

Involving People

Our engagement
strategy and framework 2023-2026



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1. Strategy and introduction

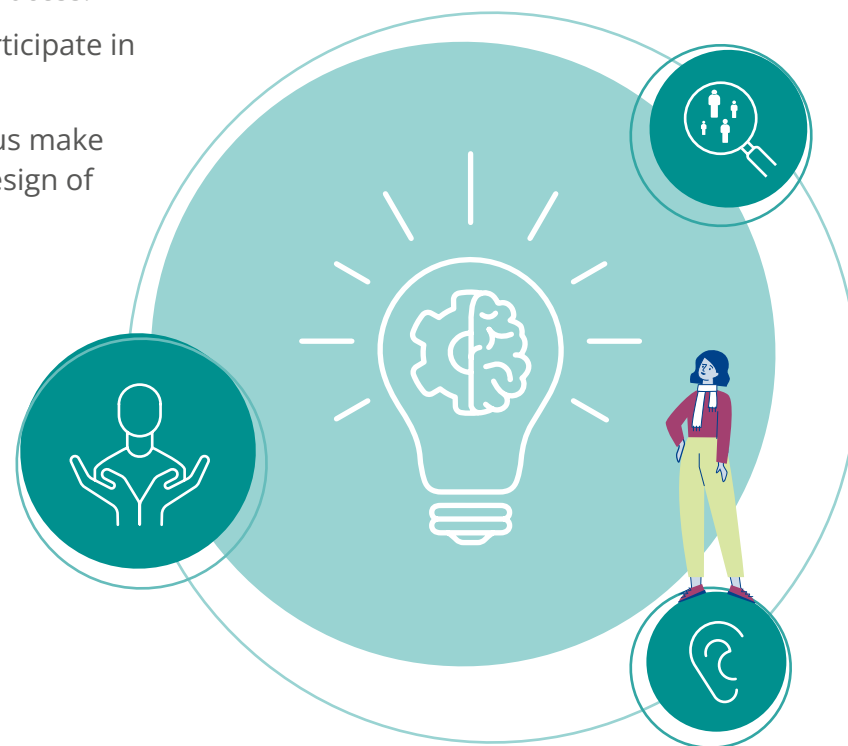
We are the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce.

We protect the public by registering social workers, social care and children and young people workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct, we can investigate and take action.

Our Strategic Plan 2020-2023 sets out our intention to take a people-led approach to the design of our services and to work collaboratively with anyone who has an interest in our work. Service design and delivery can only improve if people with lived experience are involved in the process.

This strategy has been developed for our staff and sets out how we will all encourage, participate in and promote stakeholder engagement and co-design as a driver for improvement.

It also sets out how we will involve, listen to and act on the views of stakeholders to help us make sure the views of people who have a particular interest can influence our work and the design of our services.





Our aims

- Deliver regulation that is informed by our stakeholders.
- Promote a positive culture within the SSSC that focuses on involvement and co-design and that follows the principles of the [Scottish Approach to Service Design](#).
- Improve and develop evidence-based decision making by bringing the stakeholder voice into the organisation through their involvement and gathering and analysing information and intelligence.
- Create an environment and culture of co-production, improvement and innovation across the organisation.



Who do we mean by our stakeholders?

Our stakeholders are organisations, groups and individuals who may:

- have an interest in our work
- have influence over our work
- be potentially affected by any aspect of our work
- affect our work.



Our stakeholder map provides information on the stakeholders who are key to our work and will help you to identify which stakeholders you might want and need to involve in your work including registrants and people who have experience of social services. This map is reviewed regularly to make sure that it is up to date.

The priority that each of our stakeholder groups holds for us at any one time will depend on the outcome we are trying to achieve or the project being progressed. Our stakeholders have different levels of interest and influence, expertise and resources and our involvement approach must reflect these differences.

It's important that we involve the right people, for the right purpose, at the right time and in the right way. This strategy helps us to use our resources in the most efficient and effective way.

