



NHS Grampian

Public Involvement/Engagement Team Annual Report

2024-2025

NHS Grampian – Caring – Listening – Improving

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gram.communications@nhs.scot

Introduction

This is NHS Grampian's first annual Public Involvement report, covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. It is intended to build on existing assurance reporting, through relevant structures including but not limited to the Population Health Committee, and provide relevant background context alongside progress reporting on the activity being undertaken by the Public Involvement (PI) Team during this period.

In addition to describing NHS Grampian's wider engagement activity and adherence to Planning with People guidance, the content of this report also supports the organisation's obligations with regard to the Consumer Scotland 2020 Duty.*

**NHS Grampian is a healthcare organisation with existing and comprehensive statutory duties of public involvement set out in the NHS Reform (Scotland) Act 2004. These duties are assured by Healthcare Improvement Scotland through its statutory duty defined in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. These existing statutory requirements fully cover the obligations of the Consumer Scotland Act 2020 duty.*

The History of the Public Involvement Team

The PI Team is managed by the Head of Engagement and consists of 4 substantive part-time staff, making up 1.6 whole time equivalent (WTE) posts*.

The original remit of the team when established in 2010, was to ensure compliance with [CEL4 2010](#), which ensured all NHS Boards involved service users and members of the public proportionately and meaningfully based on: *i) the scale of change determining the amount of involvement needed*, *ii) only engaging on things that can be influenced by involvement and iii) doing this well and taking action from what we hear* to inform service planning, change and redesign of all services.

Over the last 15 years the focus of the Team's focus has expanded from this responsibility for involving service users and the public, to ensuring all relevant stakeholders are proportionately and meaningfully engaged. This led to the Team name changing to the Engagement Team to better reflect its remit.

In addition, there are 3 part time staff (1.8WTE) who are assigned to and funded by Scottish Government capital projects. Information about these and other projects is available [here](#).

**It is notable that whilst delivering a significant amount of work, when non-substantive posts are removed, there are less than 2 WTE members of staff to provide involvement support for core NHS Grampian services and current/emerging priorities.*

Health and Social Care Partnership Engagement Arrangements

Before the integration of health and social care services was legislated in 2016, Moray had a only a single Public Involvement Officer but even this limited resource wasn't replicated in Aberdeen City or Aberdeenshire. NHS Grampian's PI Team therefore provided support for stakeholder involvement activity for services delivered in these two areas.

In 2025 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) now each have a dedicated member of staff focussed on engagement, meaning engagement colleagues can link with one another to provide cross-system support whenever required.



Did you know you can follow us on 'X' by clicking [here](#)

Introduction of Planning with People Guidance

The Scottish Government updated engagement guidance for Boards in 2021, for the first time in over 11 years. This guidance, called Planning with People (PwP), brought a shift in language and focus away from 'moment in time' patient-focused public involvement, to more continuous, relationship and trust-building community engagement.

The PwP guidance was then updated again in 2023 and 2024, with the latest iteration recognising the amount of service change and redesign that will be needed for post-pandemic reform as well as an enhanced role for Health Improvement Scotland in deciding how much engagement is required to be undertaken, rather than a monitoring only role.

Major Service Change

Another aim of the update was to introduce a new process to follow for all service change. Previously, only service changes which were deemed as being significantly different were classified as Major Service Change (MSC). However, to establish if service change meets this definition now, an MSC template is required to be completed and submitted to Health Improvement Scotland – Community Engagement (HIS-CE) to support them in making this decision.

Their decision takes into consideration how much change might be introduced, how much impact it is likely to have on service users and how many service users/members of the public are likely to be impacted.

The process, introduced in April 2024, means that all service change must now be reported to HIS-CE and when change is classified as being MSC, HIS-CE monitor engagement planning, activity and evaluation throughout the process.

Consumer Duty Scotland Act 2020

In addition to PwP guidance, there are existing and comprehensive statutory duties of public involvement that apply to all Scottish Health Boards, from the [NHS Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#).

