

Appendix 2:

Making the principles real

Our Involvement Principles are a commitment to undertake involvement work fairly, inclusively and honestly, supporting those involved to contribute meaningfully.

Principles make a strong statement but only make a real difference when we work through HOW they should be enacted in our work.

Below are our ideas for how to make each principle real. You, or your involvement group, may be able to generate more ideas for how each principle comes to life in your work.

1. **Ensure people can have influence over decisions and make a difference**

Be clear at the start of any service change/project what it is that people can influence and what they can't.

Be clear about who is making which decisions and if the partnership is making decisions or advising another group/person.

2. **Include and listen to people with lived experience in collaborative partnerships**

Recruit people with lived experience (patients/service users and their carers/families) from the start of the partnership.

Facilitate meetings to ensure that people with lived experience can contribute in ways that work for them (with an awareness of how vulnerable and exhausted people can feel when/after sharing their experiences).

Make time to listen to people's experiences, with the intent to understand.

Plan meetings with people, rather than for them.

3. **Include and listen to the diverse communities we work with in collaborative partnerships. We should also reach out beyond the collaborative partnership and connect with the wider community so other people can share their views and contribute to the partnership's work**

Take time to understand the demographics and diversity of people accessing your service, and how you will recruit people (patients/service users and their carers/families) from these diverse communities.

Consider whether there are groups in the wider community who have difficulty accessing your service, and why. Consider how to involve them in some way to understand the barriers they face and incorporate their views into your work.

Consider whether you need a different approach to best reach out to each group (e.g. different languages, different community networks, via support workers/families).

4. Give time to build relationships in the collaborative partnership based on mutual trust and respect, kindness, openness and honesty

Make time to get to know each other, facilitate conversations based on understanding who is involved, their experiences, skills and knowledge, and the interest they have in being involved.

Be honest, clear and upfront with information, even when conversations are difficult or contentious.

Nurture kindness amongst the group – facilitate dialogue rather than debate, insist on and reinforce mutual respect and encourage understanding.

5. Support people so they can use and develop their knowledge and skills to contribute effectively

Offer pre-meets so that you can establish if anyone needs your support with access, communication, comprehension or relational aspects of meeting as a group. Introduce yourself and answer any questions.

Offer individualised support – this is not clinical input, this is the support they need to engage fully and comfortably (e.g. explanation of information, time to formulate opinions rather than being ‘put on the spot’, further information about transport).

If there is time, provide opportunities for the group to learn and develop skills together – e.g. deliver a session on collaborative working, or Debate vs. Dialogue.

6. Plan, decide and act together including agreeing the purpose, resources, outcomes and timescales from the start of the work

In the first meeting, establish everyone’s views of the purpose and desired outcomes and reconcile this to agree the collective view of the group.

Be clear about timescales, time constraints and resources, and agree as a group the milestones, the decision points and how you will progress towards the solution.

7. Have honest conversations that emphasise dialogue where we listen to and understand others' views and agendas and give the time to arrive at collective answers

Resist the temptation to persuade/convince people of your view – listen fully, explore alternatives and entertain different possibilities before drawing discussions to decisions.

Nurture active listening and inquisitive questioning. Start questions with open language (e.g. *Can you help me to understand X, Why do you feel this would work?*).

Employ and encourage the skills of dialogue with the purpose of understanding, rather than pitching suggestions against each other (i.e., debate).

8. Make communication simple, accessible and inclusive, share the information that enables people to be part of the conversation and feedback on what has changed

Follow the [Plain English Guide](#) – keep written and verbal language simple, avoid jargon and acronyms/initialisms.

Written information should be well-formatted, using bullet points and lists where appropriate, minimum 12pt clear font, with high contrast between the font and the background.

Consider whether someone would need additional information/context to understand the information you are sharing. If so, include this but try to be concise.