

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

November 2024 to January 2025

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 November 1 2024 to January 31 2025.

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 a decision made by the Integration Joint Board in respect of options consulted on in Wigtownshire around maternity services, and also in respect of options for four cottage hospitals which were the focus of consultation within Right Care, Right Place.

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.

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.

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.

2.2 Participation and Engagement Network

NHS Dumfries and Galloway holds the responsibility for maintaining the Participation and Engagement Network (PEN).

It serves as a communication channel to foster involvement from a wide array of community members, service users, and stakeholders.

Members are provided information on engagement activity and opportunities highlighted by partners in the multi-agency Participation and Engagement Working Group.

Over the last couple of years membership of the PEN has increased substantially. We have taken advantage of the significant engagement on issues such as maternity services and Right Care, Right Place to grow the membership to currently stand at 274.

3. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

3.1 Nationally-Determined Service Change and NHS Reform

A meeting of the national Engagement Practitioner Network was held on December 4 2024 focused on the subject of nationally-determined service change and NHS Reform.

Representatives of Health and Social Care Partnerships and NHS Boards attended this online meeting, including representatives from Dumfries and Galloway.

Facilitated by Healthcare Improvement Scotland – Community Engagement, the event introduced the Scottish Government’s Professional Lead for Health Planning and Sustainability who spoke about the work being undertaken around evolving services and the need for engagement.

Attendees were given an understanding of the service areas where work is taking place aimed at ensuring sustainability. As part of this work to evolve services, it is recognised that engagement is required with staff, patients and other stakeholders. However, those attending were informed that local engagement teams within Partnerships and Boards would be pivotal to this approach, as the scale of NHS services makes a single engagement exercise challenging to deliver.

Discussion groups were formed to receive feedback, which included requests for information when available on how the engagement will be undertaken, and whether that will be on behalf of local Boards or the Scottish Government. Questions were also asked about the scale of the engagement, noting the challenges around resourcing this work.

Attendees were informed that a working group has been established to look at the practical approach to this undertaking, and that more details will be provided in due course.

3.2 Right Care, Right Place – Engagement and Consultation

The outcome of consultation on the future role of four cottage hospitals within Dumfries and Galloway has been shared widely, following a decision taken at an extraordinary meeting of the Integration Joint Board in September.

Work has been taking place within Community Health and Social Care to take forward the development of the cottage hospitals to serve as community hubs offering a range of services.

Engagement is required with staff and local stakeholders as this is taken forward.

Members of the team responsible for this work attended a meeting of the Consultation and Engagement Working Group on January 20 to discuss these approaches, and what resources might be required in support.

They suggested they would need to engage with members of the Participation and Engagement Network who had enjoyed a previous involvement in the Right Care, Right Place programme. This was met with offers of support to help take this forward, including communications to help introduce these latest developments.

3.4 Primary Care Engagement

At the December meeting of Dumfries and Galloway Integration Joint Board, members agreed a proposal to take forward work aimed at developing a vision for general medical practices and services in Dumfries and Galloway.

It was recognised that this would involve engagement with those working within primary care, as well as stakeholders including the public who access these services.

At the start of January the Communication and Engagement Manager met with the officer helping to take forward the initial stages of this work.

The purpose and rationale of the project was discussed, and initial questions aimed at getting a better understanding of the current situation were shared.

A copy of findings from engagement work in the summer of 2022 was provided, offering an insight into stakeholder perspectives at that time was meanwhile shared with the project team.

The team have committed to attend a future meeting of the Consultation and Engagement Working Group, and at the meeting on Monday 20 January there was some discussion about how this work could be undertaken, and a noting of other work taking place within this field nationally which might prove to be of interest and use.

Separately, the awarding of the contract to provide general medical services from the Southern Machars Practice to a trio of GPs has been well-publicised.

As they take on the contract, the GPs have advised that they intend to hold introductory events with the local community, helping to foster good relationships.

3.5 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.

Two part-time members of staff have now been appointed to support this work, thanks to financial backing from the NHS Dumfries and Galloway Endowment Fund.

Meanwhile, assistance around further community engagement has been volunteered through local third sector organisation The Stove Network.

Representatives of NHS Dumfries and Galloway recently met with the two members of staff and other stakeholders to discuss approaches to the project, and the setting up of a stakeholder group.

Attendees were advised that a private Facebook page and another digital interface have been established as a forum for the more than 75 members of the public who have so far committed to work on the project.

Meanwhile, an on-site event is planned for March, helping to take forward the intention of developing a vision for potential uses of the site for NHS Dumfries and Galloway to consider.

One of the two members of staff attended the Consultation and Engagement Working Group on Monday 20 January and set out the current position, taking questions and accepting input.

A commitment was given to attend subsequent meetings of the working group in order to provide further updates.