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About the Participation Framework

Why it's been created

The Participation Framework is being developed as part of the commitment made in [Scotland's Open Government Action Plan: 2018-2020](#) to:

Provide a framework to support overall change in Scottish Government to improve the way people take part in open policy-making and delivering services

The Framework is designed to guide good practice in participation across government by:

- improving staff's understanding of the benefits of involving people early in a process;
- raising awareness and giving people the skills they need to carry out (or commission someone to carry out) effective ways of including the public and other stakeholders in their work; and
- helping to make sure our staff and Ministers are choosing the best engagement methods to support participation in meaningful ways to influence policies and services.

How to use it

The Participation Framework is not intended to be a document that you should read once (from end to end). Instead it is designed as a toolkit that you can refer to (and drop in and out of) to help make the best decisions about how to enhance participation within your own policy area, for different purposes, and at different points in time.

Giving feedback

The Participation Framework and [Methods Glossary](#) are still in development, so we'd really appreciate hearing how you found them. Feedback on what was helpful, what was missing, and how you found yourself using the documents will be invaluable to us, as we create additional tools to guide users through the framework. We're also working on a more user-friendly format! You can give feedback by emailing amy.watson@gov.scot.

What it contains

The Participation Framework contains a suite of resources to support and enhance participation in the work of the Scottish Government:

- An overview of why participation is vital to the [Scottish approach to government](#)
- A glossary of terms relating to Participation and a model to help ensure consistency in how we understand, approach and talk about opportunities to enhance participation in, and with, government for different purposes

- Information to help you identify where there are [opportunities for participation](#) at all stages of the Policy / Decision Making Process, and where wider participation can add most to your own work
- Tools for understanding what [Level of Participation](#) is most appropriate to your particular situation, and why
- Steps for understanding ‘who’ needs to be given the opportunity to participate at different points within the Policy/Decision Making Process
- Advice on what type of engagement methods you might want to use to create opportunities for wider participation (and why they might be most useful for your circumstances)
- Tools to help plan you develop an engagement plan that will support opportunities for effective participation at different stages of the Policy/Decision Making Process
- Guidance on ensuring the ways you provide opportunities for participation and undertake engagement are accessible, including considerations for removing barriers to participation for different equalities groups*
- Tools to help you plan and facilitate events*
- Advice for commissioning outside support (if needed)*

*In development

Glossary of terms

This Glossary provides simple definitions of a variety of terms used throughout this framework, in alphabetical order.

The purpose of this Glossary is to build consistency in how these terms are used and understood across all areas of government in Scotland.

Civil Society Organisations	This is a term used to signify a wide range of organised and organic groups operating outside of government and or the market including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions, social movements, grassroots organisations, online networks and communities, and faith groups Civil society organisations (CSOs), groups and networks vary by size, structure and platform ranging from international non-governmental organisations (e.g. Oxfam) and mass social movements (e.g. Extinction Rebellion) to small, local organisations.
Collaborate	Collaboration involves the Government partnering with stakeholders and/or the public in each aspect of the decision making process, including defining the issue, developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions.
Consult	<p>Consulting is a particular approach to engagement that refers to the process of obtaining feedback on analysis, alternatives, proposals etc. so that the preferences and priorities of people outside of government (and public administration) can inform the decisions made by Government.</p> <p>Within the Scottish Government this is typically undertaken using a traditional Written Consultation process registered on Citizen Space and published as a Consultation on the Scottish Government website (gov.scot). This framework however highlights that there are a wide range of different methods that government can use to consult.</p>
Co-production	<p>Co-production is a practice in the delivery of public services in which citizens are involved in the creation of public policies and services. It is contrasted with a transaction based method of service delivery in which citizens consume public services which are conceived of and provided by governments.</p> <p>Co-design and co-creation are often used interchangeably with co-production.</p>
Delegate	Delegating is handing over the ability to make the decision and / or take action i.e. placing the power in the hands of the public or particular stakeholder groups.

	Activities at this level give the greatest level of control over the outcome to the participants. In many depictions of the Spectrum of Engagement this is referred to as 'empowerment'.
Deliberation	The act of weighing up options and evaluating alternatives before making a decision. In the context of public engagement it is used to describe processes that take participants through a learning and discussion phase before reaching collective conclusions.
Delivery Cycle	Throughout the Participation Framework the term 'delivery cycle' is being used as an umbrella term to refer to the key stages necessary to carry out a wide range of government functions including conventional policy work, designing and developing services, proposing legislation and the array of other government functions officials may be involved in.
Dialogue	<p>Dialogue is a specific form of communication that is focussed on building a greater understanding of different perspectives on an issue by exploring the reasons behind why people hold the opinions that they do.</p> <p>This does not happen automatically when people talk, particularly about contested issues. In practice, developing dialogue requires encouraging and supporting participants to view the conversation as a process of shared exploration, to listen without judgement and to reflect openly on what has led to their own opinions.</p>
Empowering	Empowerment (helping people to take control of their lives), can occur in many different ways and in many different contexts, and involves investing in the ongoing capacity of individuals or groups to act on their own behalf to achieve a greater measure of control over their lives and destinies.
Engagement	Engagement is an umbrella term used to refer to the direct actions taken by government to invite people (the public, professional stakeholders and/or civil society organisations) to participate in policy and decision making processes i.e. the methods used to create spaces for participation and influence.
Traditional Written Consultation	A Traditional Written Consultation will be underpinned by a written Consultation Paper providing information on the topic and setting out questions for response. It will be registered on Citizen Space and published as a Consultation on the Scottish Government website (gov.scot), although these on-line activities may be complemented with opportunities for face-to-face engagement. It will be time limited (usually 12 weeks) and is open to anyone with an interest in the matter to respond.

	In practice, this is often supplemented by additional engagement activities to secure wider participation.
Informing	Providing information, in clear, accessible and relevant ways, about governments' activities, policies, plans and performance.
Involving	Involving is an approach to engagement that sets out to work directly with the public and/or key stakeholder groups throughout the decision making process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered in the development of proposals, alternatives or policies.
Open Government	The opening up of government processes, proceedings, documents, and data for public scrutiny and involvement.
Participation	<p>Participation is a broad, umbrella term used to describe how people get involved in their communities, interest groups and campaigns, and the policies and decisions that affect their opportunities, their environments and their quality of life.</p> <p>Participation in, and with, Government refers specifically to the opportunities people have to be able to influence, question and monitor the working of their governments.</p>
Policy making	<p>Policy-making is, in essence, the process by which governments translate their visions and goals into programmes and actions to deliver outcomes i.e. their desired changes in the real world.</p> <p>Throughout the Participation Framework the term 'policy making' is used as an umbrella term to refer to the processes necessary to carry out a wider range of government functions including conventional policy work, designing and developing services, proposing legislation and a range of other government operations.</p>
Stakeholders	<p>Stakeholders are those who have a particular interest in the outcome of any decision or policy making process.</p> <p>Depending on the circumstances this might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segments of the wider public who are likely to be most affected by the outcome (e.g. women, people with a disability, home-owners or families with children under 5 years of age); • Civil Society Organisations whose role is to represent the interests of particular segment of the population: e.g. Shelter (representing the needs of the homeless), or LGBT Youth (representing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender young people) or Inclusion Scotland (representing the interests of disabled people) ; • Membership organisations established to advocate on behalf of particular interests: e.g. the NFU (National Farmers

	<p>Union), UKOOG (the UK Oil and Gas industry body) or the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional bodies advocating on behalf of specific sectors or industries : e.g. COSLA (Coalition of Scottish Local Authorities), STUC (Scottish Trade Unions Council) or Community Pharmacy Scotland (representing the voice of those who deliver pharmaceutical care to the people of Scotland),
The Public	<p>The Public is used throughout this Framework to refer to the wide range of people that live within Scotland. It must be acknowledged however that ‘the public’ is not a uniformed group and activities focussed on public participation need to give attention to who actually becomes involved.</p> <p>It is also important to note that ‘the public’ who might have an interest in the outcomes of a particular policy or decision making process may not necessarily be the ‘wider public’. Instead, in instances, where the outcomes will have specific impacts on one or more segments of the population, the relevant ‘public’ may be more tightly defined as <u>‘stakeholders’</u>.</p>

Basics of Participation

Participation is a broad, umbrella term used to describe how people get involved in their communities, interest groups campaigns, and the policies and decisions that affect their opportunities, their environments, the public services they receive, and ultimately their quality of life.

The Scottish Approach

Providing opportunities for people to participate in ways that will influence policy, service design and decision making has become a fundamental part of the [Scottish Approach to Government](#).

The drive to increase participation in, and with, government rests on 2 key principles:

1. that people have the right to contribute to, and to influence, the decisions that affect their lives, choices and life chances.
2. that involving the people likely to be affected by the decision in the process results in better decision making.

The distinctive Scottish approach to designing and delivering policy and public services that has evolved since devolution is characterised by moves towards embedding more participatory, co-productive and assets based approaches at the core of how government operates. In doing so it recognises the important role that people (individual citizens, communities, civil society organisations, professional stakeholders and experts) have in bringing different types of knowledge and experiences to address the challenges faced by government.

Open Government

Participation is also one of the 3 key pillars of the international Open Government movement, led by the [Open Government Partnership](#). The Open Government Partnership's declaration of principles, to which the Scottish Government is a signatory, describes the commitment to supporting participation as:

'We value public participation of all people, equally and without discrimination, in decision making and policy formulation. Public engagement, including the full participation of women, increases the effectiveness of governments, which benefit from people's knowledge, ideas and ability to provide oversight. We commit to making policy formulation and decision making more transparent, creating and using channels to solicit public feedback, and deepening public participation in developing, monitoring and evaluating government activities.'

