



Community Engagement

1. Introduction

Commissioning bodies need to fully understand the needs of the population they serve. In addition, they need to be confident that providers are flexible and responsive to feedback and changes in local need. Without clear mechanisms of hearing from and involving service users, carers and the wider population, commissioners cannot adequately ensure that they are meeting local need.

Over the last decade, there have been numerous policy drivers for user involvement across Health and Social Care. All have highlighted the need for putting the service users at the centre of decision making, whether on an individual care basis, or in terms of driving forward local strategy.

The [Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act](#) (2007) clarified and re-enforced the duty of health organisations to consult and involve on the planning and provision of local services and extended this ‘Duty to Involve’ to include Local Authorities. Since April 2009, all Local Authorities have had a duty to “embed a culture of engagement and empowerment. This means that authorities consider, as a matter of course, the possibilities for provision of information to, consultation with and involvement of representatives of local persons across all authority functions”.¹

The recent consultation document [Best Value: New Draft Statutory Guidance](#) (2011) sets out the Government’s desire to ensure that involvement mechanisms also include strong links to local and voluntary organisations.

2. The Local Picture

The following is a summary of Community Engagement activities undertaken in the London Borough of Hounslow during 2010/11.

2.1 Activities undertaken with children and young people

- Youth Council – The work of the Youth Council is ongoing as a voice for young people between the ages of 11-21 years in Hounslow. The focus for its work during 2010/11 was around cuts to youth services, transport and volunteering. Around 30 young people are involved in this work.
- Young People’s representation – The Citizenship and Participation team continued to support young people’s representation on the Hounslow Together Board (the local strategic partnership), its delivery groups (including the Children’s Trust Board) and others including the Community Police Consultative Group and the Disability Community Forum.
- Children in Care Council – The Children in Care Council provides an opportunity for Looked After Children in Hounslow to hold the Borough to account, influence service delivery and support the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel. The work of the Council is ongoing. Around 15 people are engaged in the Council, though considerably higher numbers of young people are attracted to their events.

¹ www.involve.org.uk (2009)



- Young People's Evaluation of Sexual Health Services – Completed in July 2010, this "Mystery Shopping" project involved young people aged 16 years and over. The evaluation provided a broadly positive report on contraceptive services in Hounslow. The young people involved (four young women) trained another group of six young people to take over from them for 2011/12.
- Disability Awareness Day – Around 20-25 young people between the ages of 13-19 years used blindfolds, wheelchairs and other impediments to simulate living with a disability. Alongside youth workers and members of the Police, young people took part in various activities during October 2010.
- Takeover Day – Twelve young people (11-16 years) from the Hounslow Youth Council and elsewhere shadowed Members and Senior Officers at the London Borough of Hounslow's offices in November 2010.
- UK Youth Parliament Elections – During December 2010, six young people in Hounslow between 11-18 years of age stood for election to the UK Youth Parliament. This was the highest number of candidates in several years.
- Youth Crime Conference – In February 2011, around 80 Year 10 students took part in the Hounslow Youth Crime Conference in Feltham. Young people's biggest priorities in terms of policing were found to be knife crime, domestic violence and bullying.
- Able 2 Travel – Around 20 young people (and around 80 adults) with disabilities in Hounslow were able to question public transport providers during May 2011.
- Hounslow Challenges Survey – In June 2011, over 200 young people from 13-19 years were surveyed on their perceptions of health, wellbeing and poverty in Hounslow.
- Youth Participation Summer Programme – Around 20 young people (13-19 years) within the Borough took part in Street Voicez training, guidance in Recruitment & Selection processes and volunteering. This Programme took place during July and August 2011.
- Children and Young People's Facilities Scrutiny Panel Survey – Over 200 young people from the Hounslow Youth Council were engaged with the aim of discovering young people's views of young people's services. The Panel Survey, which took place in September 2011, involved young people between 8-19 years old.
- Maximising health through the local environment – Discussion between residents of Haverfield and Brentford Towers estate and staff from Hounslow Homes, NHS Hounslow and the Council. In March 2011, children from Green Dragon Primary School (on the estate) formed a consultative group and used cameras to capture views about their life on the estate, including where they did and didn't feel safe. The event resulted in a range of actions that residents would like to see taken to improve health outcomes on the estate, including fixing street lighting, tidier play spaces, maintaining cleanliness, drugs and alcohol advice, benefits and welfare advice, community centre activities and support with mental health issues. Hounslow Homes, NHS Hounslow and the Council will now work with residents to tackle these issues.

