

Guide to Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement and management is critical to the success of your improvement project. A stakeholder is anyone who is affected by your quality improvement project/proposed change and anyone who affects your quality improvement project/proposed change. Some of these people could be supporters of your work and some could block or challenge it. Therefore, stakeholder management is critical in ensuring the success of your project. To enable you to work effectively with your stakeholders there are four key steps, as shown below, which you need to follow.



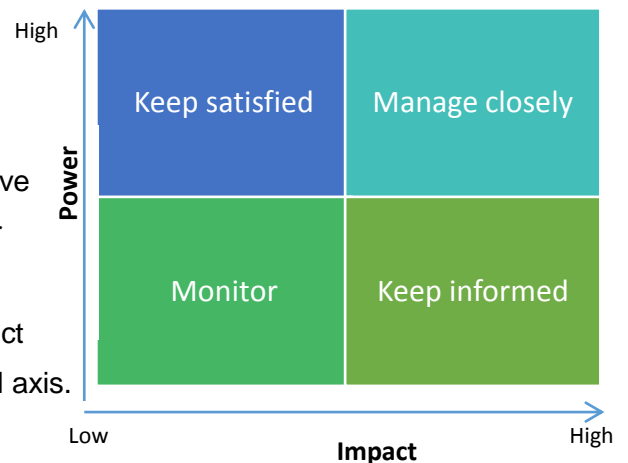
1: IDENTIFY YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

First you need to generate a list of everyone who will be affected by this work, who have influence or power over it, or have an interest in its successful or unsuccessful conclusion. This includes organisations, services and people including patients and carers.

2: PRIORITISE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

Now use the adjacent Stakeholder Matrix to classify your stakeholders in the following way:

- For each individual/stakeholder group consider their relative power or influence over your project/change and plot their position along the vertical axis.
- Then consider what will be the relative impact of the project upon each of them and plot that position on the horizontal axis.



You now have a grid which splits your stakeholders into four different groups each of which require a different engagement and communication approach.

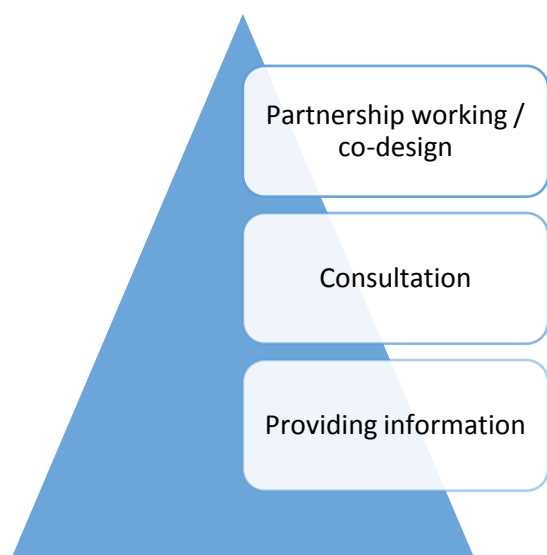
3: DEVELOP AN ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

The next step is to develop an engagement and communication plan by looking at each group and deciding how and when to communicate with them and who will do it. This will help you to manage and overcome resistance from individuals. Ideally, you should agree your engagement and communication plan with your stakeholders. The diagram below shows the four stakeholder groups and outlines the most relevant communication approaches.

| Manage closely | Keep satisfied | Keep informed | Monitor |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consult and keep fully informed •Communicate closely at the individual level •Actively seek opinions and suggestions •Enable opportunities for inclusion in the work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Inform and regularly review the need for more active involvement •Provide key messages without too much detail •Be prepared to provide further detail if requested | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This group often involves patients and you should look for ways to facilitate their involvement (see below) •Communicate via existing channels e.g. patient and public involvement groups, Trust newsletter etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Provide optional access to information to maintain engagement •Use existing communication methods e.g. team meetings, intranet, notice boards, Trust newsletter etc. |

4. FACILITATING PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Patients, including carers, most often fall into the “Keep informed” category of stakeholders. This is because they have little power over the proposed change but the impact of the change upon them is potentially high. You should actively look for ways to increase patient involvement in your project. This increases their power to positively influence the improvement activity thus ensuring that any changes made better reflect their needs, preferences and perspectives. Additionally, you will also then meet the legislated requirement for the incorporation of patient involvement into NHS decision making processes. Patient involvement can occur on many levels as shown in the adjacent diagram.



Partnership working or co-design entails joint working between staff and patients to explore how things work, and identify and implement improvement activities. This is the highest level of involvement.

Consultation is often mistaken as a high level of involvement but this is not usually the case. Activities can include sending out a survey, facilitating a focus group/forum to collect ideas/obtain information or including patients on a committee.

Providing information is the lowest level of involvement. In this approach information is made available locally on planned, current and completed quality improvement projects.