Working with communities

Committing to improving opportunities for participation across the functions of government means moving away from a 'doing to' or 'doing for' ethos towards a culture of 'doing with'. In practice this means supporting the meaningful participation

of people in policy development and implementation from the earliest possible opportunity.

When opportunities for participation are provided in effective and well managed ways then participation in and with government can lead to decisions that:

- deliver more efficient and effective services;
- better meet people's needs;
- better reflect community values;
- have a greater likelihood of effective implementation; and
- demonstrate accountability (particularly in relation to the use of public money).

However, when **not done well**, it can damage the reputation not only of the specific initiative, but of the government as a whole, by:

- reducing trust in government when the results of participation are not seen to be acted upon;
- building stakeholder frustration in situations where external organisations and individuals feel they have already given representations on the issue previously;
- reducing the likelihood of future participation when people feel their contributions have not been considered, or they have not received feedback about how their input has been used;
- not meeting legal requirements (i.e. there are some policy areas where an Act sets out specific mechanisms for how and when engagement must be carried out, for example minimum time periods or engagement with named stakeholders);
- undermining previous undertakings, commitments or practices which have given certain people or groups a legitimate expectation that they would be invited to contribute;
- being an inefficient use of public money, for example when there is already clear and available evidence on the views of stakeholder groups and/or the wider public on the issues.

The information and guidance included in this Participation Framework is designed to assist officials within the Scottish Government to plan and deliver the most effective opportunities for participation they can.

The wider context of participation

On the whole, people choose to participate in the things that matter to them. While the choices people make about how they participate are motivated by a wide range of factors (and can fluctuate in response to different demands in their own live and external circumstances), there are some common factors that define key features of participation:

- Voluntary: Participation can be encouraged, supported and made more attractive, but it is inherently about a free choice to take part (or not) without coercion. People participate because they want to.
- About action: People are moved to action for a range of different motives and their involvement may be limited in time and scope, but all participation requires an action of some kind. Even a relatively passive form of participation such as signing an online petition involves expressing an opinion and a degree of activity and effort.
- Collective or connected: Participation means being part of something. Even when the action is of an individual nature, such as giving a charitable donation, there is a sense of common purpose and the act itself has a collective impact or ambition.
- Purposeful: All participants want to do something that is worthwhile in their own terms, and every participatory act has, and is intended to have, consequences. At the very least, participation makes a difference to the individual participant; at most, it also helps change the world around them; and sometimes it does both.¹

Research into people's participatory activities has shown that participation tends to fall into three main categories of activity (although there are clearly many overlaps between them)²:

1. Social participation - This involves collective activities: from being involved in formal voluntary organisations (e.g. volunteering at a day centre or being a trustee), to contributing to grassroots community groups (e.g. a 'Transition Town' initiative or a sports club), to taking part in informal opportunities for mutual aid or skills sharing (e.g. a peer-support group or a knitting group). ([Fields of Participation](#) column 1)
2. Individual participation - People's individual actions and choices that reflect the kind of society they want to live in can also be a form of participation: from buying 'fair trade' products, to supporting a school fundraiser or giving to national or international charities. ([Fields of Participation](#) column 1)
3. Public participation - This is the engagement of individuals with the various structures and institutions of democracy and decision making: it could include voting, contacting a political representative, campaigning and lobbying, or taking part in consultations or other forms of engagement initiated by government. ([Fields of Participation](#) column 2 & 3)

¹ [Pathways through participation:](#)

² [Pathways through participation:](#)

The role of the Scottish Government to support and facilitate participation in each of these areas varies. This is further illustrated in the [Fields of Participation](#) table.

Fields of Participation

Participation activities **initiated** by the public, civil society groups and other stakeholders

Voluntary individual and social participation

When people voluntarily participate in a wide range of activities within society: around causes they believe in, to feel part of something, to improve their own circumstances and/or to give something back to their community.
Whatever their individual reasons may be, fundamentally people participate in this way because they want to.

Scottish Government's role

While this type of participation can be encouraged, supported and made more attractive, it is inherently about individuals' choice. Government does however have a role, including:

- To promote and model a participative culture across Scotland;
- To support an active and engaged civil society that enables people to freely organise, act and contribute to their communities, and wider social objectives, in ways that they chose;
- To support the voluntary sector and volunteer support organisations to support people to contribute.

Participation in governance driven by the public

When individual members of the public or stakeholder groups initiate interaction with government in order to influence policies, services or decisions they have an interest in. Activities under this heading could include:

- Contact with Councillors / MSPs / MPs
- Petitions
- Social media comments
- Lobbying
- Campaigns
- Use of Participation Requests
- Demonstrations

Scottish Government's role

- To establish an enabling and responsive context that allows people to interact with governments at all levels.

Some examples of specific initiatives the Scottish Government has implemented to enable an open and participatory culture include:

- Commitments in the Scottish Open Government Action Plan;
- National Performance Framework;
- Community Empowerment Act;
- Community Planning legislation;
- Freedom of Information legislation.

Participation **initiated** by the Scottish Government

Participation invited to influence policy making and service design

When governments invite the participation of people in policy formulation, decision making, service design and oversight the purpose is to increase the effectiveness of government. There are a wide range of ways that the Scottish Government can invite the participation of the public, civil society groups and other stakeholders. Collectively these are referred to as methods for [Engagement](#).

Scottish Government's role:

- To create opportunities for meaningful participation at the point where there is an ability to influence the outcomes of policy and service design;
- To conscientiously consider and use the results of participation activities as part of its policy and decision making processes;
- To feedback to participants, and the wider public, the results of the engagement process and the difference it has made.

Our commitment to participation

The Scottish Government's commitment to participation, and to using a variety of methods of engagement to facilitate that participation, is not new.

The commitment to enable the people of Scotland to participate in the activities of Scottish Government was enshrined in the Scotland Act. This has been enacted through key principles of operation designed to ensure:

- Power-sharing
- Accountability
- Openness and Participation
- Equal Opportunities

The commitment to facilitating participation was further embedded in the Standing Orders for the Scottish Parliament where it states (in Rule 9.3) that for any Government Bill introduced to Parliament the policy memorandums would set out the consultation, if any, which was undertaken on the objectives of the Bill, the options for meeting them and/or on the details of the Bill itself, along with information on the outcome of that consultation.³

The choice to use the word 'consult' in the Standing Orders has led many to assume that there is a need for a traditional [Written Consultation process](#) in order to meet this requirement. However, this is not necessarily the case. As guidance in the Bill Handbook makes clear, the Standing Orders "do not specify a certain level or method of consultation" but simply that the Government informs the Parliament of what consultation, if any, has taken place i.e. an overarching requirement to demonstrate how people have been able to contribute to the process.⁴

The underlying expectation therefore is that there will have been opportunities for people (individual citizens, communities, civil society organisations, professional stakeholders and/or experts) to participate in the formulation. The guidance also further notes "there are a variety of participation methods which you could consider using in addition to, or as an alternative to, written methods."⁵

As outlined elsewhere in the Participation Framework, consultation is now generally considered to be just one [level of participation](#) (and a traditional Written Consultation process just one way of consulting). Reading the Standing Orders this way does not challenge their intent, as the Bill Handbook also makes it clear that Parliament expects Government to be proactive in widening out participation in policy-making process, and expects the methods of engagement used to be responsive to the issue itself and the needs of those with an interest in the outcome:

³ <https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/26514.aspx>

⁴ It is also worth noting that in the years since the Standing Orders were written the language used to describe opportunities for people to contribute to the formation of government policy has evolved worldwide. While consultation used to be seen as an umbrella term to describe the public's role in decision making processes, now 'participation' or 'engagement' tend to be much more widely used, with 'consulting' being seen as one way of achieving this.

⁵ [Bill Handbook - A Guide To Bill Procedure For Scottish Parliament Bills](#) p25

*"What this means in practical terms is that the Government should be considering as wide a range as possible of methods of participation and consultation and, in terms of the FOISA, of publishing the results. There continues to be a role for traditional methods of written consultation, but officials and Ministers should also consider other ways of eliciting the views of particular organisations and the public as necessary."*⁶

In most cases therefore you can choose to open up opportunities for participation in ways that best suit the needs of your particular policy area and the type of contribution you are looking for.⁷ Whatever type of engagement methods you decide on, however, you will usually need to obtain appropriate Ministerial clearance for the exercise and any associated documentation.

⁶ [Bill Handbook - A Guide To Bill Procedure For Scottish Parliament Bills](#) p25

⁷ There are however, a limited number of specific policy processes that do set out when and how engagement is to be carried out (either by stipulating a Formal Government Consultation process at a specific stage of the process e.g. on the policy proposals rather than the draft instrument, or mandating timelines or publicising opportunities for participation in specific newspapers or journals). In these cases you must meet these requirements.

Identifying Opportunities for Participation

Spectrum of Participation

The International Association for Public Participation has developed a model for understanding how governments can encourage and support participation for different purposes.⁸ This has been widely embraced internationally as a way of understanding the different roles that the public (and other stakeholders) can play in a [Government initiated engagement process](#)⁹.

A version of this model, adapted to a Scottish Government context, is presented here as a Spectrum of Participation. It is a useful tool for clarifying how different forms of engagement offer participants different levels of influence over a government policy and operations.

