adult Social Care Engagement Framework



Introduction and Background

It can't be denied, and evidence supports, the simple idea that people who use or experience a service are often better placed to design and review it.

It is impossible to truly understand a service from every perspective unless you have lived each experience. We have our professional experience; we need to work with people who have used the services to understand theirs. Understanding things from every angle can only strengthen the services we provide and commission, whilst saving valuable time and money by getting things right the first time.

Not only do we believe that community engagement is very important in making sure that Adult Social Care plans and services are designed in the best way possible, but the government also think that councils should be working with people who use adult social care as well as carers and voluntary organisations, when we are designing and planning our services. This is stated in the Care Act 2014.





What do we mean by community?

A community is a group of people with something in common, this can be where they live, a shared interest, experience or identity.

This framework talks about the adult social care community which includes people who use adult social care services, their carers, and people or organisations that have a keen interest in adult social care.

What do we mean by community engagement?

When we talk about community engagement, we mean talking to the adult social care community, in Leicestershire, and developing working relationships with those people.

Good community engagement can help to make sure:

- Trust is built between the council and the community
- Community needs, and priorities are at the centre of service development and improvement
- Services are fit for purpose and cost effective

There are different levels of community engagement and the main difference between them is the amount of power the community has.

Different levels will be appropriate for different pieces of work. Things like the government giving us a set amount of money or laws we must work by will sometimes mean we can't share as much power and responsibility as we would like. The main thing is to make sure we are open and honest about these things and explain how much influence the community has, with reasons for this. Even when we give the community no decision power we should still be listening to their views and valuing their experience enough to influence our decisions about services.

A community is a group of people with something in common.



The table below shows these different levels.

Co-Produced	True sharing of responsibility and decision making in the design and delivery of services
Partnership	True sharing of responsibility and decision making. All know what their roles and responsibilities are; examples of partnership working include co-designing a service.
Involve	Getting people's advice and help to shape recommendations. They have no final decision power or responsibility.
Listen	Getting people's views on recommendations. Views should be taken into account, but people have no final decision power or responsibility.
Inform	Giving people information; so, they can make informed choices. This forms the basis of all other activity.

This table was adapted from Sherry Arnstein's 'ladder of citizen participation'

Why we need an engagement framework

We need a framework to make sure all staff and community members are aware of our aims, values and plans around community engagement for the Adult Social Care department. The framework will be very important for the Engagement Advisory Panel as it will be something they can use as a checklist, when they are looking at different project's engagement plans.

The framework will:

- List our key values, aims and plans around community engagement in the Adult Social Care department
- Give clear guidance to staff around our community engagement commitments
- Set out our ways of working
- Help us be open and honest with the community
- Support a more effective, planned approach to community engagement

The Framework

Aims

Our aims are to:

- 1 Provide opportunities for communities to shape the development and delivery of services, strategies and policies
- 2 Encourage community engagement by promoting of opportunities
- 3 Manage our community engagement within the Adult Social Care department to make sure it is always good quality
- 4 Make sure our community engagement is with the right people for example people who will be affected by our work, other departments and other services
- 5 Make sure our community engagement work supports those who need it
- 6 Be creative in engagement approaches, to ensure all members of the community can be involved especially those who we don't usually talk to
- 7 Work better with partners, such as health and providers, for community engagement
- 8 Make sure we feedback to the community about the results of engagement and what we have done with them
- 9 Make sure the results from community engagement are shared with our partners such as health and providers
- 10 Increase staff skills and expertise in engagement and co-production
- 11 Raise awareness of community engagement and share good practise with the whole of the council
- 12 Encourage a more diverse representation within our engagement work



Key values and how we will work to support them

Key values of the framework are good partnerships, good planning, good communication and effective ways of working.

A. Good partnerships

We will:

- Try to find out if any of our partners have already done similar community engagement, we don't want to ask the same people the same thing twice
- Try to work with partners to develop community engagement wherever possible
- Work with relevant organisations to increase our opportunities for connecting with communities, that we don't usually talk to
- Work in a way that recognises the value of everyone's input, especially that of customers
- Make our good practice and findings from community engagement, available online for our partners, such as health and providers

B. Good planning

We will:

- Use all available research, knowledge and community intelligence to help us plan community engagement. We will not ask for views or opinions that we have already asked about and that are unlikely to have changed
- Use community engagement methods which are fit for purpose, proportionate, accessible, and flexible
- Allow enough time for good engagement
- Make sure opportunities to be involved are available to all affected, if necessary using a variety of methodologies
- Give regular feedback on the outcomes of community engagement



C. Good communication

We will:

- Communicate any limits to the community engagement clearly (e.g. time/ resources)
- Be clear about the purpose of the community engagement, why it is needed, what is being asked e.g. the level, and how the outcomes will be used
- Make sure we provide the community with all the information for them to make informed decisions
- Find out what barriers there are to good community engagement and develop ways to overcome them
- Make sure all communication is jargon free and written clearly and to the point
- Make sure how we communicate is appropriate for the community we want to engage with
- Tell people how and when feedback will be given and the effect their input has had on services or decisions
- Tell anyone involved in community engagement how to report anything they are not happy with

D. Effective ways of working

We will:

- Support an Engagement Advisory Panel
- Make sure we actively encourage community engagement from communities, that we don't usually talk to
- Make sure there is money to support community engagement
- Support customers, carers and the wider community to build on their skills and expertise
- Give people with enough notice of our planned community engagement and know this might be different for different people or groups
- Make sure we are keeping a record of all community engagement within the adult social care department
- Make sure we keep a record of data relating to all our engagement work, including equalities data

Delivering the Framework

It is the responsibility of the Adult Social Care Department to make sure community engagement happens in line with the values and aims set out in this framework.

It is the responsibility of each member of staff, involved in any engagement work, talk to the Engagement Advisory Panel and work to the aims, values and commitments within this framework.

It will be the responsibility of the Engagement Advisory Panel to actively support this. Support will include critique, suggestions and endorsing engagement plans. The Panel will also co-produce a one-page plan that sets out the following years key pieces of work, towards delivering this framework.

Staff can also find some practical guidance on the intranet a-z under 'Engagement'.

Reviewing the Framework

The Framework will be reviewed by the co-production officer and the engagement advisory group every two years.