Part 2 of the strategy provides guidance on how to go about involving and engaging our stakeholders. We can involve and engage with people for lots of reasons, for example for significant changes and new projects/areas of work or sometimes simply to inform and let people know about a development.

The framework helps us in our decision making around the level of participation necessary for any given project and will bring consistency to our stakeholder involvement.

'It is important that we involve the right people, for the right purpose, at the right time and in the right way.'

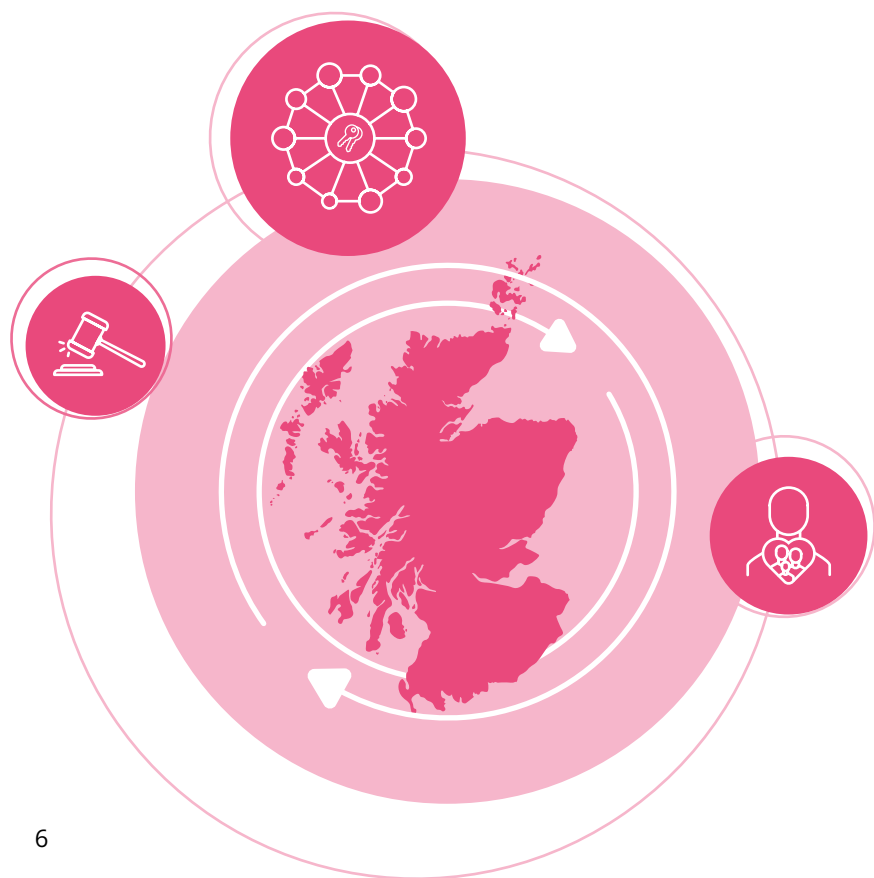


2. Context

Over the next five years we will see major changes to the way Scotland delivers health and social care. Several factors will drive key priorities for the SSSC and the wider sector including:

- the development of the National Care Service
- contributing to the priorities outlined in the Independent Review of Adult Social Care which include ensuring that care is person-centred, human rights based and is seen as an investment in society
- supporting work to keep The Promise to Scotland's care experienced children, young people and families
- the ongoing expansion of funded early learning and childcare
- changes to community justice which include the ongoing shift from custody to community-based alternatives.