The levels within the Spectrum of Participation, however, are not intended to imply a scale of increased value or virtue. Instead, this model explicitly recognises that activity at each of the different levels serves a different function – and that all are useful, and appropriate, at different points in the [delivery cycle](#) of policy and decision making.

It is, however, important to understand that engagement undertaken at each level makes a different 'offer' to participants about how their contribution will be used. Being clear about the level of engagement being made to participants helps manage expectations and allows people to make an informed choice about getting involved.

⁸ https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf

⁹ Engagement is the overarching term used to describe the range of actions taken by government to create opportunities for participation within their operations. Methods of inviting engagement range from social media interactions, to surveys, formal consultation papers, roadshows, workshops, stakeholder roundtables, user-led service design, public meetings, co-production processes and more.

Spectrum of participation

	Activity	Offer to participants	Purpose
<u>INFORM</u>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will keep you informed • We will provide information openly and transparently • We will not withhold relevant information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform those with an interest in the outcome (i.e. the public and stakeholder groups)
<u>CONSULT</u>	To obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives, proposals and/or decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will keep you informed • We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations • We will give serious consideration to your contributions • We will be open to your influence • We will provide feedback on how your input has influenced the outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform those making the decision or developing proposals
<u>INVOLVE</u>	To work directly with participants throughout the policy / decision making process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will keep you informed • We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the outcome / alternatives developed • We will provide feedback on how your input has influenced the outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable participants to directly influence the decision / options developed
<u>COLLABORATE</u>	To partner with participants in each aspect of the decision, including defining the issue, developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions • We will incorporate your advice and recommendations into decision / implementation to the maximum extent possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To share the development and decision making process (as much as possible)
<u>DELEGATE</u>	To place final decision-making in the hands of the participants - to delegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will implement what you decide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To hand over the ability to make decisions and / or take action

Inform

PURPOSE : to provide the public and other stakeholder groups with information about government's activities, policies, plans and performance in clear, accessible and relevant ways. This could also include providing information about how people can participate in shaping or monitoring these aspects of government.

Supporting participation through information

An engagement approach primarily focussed on information provision can be most appropriate on occasions where there is little or no room for negotiation (e.g. legal obligations) or a decision has already been made (e.g. clear manifesto commitments).

Providing information about governments' activities, policies, plans and performance however is also the foundation that supports all other mechanisms for engaging the public and stakeholder groups in the processes of government.

Informing activities that assist participation at different levels include:

- letting the public know that work is going on around a particular issue;
- communicating opportunities for participation in policy development;
- building public capacity to understand the details of a particular policy consideration;
- publishing information/data related to the issue so that interested stakeholders can choose to engage with the material; and
- announcing a government decision, following wider engagement.

Key principles for effective information provision include:

- that information must be provided in accessible and relevant ways;
- that information must be easy to find;
- that relevant information should not be withheld unless there is a strong and justifiable case for doing so.

When focussing on the provision of information as a tool for supporting wider participation it is important to be clear on the following details: the target audience; the purpose of the information being provided; the implications of this information for the audience; and avenues for the audience to respond. This is important because, just as the provision of information helps the public understand the government's position, it also helps them to decide whether they want to engage more actively around the topic.

Support for providing information

There are a range of well-established practices and standards within government for providing information to the public including:

- Pro-active publication of information;
- Using 'plain English' in all communications;
- Effectively signposting people to sources of information;

- Providing information in multiple formats (e.g. printed, online, easy-read) and in different languages;
- Making information available via multiple channels;
- Making it easy for people to request information, alongside a commitment to providing timely responses.

Additional sources of support include:

- [Scottish Government Content Standards](#) - The standards and tools here have been developed by the Scottish Government's Digital Directorate and are free to use by government, public sector and third sector non-commercial organisations in Scotland.
- **Communications Division** can help you promote wider engagement opportunities via official Scottish Government channels and handle any press enquiries.
- Advice on [using social media](#)

Further information:

- Advice on [the role different engagement approaches serve at different points in the delivery cycle](#)

Consult

PURPOSE : To obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives, proposals and/or decisions in order to provide information to decision makers about preferences and priorities.

Consultative approaches to participation

'Consulting' is the most common approach to engagement used by government.

Consultations are widely used to collect and consolidate the range of viewpoints and opinions held by the public (or specific stakeholder groups) on a given topic, in order to inform decision making.

Distinguishing features of a consultative approach

While the method of consulting with participants may vary, the key feature of a consultative approach to engagement is that it is primarily an 'extractive' process i.e. the issue to be addressed is framed by government and, through engagement, decision makers are seeking responses from participants to identified questions, options or proposed courses of action.

The 'offer' made to participants is therefore limited to: **we are interested in hearing your views and will give them conscientious consideration in the decision making process.**

More explicitly, as outlined in the [Spectrum of Participation](#) table, the offer is:

- We will keep you informed
- We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations
- We will give serious consideration to your contributions
- We will be open to your influence
- We will provide feedback on how your input has influenced the outcome

Methods that support a consultative approach

It is worth noting here that there is an established practice within the Scottish Government of issuing a specific form of traditional Written Consultations that are open to anyone to respond to. However, this is just one method of consulting. Further, as explained in the section on [Planning for Participation](#), there are only a limited number of situations in which this is the required approach.

As a proven and well understood means of testing the views of civic Scotland in the development of new policies and legislation, traditional Written Consultations will continue to have a fundamental and legitimate role within government engagement practices. But it is also important to recognise that they are only one of many ways that Government can ask, listen to, and act on, the views of citizens and stakeholders.

There are also a wide range of other well established and well known methods for undertaking a consultation including:

- **Surveys** (with the public, service users or specific stakeholder groups)
- **Public opinion polls** (with a representative sample of the population)
- **Qualitative interviews** (usually with people selected because of their specific stake in the outcome of a decision. This could be existing service users or people with particular characteristics e.g. people with a disability, nursing mothers, people observing halal diets)
- **Roadshows or public meetings** (open to everyone in a given area)
- **Focus groups** (with invited participants, usually those with a particular interest in the outcome)
- **Workshops** (with either self-selecting or invited participants)
- **Deliberative engagement models** (either with a representative sample of the public e.g. Citizens Assemblies, Citizens Forums or Citizens Juries, or with targeted stakeholder groups)
- **Stakeholder Roundtables / working groups** (usually with professional stakeholders)

Further information:

- Advice on [the role different engagement approaches serve at different points in the delivery cycle](#)

More information on consultation methods:

- Guidance for [Planning participatory engagement](#) to consult with the public and other stakeholders
- [Detailed guidance on planning and running a traditional Written Consultation in Scotland](#)

Involve

PURPOSE: To work directly with participants throughout a decision making process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered in the development of proposals, alternatives or policies.

Involving approaches to participation

Taking an 'involvement' approach to participation emphasises a two-way relationship between government and participants. Involvement-based approaches tend to work best in the early stages of a policy making process when the issues that are important to people have the most opportunity to influence the policy options or service delivery alternatives being developed.

The specific goal of an involving approach is to open up space for an exchange of information and perspectives in order to explore ideas for a solution. This is a particularly appropriate level of participation when the possibilities open for consideration require the participants to understand and engage with complex or unfamiliar concepts, or asks them to move beyond the boundaries of self-interest and recognise the (sometimes competing) needs of others.

While Government may start an involvement-focussed engagement project with a pre-set topic of interest, the most effective processes engage the public and stakeholders in ways that are relevant to them. Central to the success of involvement processes, therefore, is ensuring that they start from where participants are 'at' – both physically (i.e. by reaching out to potential participants in environments that they are already in, or feel comfortable within) and mentally (i.e. by beginning with a learning phase that ensures all participants have a foundation of relevant knowledge). This serves to enable 'what matters' conversations, which help everyone involved understand the issues in the context of their own realities (personal or professional) and focus on the things that are most important to them.

Distinguishing features of an Involving approach

At the core of an 'involving' approach must be the goal of promoting dialogue between government and the participants (and sometimes between participants themselves). Dialogue is a specific form of conversation that seeks to expose all of the participants (professionals and the public) to the opinions and reasoning of others. This serves to enhance their understanding and appreciation of differing priorities and perspectives.

Approaches that focus on involvement are usually best undertaken early in the decision-making process. Doing so ensures that Governments are better positioned to act on the 'offer' they are making to the participants i.e. **to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the outcomes and/or the alternatives developed.**

Engagement activities that take place at the 'involve' level need to be clear that the offer made to participants is that Government will endeavour to understand and reflect their concerns and aspirations when they develop policy proposals and

alternatives. It must also, however, be recognised that this 'offer' is contingent on decision makers balancing the views of participants in the engagement process alongside the variety of other evidence, arguments and policy priorities that they have been presented with in formulating their position.

Methods that support involvement

There are a variety of engagement methods that particularly support this approach including:

- **Qualitative interviews** (usually with people selected because of their specific stake in the outcome of a decision. This could be existing service users or people with particular characteristics e.g. people with a disability, nursing mothers, people observing halal diets)
- **Focus groups** (with invited participants, usually those with a particular interest in the outcome)
- **Workshops** (with either self-selecting or invited participants)
- **Deliberative engagement models** (either with a representative sample of the public e.g. Citizens Assemblies, Citizens Forums or Citizens Juries, or with targeted stakeholder groups)
- **Stakeholder Roundtables** (usually with professional stakeholders)
- **Participatory Strategic Planning** (which involved professional and public stakeholders working together to understand different perspectives)
- **User research** (which involves existing service users in exploring the pros and cons of an existing system and suggesting alternatives)
- **Improvement Methods** (which bring different stakeholders together to identify the issues with a service or ways of working, agree a shared aim and theory of change and measures and a method of testing to understand if changes are leading to improvement)
- **Citizen Research** (wherein an identified group of those most affected by a decision lead on a wider engagement with their peers and bring this information back to government)

In practice engagement activities at an involvement level may often run in parallel with wider information and consultation based activities. In this case they are often designed to help decision makers better understand the needs of a particular segment of the population.

