



Mid and South Essex
Health and Care
Partnership

Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership

Engagement Framework 2020 -2021



Executive Summary

We are committed to achieving inclusive and meaningful engagement at all levels as the cornerstone of the design, development and delivery of services, in the Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership.

We are not a new organisation – but a collaboration of NHS commissioners, NHS providers, Public Health, Social Care, Local Authority, Healthwatch and community and voluntary sector organisations.

Every day, as a collective of statutory and community bodies, we engage with people who have an interest or concern in what we do and who can affect or be affected by our actions and priorities.

Our Partnership is not just about changing and improving how organisations work together, it is about bringing groups together in new and different ways. It is also about working closely and engaging in partnership with people to make a real difference to their health and wellbeing, and the quality of care provided to them

Understanding the views of our population will help us to explore ideas such as the smarter use of technology, providing care in different settings closer to home and support the Partnership to seek ways to reduce health inequalities

Having an agreed engagement framework helps us as Partners to promote awareness and understanding of this to members of the public and our shared stakeholders.

Introduction

As a Partnership, together we share responsibility for supporting and improving the health of 1.2 million people in our region. Our guiding aim is to reduce health inequalities.

How we engage, will determine how well we deliver on those priorities. It is about building awareness, relationships and trust in who we are, what we do now and where we need to be in the future.

As a Partnership we have agreed that grass roots delivery of our plans will be through our four emerging “places” – South east Essex, Thurrock, Mid Essex and Basildon and Brentwood.

These local partnerships are building strong, locally focused collaborations to enable integrated delivery with and for their local communities.

Our Partnership has therefore agreed to work together where it makes most sense to do so, but also to protect the importance of ‘place’ – with each of our organisations staying accountable to local people, and being able to respond to local needs.

This framework supports that approach.

It does not seek to replicate or replace strategies, frameworks and activities from constituent bodies but seeks to facilitate their delivery.

In doing so the Partnership at all levels recognises:

- We will undertake engagement at system level only when it makes sense to do so
- Utilising locally based connections, relationships, co-production methods is best
- We will not replicate statutory functions or governance arrangements
- We will make use of existing community based assets including our Healthwatch organisations and Health and Wellbeing boards
- We are committed to do all we can to make sure a wide range of people's voices are at the heart of our development.

Together we will strengthen our arrangements and processes (i.e. the way we do things) for engagement and involvement, ensuring that they are effective and meaningful, and promoting a culture where the experience of residents and our communities is at the centre of everything we do.

For example we want to continue to encourage patients to get involved in how their local GP surgery services are run and can be improved by joining a Patient Participation Group. These belong to GP practices to enable two-way communication and discussion about primary care issues and the wider health service.

Through "place" we can plan and implement a new model of engagement that supports Patient Participation Groups and Primary Care Networks to create a regular cycle of engagement activities to support the connectivity to the communities we serve in partnership across the system.

We will also continue to benefit from and build on the excellent work Healthwatch partners and engagement colleagues have done to date.

New technology has and will continue to have a transformational impact on the way we communicate and engage, and local adoption of these methods has been accelerated through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whilst we will continue to draw on insight, both quantitative and qualitative, gathered within our Partnership member organisations to avoid duplication of effort, we will also seek to complement this with bespoke methods.

Feedback is important to ensure we have taken in consideration the needs and expectations of as many of our partner organisations and our local population as possible.

By working together we will seek to bring together resources to undertake targeted campaigns with a fresh approach to what can sometimes be formulaic public engagement conversations.

Professor Mike Thorne CBE
Independent Chair

What is community engagement?

Community engagement is a way of developing a working relationship with individuals and groups from our communities. Engagement involves understanding and describing – both qualitatively and quantitatively – the nature of the relationship between our community and us.

