


**Evolving through
Involving...**



Involving People in Planned Service Change

People should be at the heart of service change

Many service changes are planned improvements, redesigns or developments that may affect patients, carers, families and communities. Even when a change is not considered 'major', people should still be involved in decisions that affect how services are delivered.

Meaningful involvement helps services understand potential impacts, identify opportunities for improvement and design services that better meet people's needs.

What is a planned service change?

A planned service change is a proposed change to how services are delivered that:

- Is not temporary
- Is not expected to meet the criteria for major service change
- May affect patients, carers, staff and / or communities
- Requires appropriate engagement and communication

Examples include:

- Changes to clinic locations or opening arrangements
- Introduction of new digital or virtual services
- Service redesign to improve patient experience
- Changes to referral pathways or care processes
- Implementation of new models of care

- Changes that affect how people access services

Five things every team should do:

Before or as soon as possible after identifying a change:

1. Understand the impact

Understanding potential impacts early helps services design better solutions and avoid unintended consequences.

Before developing proposals:

- Identify who uses the service
- Map stakeholders who may be affected
- Complete an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)
- Consider impacts on access, travel and inequalities
- Identify potential risks and benefits

2. Involve people early

Before decisions are made:

- Speak with patients, carers and communities
- Engage with staff and partner organisations
- Involve groups who may be disproportionately affected
- Ask people about challenges, opportunities and possible solutions

People with lived experience often identify practical issues and improvements that may otherwise be overlooked.

3. Communicate clearly

Clear, honest and accessible communication helps build understanding and trust.

Tell people:

- What is changing
- Why change is being considered

- What options are available
- How people can share their views
- What happens next
- How decisions will be made

4. Seek and use feedback

Ways to gather feedback may include:

- Conversations and discussion groups
- Online surveys
- Care Opinion feedback
- Meetings with stakeholders and community groups
- Written feedback and questionnaires
- Existing participation and involvement groups

Feedback should inform proposals and help shape the final decision wherever possible.

5. Show how views have influenced decisions

When engagement is complete:

- Review what people have told you
- Consider feedback alongside operational, clinical and financial information
- Explain how feedback influenced proposals
- Communicate decisions and next steps
- Continue to keep people informed during implementation

Closing the feedback loop demonstrates that people's contributions have been listened to and valued.

Think about equality and accessibility

Good engagement should:

- Be accessible to different communities
- Include people with protected characteristics
- Reach people whose voices are not always heard
- Consider travel, access and potential inequalities

- Use information in accessible formats where needed

Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in decisions that may affect them.

What does good involvement looks like?

- Early engagement
- Understanding impact
- Inclusive and accessible approaches
- Listening to diverse perspectives
- Transparent communication
- Acting on feedback
- Explaining decisions
- Ongoing dialogue with communities

The NHS Grampian Public Involvement Team

The NHS Grampian Public Involvement Team have a range of resources available on their website to help do great engagement, including, Service Change Conversations, [VOiCE](#) Engagement Planning Tool, The Grampian Digital [Engagement Toolkit](#), Foundations of [Community Engagement](#) Training and Engagement 101 Training, now available to book on Turas [here](#)

We also provide some of the [key documents](#) you will need to get started. To access all of this and much more, you can visit our website [here](#)

Key message

Not every service change is a major service change, but every service change should consider the needs, experiences and views of the people who use services.

Early involvement, meaningful engagement and clear communication help services make better decisions and improve outcome for patients, carers, families and communities.

NHS Grampian Engagement Team – here to support Services to involve people in decisions that will impact them.

Please contact gram.involve@nhs.scot for advice as early as possible when planning service changes.