Further information

- Advice on [the role different engagement approaches serve at different point in the decision making cycle](#)
- Advice on other methods for involvement
- [Developing an Engagement Strategy](#) to involve the public and other stakeholders

Collaborate

PURPOSE: For Government to partner with stakeholders and/or the public in each aspect of the decision making process, including defining the issue, developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions, to the maximum extent possible.

Collaborative approaches to participation

Opportunities for participation at the level of 'collaborate' involve the government, and their collaborative partners, being willing to share, not only in the power to influence the decision, but in the responsibility for the outcome.

Collaborative approaches tend to be most viable, and constructive, when policy makers are genuinely uncertain about how best to proceed, or need to innovate in response to changing external contexts i.e. when there are multiple possible solutions.

They are also particularly valuable when the ultimate decision may have different implications for different segments of the population. In these cases a collaborative process should enable stakeholders to test, evaluate and negotiate these potential impacts against the wider common good, and propose measures to mitigate against the negative consequences of uneven impacts before decisions are made.

Collaborative processes are, however, usually particularly time intensive and therefore do demand a significant commitment from all involved.

Distinguishing features of a collaborative approach

Collaborative approaches to policy and decision making start from the position that the Government is just one of a number of stakeholders with an interest in the outcome of the process. Thus, unlike information, consultative and involving approaches to inviting participation, in a collaborative process the government steps back from its central framing and decision making role.

The 'offer' made to participants, as shown in the Levels of Engagement table, is therefore that decision makers will work in partnership with them to identify and define the issues and develop solutions 'as far as possible'. In most Government contexts, the conditional statement 'as far as possible' is particularly relevant as final decision making authority is retained by Ministers. In undertaking a collaborative process this must be made clear to participants to avoid creating false expectations about the strength of their influence.

Methods that support Collaboration

There are a number of broad approaches to collaboration that the Scottish Government has already identified as central to the goal of establishing more participatory forms of policy and decision making in Scotland.

1. Co-production

Co-production describes a relationship between service provider and service user that draws on the knowledge, ability and resources of both to develop solutions to issues that are claimed to be successful, sustainable and cost-effective, changing the balance of power from the professional towards the service user. The approach is used in work with both individuals and communities.

Co-production is underpinned by 5 principles:

1. Value all participants, and build on their strengths.
2. Develop networks of mutual support.
3. Do what matters for all the people involved.
4. Build relationships of trust; share power and responsibility.
5. People can be change makers, and organisations enable this.

For several years now the Scottish Government has supported the Scottish Co-production Network to develop and deliver innovative co-produced responses to challenges across public sector service delivery.

More information about co-production, including case studies and toolkits can be found [here](#).

2. Open Policy Making

Openness is an outcome in Scotland's refreshed [National Performance Framework](#) which Scottish Government wants to achieve by being open, transparent and participatory in how we work. The Government has also reinforced this commitment by signing up to the principles of Open Government through its membership of the international [Open Government Partnership](#). When governments join the partnership they must endorse the Open Government Declaration and commit to the following principles:

- increase the availability of information about governmental activities
- support civic participation
- implement the highest standards of professional integrity through administrations
- increase access to new technologies for openness and accountability

Scotland's second [Open Government Action Plan](#) makes a specific commitment to Open Policy Making and places an expectation on staff to work with people in Scotland to deliver policies and services that are designed to meet their needs. The bigger vision is that people's views, expertise and lived experience is able to feed into the right places in government, at the right times in the development of policy and services in ways that will contribute to changing the relationship between citizen and state to one of collaboration and partnership.

An Open Policy Making Approach is best used when there are legitimately competing expectations of the policy outcome, where there are complex trade-offs

to be made and/or there may be significantly different impacts of policy on some groups in society.

3. Improvement Methodology

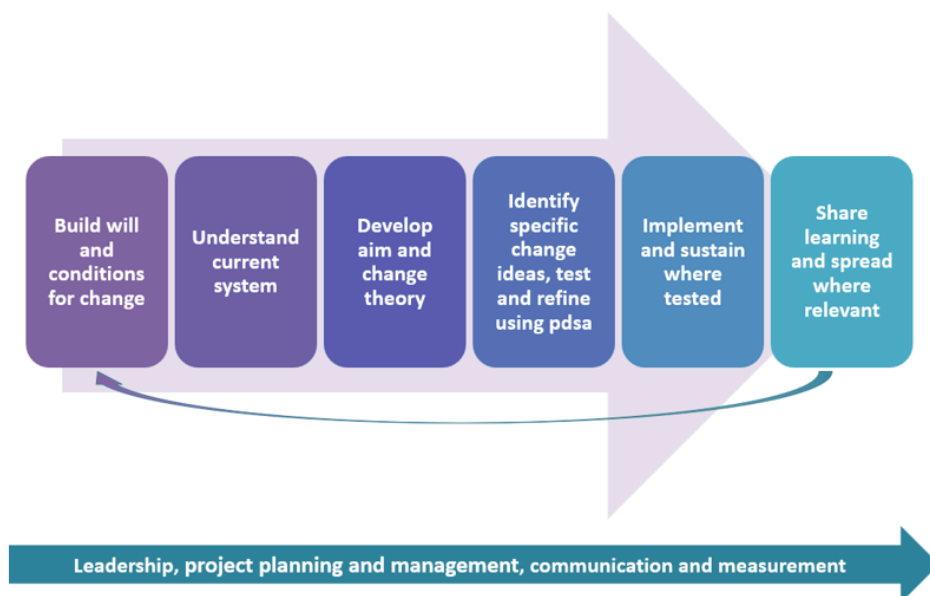
Improvement Thinking: method and tools

Public services are complex. We are working in a complex system, with a complex authorising environment and managing reactive work whilst coming up with innovation. As a result, delivering change, whether through the development of a new policy or service, is usually circuitous and uncertain.

Quality improvement provides a way of thinking and method for navigating complex landscapes like this. It offers a tried and tested methodology to help you create the conditions for systemic change; empowering and harnessing the energy and creativity of staff and citizens in developing, testing and implementing changes that put service users, citizens and communities at the heart of policy. Applied alongside subject matter expertise, quality improvement helps people increase the likely success and impact of what they are doing. The improvement can be better outcomes or delivering something more quickly or cheaply.

The Leading Improvement Team (LIT) is the Scottish Government's professional lead for quality improvement. Our work is a key part of our approach to quality improvement – the 3-Step Improvement Framework. We use the improvement journey as the basis for helping people along their journey through the application of a range of collaborate tools and research techniques.

The improvement journey



What are Improvement Advisers doing?

We train, coach and mentor people and teams who want to apply the way of thinking and working in the organisation and wider public sector - to:

- **Understand the system** by gathering together your evidence: lived experience and subject matter expertise to understand the current context, people's needs and aspirations.
- To be clear about the **connectedness with other policy areas** and parts of the system to identify the right focus for your work and avoid duplication and confusion. • Collaboratively develop your aim and change theory and co-design your strategy.
- To **identify what system changes (drivers)** will support policy goals nationally, and give those responsible for local implementation the freedom over the approach and methods used to deliver.
- Address the implementation gap by using **testing** to identify what needs to be in place to fulfil national expectations and support local delivery.
- **Create a measurement framework** that allows feedback to give you a clear sense of progress towards your aim, to inform responsive system level adaptation and local improvement through iterative testing.
- Test out new approaches in line with the NPF values and Christie principles to identify what is working in which contexts and why.

Why is Quality Improvement important?

Making sure our public services are user centred and designed and delivered to the highest quality has never been so important. It is a central thread of the National Performance Framework and critical to how we deliver the best possible public value with the resources we have available.

Quality improvement supports the Scottish Approach to Service Design, development and delivery. It helps align policy with operational delivery and allows us to deliver improvement while understanding the impact of changes elsewhere.

Quality improvement methods are helping to make a difference and improve services across the public services. Embedded as part of a Quality Management System it can support effective organisational learning and the delivery of outcomes. It offers a systematic methodology (and a range of tried and tested tools) to empower and harness the energy and creativity of front line staff and communities in developing, testing and implementing changes that put service users at the centre.

Quality improvement helps translate policy intent into operational delivery by shaping what needs to improve. Articulating the system changes required through a theory of change. Grounded in a recognition that sustainable improvement occurs when an understanding of the system, psychology, variation and how we build knowledge is brought together with subject matter expertise to take the next right step. This works because change happens where the people are and all improvement is local. By testing how successful the changes are, under a range of conditions, users and people working with these systems can have confidence they'll work well when embedded into working practice. The learning is used to inform further changes if it is to be scaled and spread elsewhere.

Examples in early years, schools, colleges, health, justice and many other areas.

4. Scottish Approach to Service Design

The vision for the [Scottish Approach to Service Design \(SAatSD\)](#) is that the people of Scotland are supported and empowered to actively participate in the definition, design and delivery of their public services (from policy making to live service improvement).

