



Comisiynydd  
**Cenedlaethau'r  
Dyfodol**  
Cymru

**Future  
Generations**  
Commissioner  
for Wales



## A Journey to Involvement

**1: Enabling and embedding a culture of meaningful citizen and stakeholder involvement**

**2: Working with people and stakeholders** to understand their needs, aspirations and ideas

**3: Ensuring people's needs, aspirations and ideas** are taken into account and reflected in decision-making





## A Journey to Involvement

In the Well-being of Future Generations Act, involvement is defined as part of the 'Sustainable Development Principle' as follows:

*A public body must take account of:*

*(b) the importance of involving other persons with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population of*

*i. Wales (where the body exercises functions in relation to the whole of Wales, or:*

*ii. The part of Wales in relation to which the body exercises functions.*



## Defining the way of working

As a way of working, involvement is about having rich and meaningful conversations with the people in your community, finding out what matters to them, and reflecting that in the decisions that you take.

A recent UK survey found that only 27% of adults agreed they could personally influence decisions. There is also a feeling of 'consultation fatigue' due to multiple instances of uncoordinated involvement on similar issues, and people are not always able to see how their views are taken on board.

Involvement requires organisations to be open to influence from citizens and stakeholders, moving to a culture of 'working with' rather than 'doing to'. In contrast to consultation, involvement approaches work with people at earlier stages, such as helping to identify issues and potential solutions, and being supported to remain involved right throughout design, implementation and evaluation processes.



### Case studies

Throughout the document you will find a number of reports relating to the topic subject. Please read the link if you see this symbol.



## Defining the way of working

Where to focus action in contributing to this way of working

**Enable a culture of meaningful involvement in your organisation**

[\(See involvement journey topic 1: Organisational culture of involvement\)](#)

**Work with people and stakeholders to understand their needs, aspirations and ideas**

[\(See involvement journey topic 2: Front-facing involvement\)](#)

**Ensure you reflect people's needs, aspirations and ideas in decision making and show how you've done this**

[\(See involvement journey topic 3: Impact and communication of involvement\)](#)

## Enablers

Achieving this way of working is **more likely to happen** when...

- **Organisations enable the space, time and resource for meaningful involvement.**
- **Citizens understand the relevance of involvement to their lives, and see it as a vehicle for making change happen.**
- **Organisations explain the impact involvement has had – for example a ‘you said, we did’ approach, building transparency and trust.**
- **Existing projects prove that good involvement can add value and save long term costs.**
- **Involvement is seen as enjoyable and worthwhile; for staff, organisations and citizens.**
- **Involvement is co-ordinated and not siloed.**



## Disablers

Achieving this way of working is **less likely to happen** when...

- **Organisations do not invest in the skills and allow the time to involve people and meaningfully transfer the outcomes into policy and decision making.**
- **Ongoing involvement of a diverse group of citizens and stakeholders is seen as time consuming and confusing due to differing views.**
- **Decision makers are not held to account in relation to public input.**
- **Organisations take traditional 'consultation' approaches to engagement.**
- **Communicating what has changed as a result of involvement is inconsistent, and citizens feel they have 'consultation fatigue'.**





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## A Journey to Involvement

### 1: Organisational Culture

Enabling and embedding a culture of meaningful citizen and stakeholder involvement

## Defining the issue

A 2018 citizen-led report by Diverse Cymru found that citizens felt involvement should not be about the public sector taking their agenda and drafts to people or tokenistic engagement. Instead, public sector organisations should set their agenda by listening to people, meaningfully involving them throughout the decision-making process, and being open to real change as a result. It is vital that activities and mechanisms for involving people are appropriately planned, monitored and reported, so they can be

developed, challenged or championed. Ensuring that staff and organisations have the necessary skills, structures as well as time and resources to involve the public effectively is vital. This ensures that public services in Wales reflect what is important to the public and their needs, rather than what we may traditionally think works best.

### Synergies and connections to other journeys



#### **Journey to a more equal Wales**

**Topic 3:** Equal participation



#### **Journey to a resilient Wales**

**Topic 2:** Natural green space





## Making **Simple** Changes

**Identify** the most relevant staff and provide them with [training in involvement theory and techniques](#).

**Ensure that staff** are aware of the [National Principles of Public Engagement](#) and that these are displayed in the workplace.

**Offer financial assistance** for travel costs associated with citizen attendance at involvement events.

**Include [public involvement in planning, monitoring, reporting and staff appraisals](#)**. This may be as simple as including a question around how staff have involved people in the course of their work, and what was done differently as a result.

**Involve people** at the earliest possible opportunity.

Eg

E.g. [The Open Government Network Wales equality project](#) delivered by [Diverse Cymru](#) and [C3SC](#) in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

**Ensure there are** citizen and stakeholder representatives on panels, working groups and boards.

**Find opportunities** to bring user experiences into board or leadership team meetings.

**Forward plan** your involvement and engagement activities over the year (or beyond) and share plans with other public sector partners.

## Being More Adventurous

**Ensure all staff** are given the opportunity for [training on involvement theory and techniques](#). This would ensure that staff on the 'front-line' of services are better equipped to deal with the needs of the public and respond to their concerns.

**Ensure your organisation** is signed up to and have the tools to deliver the [National Principles of Public Engagement](#), and can clearly demonstrate how they are working towards them.

**Establish a fund** to ensure people are able to get involved, overcoming any financial barriers. For example, help with transport or childcare costs.

**Ensure there is** a recognition of people's time through schemes such as time credits.

**Ensure there is** a named person with a responsibility to champion and advise on involvement within each department.

**Public involvement** is actively sustained and supported. This might be through peer support or from staff.

**Citizen and stakeholder** representation is visible on panels, working groups and boards.

**Co-produce engagement** plans and activities for the year and (beyond) with public and third sector partners, using the opportunity to make activities useful to a number of organisations.

## Owning your **Ambition**

**All staff**, irrespective of role, are given the opportunity to partake in community engagement and involvement activities. Involvement is everyone's business.

Eg

E.g. [CwmTaf Morgannwg UHB](#) Senior staff take part in shadowing opportunities or scheduled 'walk-throughs' of services.

### [The National Principles of Public Engagement](#)

are embedded across the organisation; involvement is seen as the responsibility of all staff. Many 'frontline' staff deal with members of the public every day and this would ensure they are better equipped to deal with the needs of the public.

HOME

**Involvement** is recognised and supported through the provision of formal recognition for members of the public, and the opportunity to access training, accreditation or time credits.

**Involvement** is a core activity, with ongoing dialogue being highly visible throughout organisational and partnership planning.

Eg

**Mechanisms** are in place to ensure any citizen who would like to get involved with improving a service or plan are given the opportunity to do so.

E.g. [Scottish Community Empowerment Act-Participation](#) requests.

**Mechanisms** are in place for citizen and stakeholder representation, and representatives are seen and treated as equals.

## Owning your **Ambition**

**There is a single point** of access to all involvement activities taking place across a partnership- such as a co-ordinated involvement calendar to ensure that events are well advertised, opportunities for collaboration are identified, and duplication is prevented.

**There is ongoing public involvement** in strategic long-term decision making, not just a one-off.

**Eg**

E.g. **The Wales We Want** national conversation.

**Policy and service development** and review systematically adopts a 'walking in the shoes approach', considering who the end users are, and how the policy or service is experienced by them.