

Positively engaging in NHS change: how best to involve people

Wessex Voices Event Summary
December 2016





Key messages

The key messages that came out of participants' discussions about how people can be involved in NHS changes over the next 5-10 years are summarised below:

- People need **clarity** about the purpose, nature and limits of influence of their involvement.
- These conversations should be **open and honest**.
- Involve people in things that are **relevant and specific** to them.
- Do it in ways that are **tailored, exciting and use technology**, particularly to reach younger people. Positive stories, role models and scenarios can show the potential of change.
- Involve **existing networks** but **reach beyond** the usual suspects.
- Involvement activities need **resourcing** and **skilled people**.
- **People have a role to play** by committing to be a critical friend, making sure the best interests of patients are considered and holding the NHS to account.





'How people can be involved' workshop

Participants spent an hour discussing the key questions set out below:

- ? How can the NHS involve people in change over the coming years?
- ? What are the opportunities?
- ? What are the challenges? How can they be overcome?
- ? What role do you have to play?

Headline feedback from the workshop:

-  Go to where the people are. Even try to reach people in their homes
-  Use existing GP and community engagement and communication networks but also move beyond the usual suspects
-  Understand and accept where people are: be respectful, use plain language and be accessible. Do it on the people's terms. Don't do unto people
-  Revolutionise how things are done
-  Make communications exciting. Harness the use of social media
-  Give scenarios to show the potential of change; and use positive stories and role models to explain the changes (to reduce suspicion that this is about cuts)
-  Keep it specific, relevant and local
-  Hold events that encourage people to address their own health needs to spark their interest and get involved
-  Encourage GPs and health staff to get involved in making improvements
-  Resource this specialist engagement function
-  Be genuine, open and honest about problems. Don't over promise. Be realistic!
-  Be clear about how people's feedback will be used, as well as what it will and won't influence
-  Update people on what their feedback has influenced.





Recommendations

For the NHS (regionally and locally)

- 6 To resource support and development for NHS colleagues to develop their skills to communicate and involve people in change
- 6 To make the case for change by sharing potential future scenarios – using exciting, positive communications and human stories
- 6 To consider and report on the quality of patient and public involvement in service changes based on the principles of clarity, honesty and relevance
- 6 To review their existing community and voluntary sector contacts and dialogue with Councils for Voluntary Services and local Healthwatch, especially for those experiencing health inequalities
- 6 To promote ways to hear about the NHS changes to these groups and how people have been involved in local and regional changes on an ongoing basis.

For Wessex Voices and local Healthwatch

- 6 To continue to promote ways people can get involved if they want to
- 6 To provide practical support on what good involvement looks like
- 6 To explore with NHS England colleagues how they can quality assure involvement activities based on principles of clarity, honesty and relevance.

Wessex Voices will ask NHS England Wessex to respond to these recommendations. We will also ask them to share these headlines and recommendations with national and Wessex based local health and social care organisations.

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Sue Newell
Wessex Voice Project Manager

Contact us at:

 sue.newell@helpandcare.org.uk

 07595 424 198

 www.wessexvoices.org

 @wessexvoices