The SAatSD is built on [seven principles](#) outlining the fundamental values of user-centred design and underpins the importance of [undertaking research inclusively and ethically](#). The SAatSD also encourages collaboration between organisations to explore the problem space openly, collaboratively and with users, before a solution or service is decided.

This approach should be used by anyone involved in the design of public services in Scotland (e.g. ministers, senior leaders, policy teams, service delivery teams, designers). [The SAatSD maturity assessment](#) can help to diagnose how your organisation is doing and to identify key areas for improvement.

The Office of the Chief Designer is developing a more detailed version, which will include a common set of tools and practices for designing public services. Contact design@gov.scot to learn more

5. Collective Leadership

This work is led by a small team within the Scottish Government, seeking to develop leadership practice across public service to make progress on complex, societal issues by working collectively in pursuit of shared outcomes.

This work originated through the Scottish Leaders Forum (SLF), with an initial focus on the strong Christie themes of collaboration and participation.

Principles and Practice

Co-design and co-delivery sit at the heart of Collective Leadership for Scotland and take place in different ways:

Place-based:

- Groups of leaders work collaboratively across localities: e.g. **Police Scotland and Local Government** work collaboratively and creatively to tackle local systemic challenges, with a pilot taking place in three localities and a potential rollout across Scotland.
- **North West Highlands 2045** is a collective from a broad range of sectors and interests with a common interest in seeing a future for the North-West Highlands where communities thrive economically, socially, and environmentally.

Issue-based:

- Groups of leaders tackle a complex issue, e.g. a collective leadership group drawn from Government, academia, grass roots organisations **tackling sectarianism**.
- A programme for **Young System Changers** with the potential delivery of a co-designed, experiential development programme for around 1,000 young people is currently in development.

View resources [here](#).

The approaches outlined above however are not specific methods in themselves. Instead each presents a specific approach to delivering on the goal of collaborative working, and different approaches may be more, or less, useful in different contexts. Further each may deploy a wide range of methodological tools within their overall approach to achieve their goals (including those highlighted elsewhere within this framework).

There are however also a variety of other standalone participatory engagement methods that are specifically designed to enable collaboration including:

- Appreciative Inquiry
- Citizen Research
- Participatory Strategic Planning.

Further information:

- Advice on [the role different engagement approaches serve at different point in the decision making cycle](#)

Delegate

PURPOSE: to place power in the hands of the public (or relevant stakeholder groups) by handing over the ability to make the decision and/or take action.

This is the most rarely deployed level of participation by the Scottish Government, though it is increasingly being used within local governments, particularly in Participatory Budgeting processes. Here decisions over a finite amount of a council's budget, usually in a particular service area, are devolved to the local community for decisions on allocation. More information about Participatory Budgeting in Scotland can be found [here](#).

Distinguishing features of a delegating approach

The offer made to participants in a delegated process is that **the government will implement what they decide**.

Activities at this level give the greatest amount of control over the outcome to the participants. In many variations of the Spectrum of Participation this is referred to as 'empowerment'. In this Participation Framework we have chosen however to use the term 'delegate', as within the context of Government, even when the decision making process is delegated, Ministers retain ultimate 'responsibility' for any policy implemented by government and any resulting demands on public finances.

There are therefore only limited circumstances where this is an appropriate choice of approach for activity initiated by the Scottish Government.

Methods that support delegation

Methods that have been used by governments to delegate decisions to the public include:

- referenda;
- community votes;
- participatory budgeting
- mini-public deliberations.

Further information:

- Advice on [the role different engagement approaches serve at different point in the decision making cycle](#)

The Delivery Cycle

In order to get the most out of this guide, we would recommend reading about the [Spectrum of Participation](#) first.

The figure below presents an illustration of opportunities for participation at key stages of the delivery cycle. While the reality of a decision making process may not follow this smooth curve (and might even backtrack, or create loops within loops, at times) this figure illustrates which [levels of participation](#) are likely to be most effective at each stage, and the different purposes they can serve.

Informing is the foundation of any other engagement process and should be understood to be applicable to all stages.



Different levels of participation will provide different types of information to policy and decision-makers at different stages of the delivery cycle.

Choosing the best approach for your needs will require you to have a clear understanding of the purpose of your engagement activity and the type of contribution you are asking participants to make.

Visioning

Visioning: The process of defining the agenda by identifying and understanding the need to be addressed or the problem to be solved, and the wider context surrounding the process.

Each delivery process begins with a stage of exploring the issue under consideration, and establishing the scope of any proposed change. It may also involve establishing what is not in scope and what constraints may limit the ambition of the initiative. The participation of those outside government can assist with this process in a variety of ways.

Role of consultation at the visioning stage

Consultation: *to collect feedback or ideas from the public (or specific stakeholder groups) on a given topic, in order to inform decision making.*

Consultation at this stage of the policy making process can help you collate the range of different opinions and perspectives on the need/problem you are seeking to address. Consultation can also identify elements of the issue that you may not yet have considered.

Consultations at this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- surveys or opinion polls to establish a baseline of public opinion
- focus groups or qualitative interviews with key stakeholder groups to ask for their views on the subject
- Roadshows (pop-up democracy events) that ask for ideas or high level priorities
- a traditional Written Consultation process to identify the range of public and/or stakeholder views

More information on [consulting](#)

Role of involving at the visioning stage

Involving: *Working directly with the public and/or stakeholder groups to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered in the development of proposals, alternatives or policies.*

At this stage of the policy cycle involving people will help give you a better understanding of different perspectives on the issue under consideration. While consulting may help identify the range of opinions, approaches at the involvement level provide an opportunity to better understand why people may hold the views they do, or to explore their concerns or aspirations for a given policy area early on.

Involvement at this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- Stakeholder workshops or round tables to explore their aspirations for the policy area
- Deliberative processes to identify preferred policy outcomes

More information on [Involving](#)

Role of collaboration at the visioning stage

Collaboration: *to partner with stakeholders and/or the public in each aspect of the decision making process, including defining the issue, developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions, to the maximum extent possible.*

Collaboration at this stage of the policy making cycle has an emphasis on co-defining the problem, need or issue that will be addressed. This can be an important step in ensuring that elements of a situation are not overlooked that could cause problems for the policy at the development or appraisal stages.

Collaboration at this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- establishing a multi-stakeholder steering group to help guide the policy making process
- involving service users in a discovery process to better understand and define the problem

More information on [Collaborating](#)

Role of delegation at the visioning stage

Delegate: *to place power in the hands of the public or identified stakeholder groups by handing over the ability to make the decision and / or take action.*

There is no role for delegating approaches to participation at this stage of the policy making process.

More information on [Delegating](#)

Development

Development: the stage of the policy cycle where issues are explored in more detail to generate options, recommendations or potential solutions

Creating opportunities for participation at the development stage of the process allows people to have an input early in the formulation of policy, and is often where their contributions can be most valuable for ensuring that policies best meet people's needs and reflect wider community values.

Role of consultation at the development stage

Consultation: *to collect feedback or ideas from the public (or specific stakeholder groups) on a given topic, in order to inform decision making.*

Consultation at this stage of the policy making process can help you collect ideas for a solution or a range of alternatives.

Consultations at this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- Workshops with stakeholder groups to collect their ideas for the policy
- online crowdsourcing of ideas around a broad policy objective
- Traditional Written Consultation which is open to anyone to respond
- qualitative interviews to explore the impacts of a proposal for specific sections of the population

More information on [consulting](#)

Role of involving at the development stage

Involving: *Working directly with the public and/or stakeholder groups to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered in the development of proposals, alternatives or policies.*

At this stage of the policy cycle involving people means that an understanding of their views are able to contribute to the formation of proposals, alternatives, recommendations or service models developed.

Involvement at this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- Stakeholder workshops or round tables to explore alternatives
- Involving users and potential users in an iterative process of workshops or other engagement to build and test alternatives
- Deliberative processes to identify priorities for policy outcomes

More information on [Involving](#)

Role of collaboration at the development stage

Collaboration: *to partner with stakeholders and/or the public in each aspect of the decision making process, including defining the issue, developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions, to the maximum extent possible.*

Collaboration at this stage of the policy making cycle has an emphasis on co-producing solutions that will best meet the needs of all stakeholders.

Collaboration at this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- an open policy making process that involves external stakeholders throughout
- involving service users in the design process to help ensure proposed systems or services are fit for purpose

More information on [Collaborating](#)

Role of delegation at the development stage

Delegate: *to place power in the hands of the public / stakeholder groups by handing over the ability to make the decision and / or take action.*

There is no role for delegating approaches to participation at this stage of the policy making process.

More information on [Delegating](#)

Appraisal

Appraisal: The process of reviewing and evaluating the options to measure support, identify problems and/or seek suggestions for amendment

This is about refining options and deciding on a firm policy proposal to be put to a decision. This is the stage of the policy process where most engagement by government currently takes place – asking people for their feedback on policies, proposals or upcoming decisions.

Role of consultation at the appraisal stage

Consultation: *to collect feedback or ideas from the public (or specific stakeholder groups) on a given topic, in order to inform decision making.*

Consultation at this stage of the policy making process is essentially about measuring levels of support for a proposal and/or identifying where there is a need for amendment.

