



Sefton Borough Partnership

YOUR SEFTON YOUR SAY

**A PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
AND CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK**

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1 What this Framework will do

This Public Engagement and Consultation Framework explains how we work with our communities as part of our Sustainable Communities Strategy. This Framework gives us clear information on how to speak with and listen to our communities and get them involved in the work we do.

We, and the following organisations, will follow this framework.

- Sefton Council
- NHS Sefton
- Sefton Council for Voluntary Service
- Sefton Equalities Partnership
- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
- Merseyside Police
- Any other partner organisation that uses this framework

By using this framework, we and the organisations above agree to:

- follow a set of principles and standards that influence the way we speak with and listen to our communities; and
- support and develop ways of working that will give us detailed information on people living in Sefton.

The aim of these principles, standards and ways of working is to make sure that we can improve the way we speak with and listen to our communities. This framework will give us better information which we can share with our partners. It will also stop us from doing the same jobs twice, which will then save us money.

This Framework gives us clear information on how to speak with and listen to our communities and get them involved in the work we do.

2 Our Main Aims

We want to make sure that we support our communities to get involved in the public services they receive.

Our main aims are to:

- know and work with our communities and understand their needs, in particular those who may experience discrimination or who are vulnerable (people who have an illness, a disability or who are elderly);
- make sure that we involve our communities in identifying issues that are important to them;
- ask our communities whether or not we have achieved the things that are important to them; and

- work with other partners (people using this framework) when we want to speak with or listen to our communities, and we will tell our communities about what we find.

The Public Engagement and Consultation Panel will check that we are achieving these aims.

3 The Public Engagement and Consultation Panel

Our Public Engagement and Consultation Panel makes sure that the way we speak with and listen to our communities is of a high standard.

The Panel is made up of:

- the Cabinet Member for Performance and Governance;
- the Cabinet Member for Communities;

Our Public Engagement and Consultation Panel makes sure that the way we speak with and listen to our communities is of a high standard

- a representative from the Labour Group;
- a non-executive member from NHS Sefton;
- representatives from the Community Empowerment Network;
- a representative from Merseyside Police;
- a representative from the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service;
- a representative from Sefton Young Advisors (paid professional young people aged 15 to 21 who advise adults on how to work with young people).
- the number of people who took part and the costs of the different methods of getting them involved; and
- how successful different methods were at getting the views of people who are not normally heard, for example children, young people and people with disabilities.

For an activity to be successful, there must be proof that our work has made changes to how we provide a service.

The Panel will also receive feedback, assessment reports and presentations from our partners. This feedback will be about:

- how we carried out our work;
- the opinions of the people taking part on how they found the process;

The Partnership Public Engagement and Consultation Panel will report to the Cabinet Member for Performance and Governance and the NHS Sefton Board.