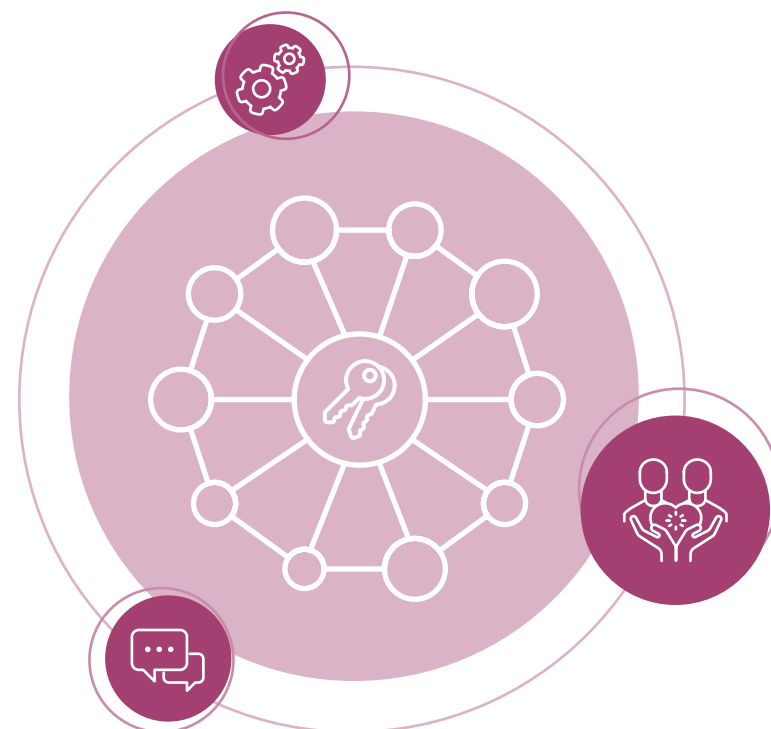
Our involvement and engagement must align to the work of the SSSC, playing a key role in informing our policy developments as well as the national initiatives that we participate in.



3. Principles

We want involving people to be part of the way we work, not an add on but essential and integral to the way we do things. Successful engagement will require a mix of methods and channels depending on the stakeholder, their needs, influences and interests.

- We will encourage involvement and engagement as a driver for improvement.
- We will give our stakeholders clear, coherent and consistent messages about our work and what it means for them.
- We will make best use of people's time in seeking their views, engaging them in decisions, in the design and co-production of our services and sharing information.
- We will make use, both at a strategic and an operational level, of the information, feedback and intelligence gathered from our engagement with stakeholders to improve our services.
- We will use clear and plain language to avoid barriers to involvement and engagement.
- We will develop and maintain open and effective relationships with our stakeholders.
- We will work with key partners and explore ways of involving children, young people and the views of people who are harder to reach.
- As we develop our approach to involvement and engagement we will always look to innovate and share our learning with others.
- We will develop our services and products based on stakeholder evidence and insight.
- We will apply the principles and methodology as set out in the Scottish Approach to Service Design.