Consultations at this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- A traditional Written Consultation open to all to respond
- Surveys or opinion polls to establish a baseline of public
- Deliberative processes to determine the preferences of an informed cross-section of the public

More information on [consulting](#)

Role of involving at the appraisal stage

Involving: *Working directly with the public and/or stakeholder groups to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered in the development of proposals, alternatives or policies.*

Involving people at this stage of the policy making cycle is about understanding their preferences and priorities.

Involvement at this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- Stakeholder round tables to explore alternatives
- Involving users and potential users in an iterative process of workshops or other engagement to build and test alternatives

Deliberative processes to identify preferred policy options

More information on [Involving](#)

Role of collaboration at the appraisal stage

Collaboration: *to partner with stakeholders and/or the public in each aspect of the decision making process, including defining the issue, developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions, to the maximum extent possible.*

Collaboration at this stage of the policy making cycle is primarily about identifying points of common ground that could enable a proposal to meet the needs of both government and external stakeholders.

Collaboration as this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- an open policy making process that involves external stakeholders throughout
- working with service users in the design process to help proposed systems or services are fit for purpose

More information on [Collaborating](#)

Role of delegation at the appraisal stage

Delegate: *to place power in the hands of the public / stakeholder groups by handing over the ability to make the decision and / or take action.*

There is no role for delegating approaches to participation at this stage of the policy making process.

More information on [Delegating](#)

Decision Making

Decision Making: The point where a commitment is made to a particular policy or implementation strategy.

Within our current system of government there are limited opportunities for direct participation in decision making, although there is a growing move towards more collaborative approaches to decision making and power sharing with partners.

Role of consultation at the decision making stage

Consultation: *to collect feedback or ideas from the public (or specific stakeholder groups) on a given topic, in order to inform decision making.*

There is no role for consulting approaches to participation at this stage of the policy making process. Instead it is about decision makers using what they have learnt through consulting with people at the earlier stages to help inform their decisions.

More information on [consulting](#)

Role of involving at the decision making stage

Involving: *Working directly with the public and/or stakeholder groups to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered in the development of proposals, alternatives or policies.*

There is no role for involving approaches to participation at this stage of the policy making process. Instead it is about decision makers using what they have learnt through the involvement of people in the earlier stages to help inform their decisions.

More information on [Involving](#)

Role of collaboration at the decision making stage

Collaboration: *to partner with stakeholders and/or the public in each aspect of the decision making process, including defining the issue, developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions, to the maximum extent possible.*

Collaboration at this stage of the policy making cycle means sharing the process, and the responsibility for any decision made.

Collaboration as this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- an open policy making process that involves external stakeholders throughout
- involving service users in the design process to evaluate whether proposals are fit for purpose and making a collective decision

More information on [Collaborating](#)

Role of delegation at the decision making stage

Delegate: *to place power in the hands of the public / stakeholder groups by handing over the ability to make the decision and / or take action.*

The key ways that decision making is delegated to the public or stakeholder groups in a government context are through:

- referenda
- participatory budgeting
- Deliberative mini-publics, for example and Citizens Assembly or Citizens Jury where a pre-engagement commitment has been given to deliver on the conclusions or recommendations

More information on [Delegating](#)

Implementation

Implementation: Putting into place the services, strategies, policies or changes resulting from the decision

Implementation in the context of this framework is about the enactment of the decision – the practical processes of delivering on a manifesto commitment, policy decision, strategic plan or service change.

In most cases the engagement opportunities appropriate at this stage are actually a case of stepping into a new delivery cycle, as illustrated below. The exception is when there is an opportunity for collaboration to co-design and/or co-deliver on a policy, service or strategy.

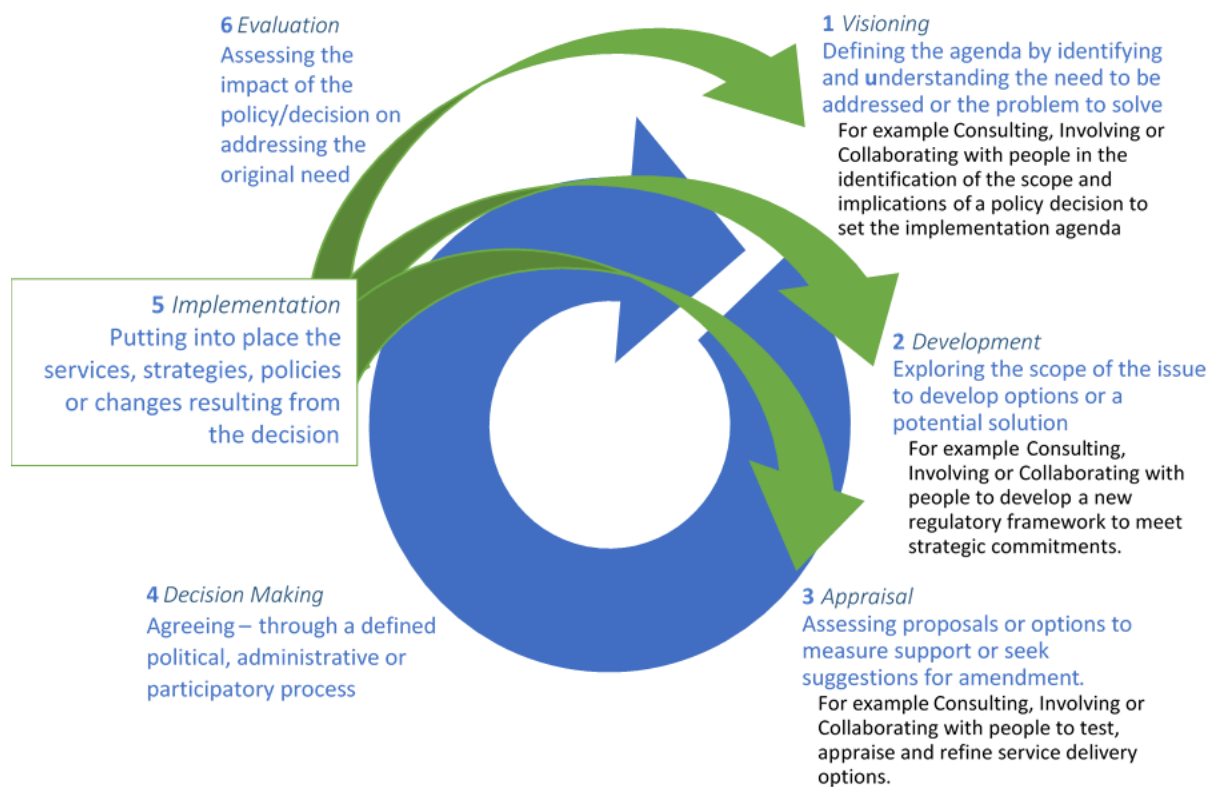


Image description: Diagram showing circular nature of delivery cycle, with emphasis on stepping back to visioning, development and appraisal stages during engagement for Implementation stage.

Role of collaboration at the implementation stage

Collaboration: *to partner with stakeholders and/or the public in each aspect of the decision making process, including defining the issue, developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions, to the maximum extent possible.*

Collaboration at this stage of the policy making cycle means sharing the process, and the responsibility for implementation.

Collaboration at this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- Co-producing an operational plan to deliver on a joint objective with professional partners and stakeholders involving service users in the delivery of the services they receive

Evaluation

Evaluation: The process of reviewing and evaluating the options to measure support, identify problems and/or seek suggestions for amendment

The role of Consultation at the evaluation stage

Consultation: *to collect feedback or ideas from the public (or specific stakeholder groups) on a given topic, in order to inform decision making.*

At this stage consultations would be used to hear views on the impact of an initiative.

It could be undertaken in a number of ways, for example:

- A traditional Written Consultation process open to all to respond
- surveys or opinion polls to establish a baseline of public opinion
- Deliberative processes to determine the assessment of an informed section of the public

More information on [consulting](#)

The role of Involvement at the evaluation stage

Involving: *Working directly with the public and/or stakeholder groups to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered in the development of proposals, alternatives or policies.*

At the evaluation stage this would be to help better understand the impacts of a policy or decision from the perspective of those impacted by it.

Involvement as this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- Stakeholder round tables to assess positive and negative impacts of a policy or service under review
- Involving users and potential users in workshops or to evaluate the policy/service
- Qualitative interviews with those with direct experience of using a service

More information on [Involving](#)

The role of Collaboration at the evaluation stage

Collaboration: *to partner with stakeholders and/or the public in each aspect of the decision making process, including defining the issue, developing alternatives and identifying preferred solutions, to the maximum extent possible*

At this stage of the process this would mean to work together to assess impacts, in order to better understand the impacts of a policy or decision

Collaboration as this stage could be undertaken in a variety of ways, for example:

- Co-producing an open evaluation involving staff, service users and other stakeholders
- Appreciative Inquiry to review and propose services that are fit for purpose

More information on [Collaboration](#)

The role of Delegation at the evaluation stage

Delegate: *to place power in the hands of the public / stakeholder groups by handing over the ability to make the decision and / or take action.*

Delegation at the evaluation stage would involve handing over the assessment to an external evaluator.

This could be done in a variety of ways, for example

- Commissioning an external evaluator to engage with stakeholders to review a program or service
- Voluntarily entering a programme of external verification which will involve stakeholders

More information on [Delegation](#)

Principles of effective engagement

When opportunities for participation are provided in effective and well managed ways then participation in and with government can lead to decisions that:

- deliver more efficient and effective services;
- better meet people's needs;
- better reflect community values;
- have a greater likelihood of effective implementation; and
- demonstrate accountability (particularly in relation to the use of public money).