4 Important principles

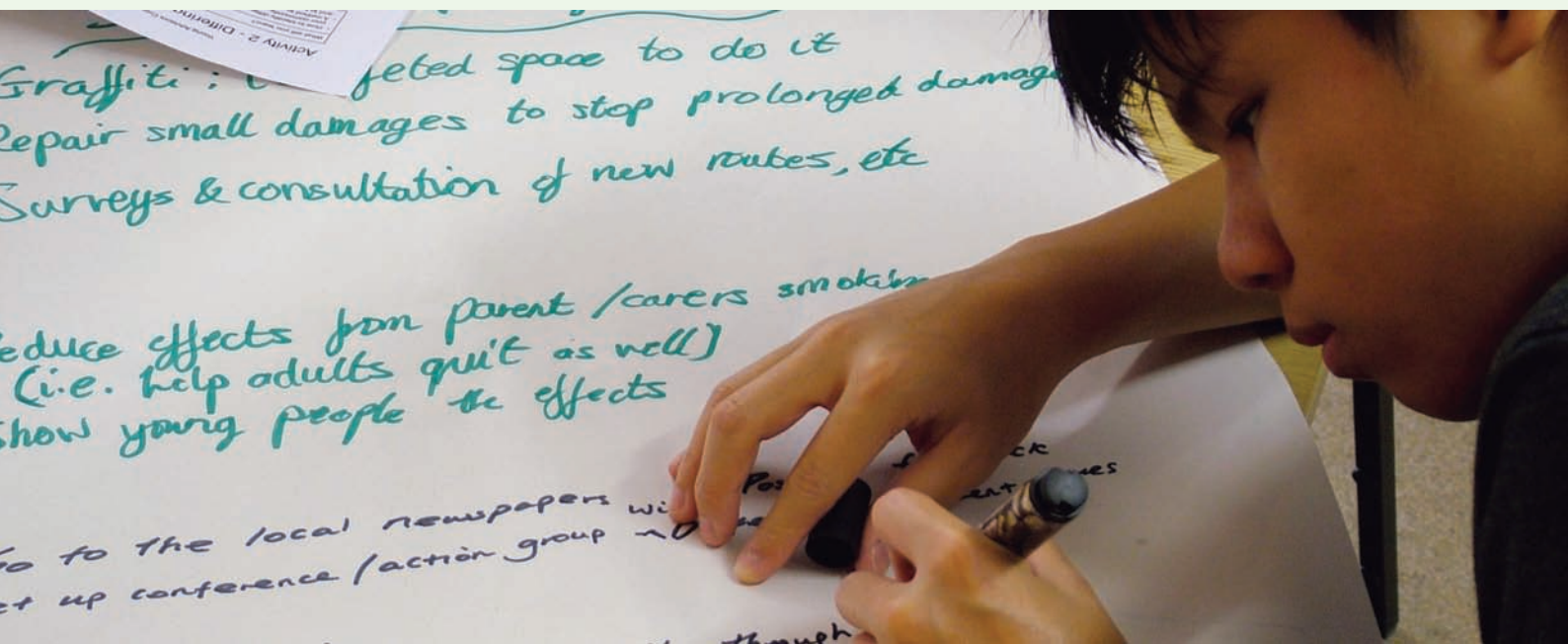
To maintain high standards in the way we work with our communities, we will use the following important principles in everything we do.

We will:

- put people at the heart of how we develop a service;
- treat the involvement of our communities as a developing process, which grows and improves over time;
- monitor, assess and improve the way we speak with and listen to our communities by sharing information with our partners;
- give our stakeholders (people who have an interest in our organisation) feedback on the results of the work we do;

- work in a fair and clear way;
- recognise difference and make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be involved;
- make sure that anyone we speak with and listen to has all the information they need to get involved;
- make sure people know how they can influence the decisions we make; and;
- set standards for how we work with our communities, and keep to them.

The Partnership Public Engagement and Consultation Panel will make sure we keep to these standards.



5 The standards

We will use these standards to make sure that the work we do with our communities is of a high quality and fair.

These standards will help us get a better understanding of our communities and stop us from doing the same work twice.

Standard 1:

The way we want to speak with and listen to our communities is clear

We will make sure that our work:

- has clear aims that explain what we are asking people's views on, what we are not asking people's views on and any limits we have to work within;
- includes a review of the other work we are currently doing, so we know this work is needed;

- is linked with other similar work, so we don't do the same work twice;
- includes information on the influence people are likely to have, and the expected costs and benefits; and
- follows all relevant legal requirements - for example, the Freedom of Information Act, the Duty to Inform, Consult and Involve and the Equalities Duties.

Standard 2:

We identify all local people who are likely to be affected or interested

We will make sure that:

- we make a list of all local people - for example, members of the public (including young people and those that may experience discrimination or who may be vulnerable), elected members, the community empowerment network, staff and other stakeholders; and



- we make the work we are doing easy to get involved in, and that we clearly target the people we want to speak with and listen to.

Standard 3:

We have a public engagement and consultation plan that is value for money

We will make sure that:

- we upload onto eConsult (an online calendar) the plan details, aims and realistic timescales;
- the plan includes actions, methods and approaches which are appropriate for the target audience;
- the plan allows everyone interested to give us their feedback;
- we choose an officer who has the relevant skills and knowledge to lead the work we are doing; and

- the plan includes an equality impact assessment (an analysis to help us decide how our decisions will affect different groups).