Engagement can include

- Oversight of decision-making
- Partnering with communities to develop solutions
- Understanding and considering concerns and aspirations
- Getting feedback on analysis, alternatives and decisions
- Providing balanced and objective information

Context

The NHS Long Term Plan published in January 2019 set out a number of important ambitions for the next few years, but central to the delivery of all of them will be the need for people to work together – whether that's GP surgeries teaming up so they can provide more appointments and services, or whole health and care systems coming together to plan and deliver real improvements for patients in crucial areas like mental health, cancer or stroke care.

As a Partnership, we know that to truly do the best for our residents we must work together with them.

Over the past three years we have built a good foundation of joint working and have already started to transform the way care is delivered.

Since the national plan was published, our Partnership has been exploring how best to take the ambitions it contains and turns them into real improvements for our residents over the next few years.

We have also set the ambition to become an integrated care system by April 2021.

Our vision and ambitions

A health and care partnership working for a better quality of life in a thriving mid and south Essex, with every resident making informed choices in a strengthened health and care system

- Healthy Start – helping every child to have the best start in life
- Healthy Minds – reducing mental health stigma and suicide.
- Healthy Places – creating environments that support healthy lives.
- Healthy Communities – which spring from participation
- Healthy Living – supporting wellbeing and independent lives
- Healthy Care – joining up our services to deliver the right care, when you need it, closer to home

Through working in partnership at every level, we aim to reduce inequalities through:

- Creating opportunities – education, employment, housing, growth
- Supporting health and wellbeing – healthy lifestyles and behaviours, focus on prevention and self-care
- Bringing care closer to home – where safe and possible
- Improving and transforming our services – integrating care for and with our residents

Developing our framework

As a commitment to hearing and working with our staff and communities the Partnership has set as one of our system “design principles” the use of insight gained from our engagement work to inform what we do.

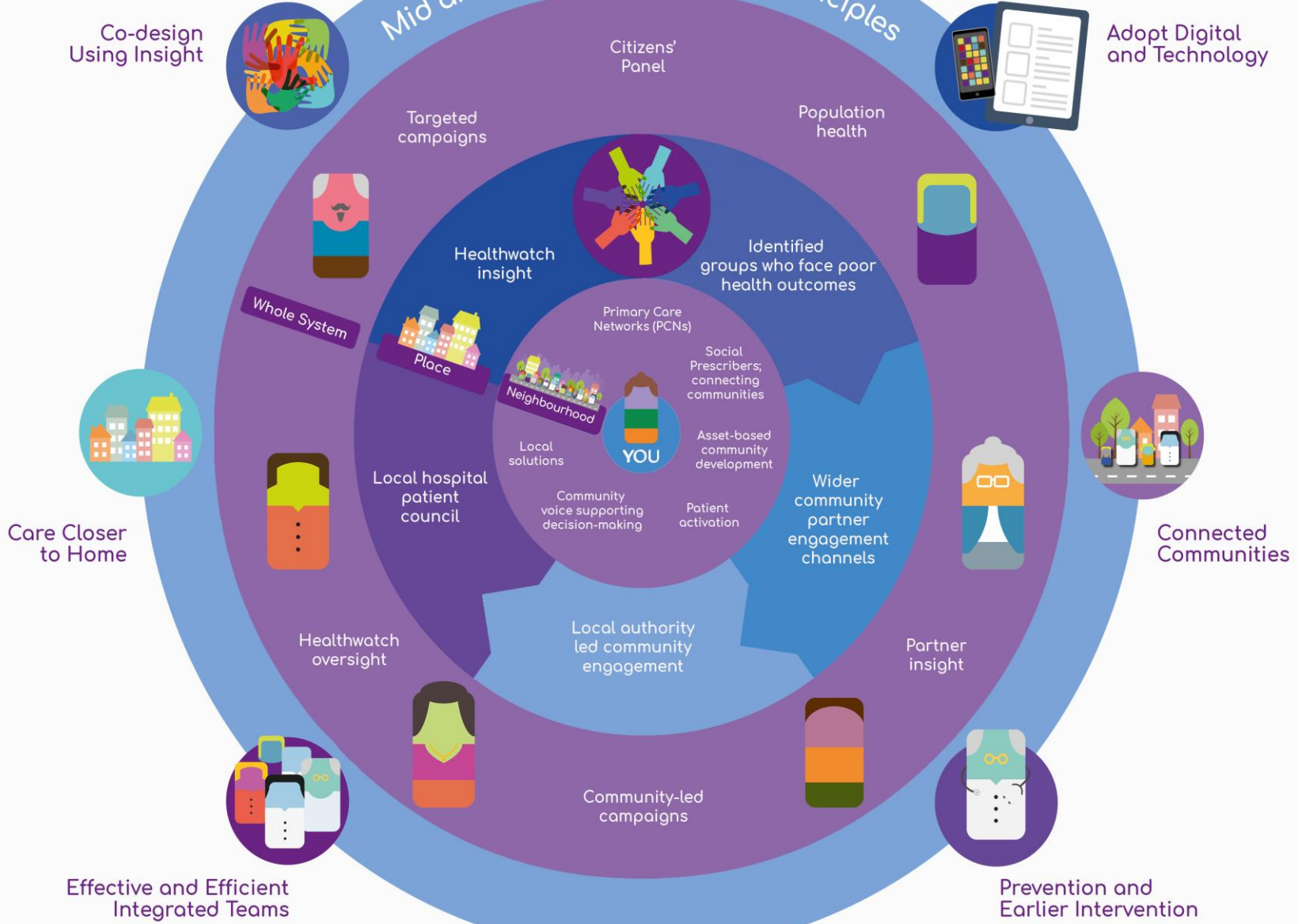
So the starting point for developing this framework was a series of Engaging Our Communities co-produced workshops and conversations.