However, when engagement is **not done well**, it can damage the reputation not only of the specific initiative, but of the government as a whole, by:

- reducing trust in government when the results of engagement are not seen to be acted upon;
- building stakeholder frustration in situations where external organisations and individuals feel they have already given representations on the issue previously;
- reducing the likelihood of future participation when people feel their contributions have not been considered, or they have not received feedback about how their input has been used;
- not meeting legal requirements (i.e. there are some policy areas where an Act sets out specific mechanisms for how and when engagement must be carried out, for example minimum time periods or engagement with named stakeholders);
- undermining previous undertakings, commitments or practices which have given certain people or groups a legitimate expectation that they would be invited to contribute;
- being an inefficient use of public money, for example when there is already clear and available evidence on the views of stakeholder groups and/or the wider public on the issues.

This section of the Participation Framework is designed to help you navigate through making these choices and design an engagement strategy that will best meet your needs, the needs of those you are engaging with and, ultimately, the needs of Ministers and decision-makers.

National Standards for Community Engagement

The National Standards for Community Engagement are good-practice principles, developed in collaboration between Government and Civil Society, that are designed to improve and guide the processes of engagement. Refreshed in 2016 the National Standards are intended to act as a central benchmark and reference point for good practice.

The standards identify good practice in engagement that are widely recognised throughout Scotland, and are particularly relevant for working directly with communities (or stakeholder groups) on an ongoing basis.

The standards are:

- **Inclusion:** We will identify and involve the people and organisations that are affected by the focus of the engagement.
- **Support:** We will identify and overcome any barriers to participation.
- **Planning:** There is a clear purpose for the engagement, which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and ambitions.
- **Working Together:** We will work effectively together to achieve the aims of the engagement.
- **Methods:** We will use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.
- **Communication:** We will communicate clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement.
- **Impact:** We will assess the impact of the engagement and use what has been learned to improve our future community engagement

Further guidance on how the expectations of each Standard can be met and monitored can be found [here](#).

The Gunning Principles

The key principle of any engagement activity is that it should take place at a point that it is able to influence the outcome of a decision.

This principle is enshrined in the Gunning Principles¹⁰. The Gunning Principles are four rules, which if followed, are designed to make engagement activities a fair, legitimate and worthwhile exercise.

The principles are:

1. **that consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage** (i.e. that a final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers);
2. **that the proposer must give sufficient reasons and information for any proposal to permit 'intelligent consideration' and response** (i.e. that information related to the matter under consideration must be available, accessible, relevant and easily interpretable to enable participants to provide an informed response);
3. **that adequate time is given for consideration and response** (i.e. that there must be sufficient opportunity for people to participate. There is no fixed length of time stipulated as the length of time needed to respond can vary depending on the subject and extent of impact of the proposal); and
4. **that the product of consultation is given 'conscientious consideration' and taken into account when finalising the decisions** (i.e. that decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account).

While these principles were adopted initially in relation to formal written government consultation processes, they are now widely recognised as establishing the baseline expectations of any engagement activity undertaken by government. If these conditions can not be met then engagement should not take place.

¹⁰ The Gunning Principles are rules for public consultation that were coined by Stephen Sedley QC in a court case in 1985. A Supreme Court case in 2014 endorsed the legal standing of the four principles. Since then, the Gunning Principles have formed a strong legal foundation from which the legitimacy of public consultations is assessed, and are frequently referred to as a legal basis for judicial review decisions. (Taken from the taken from the Law of Consultation training course provided by The Consultation Institute)

Duties and Rights

In 2018, building on the Gunning Principles, an additional set of duties and rights relating to effective engagement practice were developed by the [Consultation Institute](#)¹¹. This framework sets out further expectations around the 'duties' which should be incumbent upon those inviting participation, and a related set of 'rights' for participants. Together they define norms of good practice and have been supported by the Scottish Government within the Participation Framework to improve our approach to engagement.

The duties and the related rights they guarantee are outlined below.

<i>Duties</i>	<i>Rights</i>
<p>1. The duty to define</p> <p>This duty emphasises the need for government, when initiating a participatory process, to be willing, and able, to openly define what is able to be influenced (and what decisions have already been made) – i.e. what is inside and outside of scope for influence. Doing this effectively also includes clearly defining who will make the ultimate decision on the matter under question.</p> <p><i>'Having defined the issue [the Government] must then work within that specification. The information provided, the dialogue methods selected, the questions asked and the decision making process all have to work around the project definition.'</i>¹²</p>	<p>The right to influence</p> <p>Any section of Government inviting participation must be presumed to be open to influence from the results of that engagement. It is therefore expected that every participant's contribution is entitled to some measure of consideration – simply because the process has been opened up to them, their contribution invited, and they have made the effort to respond.</p> <p>It is important to note, however, that this is put forward as collective right, rather than an individual one: <i>'taken as a whole the sum total of the exercise needs to impact the decision. So, whereas every contribution has the right to be heard and to be counted, influence is generated by the overall output'</i>¹³.</p> <p>Opportunities for influence however, unless explicitly identified as such, should not simply be reduced to numerical processes: i.e. even if a participatory process results on a landslide of support for one particular option, it is perfectly legitimate for Government to take a decision to the contrary as long as the decision is based upon alternatives that were known/explained to participants.</p>

¹¹ [The Politics of Consultation](#) Rhion Jones and Elizabeth Gammell (2018)

¹² 'The Politics of Consultation' p.278

¹³ 'The Politics of Consultation' p.312

<p>2. The duty to explain</p> <p>This builds specifically on the 2nd Gunning Principle by highlighting that providing information is often not enough. Instead this duty stipulates that there is a need to 'explain' in order to ensure that the target audience is able to really understand what is under consideration, and the potential implications, without seeking to influence responses.</p> <p><i>'Being inundated with information is no substitute for honest communication that properly explains the issues' and this right recognises Government's role in educating wider society about the complexities of decisions that might affect them</i>¹⁴.</p>	<p>The right to know</p> <p>This right is focussed on the entitlement of people to know that there are opportunities to participate regarding a matter that may affect them or that they are interested in. For the wider public this may be achieved through publicity and promotion. It is equally important however to ensure that stakeholder groups who have a legitimate expectation of contributing to the discussion of issues that impact upon them, are made aware of opportunities to participate.</p>
<p>3. The duty to engage</p> <p>One thing considered missing from the Gunning Principles is the requirement that a reasonable and proportionate attempt should be made to reach out to and obtain the views of stakeholders with a significant interest in the issue: as <i>'without a clear need to identify and engage with the right people, one might easily satisfy every one of the other Gunning Principles and conduct a consultation that is perfectly lawful, but deeply flawed in terms of best practice.'</i>¹⁵</p> <p>This duty therefore obliges Government to actively identify stakeholders from as wide a range of perspectives as possible and actively engage with them. This is not however simply about boosting the</p>	<p>The right to be heard</p> <p>This right is fundamentally about reinforcing the 4th Gunning Principle i.e. that participants contributions will be acknowledged, listened to and actively considered.</p>

¹⁴ 'The Politics of Consultation' p.281

¹⁵ 'The Politics of Consultation' p.284

number of participants, but fundamentally about <i>'ensuring that relevant information is gathered, relevant attitudes are captured and that all the relevant arguments are heard.'</i> ¹⁶	
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Considering the balance of these rights and duties when planning any engagement process should help ensure that it will be seen as a fair and legitimate process by all parties.

¹⁶ 'The Politics of Consultation' p.290

Planning for Participation

Creating an engagement strategy

The term engagement is an umbrella term that covers a wide range of potential outreach activities that government might choose to undertake – from social media interactions, to surveys, formal consultation papers, roadshows, workshops, stakeholder working groups, co-producing policies, user-led service design, public meetings and more. Each of these serve different purposes, produce different types of information and can be useful at different stages of the delivery cycle.

Simply put, engagement is the direct activity taken by government to create opportunities for people (the public, professional stakeholders and/or civil society organisations) to participate in policy, service design and decision-making processes. Effectively creating and facilitating opportunities for participation in, and with, government will involve the creation of an Engagement Strategy.

In developing your Engagement Strategy, it is important to recognise that **engagement is a process, not just the outreach activity**. Your Engagement Strategy will therefore need to cover not just what you are planning to do, but why and the impact the engagement is intended to deliver. This will involve considering:

- **the Why** – the reasons you have for choosing to open up an issue, question or decision-making process to wider participation;
- **the What** – determining an effective way of engaging with participants and dealing with the information they provide; and
- **the Difference made** - linking the outcomes of these activities to decision-making processes, service delivery and/or social change

Developing an effective engagement strategy to facilitate participation, especially in a complex policy area, is likely to contain a range of different activities at different levels, at different points in the delivery cycle.

The level and form of engagement best suited at a particular point in time will depend on a number of factors including:

- The overall purpose of the activity and the outcome you hope to deliver;
- [The stage of delivery cycle](#) i.e. activities at the consulting level may be most appropriate when there is a specific proposal (or choice of proposals) that you want feedback on, whereas activities at the 'involve' or 'collaborate' levels tend to work best when you are seeking ideas around which to build a proposal;
- What is open to public /stakeholder influence i.e. the level of the [Participation Offer](#)
- Who needs to be involved and the role they are being asked to play: for example, whether they are being asked to respond as individual 'service users' concerned with impact on themselves, as 'citizens' with wider social concerns or as stakeholders representing the views of a sector or community;
- What type of information you require from participants i.e. the outputs the activity will generate

- Whether there are legislative, or other specific requirements, pertinent to your engagement;
- What has been done before; and
- The time and resources available.