These duties are assured by Healthcare Improvement Scotland through its statutory duty defined in the [Public Services Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#). These existing

statutory requirements fully cover the obligations of the [Consumer Scotland Act 2020](#) (CSA-2020) duty.

Boards have been advised that if they comply with existing statutory engagement duties, this will be viewed as also meeting those obligations in the Consumer Scotland Act.

NHS Grampian is summarising its approach to meeting these statutory engagement duties within this annual report, which bolsters our ongoing dialogue with HIS and individual reporting lines supporting specific consultations and service changes.

An Evolving Role

Nationally mandated service change, local priorities and our commitment to Putting People First mean that the Engagement Team today plays a key role in empowering and up-skilling colleagues through developing resources and delivering training to enable them to deliver best practice engagement.

In addition to supporting colleagues, the Engagement Team actively engage and involve citizens and local communities with service design and change in a range of meaningful and interesting ways.

NHS Grampian's Approach to Engagement

- Ongoing active, transparent and two-way engagement, continually creating connections to build trust.
- Those with lived experience, including seldom heard voices, are an integral part of all service developments and improvements, as part of a culture of co-production.
- All individuals are supported to access care, treatment and support in a way that is best for them.

Barriers, Challenges and Opportunities

The Engagement Team understand that a great deal of work will be required over the coming period to modernise and redesign services in accordance with national priorities and financial considerations.

To support this the team has developed a suite of resources through collaboration and partnership working with colleagues from Public Health, a range of Public Sector Partners, Community and Third Sector Colleagues, and through Community Planning Aberdeen and the Grampian Engagement Network (GEN).

These resources have been thoughtfully selected and developed to support colleagues with a wide range of engagement requirements and activities [Community Engagement Toolkit - Community Planning Aberdeen](#).

The Engagement Team pages on NHS Grampian's corporate website act as a 'One Stop Shop' to enable and empower staff to access support and materials. In addition to resources and training, the Engagement Team respond to colleagues seeking advice who don't find what they are looking for or would like to talk to a member of the team for advice.

Training and Web based Resources – ‘Engagement one stop shop’

During 2025/26 the team refreshed and relaunched the [Public Involvement](#) web pages. Whether visitors are a member of the public, partner organisation or staff member, there is information to encourage and support their participation. Among the refreshed content are resources that explain the engagement cycle, links to necessary guidance, ways to get involved for members of the public and staff as well as toolkits to help individuals or teams to engage with their stakeholders.

Service Change and Service Design

Another key function of the Engagement Team, is to provide guidance and support that enables teams to comply with statutory duties to involve people meaningfully and proportionately when designing or redesigning services and progressing capital projects.

This support ensures that communities and stakeholders have opportunities to be involved and, crucially, to influence any plans and changes. In this way we ensure services are designed ‘with’ people and not ‘for’ people. Ongoing projects and services currently being supported include:

- The Baird Family Hospital – new build Foresterhill Site
- The ANCHOR Centre – new build Foresterhill Site
- Integrated Mortuary Project – new build Foresterhill Site
- National CAELUS Drones Project – NHS Grampian Led
- Long Covid Pathway Development
- Maternity Collaborative Programme
- Mental Health and Learning Disability services
- New Pharmacy Application Public Consultations
- CAR-T (Chimeric Antigen Receptor Therapy) Project
- Adult Weight Management Service
- Integrated Acute Pathway Redesigns

Some more information about some of the above projects can be found at the below links:

[Welcome - The Baird Family Hospital & The ANCHOR Centre](#)

[Integrated Mortuary Project](#)

[CAELUS](#)

[Lived Experience](#)

[Elgin Pharmacy](#)