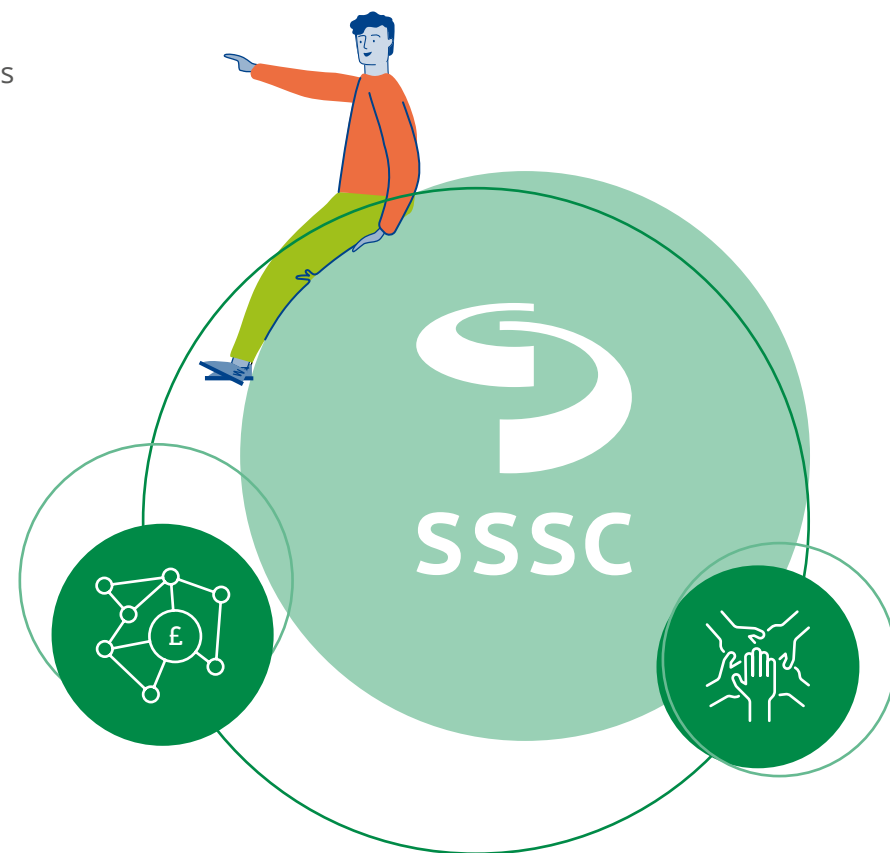
4. Resources

We will develop an annual action plan to support the aims of this strategy, identifying costs and staff required. During the first year of this strategy, we will identify the staffing and costs required to make sure that we can develop a sustainable and meaningful approach to involvement and engagement.

Additional corporate staffing and activity costs for will be included in the Communications and Policy budget for the first year with project costs included in relevant directorate budgets.

We will work with the national network of organisations and groups that support, represent or advocate for people, particularly those with lived and learned experiences of using care services to reach different groups of people. This may also lead to additional costs. For our first year this will be within the Communications and Policy department budget and individual project budgets.

We identified the need to develop an ethical payment policy to support people to get involved in our work. We will do this in year one of the strategy.



5. Governance

All our staff will engage and involve stakeholders in line with this strategy and apply the framework to their involvement and engagement.

The Strategy and Performance Directorate has lead responsibility for coordinating the delivery of the strategy and for overseeing engagement with the public and key stakeholders.

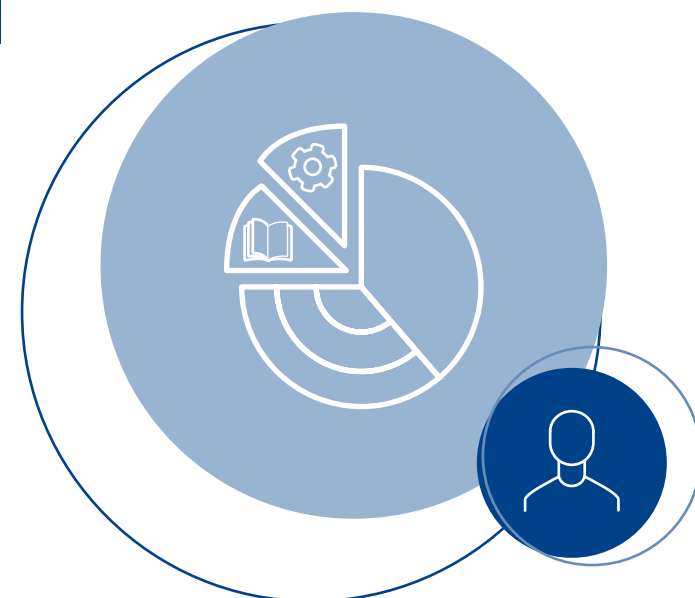
The lead officers for each strategic outcome will report on their engagement and activities via their assurance reports as well as via Council, Committee and EMT reports.



6. Evaluation and measuring impact

We will report progress through the assurance reporting on the measures in the Strategic Plan and annual operational plan using a combination of:

- evaluation and analysis of engagement activity and analytics
- regular analysis of stakeholder perception insights
- feedback, case studies and survey results.