Standard 4:

All relevant information is available in appropriate formats and written in plain English for people who want to see it

We will make sure that we:

- make all background documents, supporting documents and information available at the time we carry out the work, including our reasons for carrying out the work;
- clearly discuss the decisions we make; and
- use all appropriate public resources.

All relevant information is available in appropriate formats and written in plain English for people who want to see it

Standard 5:

We record all responses accurately and fairly

We will make sure that we:

- accurately record all the information we find from the work we do; and
- upload information onto eConsult.

Standard 6:

We have a clear plan for giving feedback on the results from our work with the community

We will make sure that we:

- have a list of the people who took part and their views and comments;
- give everyone who took part in our work the chance to see the results we found;

- have a clear process to give feedback to people who did not take part, but who are still affected; and
- tell people about the suggestions we cannot use and explain why.

Standard 7:

The results of our work with the public and how it has influenced our policies and plans

We will make sure that we:

- use the information we have found to develop our policies and service plans; and
- tell people about any changes we make.



Standard 8:

Assessing how effective our work is

We will make sure that we:

- assess how effective and efficient our work has been; and
- share what we have learnt, and use this for the next time we want to speak with and listen our communities.

6 What we mean by 'engagement and consultation'

The words 'engagement' and 'consultation' can mean different things. To us, engagement is more than simply making information available or gathering opinions and attitudes. We should use the views and opinions we receive to help us make decisions on or changes to our service plans.

We believe it is important to get our community involved in designing and assessing services. This should improve things for local people.

We must consider what we can do to communicate effectively with all local people, so that everyone can have their say. It is important that the wider community understand how they can get involved in activities before they start, and that they feel able to do so. It is also important that we keep local people informed throughout the process, and tell them: -

- what is going to happen with the information they have given us;
- what changes we will make as a result of the work we have done with them; and
- how else they can get involved.

For this partnership public engagement and consultation framework, people can get involved at five levels (see box on next page).



Informing

We will make sure that our communities are fully aware of local initiatives, issues and opportunities to get involved in our work. We should be able to give local people information before we provide any activities for them to get involved in.

Consulting (getting people's views)

We want to get the views of people in our communities, so we can put together our plans and services.

Deciding together

Making decisions using our communities' views.

Acting together

We have long-term partnerships where local people are involved in making decisions and reviewing plans or services.

Supporting local initiatives

People can get involved in leading, delivering or developing local initiatives. Adapted from 'The Framework for Participation', Wilcox, 1994

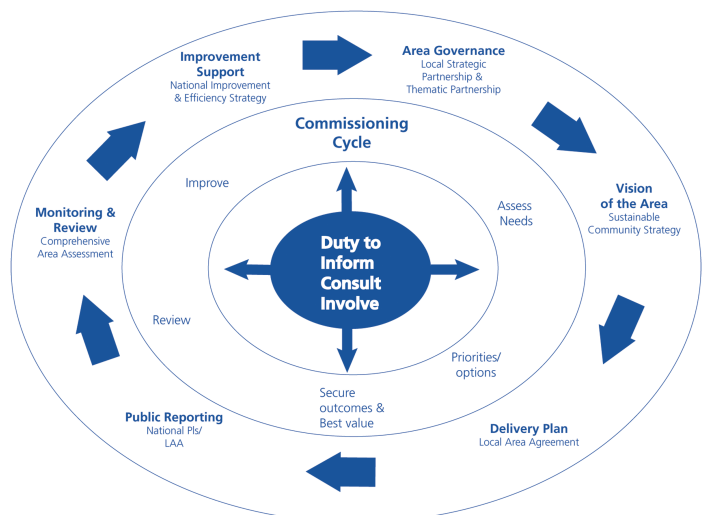
7 How will we know if it is working?

By reviewing our progress, we can make any changes or improvements we need to. We will also be able to make sure that local people are receiving the best possible services.