2.2 Activities undertaken with adults

2.2.1 NHS Hounslow adult engagement activities

- Urgent Care Centre programme - A postal and online consultation with Hounslow residents and stakeholders took place to gain views on the development of an Urgent



Care Centre in Hounslow, including the potential closure of the walk-in centre at Heart of Hounslow. This consultation also involved a separate survey of 350 walk-in centre patients in collaboration with the NHS Hounslow Public Health team.

- Ophthalmology – A paper and online survey of views on commissioning community-based ophthalmology services for NHS Ealing, Hillingdon and Hounslow was undertaken. A total of 488 responses received across all three Boroughs, around 250 of which were for Hounslow.
- Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment - NHS Hounslow ran a patient survey to support the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2010/11. Approximately 645 local people were asked about community pharmacies, how they used them and their thoughts on services available to them.

2.2.2 London Borough of Hounslow adult engagement activities

- Community Services Volunteer Project – Local volunteers (many of whom are service users or carers) are recruited and trained to take part in specific projects related to various Partnership Boards. There are currently 26 volunteers. In 2010/11, the projects included:
 - Adult Abuse Awareness Project: working with the safeguarding team to promote issues and raise awareness around safeguarding;
 - Readers Panel: to read and comment on materials produced within Community Services on the appropriateness of language and messages;
 - Recruitment of staff: members of recruitment panels for key staff;
 - Tender Evaluation Panels: lay members on procurement exercises;
 - Falls / Stroke Awareness project: raising awareness around stroke and falls
 - Older People's Scrutiny Panel: holding services for older people to account.
- Annual User Satisfaction survey - The Quality Team are currently piloting a User Survey within Community Learning Disability Team services. This short survey focuses on experience of a using a Council-run service and is completed as part of the annual review.
- Savings Options Consultations - The consultation was conducted using postal and online questionnaires in addition to meetings to allow users, carers and stakeholders to have the opportunity to understand and discuss the issues.
- Department of Health's Annual Social Care Survey - The questionnaire was pre-determined by the DH and provided in multiple formats for those with learning disabilities or other disabilities and impairments. Approximately 1,350 local responses provided a valuable insight into social care service users' views, and flagged around 70 people who had potential safeguarding issues.
- User Forums – Various user forums take place, including the Carers Forum, Supporting People User Forum, and the recently formed Personalisation Group.

2.2.3 Joint adult engagement activities

- One Hounslow, Many Voices (OHMV) - Launched in 2010, this event provided an excellent opportunity for Council services and those of its partners to not only raise awareness amongst residents but also discuss future service delivery. OHMV 2010 attracted around 1,000 residents over two days.



- Partnership Boards – There are seven service-specific Partnership Boards have places reserved for user and carer representatives. In addition, there are places for Voluntary Sector Representatives and the Local Involvement Network (LINK).
- Older People’s Scrutiny Panel - The Older People’s Scrutiny Panel analyses local health and social care services for older people, and is well attended by both volunteers and service providers. Services are obliged to incorporate suggestions from the Panel and are asked to return to the Panel to demonstrate how they have been actioned. A key success has been a review of the discharge process at West Middlesex University Hospital. The potential to transfer the Panel into HealthWatch when it is commissioned could be explored.
- Integrated Provider Forum - A twice-yearly event for providers commissioned primarily by the Council (and the Joint Commissioning Team) and some NHS Hounslow-commissioned providers, to meet, network, and strengthen relationships.