7. Links with other policies and strategies



SSSC Strategic Plan 2020-2023

SSSC Communications Strategy 2021-2024

SSSC Digital Strategy 2021-2024

SSSC Programme Management Handbook March 2021

SSSC Data and Intelligence Strategy 2022-2025

Involving People Plan 2019

Scottish Approach to Service Design

Appendix

Involvement and engagement framework

Our services, policies and products are more likely to be useful and meet people's needs if they are involved in the design at an early stage.

At the very start of a project or development, we must consider how we will involve stakeholders and their particular involvement and engagement needs, along with the methods we intend to use.

This step by step framework will guide you through involvement and engagement planning. But it is not a template or toolkit, rather a set of questions and tools to help you plan the right approach to involve people in your work before you start.



Appendix



Who can help me?

If the answer is yes, please contact the Strategic Communications and Policy Department for advice.

If involving and engaging stakeholders is part of your communications planning, please contact the Communications Team.

Do we have a stakeholder map?

Our stakeholder map is on in the know.

Is the involvement or engagement associated with a programme or project?

If yes, please discuss with the Programme Manager or Project Lead and use the PMO toolkit.

Step by step to planning your involvement and engagement

Step 1 Why are you involving and engaging with stakeholders?

Step 2 Different types/levels of involvement and engagement

Step 3 What engagement outcomes do you want to achieve?

Step 4 Who are your stakeholders?

Step 5 Engagement plan

Step 6 Review process

Step 7 Has it worked – final evaluation

Step 8 Using what you have learned from your engagement with stakeholders

Appendix

Step 1. Why involve and engage?

Do you have a clear purpose for involving people and an outcome to achieve?

A clear purpose makes sure that we have identified whether the method of engagement is appropriate and that everyone involved understands what is required, how their views will be used and the level of influence they will have.

What can involvement and engagement achieve?

Ask these questions as you start your engagement planning.

How much can really change? Establishing what can change as the result of participation is vital.

Is participation appropriate at all? There is no point of participation if:

- the consultation will not change anything
- there is no demand or interest in becoming involved.

What level of participation is needed? Do people need to share their views on something? Do they just need information so that they are aware? Will they have a say in the final outcome? It is important to be clear as to the level of participation and involvement needed.

What are the risks of both engaging and not engaging, for example to the organisation in terms of reputation, to the success of a project or the design of a service?

Appendix

Step 2. Types and levels of engagement

People can get involved and engaged in different ways, with different levels of effectiveness, for example from receiving information so that they know something is happening to ultimately co-designing final policy decisions, products or services.

Stakeholders need to gain something from the activity so think carefully and be clear about what is in it for them.

Different intended outcomes and different types of projects need different levels of stakeholder participation and engagement must be proportionate and relevant. You might need to use a combination of approaches.

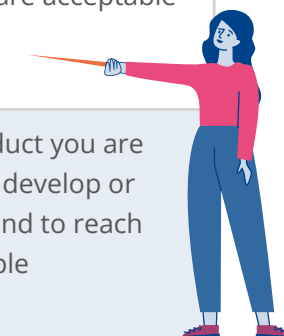
[See table on next page](#)



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Table 1: Types/Levels of participation and what they can mean

| Types/Levels of participation | What they mean |
|---|---|
| Inform - Eg leaflets, website content, SSSC news articles. | Provide information to help people understand what we are developing or consulting on and any associated issues. |
| Consult - Either a formal 12 week consultation or a less formal consultation with groups of stakeholders, this could also include online surveys, consultation events, website content. | Gather feedback from those with an interest/influence, either for policy/ decision makers for analysis of responses, identifying alternative ways to achieve desired outcomes or for supporting decisions. |
| Involve - This could be developing our services or new products, policy developments or a new set of standards, for example. | Involve stakeholders to make sure their feedback informs the key aspects of the decision making processes. You will also use this approach for co-producing services or products. |
| Collaborate - Examples of this could be our work on developing the National Occupational Standards and standard for Childhood Practice or the Codes of Practice awareness projects for Looked After Children and young people and older people using care home services. | Partner with and involve stakeholders in each aspect of decision making including considering alternatives and identifying solutions that are acceptable to all concerned. |
| Empower - This can be co-designing services or products and making decisions together during the process. | Empowering stakeholders can be critical when the policy or product you are producing has a direct impact on those stakeholders. Helping to develop or explore a variety of options designed with and by stakeholders and to reach agreement on the best one for all concerned would be an example of empowerment. |



Appendix

Step 3. What do I want to achieve?

