

# Adult Social Care Engagement Framework



# Introduction and Background

It can't be denied, and evidence supports, the simple idea that people who have experience of 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 experience of a service 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.

We believe that engagement with people in communities is very important in making sure that Adult Social Care plans and services are designed in the best way possible. 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, as 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 relates to the adult social care community which includes people who have experience of adult social care services, their carers, staff, and people or organisations that have an expressed interest.

## 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 people have, with reasons for this. Even when we give people 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.

<b>Co-Produced</b>	An equal relationship between people and those responsible for services. They work together from design to delivery, sharing strategic decision-making about policies, as well as decisions about the best way to deliver services.
<b>Partnership</b>	True sharing of responsibility and decision making. All know what their roles and responsibilities are; examples of partnership working include co-designing a service.
<b>Involve</b>	People are given opportunities to express their views and may be able to influence some decisions, but this depends on what those making policies will allow.
<b>Listen</b>	People may be asked to fill in surveys or attend meetings. Views are considered, but people have no final decision power or responsibility. This step can be considered tokenistic.
<b>Inform</b>	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 everyone - staff and people in communities are aware of our aims, values and plans around engagement for the Adult Social Care department. The framework can also be used by the Engagement Panel to support their work with the department, when scrutinising engagement plans.

### The framework will:

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

# The Framework

## Aims

Our aims are to:

**1**

Provide opportunities for people to shape the development and delivery of services, strategies, and policies.

**2**

Encourage engagement by promoting opportunities to get involved.

**3**

Manage our engagement within the Adult Social Care department to make sure it is always good quality.

**4**

Make sure our engagement is with the right people, for example people who will be affected by our work, other departments, and other services.

**5**

Be creative in the way we engage, to ensure we do not exclude anyone who wishes to be involved, especially those who we don't usually talk to.

**6**

Work better with partners, such as health and providers.

**7**

Ensure we give regular feedback to everyone involved in the engagement activity.

**8**

Increase staff skills and expertise in engagement and co-production by providing relevant training, including sharing good practise across the Adult Social Care. department.

**9**

Encourage a more diverse representation of people 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 engagement, we don't want to ask the same people the same thing twice.
- Try to work with partners to develop engagement wherever possible to help increase our opportunities to connect with people we don't usually talk to.
- Work in a way that recognises the value of everyone's input – acknowledging different strengths and experiences.
- Share good practice and findings with partners.

### B. Good planning

#### We will:

- Use all available research, knowledge, and intelligence to help us plan our engagement, to ensure we don't duplicate work that has previously been done.
- Use engagement methods which are fit for purpose, proportionate, flexible, and accessible.
- Allow enough time for good engagement.
- Make sure opportunities to be involved are available to all affected, if necessary, using a variety of approaches.
- Give regular feedback to those involved in the engagement.



## C. Good communication

### We will:

- Communicate any limits to the planned engagement clearly (e.g. time/ resources).
- Be clear about the purpose, why it is needed, what is being asked e.g., the level, and how the outcomes will be used.
- Make sure we provide people with all the information they need to make informed decisions.
- Identify any barriers to engagement and develop ways to overcome them.
- Make sure all communication is jargon free, written in plain language and to the point.
- Make sure how we communicate is appropriate for the people 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 people involved how to report anything they are not happy with/within the process.

## D. Effective ways of working

### We will:

- Support and develop the Adults & Communities Engagement Panel.
- Make sure we actively encourage engagement from people, that we don't usually talk to.
- Make sure there is resources to support engagement.
- Support people to become actively involved by helping them to build on their skills and expertise.
- Give people enough notice of our plans, and recognise this might be different for different people or groups.
- Make sure we are keeping a record of all 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 all 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, to talk to the Adults & Communities Engagement Panel about their proposals and work to the aims, values, and commitments within this framework.

It will be the responsibility of the Engagement Panel to actively support this. Support will include critique, suggestions and endorsing engagement plans.

Staff can also find some practical guidance on the intranet under Adult Social Care, Engagement across ASC.

# Reviewing the Framework

The Framework will be reviewed and updated by the Adults & Communities Engagement Panel with support from the Customer Experience & Co-production Improvement Lead every two years. Next review will be due August 2026.