<https://www.birthingrampian.scot.nhs.uk/moray-maternity/>

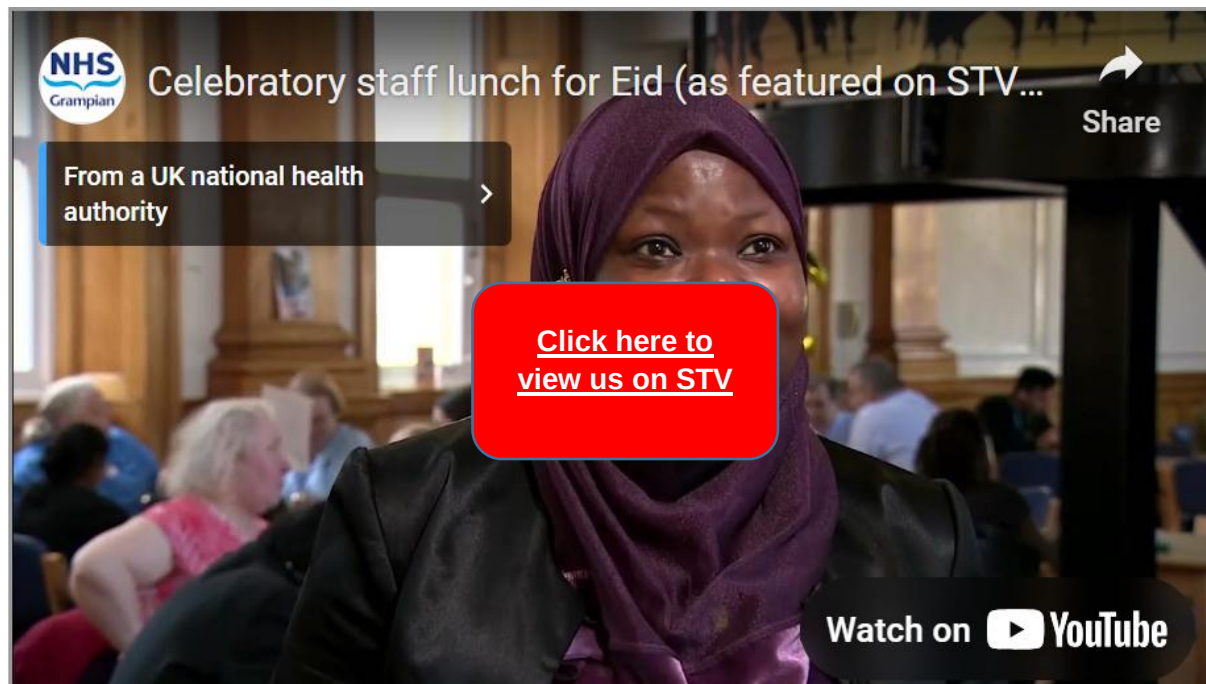
Inclusive Engagement

There is a symbiotic relationship which exists between inclusive workplace culture and inclusive engagement practice. Listening to the voice of our diverse workforce and the voice of our local communities often means listening to the same people.

This helps to raise the visibility of NHS Grampian as an inclusive anchor organisation, means people can see their values reflected, helps build trust and

creates new opportunities for more diverse and inclusive conversation and collaboration. Recent examples of engaging and involving local faith-based communities in a way that was meaningful to both colleagues and communities can be seen among our events programme [here](#).

[NHS Grampian welcomes local faith based communities into ARI to celebrate with colleagues around events in the diversity calendar](#)



Hearing from a diverse range of voices and communities across Grampian is recognised as being vital to getting services right for everybody. Where possible, relationships with community groups are proactively developed by employing an asset based approach towards enhance partnership working.

Tapping into the expertise of our Public Sector Partners and Third Sector Colleagues is a vital element of this work, enabling us to reach and collaborate with people throughout Grampian that may not otherwise be heard. Some examples of this are; younger people, older people, carers, people living in poverty, long-term condition support groups and more vulnerable, harder to reach people in rural communities.

Public and Patient Involvement

It is now easier than ever for members of the public to get involved in the work of NHS Grampian, without having to leave home.

Through the [NHS Grampian Public Involvement Network \(PIN\)](#), people can participate in a range of ways, including being a Public Representative on boards and committees, providing feedback on a range of projects through the completion of questionnaires or by participating in workshops and other interactive opportunities.

