

Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership  
Participation and Engagement Activity – Quarterly Report

May 2024 to July 2024

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

This report provides an overview of the engagement and activity carried out by Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership during the period February 1 2024 to April 30 2024.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the partnership's efforts to engage with the community, stakeholders, and service providers. It examines the various activities and initiatives undertaken to address emerging challenges and enhance the delivery of health and social care services in the region.

The partnership has prioritised community engagement as a cornerstone of its decision-making process.

Over the past quarter the partnership has seen the conclusion of the period of formal public consultation around maternity services in Wigtownshire, along with the conclusion of stakeholder workshops aimed at developing options within Right Care, Right Place and planning for next steps within this ongoing work.

The partnership has demonstrated its commitment to listening to the needs and concerns of the community and using this valuable input to shape the future of health and social care services in the region.

## **2 PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRUCTURES**

### **2.1 Consultation and Engagement Working Group**

As formally agreed by the Integration Joint Board, the Health and Social Care Partnership has an established Consultation and Engagement Working Group featuring representation from many different aspects of the partnership.

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The group continues to meet monthly, chaired by the partnership's Communication and Engagement Manager and with members who are either trained in engagement or consultation and/or have direct, active experience within this area.

A number of significant pieces of engagement and consultation work have now become standing items on its agenda.

These include the Right Care, Right Place, the maternity services consultation, Greening the Estate, the Complex Needs Plan and the Independent Advocacy Plan.

The group continues to play an important role in overseeing the significant engagement and consultation work being carried out within the partnership, providing advice and co-ordinating efforts, and signing off on formal public consultation in line with the agreed Framework.

### 3. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

#### 3.1 Maternity Services Review

A report produced by Sleeping Giants focused on the outcomes of the maternity services consultation had been due at the 4 June meeting of Dumfries and Galloway Integration Joint Board.

However, on May 22 Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that he had sought permission to dissolve parliament and call a general election to be held on 4 July.

Strict guidance comes into effect ahead of an election, so that public bodies do not take any action which might impact on the election process – and for the 2024 General Election this took effect from 25 May.

Specific guidance is produced for each Pre-Election Period, but it is always advised that public bodies should take care around making strategic decisions

**DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY Health and Social Care Partnership**

**Have your say on Maternity Services in Wigtownshire**

**Local Drop-In Sessions**  
Stranraer Library, Stranraer  
7 March 2023 10.30am to 1 pm  
McMillan Hall, Newton Stewart 14  
March 2023, 10.30am to 1pm

**Pop-Up Stalls**  
Stop for a chat at one of our pop-up stalls:  
Machars Action, Wigtown High Street,  
17 March 2023, 12.30pm to 3pm  
Ryan Centre, Stranraer, 22 March  
2023, 12pm to 4pm

**Bookable 1-1 Sessions**  
McMillan Hall, Newton Stewart  
14 March 2023, 1pm to 3pm  
Millennium Centre, Stranraer  
28 March 2023, 10am to 2pm

**Virtual Engagement Session**  
On Microsoft Teams 22 March 2023  
from 9am to 4pm

**Complete an online survey**  
Scan the QR code

Anyone interested in a bookable 1-1 or the virtual engagement session, please email well in advance to [ds.maternityservices.comms@nhs.scot](mailto:ds.maternityservices.comms@nhs.scot) to request an invitation.  
For more information or to complete the online survey, visit <https://dgihsop.co.uk/wigtownshire-maternity-services-engagement>

*Developing a Future Model for Maternity Services*

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at Board meetings and should not introduce agenda items that are likely to be the subject of controversy.

As soon as news of the planned General Election was announced, discussions took place with Healthcare Improvement Scotland – Community Engagement seeking advice around the likely Pre-Election Period guidance which had yet to be published. HIS-CE liaised with Scottish Government.

A decision was taken that the report on the maternity services consultation would need to be delayed until a meeting of the Integration Joint Board following the General Election.

The report did not appear on the agenda for June 4, with an explanation for this move able to be issued before the Pre-Election Period began. It is now scheduled to feature on the agenda of the meeting in September.

### 3.3 Right Care, Right Place – Engagement and Consultation

The Pre-Election Period which ran from 25 May to 4 July 2024 had a major impact on the consultation focused on the future role of four cottage hospitals.

Consultation was formally launched on 17 May, preceded with public notices in local newspapers in the region.

The website was made live, featuring all of the information to assist people to make an informed response to the consultation and providing them with details of in-person events, online sessions and how to complete the consultation document online.

An extensive radio campaign was just about to be launched when the Prime Minister announced the planned General Election.

Guidance was sought immediately from Healthcare Improvement Scotland – Community Engagement, who liaised with the Scottish Government around the anticipated Pre-Election Guidance specific to this election.

Advice drawn from previous election pre-election periods made it very clear that we would not be permitted to promote the consultation, and that it would not be possible to organise public gatherings.

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Taking this guidance, we suspended the planned promotion of the consultation and took the decision to suspend the in-person events until after the election period. We were able to quickly issue an explanation of these moves publicly before the Pre-Election Period took effect – noting that all the materials remained available on the website, which also afforded people the opportunity to submit their responses online.

As soon as the Pre-Election period passed we were able to immediately ramp up promotions of the consultation, with adverts in local newspapers, a two-week radio campaign ahead of a major campaign in advance of the in-person events, email notification to stakeholders, press releases, and social media promotions including a new animated video with a British Sign Language variant.