The outcomes of stakeholder engagement should always be at the heart of planning the engagement process (eg inform, consult, influence, etc). State them clearly in your engagement/involvement plan, detailing exactly what we're looking for from the engagement process so that they always remain the focus of that engagement.

Different methods – different outcomes

Different methods of engagement produce different types of outcomes, which in turn, determine the final outcomes of the stakeholder engagement exercise. Identifying the desired outcomes at the start helps to identify which methods will be the most likely to deliver. Here are some examples of outcomes that you could look for as a result of effective involvement and engagement:

- people know who we are, what we do and/or know about specific developments or areas of our work
- improved decision making, for example by the SSSC and those we want to influence

- improved working relationships with individual stakeholders and partners
- changed perceptions of our work or our staff
- methods to evaluate the impact of our work on the public or the social service sector
- improved communication with individuals, groups or organisations
- increased understanding of what we are aiming to achieve as an organisation
- increased and improved influence on Scottish Government and other stakeholders
- promotion of our vision to those with an interest or influence
- agreement of purpose and direction of specific projects or programmes of work
- early identification of potential issues, conflicts and benefits
- generating new ideas to achieve outcomes
- forming new partnerships
- improving our services for people eg workforce development, registration or fitness to practise processes
- sharing information on policy change
- cost savings and value for money
- products and services that meet our stakeholders' needs.

Appendix

Step 4. Who do I need to involve?



Ask yourself the following questions.

- Who will this affect?
- Who are the influencers and opinion formers?
- Who has been involved in the past?
- Who has not been involved in the past but should have been?
- Who has expertise on this issue?
- Who are the hard to reach groups that are affected or have experience?
- What part of the process is most relevant to different groups? Not everyone needs to be involved at every stage.
- Who has resources that could contribute to the engagement?
- Who are the 'right' people to be involved?
- What's in it for them? Be clear about people's motivations.
- Who are the people with a real interest but who have little contact with the SSSC at the moment?

Use the SSSC stakeholder map as a guide to identify which stakeholders are relevant to your project and why. This is the list of stakeholders identified by the SSSC's Council and matched against each of our outcomes.

The table is available on in the know.

Complete a version of the map for each project at the planning stages.

This will help you to decide whether to engage, at what level you need to engage and it will help you with your stakeholder engagement plan.

Once you have established your stakeholders for your project you can then carry out an analysis to establish and prioritise the key stakeholders for each phase of your project.

Please contact the **Communications Team** for advice and support to do this exercise.

Appendix

Step 5. The stakeholder engagement plan

Here is a list of things to consider for your engagement plan.

There may be other things that you can add, these are the basics:

- time schedule
- resources and allocation
- outputs and outcomes
- communications strategy – including follow up – how has the engagement influenced our work
- logistics – are meetings online or in person, do you need a venue, specialist equipment, visits to service user establishments/projects
- stakeholders to be involved
- selection of techniques to be used – think about how you will engage stakeholders:
 - you might be sending information so that people know about something we are doing
 - involve people in meetings to present a proposal/consultation, etc
 - set up a stakeholder working group, if a group is necessary but don't set up groups that you don't really need
 - invite stakeholders to presentations at meetings and conferences
 - hold online or in person events
 - set up focus groups or panels on specific issues
 - involve people in the design of a consultation or in publicity campaigns.