However, the Engagement Team recognise that hospitals offer people and communities more than just healthcare and wellbeing services. We therefore showcase our hospital sites as hubs that also offer vibrant and diverse activities.

You may be surprised to learn that there are lots of interesting opportunities for people and communities to take a unique behind the scenes look and experience the daily life of our hospitals.

By taking this approach, we develop and deliver a range of innovative involvement activities that take an asset-based approach to citizen engagement and involvement by meeting people where they are interested.

Examples of these activities are on the Public Involvement webpages [here](#).

Partnerships and Networks

The Engagement Team harnesses the expertise of Public Sector Partners and Third Sector Colleagues as valued members of the wider Grampian health and care system whenever possible.

During the Pandemic, staff in engagement roles in Grampian found themselves trying to ‘do’ engagement with people and communities at a time when everyone was learning to live and work in isolation.

So, with the aim of creating a space for those with roles or an interest in engagement, the Engagement Team decided to launch a Grampian Engagement Network (GEN). The GEN provides an invaluable forum for collaboration, co-design, shared learning and good practice as well as peer support.

It also recognises and celebrates the fact that Grampian is comprised of many diverse voices and is intended to be a Community of Practice supporting colleagues from a wide range of sectors across the region to come together regularly.

Engagement training, sourced and coordinated by the Engagement Team, and delivered to GEN members, has included; the Scottish Approach to Service Design (SAatSD), National Standards for Community Engagement, delivered by Scottish Community Development Centre and Planning with People training by HIS-CE.

Interest and participation in the GEN has seen its membership increase significantly, as people with a desire or professional need to connect and collaborate with others gravitate towards it to share and learn from others experiencing similar challenge.

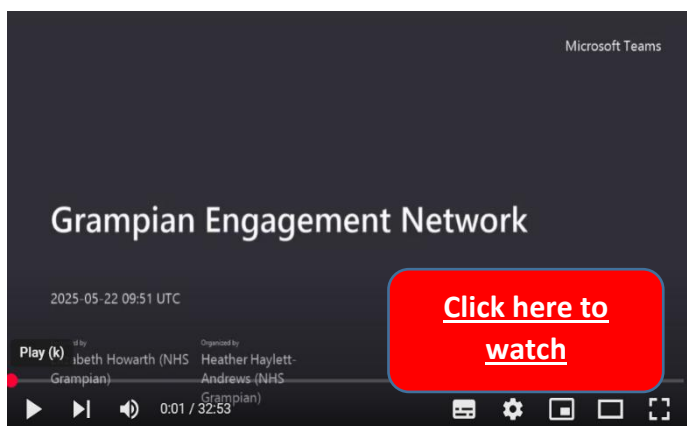
An early ambition of the GEN was to co-develop some best practice engagement principles. Entitled the ‘Hallmark for Engagement’, these principles went out for consultation in August 2021, at which time the Network’s membership was comprised of 40 engagement practitioners from a variety of organisations across Grampian, including but not limited to:

- NHS Grampian
- Health and Social Care Partnerships
- Third Sector

- Public Representatives
- Community Planning
- Local Authority

Membership in 2024/25 has since grown to around 80 and the GEN continues to meet regularly throughout the year. Over the past year the GEN has been steered by a small group comprising NHS Grampian Engagement, Public Health and SHMU Radio. Together it has delivered a number of special online and in-person learning sessions, which has included spotlights on the following areas:

- Community Paradigm
- The Radical Potential of Participatory Budgeting
- The Innovative Practice of Participatory Research



In May the GEN welcomed Kevin McDermott, Community Learning and Development (CLD) Manager at Moray Council as our guest speaker. Kevin presented to colleagues some of his experience from a rich and varied life time career working in engagement, and the important role of CLD in building stronger communities.

You can find out more about the GEN and our Hallmark for Engagement [here](#).