2.2.4 Commissioned adult engagement activities

- Local Involvement Network (LINK) - The LINK allows community issues to be raised with statutory health and social care organisations, thus providing a two-way mechanism of engagement. The LINK Steering Group has approximately 15 people representing a range of care groups or issues, which meets monthly. There are around 600 Hounslow residents, groups, organisations or interested parties on the LINK database. This year Hounslow LINK has formed four separate Working Groups to focus on Hospital Services, GP and Community Health Services, Social Care, and Mental Health. Each Working Group comprises LINK members, Steering Group members and representatives of partner organisations.
- User Forums – there are several user forums set up to engage with specific groups within the local community, including:
 - Mental Health Services User and Carer Forum (WLMHT);
 - Learning Disability Services User forum (Speakout);
 - Deaf Health Group (Disability Network Hounslow);
 - Physical Disability Forum (Independent Activities Project);
 - Sensory Impairment Forum (Independent Activities Project); and
 - Wheelchair Users Forum (Disability Network Hounslow).
- Advocacy – The Council commissions general advocacy services from the Citizen’s Advice Bureau. A number of advice and information organisations also provide low level advocacy services. In addition, there is a mental capacity advocacy service, and a learning disability service users’ advocacy service provided by Speakout.

3. Strategic Leadership and Collaboration

There is a need to ensure that an engagement plan is adopted across Health and Social Care in Hounslow, particularly in a time of transformation and increased financial pressures. This plan will need to incorporate user and carer involvement activities, regular service user reviews and formal consultations.

The London Borough of Hounslow, NHS Hounslow and the Great West Commissioning Consortium (GWCC) already have a proven track record of user and carer involvement, however, work needs to be undertaken to build and further involve the public in service



design, delivery, procurement, monitoring and review. To be able to undertake this increased level of engagement and involvement, a rolling action plan of activities needs to be adopted and implemented, including associated policies and protocols to support them.

4. Priorities

4.1 *Priorities for Engagement with Children and Young People in 2011/12*

- Ensure a coordinated framework for consulting and involving young people in decision making;
- Engage children and young people in a range of democratic processes;
- Ensure that there is a range of opportunities for children and young people to influence and shape the services they receive that is relevant to young people's needs;
- Improve the participation of children and young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties and those from hard to reach groups;
- Ensure children, young people and families have a range of activities and places for leisure and recreation; and
- Ensure children and young people are engaged in a range of volunteering opportunities.

4.2 *Priorities for Engagement with Adults in 2011/12*

Priorities for NHS Hounslow:

- Support the development of Patient Forums – A small number of local GP practices have active patient participation groups. GWCC has identified the need to improve how it works with and supports local GPs to engage with their patients as well as including the groups in its wider engagement structure.

Priorities for London Borough of Hounslow:

- Public Communication and Hounslow Matters – London Borough of Hounslow corporate communications has a dedicated team of communications experts who provide public relations and communications expertise for the Council. They produce a publication “Hounslow Matters” which appears 4 times a year, is delivered to every home and regularly has dedicated health and care pages.
- User and Carer Forums – There are a range of forums for particular groups or people with particular conditions.

Joint Priorities:

- Consultation on Commissioning Intentions for 2012/13 – A series of consultations on the commissioning intentions between November and January. This will be planned in partnership with LINK and will use existing meeting structures wherever possible including Patient, User, Carer and Provider Forums and Partnership Boards.
- One Hounslow, Many Voices – This is an annual engagement event for Health and Social Care which has run for many years. It allows organisations to showcase their services, promotes self-help and gives opportunities for health promotion and opportunities for consultation.
- Partnership Boards



Commissioned Priorities:

- Hounslow LINK and the procurement of HealthWatch – This is the statutory involvement structure for Health and Social Care. The Council commissions support to the LINK and will tender in the next few months to do the same for HealthWatch which ideally needs to be in place by October 2012.
- Advocacy – There are currently contractual arrangements in place for people without mental capacity and people with learning disabilities (Speak out). It is proposed to tender for an advocacy service to deliver improved outcomes for people aged 18 and over including those people with a mental health condition; a learning disability; older people; carers, a physical disability; drug and alcohol issues.

5. Summary of Need

The table summarising the needs in this area has not been completed as it is not considered applicable to Community Engagement.