**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.*

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## 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.

**Eg**

**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.



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**A Journey to**
# Involvement
2: Front-facing Involvement

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## 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**
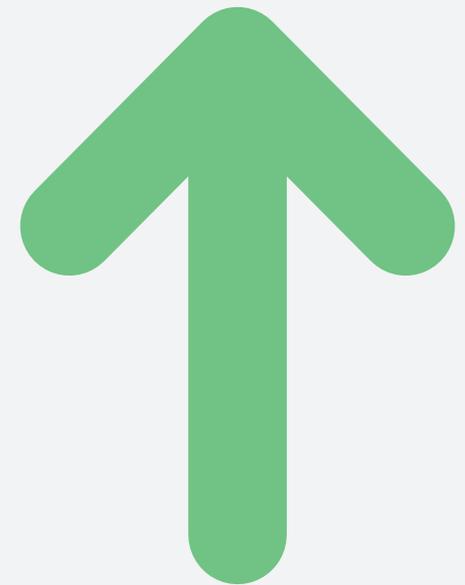(See involvement journey topic 2: Front-facing involvement)

**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)

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# Involvement
2: Front-facing Involvement

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## 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.**

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## 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'.**

**A Journey to**

# Involvement

# 2: Front-facing Involvement

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

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# Defining the issue

The Community Life survey (2016-17) found that across the UK, only 27% of adults agreed they could personally influence decisions. Sometimes, the way we host conversations with the public is off-putting or fails to get to what really matters to them. It's important to ensure there are appropriate and accessible opportunities for the public and stakeholders to get involved in and shape services and the decisions that affect them. Involving them in a way that is relevant to them, and makes best use of the knowledge and experience they have to offer.

## Synergies and connections to other journeys

**Journey to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**
**Topic 5:** Culture available to all

**Journey to a Wales of cohesive communities**
**Topic 1:** People active in communities

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## Making **Simple** Changes

**Write in plain English and Welsh** as standard in public documents, and ensure you sense-check with 'non-experts'.

**Produce easy to understand summaries** of the issue so citizens and stakeholders feel informed.

**Identify and map** community anchor organisations who may be able to facilitate community members to get involved.

**Provide the option** for people to engage using 'easy read' documents and BSL where needed.

**Use a variety of accessible,** inclusive engagement methods and formats. As a minimum, this should include the ability to get involved online and offline.

**E**g

E.g. **The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement** provides information on a number of engagement methods.

**Take involvement opportunities** to people, rather than expecting them to come to you. This should include digital and offline opportunities.

**E**g

E.g. **Welsh Government** explored this with their involvement work around the National Development Framework.

**Use existing groups and networks** to identify and advertise opportunities to get involved.

**Consult frontline staff** who work with people and communities, on how best to engage with specific groups. Considering locations, types of engagement, and how to address specific barriers.

**Map digital platforms** to understand how best to communicate with different demographic groups, and ensure this information is available to all staff who lead involvement work in your organisation.

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## Making **Simple** Changes

**Align involvement events** with public transport, and ensure accessible venues are used.

**Identify and publicise car sharing schemes** for citizens and stakeholders attending events or workshops.

**Engage on a theme** rather than a policy.

**Eg**

E.g. Measuring the Mountain hold regular citizen jury events to allow members of the community to engage on a specific theme.

**Ensure you are** having 'what matters' conversations.

**Eg**

**Use the 'UN international day(s)** of…' to educate inspire and involve people.

E.g. 24th Jan: International day of Education.

**Share public involvement** events and data with other organisations.

**Eg**

E.g. **Cwm Taf PSB, Welsh Government Valleys Task Force** and local organisations shared data and engagement events in the Valleys Stories Project.

**Aim to overcome perceived power** imbalance by doing things differently, such as not 'talking at' an audience, and wearing more casual clothing when engaging with community groups and young people.

**Put mechanisms** in place to map participation initiatives to avoid engagement overload.

**Actively seek input** from under-represented and seldom heard groups.

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## Being More **Adventurous**

**Eg**

**Maintain regular contact** and partnerships with existing groups, such as community anchor organisations and networks, to build a relationship of trust and approachability.

E.g. **Welsh Water** have taken this approach in their work in the Rhondda Fach.

**Provide regular** drop in sessions or surgeries for involvement and feedback.

**Establish opportunities** to map lived experiences and personal knowledge of key policy and service design issues amongst staff, and provide opportunities for them to contribute to policy and service design.

**Make every contact count** – encourage staff to seek feedback from individuals and communities and ensure there is an organisational mechanism for feeding this in to policy, service design and delivery.

**Use scenarios** and existing data or information to set the context for the involvement activity. This may be set in the future using long-term trends.

**Eg**

**Host cultural activities** such as a community party, theatre performance or festival around the topic in question to get people to explore the issue further.

E.g. **HiJinx Theatre** have performed interactive forum theatre to explore issues around learning disabilities.

**Provide opportunities** for departments and organisations to share findings, processes and learning as a regular good practice exchange network.

**Eg**

E.g. **Cwm Taf PSB** have an Involvement Communications and Information group who meet regularly and produce a newsletter to share good practice.

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## Being More **Adventurous**

**Identify what skills** you will need to ensure your organisation is able to make use of current and future digital platforms.

**Provide opportunities** for members of the public and community groups to feed in proposed solutions to issues your organisation or communities have identified through online platforms.

**Eg**

E.g. **Simply Do** have worked with **Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board** to identify solutions to obesity.

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## Owning your **Ambition**

**Eg**

**There is standard practice** of using 'snowball sampling' or distributed conversation approaches to reach beyond 'usual suspects'.

E.g. The Wales We Want National Conversation took this approach through identifying champions and using existing groups.

**You expand your use of technology** to creatively engage people, such as virtual reality and games to simulate planning, decision-making and the potential consequences.

**Eg**

E.g. this exploration of a virtual reality tool for urban planning and preserving cultural heritage.

**Eg**

**You use open data approaches** to sharing data, using a network of contributors and participants to identify solutions.

E.g. Simply Do have been working with Public Bodies and Further Education to crowd source ideas and solutions.

**The use of randomly selected representatives** and facilitated deliberation, for example Citizens' Assemblies and Citizens' Juries, becomes standard practice.

**Eg**

E.g. Interlink's work using the 'Measuring the Mountain' citizen jury.

**Ensure your organisation has skills** needed to make use of current and emerging digital media platforms – seeking opportunities to collaborate with other organisations to share and or develop expertise.

**Eg**

E.g. **The Office of the Future Generations Commissioner** has produced a People's Platform and run Digital Cafes to upskill staff, and collaborate with other organisations looking to develop their digital capacity.

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