Conscious that many local people may be outwith the region for part of the school holidays, the 15 in-person events have been scheduled to take place once the holidays are over - running from 20 August to 18 September.

In addition, having lost several weeks of promotion due to the Pre-Election Period, the original consultation period has been extended so that it now runs until September 27.

Dumfries and Galloway Integration Joint Board (IJB) had been due to receive the outcomes of the consultation at their meeting in September, but it will now be considered at an extraordinary meeting of the IJB on October 29.

Preparations are taking place for the in-person events, where we hope and expect to see significant participation. We are also hoping that that increase promotions will encourage more people to take part online with just under 200 responses received before the end of July.

Work is taking place to assess the responses and to provide any additional information that may be required, while working with Healthcare Improvement Scotland – Community Engagement around our respective assurance processes.

### 3.4 Primary Care Engagement

A Dental Task Force has been established within the Partnership, aimed at addressing a continuing challenge around provision of NHS dental services within the region.

Flyers have now been created which mirror advice on the web-page around how people can manage oral and dental health at a time when immediate access to routine NHS care may be challenging.

The flyers help address the fact that not everyone will have access to the internet, with the plan having been that they would be distributed to the likes of GP practices, pharmacies and local authority offices.

Meanwhile, working has been taking place through the GP Practice Sustainability Communications Working Group to help provide support to general medical practice.

A newsletter template has been designed for practices to employ as a means to communicate to patients, with an offer to tailor templates for each practice that wishes to employ this medium.

Meanwhile, a video has been produced locally by the communications team showcasing how practices are working and the many different roles within practices, with the hope that this can be employed shortly.

### 3.7 Greening the Estate

Work has taken place to prepare for further stakeholder engagement around land surrounding Mountainhall Treatment Centre, and how it can support environment-focused goals.

Around 70 stakeholders attended an event held at the treatment centre earlier this year, seeking to gain views and perspectives on the land.

Two further events were planned for 30 July and 8 August, hoping to take forward the conversations.

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There had been some degree of concern that the project might lead to the redevelopment of the land, and the loss of the green space. However, assurances were provided that the goal is to ensure that the land best serves the green agenda, informed by the perspectives of stakeholders.

### 3.8 Galloway Community Hospital

A paper recommending that work take place to explore ways of supporting Galloway Community Hospital and sustaining its services had been due at the IJB's June meeting.

Once again, this was impacted by the Pre-Election Period.

There was a considerable degree of public interest in this matter, as an initial paper focused on this long-planned work appeared at the same as reports on NHS Dumfries and Galloway's major financial challenges – leading to concern the two matters might be connected.

Following the election, Chair of the IJB's Transformation, Innovation and Futures Committee Ian Carruthers and Director of Strategic Planning and Transformation David Rowland met with members of Galloway Community Hospital Action Group where this matter was discussed.

Subsequently, a briefing and press release was issued noting that at no point had there been a suggestion that this work, if approved, could result in the hospital's closure.

It was stated that the important role of Galloway Community Hospital was very much recognised.

If the work around GCH is approved by the IJB, it is anticipated that extensive engagement will be required with stakeholders including staff and public.

### 3.9 Planning With People

On 29 May 2024 a letter was issued to all local public health and social care organisations co-signed by Neil Gray MSP, Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery,

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Health and Social Care and Councillor Paul Kelly, Spokesperson for Health and Social Care, COSLA.

The letter introduced the latest iteration of the Planning with People guidance. Planning With People was first published in March 2021. It is co-owned by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), and was developed with the support of Healthcare Improvement Scotland – Community Engagement. The document is designed to provide guidance around how public bodies in health and social care carry out engagement and consultation activity.

It is now the principal guidance which public bodies in health and social care should follow. However, it is in addition to, rather than instead of, existing requirements set out through legislation such as the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978, through national standards, best practice, and expectations established by legal precedent

Late last year Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership agreed a request from Healthcare Improvement Scotland - Community Engagement (HIS-CE) to participate in a pilot trialling a new structure in the approach to consultation around major service change

The Partnership was already working very closely with HIS-CE, complying with all requirements, and the Leadership Team saw the participation request as reasonable.

A key element of this pilot approach was a flowchart which set out how a determination would be arrived at as to whether potential service change constituted major service change, and the actions to be taken once a determination was made.

Partnership officers engaged with HIS-CE around work on the maternity services consultation and the Right Care, Right Place consultation. The former was already in train, and it was agreed the new framework should be applied, but it was applied in the case of Right Care, Right Place – HIS-CE determining that it did represent the potential for major service change.

National meetings took place with HIS-CE and other health and social care agencies to feed back thoughts around the new framework around major service change

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The new iteration of Planning With People now incorporates what was developed on major service change from that trial approach and establishes it as a requirement for all public health and social care bodies.

One element altered from the trial version is that public bodies can decide to consult, even if HIS-CE reaches a conclusion that options/proposals do not represent major service change.

The guidance, and covering letter, also reflects calls from several public bodies for a process which moves quickly. It states that determinations by HIS-CE as to whether change represents major service change or not will come within 4 weeks where HIS-CE has had no prior involvement, and 2 weeks where there has. The latter was the Partnership's experience in relation to Right Care, Right Place, and HIS-CE remain constantly involved in our engagement/consultation through regular meetings with the Communication and Engagement Manager and by sitting on the Consultation and Engagement Working Group.

A meeting took place with all Boards on 4 July to introduce this new version of Planning With People. At this meeting it was revealed that there are two versions of the flowchart to be followed for engagement around major service change – one for the NHS and the other for IJB.