Through this work we talked to and worked with service users, voluntary and community sector colleagues, our Healthwatch organisations, charitable and support groups, youth councils and engagement professionals working in our system.

From these conversations we agreed a set of engagement principles with the groups and the foundations of our framework, utilising the established design principles for the system.

These conversations and workshops also helped us to agree and set out the opportunities at neighbourhood, place and system for involvement and community engagement in the diagram as set out below,

Mid and South Essex Design Principles



Wider research

During the development of our framework we explored the experience of other areas including a study by NHS England which commissioned Ipsos Moris to undertake research amongst 14 early wave ICSs.

It recognised the challenges to aligned, system-wide engagement are many. For example, integrated care systems cover large geographical areas which can make it hard to engage and to connect system-wide work to the local concerns of residents. Evolving system structures and governance also add to the complexity.

Some of the challenges identified in this research will be familiar to those who have worked to engage people and communities in health and care over the years.

- How best can we reach out to the 'silent majority' and groups that are harder to reach?
- How do we have conversations with local people about things that matter to them?
- How do we move from just talking to patients to engaging residents?
- Something about coproduction?

The subsequent report identified the key ingredients needed to help strengthen engagement within an ICS

- Shared and agreed vision for engagement supported by senior system leadership.
- Open and transparent approach with clear governance and channels for engagement.
- Mobilise knowledge, skills, resources, networks and relationships in wider partnerships to tackle shared priorities.
- Strategic engagement with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector
- Design engagement approaches to involve cross-section of local community, drawing on experience and assets of partners
- Tap into what matters to people locally so messages and approach are tailored, making use of existing local links

Our principles for engagement

These are identified through best practice co-produced as part of our engagement and feedback conversations and, which set the standards to which as a collective we aspire in building consistent, open and respectful relationships.

- **Inclusive**
Widest range of opinions are sought and valued using a variety of methods
- **Supportive**
Barriers to participation are identified and overcome
- **Planned**
Reasons for engagement are clear and the tools and methods used fit for purpose
- **Collaborative**
Alignment and coordination of activity utilising existing local networks where possible and built on existing insight

- **Evaluated**
Feedback is compiled and communicated back to people, communities and partner organisations in a timely way
- **Impactful**
Transparency on how engagement has influenced decisions and what has changed as a result.

Putting the principles into practice

This framework has been developed to assist the Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership in undertaking engagement with stakeholders at all levels within our system, and provides a foundation for all future engagement activity.