The NHS Grampian Public Involvement Network

NHS Grampian has had a [Public Involvement Network](#) (PIN) since 2010. As the name suggests, the group offers community groups, third sector organisations and members of the public a range of ways to engage with NHS Grampian and helps ensure they are actively involved with our organisation.

A review of the PIN began during 2024/25, born out of a desire to grow this valuable resource but the recognition that active participation is challenging for increasingly time-poor individuals. PIN Members are often also members of other groups and consequently they have finite capacity and must balance competing demands on their time.

Engagement with existing PIN members was undertaken to gather their views on how the membership could be expanded and a wider audience reached for the purposes of recruitment. This informed the development of a new, two-tier structure which will support members to be actively involved in projects, groups or committees through greater flexibility - allowing them to commit more or less of their time depending upon their circumstances and capacity. This will be rolled-out during summer 2025.

Summary of Public and Partner Involvement Networks

In addition to public and patient involvement, the Engagement Team recognise that staff are key stakeholders in any engagement process. As part of a commitment to facilitating inclusive engagement, the Engagement Team support a number of equalities-focused networks such as the Staff Equalities Network and the Neurodiversity Empowerment Group.

These networks enable the voice of colleagues to be heard and complement established partner and community forums across the wider Grampian system, including our third sector colleagues and public sector partners, including University of Aberdeen, Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC) and Aberdeen City Council.

Some of the recent sessions have covered:

- [Understanding the health needs of asylum seekers living in communal accommodation in NHS Grampian](#)
- [NHS Grampian Digital Take Over - Does technology create greater or lesser equality in the workplace?](#)
- [Improving healthcare service provision for LGBTQ+ patients](#)
- [NHS Grampian Digital Take Over - What does AI mean for digital equality?](#)
- ['Speak up culture and antiracism' in NHS Grampian](#)
- [Speak Up and Antiracism – 'One Year On' in person event](#)

Public Involvement Team - Public Engagement Networks

NHS Grampian Involvement Networks
For our partners, patients and communities

Grampian Engagement Network (GEN)

The GEN is a network of engagement practitioners and those with an interest in engagement from a range of organisations, and from across all sectors in Grampian. The aim is to work in a collaborative way, share best practice and avoid duplication.

For more information contact gram.involve@nhs.scot or scan the code

Public Involvement Network (PIN)

The Public Involvement Network (PIN) provides a range of opportunities for members of the public to be involved with NHS Grampian. Our Public Representatives helps to ensure that services are developed in partnership with people who use our services.

For more information contact gram.involve@nhs.scot or scan the code

Grampian Maternity Voices Partnership

The Grampian MVP is an independent advisory and action forum made up of service users, their representatives and NHS staff. It exists to make sure that NHS Grampian listens to and takes account of the views and experiences of the people who use the local maternity services.

For more information contact gram.involve@nhs.scot or scan the code

Public Involvement Team - Staff Engagement Networks

NHS Grampian Staff Networks

Improving the Staff Experience – Everyone welcome!



Staff Equalities Network
Improving Staff Experience

Staff Equalities Network (SEN)

The SEN is open to all health and care staff. The Network meets regularly to share learning and good practice, and supports NHS Grampian towards becoming and anti-racist and anti-discriminatory organisation.

For more information contact gram.staffequalities@nhs.scot or scan the code





Neurodiversity Empowerment Group (NEG)

The Neurodiversity Empowerment Group has been established to bring together individuals who have a personal and/or professional interest in making NHSG a more neuro friendly place to work.

For more information contact gram.staffequalities@nhs.scot or scan the code





Grampian Empowered Multicultural Staff (GEMS) Group

The GEMS has been established to help centre the voices our ethnically and culturally diverse colleagues. The GEMS is open to anyone who is passionate about advancing the principles of antiracism in NHS Grampian.

For more information contact gram.staffequalities@nhs.scot or scan the code





Culture Collaborative Open Forum

The Culture Collaborative Open Forum runs on a monthly basis and is open to all colleagues across NHS Grampian who want to learn about, nurture and develop supportive, inclusive and empowering work cultures in NHS Grampian where the values of caring, listening and improving are evident in every day practice.