We understand that everyone has a part to play in creating strong, safe, successful and healthy communities that put the people at the heart of what we do. A new performance framework has been developed by the Department of Communities and Local Government

Performance Framework Model

Taken from: **Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities, Statutory Guidance 2008**



8 Measuring our performance

The Public Engagement and Consultation Panel is responsible for managing how we perform. To check whether or not the framework is having an effect, the panel will use the following scorecard to identify areas we need to develop, and also areas where we are showing good practice.

Results of the public engagement and consultation framework	How we will know we have been successful
<p>We know and work with our communities and understand their needs, in particular those who may experience discrimination or who are vulnerable.</p>	<p>National Indicator (NI) 7 There will be a successful community, faith and voluntary sector</p> <p>We have completed an equality impact assessment for an activity to get people involved in our work.</p> <p>We can show that we have spoken with and listened to local people according to the Standards for Engagement and Consultation.</p>
<p>We have made sure that we have involved our communities in identifying the issues that are important to them.</p>	<p>National Indicator (NI) 4 The number of people who feel they can influence decisions in their local area.</p> <p>National Indicator (NI) 3 Civic participation (more local people are involved in community activity in the local area).</p> <p>National Indicator (NI) 27 The number of people who agree that the police and other local public services seek the views of local people on anti-social behaviour and crime.</p> <p>We can show that we have made changes to how we deliver services, as a result of the work we carried out with the local community.</p>

Results of the public engagement and consultation framework

How we will know we have been successful

We have asked our communities whether we have achieved the things that are important to them.

National Indicator (NI) 3

Civic participation (more local people are involved in community activity) in the local area.

National Indicator (NI) 4

The number of people who feel they can influence decisions in their local area.

National Indicator (NI) 5

Overall satisfaction (More people are happy with the local area).

National Indicator (NI) 21

The number of people who agree that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime.

We have made progress on the Equality Standard for Local Government, which is a way for local authorities to make sure that nobody is discriminated against.

We have worked with other partners when we have wanted to speak with and listen to our communities, and we have told our local communities about what we have found.

National Indicator (NI) 14

Reducing avoidable contact (we are limiting the contact that has little or no value to the customer).

We can show that we are working with partners to plan, design and deliver our work with the local community, and that we are sharing the results of the activities.

We can show that we have financial control and we are making the most of the resources we have available.

9 Associated documents

A Guide to Equality Impact Assessments, EqIA Learning Resource
Website: www.idea.gov.uk/EqIA

The Sefton Compact: Working Better Together
For more information email neil.frackelton@seftoncvcs.org.uk

HM Government Code of Practice on Consultation, July 2008
Website: www.bre.berr.gov.uk

Eversheds Local Government Briefing Note, November 2008
Effective Consultations - What are the requirements?
Website: www.eversheds.com

Section 242 of the 2006 National Health (NHS) Service Act www.dh.gov.uk

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
Website: www.dh.gov.uk

Communities and Local Government White Paper: Communities in Control:
Real people, real power July, 2008
Website: www.communities.gov.uk

Developing Your Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy:
A Practical Guide for LSPs, March 2009 Website: www.idea.gov.uk

10 Contact details

The Public Engagement and Consultation Team
Sefton Equalities Partnership, 5th Floor, Merseyside 3TC Building,
16 Crosby Road North, Waterloo Merseyside L22 0NY

Phone: 0151 928 2233, extension 380 or 301

Email: jayne.vincent@chief-executives.sefton.gov.uk
or paul.mccann@chief-executives.sefton.gov.uk

Sefton Equalities Partnership is managed by Sefton Council for Voluntary Service.

Registered office: 3rd Floor, Merseyside 3TC Centre, 16 Crosby Road North,
Waterloo, L22 0NY.

Registered charity number: 1024546.

Registered in England and Wales as a Company Limited by
Guarantee number: 2832920.

**YOUR SEFTON
YOUR SAY**

5th Floor, Merseyside 3TC Building, Waterloo, Merseyside L22 0NY

Email: jayne.vincent@chief-executives.sefton.gov.uk
or paul.mccann@chief-executives.sefton.gov.uk

www.yourseftonyoursay.co.uk