Whilst this framework seeks to set out a collaborative approach to involvement and engagement, depending on the issue or opportunity, individual communication and engagement plans will be required that are subject specific.

This framework will therefore not go into detail on every piece of work delivered by each team. Each of these areas would require its own dedicated strategy to ensure it is developed in line with a resident-led approach rather than that of a one size fits all approach.

The extent of an individual's level of involvement is a matter of personal choice. Together we will promote opportunities for involvement and engagement so that people are able to choose those most suitable for them.

As a system we have launched a Citizens' Panel to support us to research and understand the views of a demographically representative sample of our population and have the ambition to continue to develop new ways and means engaging a truly diverse range of our population

However over the next year to support our journey to becoming an integrated care system we will place our focus in the following areas:

- Work across both geographical communities and communities of interest and demographics to increase awareness, understanding and access to opportunities to engage
- Work with our partners to increase awareness of who we are and what we seek to do to identify opportunities to improve how we engage together
- Explain our purpose and priorities, opening up opportunities for involvement
- Expand the ways in which people and our partners can provide feedback
- Expand our activities to better understand who is using the forums and channels that we provide and who are not, and why?

To support this alongside our existing communications leads network, we have recently established an engagement professionals' network across the system.

This recognises that we must continue to build capability to ensure we keep up with new and more effective ways to communicate and engage.

By coming together we have the opportunity to plan and collaborate as a system. This will in turn enable more effective and efficient delivery of communications and engagement activity.

Embedding a collaborative approach

Working collaboratively across all parts of our system we can shape priorities for joint action which is then delivered locally and as close to our communities possible.

Our collaborative approach will be:

Purposeful:

Whilst our engagement will be driven by our strategic priorities, taking into account the agreed principles we have set out above, at neighbourhood, place and system level the approach will:

- Be clear about what involvement and engagement means, why it is being undertaken and any specific requirements for participation.
- Be aware of and take account of our stakeholders' needs and values in defining purpose
- Be aware of our stakeholders' objectives, the environment in which they operate and their level of expertise and influence

Inclusive:

Effective stakeholder engagement can only be achieved if we identify and enable the participation of those people and organisations that contribute to, influence, or are affected by our work. To promote inclusion, we will:

- Provide wider staff with the skills to enable them to engage effectively with the people collectively serve
- Engage with people in a way that best suits their needs
- Provide information using alternative formats
- Uphold the values and principles of public life, including dignity and respect

Impactful:

In order to achieve optimum outcomes for all, stakeholder engagement activity must be carried out in a timely manner where we are open and honest in our engagement with clearly set expectations. We will therefore:

- Involve stakeholders early in any activity in which they may have an interest or concern or where they can affect or be affected by the outcome.
- Seek open and honest feedback from our partners throughout our engagement
- Ensure stakeholders jointly agree on when and how to engage and the process will be clearly defined and understood by all. We will provide information so stakeholders can participate in a meaningful way and will foster a culture of sharing ideas
- Capture and share engagement activities at both strategic and operational levels to support effective decision-making

Evaluated:

The Partnership is committed to improving the effectiveness of our engagement with stakeholders over time. The outcomes we want to achieve are:

- An engaged and proactive community, who have access to updates about our plan and a variety of ways and means to ensure their voice is heard
- Positively enhanced our partnership culture so that our health and care staff working across the system feel informed, have a sense of ownership and are empowered every day to bring their best selves to work
- Established strong, partnership focussed working relationships with the public and other key stakeholders which have improved local confidence and endorsement and built a national reputation for people-led change
- Recognition as a partnership that has united to create the changes we want to see...and need to deliver.

A key element of to this will be evaluating our performance under this framework, making it a “live document” that we amend and add to as we grow.

To support this approach we will:

- Informally monitor the effectiveness of the framework, including the actions that support each of the principles as engagement professionals and within our local communities
- The Partnership Board will formally review this framework every year to determine whether it is operating and being applied effectively

- Act on recommendations from those reviews

Version

The edition dated July 2020

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Enable East