For more information contact gram.culturematters@nhs.scot

Public Involvement Team – Service Change Conversations



We know that as part of our ongoing organisation wide transformation programme services are changing and evolving all of the time. When services are designed or redesigned in ways which may affect the way people access care, there are legal requirements set out in legislation that must be followed as part of the process. Therefore the Engagement team can now offer Service Change Conversations training. This explains what services have to be aware of, looks at the guidance in more detail and also covers:

- Understanding what constitutes service change
- Understanding what constitutes major service change
- Understanding the legislation which must be followed
- Understanding the engagement process
- Understanding the business case for engagement during a service change
- Examples of this in practice
- Find out about resources and who else can help

Public Involvement Team – Engagement 101 Training: ‘Why you should be engaging with you patients every day and how to get started’



The Public Involvement Team have piloted a relaxed and informal session which has been designed as an introduction to patient and service user engagement for those who may be new to engagement or interested to find out more so they can make a difference in the service they work in.

This session will offer colleagues a ‘whistle stop tour’ about engagement practice to help demystify what is involved and provide you with some simple next steps for how to get started.

By participating in this session, colleagues will gain an understanding of:

- Why and when to engage
- The business case for engagement
- The Engagement cycle (process for engagement)
- How to get started with your engagement
- Who else can help
- Suggested next steps

Following the successful pilot, the Engagement Team are in a process of *define and refine* in advance of making the session available to book on Turas.

These sessions have been designed to contribute to a portfolio of offerings which have been developed with colleagues in Public Health and alongside colleagues in Community Planning Aberdeen and the Grampian Engagement Network (GEN).

Foundations of Community Engagement Training



Are you a member of staff who is looking to undertake a piece of engagement? This session will support you to develop awareness and knowledge of community engagement, whether that be a community based on common geography (country, locality, neighborhood, etc.) or common interest (values, religion, health needs, etc.), which may include a range of stakeholders, including citizens, businesses and residents

By the end of the course, you should feel more confident undertaking community engagement in your role, and have an awareness of the main aspects involved in community engagement, including:

- The importance of identifying an issue to engage on.
- The main barriers to participation for communities

- The purpose of the VOICE planning tool
- Practical engagement tools
- Evaluating a community engagement project
- The National Standards for Community engagement
- Managing difficult conversations
- The importance of communicating engagement outputs and subsequent decisions with participants

Grampian Engagement Digital Toolkit – everything you need to set up for success.



As recommended by the Scottish Government in Planning with People, this toolkit is based upon the Engagement Cycle. This toolkit has been designed by colleagues in Grampian to empower colleagues to engage with patients and our local communities and will help you to make positive improvements within your service.

Whether you are looking to do everyday patient engagement or need support with service change, this toolkit will provide step by step support that can help anyone, regardless of their experience or job description to access to the tools they need to help make improvements happen.

This interactive digital toolkit is a place where anyone can go to find out how to do a range of engagement activities and access the tools that they will need to be successful. The toolkit also provides lots of tips, ideas and local information to support engagement across Aberdeen City and the wider Grampian system

[Let's get started](#)

Planning your Engagement with VOiCE

Online planning and recording software that makes engagement easy

The Engagement team are also encouraging colleague to use Voice. Voice is planning and recording software that helps individuals, organisations and partnerships to design and deliver effective engagement. [Voice — VOiCE.](#)





Connect with local communities and lived experience groups – all at your fingertips with ALISS

The Engagement Team also highlight resources to staff such as ALISS [ALISS - A Local Information System for Scotland | ALISS](#). ALISS is a national online platform that enables individuals and professionals to access information about resources in their communities.

Thinking to the future... The Engagement Team see the fast paced and changing landscape and we will continue to innovate and evolve to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Whilst we work to formalise the supports we have developed, we remain a solution orientated team, with a firm focus on emerging technologies, whilst at the same time being on hand to offer a person centred service for our patients, colleagues and communities.