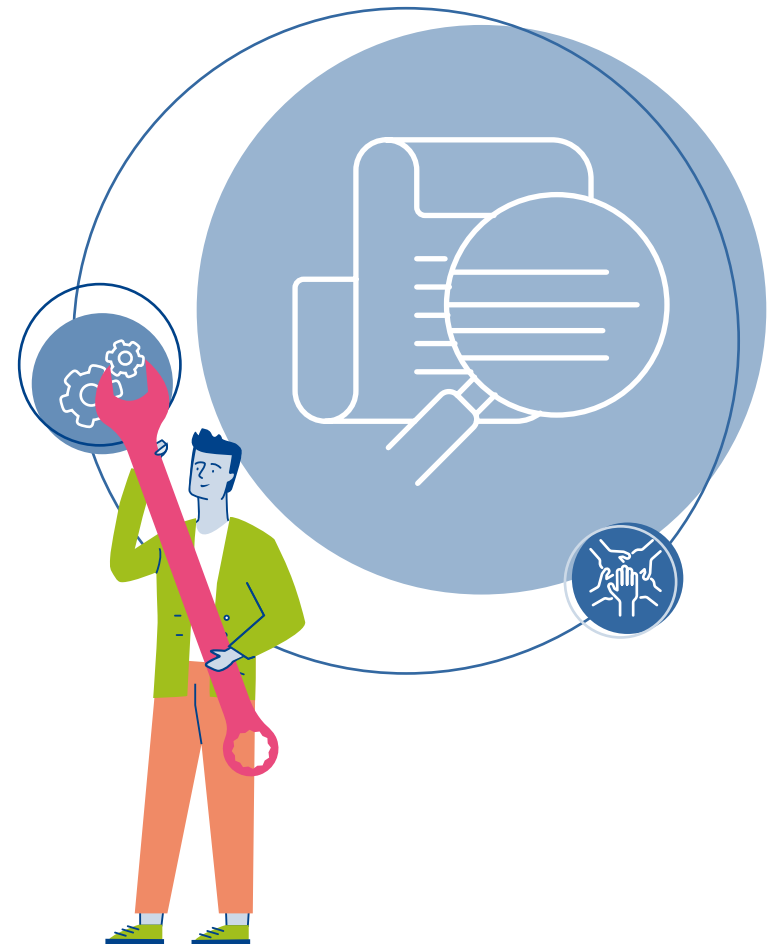
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Step 6. Keep it under review

Set out and agree a review process to make sure things are on track and check if the engagement is meeting its purpose. If this is part of a programme or project please use the PMO toolkit.

This keeps everyone involved in the engagement process up to date and helps you see if things are on track. Set some benchmarks or milestones and regular check points in your project timescale.

A robust review process also helps manage any risks.



Appendix

Step 7. Has it worked?



Include stakeholder engagement evaluation as part of your project documentation to help you assess the following areas.

- Whether the engagement process met its aims and originally agreed purpose.
- Whether the process met the explicit and implicit needs of the participants.

It may also consider whether:

- the level of participation was appropriate to the context and stakeholders
- the methods and techniques used were appropriate and worked as expected
- the costs were reasonable and within budget
- what was co-designed or co-produced helped towards achieving the desired outcomes
- the involvement and participation methods worked.



Appendix

Step 8. Using what you've learned

There are lots of different ways to use what you learn from involving and engaging with our stakeholders. We are developing an online tool for you to record engagement activities and feedback so that we can see the impact over time that it has on our work.

Here are some examples of how to use what you've learned.

- Record any relevant information and highlight issues to help us with our business development and planning. Your directorate can highlight their engagement and any emerging issues at the monthly assurance meetings or before that via their director to EMT.
- Record and share any changes or developments because of the experience.
- Identify potential or developing issues for the organisation and record and report them through the OMT and EMT.
- Identify issues or areas of interest for different stakeholders and use these for future planning.
- Use stakeholder views to inform and develop future resources and products that are targeted to different groups and their needs.

Incorporate stakeholder needs into plans.

Measure the success of the stakeholder engagement process and use as an improvement mechanism.



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please contact the SSSC on 0345 60 30 891

We promote equality by removing unlawful and unfair treatment
on the grounds of any protected characteristic wherever possible.