Understanding these factors will also help you decide what method is most appropriate for you.

Steps for planning your engagement

Ideally you will be able to develop an engagement strategy at the beginning of a delivery process in order to identify the best place for different, proportionate engagement activities at different stages and plan for them accordingly. In practice, however, identifying opportunities for engagement is often a neglected part of the delivery cycle and are instigated responsively when needs arise.

In each case there are a number of steps to go through to ensure your engagement has the most impact. These are equally important considerations in terms of an overall strategy as they are in relation to the specific engagement activities planned.

- Step 1: [Defining purpose](#)
- Step 2: [Defining scope and opportunity](#)
- Step 3: [Identifying the outputs required](#)
- Step 4: [Identifying who needs to be involved](#)
- Step 5: [Choosing a preferred method or approach](#)

Step 1: Defining Purpose

Establishing a clear purpose, and getting agreement on it across your team, and from all parties in a decision-making role, is the single most important stage of planning any engagement process.

Being clear about the purpose of your engagement activity is an important component of ensuring that everyone involved (participants and decision makers) have accurate expectations about how the outputs of the participation will be used, and responded to. In practice, however, when the purpose of engagement is less well defined, different understandings of its goal and potential impacts may exist within the same organisation. Sometimes these unspoken or assumed purposes only come to light when the process is underway, or are revealed through evaluation when some stakeholders may express their disappointment that their expectations were unmet.

Being able to make a clearly defined statement of your purpose at the outset of any engagement activity is therefore vital for:

- ensuring a commonly shared understanding of the potential impact of the engagement i.e. what difference it can make;
- enabling you to ensure that the right mechanisms are in place to transform the findings from your engagement into outcomes i.e. that there is a clear route for influence at an appropriate stage of the delivery cycle; and
- giving participants the opportunity to make an informed choice about getting involved i.e. a choice made on the basis of understanding the level of influence their participation can have and how their input will be used.

Staff tasked with an engagement role however need to be assured that they have the institutional support to ensure that any proposed engagement activity is meaningful, will be given due consideration, and complies with the principles of [legitimate and effective engagement](#).

Clarifying a specific purpose

Choosing to initiate opportunities for participation should never be simply driven by the generic idea of 'involving people'. Instead there are a wide variety of different reasons for initiating engagement that will deliver different outcomes and create different expectations, for example to:

- Increase public awareness on an issue;
- Improve transparency of decision making;
- Enhance democratic legitimacy;
- Understand public preferences and priorities;
- Explore issues and come up with new ideas;
- Meet legal or regulatory requirements;
- Inform campaign objectives;
- Deliver better, more responsive services;
- Establish new partnerships;
- Prompt behaviour change;
- Defuse conflict to enable progress to be made;
- Make a decision;

- Encourage easier implementation (public support);
- Enhance government's social license to operate by building relationships of trust and mutual respect.

Not all of these reasons are necessarily complimentary, and defining your purpose needs to involve consideration of the stage of the delivery cycle that the engagement is taking place and the level of participatory offer you are going to make.

For example:

- At the **Visioning** stage of a new initiative you might want to **consult** widely for the purpose of opening up the issue to understand what aspects are most important to people and generate new ideas;
- At the **Development** stage of a new service offer your purpose for engagement might be to **collaborate** with potential user groups to define the challenge and develop proposed solutions;
- At the **Appraisal** stage your goal may be to **involve** targeted groups of civil society representatives in order to better understanding of the implications of a particular policy choice on different groups in society;
- At the **Decision Making** stage your purpose might be to offer a formal **consultation** opportunity to ensure that there are opportunities for interested parties to give final perspectives on a legislative proposal to ensure any unintended consequences are not missed in moving forward;
- At the **Implementation** stage you may want to develop a multi-stakeholder partnership group to **collaborate** to monitor the delivery of a strategic plan; or
- At the **Evaluation** stage the purpose of your engagement could be to **involve** beneficiaries of a service in identifying where there are opportunities to explore how it should be delivered in the future in better and more responsive ways.

More information to support considerations of purpose at different stages of the delivery cycle can be found [here](#).

Clarifying scope

It is also vital at the early stage of planning to identify the scope of influence available to the results of the engagement activity (i.e. how much can really change?). Fundamentally this is about being transparent and realistic about what can be achieved in practice.

This will not only assist in defining an appropriate and achievable purpose but will also establish its boundaries: clarifying what is, and what is not, open for discussion. It will also help determine whether participation is useful at this stage, as there is likely to be very little point in pursuing an engagement exercise if nothing can change.

Key questions to help define purpose

In defining the ultimate purpose of your engagement activity there are a number of key questions you will need to consider.

<p>What information / contribution is it that you specifically need from the engagement?</p>	<p>Here you need to be thinking about what specifically the engagement process is going to add to what you already know.</p> <p>You will also need to be considering what tangible products do you want to have produced during and after the process (outputs)?</p> <p>To do this it may also be worth considering what specific question(s) or problem(s) you are inviting participants to address.</p>
<p>How are you going to use this information?</p>	<p>Referring back to the Gunning Principles, it is important to be able to identify here where, and by whom, 'conscientious consideration' is going to be given to the outputs on any engagement.</p> <p>It is also important to acknowledge the role any outputs will play (i.e. the participation offer you are making) is it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to keep those with an interest in the outcome (the participants) informed? • to provide information to those making the decision or developing proposals (consult) • to enable participants to directly influence the decision / options developed (involve) • To share the development and decision making process (collaborate) • To hand over the ability to make decisions and/or take action
<p>What are the limits to public/stakeholder influence?</p>	<p>Is your intended purpose consistent with the Duties and Rights that help define good engagement practice?</p> <p>Here you will also need to be clear about what has already been decided or determined – as a sector we need to be able to argue (and if necessary) push back to decision makers on where the case for engagement is weak: i.e. If the programme for government or a party manifesto commits to clear and definitive action then the case for engagement is weak. When, however an integral feature of a proposal needs to accommodate the views of stakeholders or the general public, then it is strong.</p> <p>'What we need of politicians is the wisdom to know when stakeholder views will be of some value in influencing their actions, and when they will not.'^[2]</p>

	Fundamentally the question is: <i>Can anything change as a result of participation?</i> Depending on the answers to this question you may want to consider whether engagement, beyond keeping people informed, is appropriate at all.
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Step 2: Defining context and opportunity

Every engagement exercise takes place within a wider context:

- existing (and previous) decision making contexts, including party positions, UK wide policies and local policy drivers;
- public awareness and history of engagement with the issues, including emotional and personal connections and relationships of trust between institutions;
- practical constraints including budgets, timescales, resources etc.

Considering the context for a proposed participatory initiative is essential for understanding the social, political and institutional environment in which the activity is taking place, and therefore the potential that it has to effectively influence policy and decision-making.

Decision making context

Central to understanding the environment within which a project is being developed is appreciating the decision-making context in which the outputs will be presented.

Therefore, as part of the planning process it is important to define:

- the interest, commitment and/or involvement of key decision-makers in the process;
- how the proposed research fits into the relevant decision-making systems (e.g. timing, required documents, etc.);
- the history of engagement on the same questions, including how they went (e.g. conflict, agreement), and what happened as a result.

Doing this will require making explicit links between the participatory process and the location of the specific decision(s) that the engagement is intended to inform or influence. Ensuring that you have determined the process for gaining an institutional response during the planning stage is vitally important because it:

- establishes the commitment to considering the results of the research and recognises that some response will need to be made;
- ensures that mechanisms are in place to deal with the outputs that come from the participatory process and ensures that these outputs can be dealt with effectively and within a given timescale;
- allows those running the process to explain to participants exactly what will be done with their effort, how the process will be managed and how its outcomes will influence policy-making.

Social Context

In order to have maximum impact engagement activities must be well embedded within the wider landscape of activity around the issue or question. Being clear on the wider context will help to ensure that your engagement links with, and builds upon, other relevant activities going on at the same time and builds on (rather than duplicates) existing knowledge.

Understanding the wider context is important to ensure that it:

- Links with other relevant activities going on at the same time so that outputs can be shared (and/or dovetailed if appropriate);
- Does not duplicate other activities, as one of the easiest ways to frustrate or alienate participants (particularly professional stakeholders and user groups) is to create a situation where they feel they are being asked to repeat their contributions¹.
- Is responsive to participant needs / sensitivities by appreciating their wider roles and commitments;
- Builds on previous experience and learns lessons from the past, particularly where relationships or trust may have become strained;
- Progresses quickly and is relevant to the needs of all parties.

Once you have a good understanding of the context it is important to realise that all participants will have their own interpretation of the context within which they are operating. Time will probably be needed to allow participants to develop a shared understanding of the context for the specific participatory process.

Key questions to define context and opportunity

These questions are designed to help you consider whether the context you are in creates an opportunity to initiate participation, or not. To do this there are a number of questions that you will need to consider.

Decision making context

Is this the right time in the delivery cycle to invest in initiating a participatory process?	This will involve considering whether there are real opportunities to influence decision making, or whether there may be better times in the delivery cycle to initiate a participatory process where the outputs are more likely to have a significant impact.
Are decision makers supportive of your participation process and willing to give 'contentious consideration' to the outputs?	<p>If not, you will need to consider how to gain their support. You might want to refer to the <i>Basics of Participation</i> section of this framework.</p> <p>If this is not an option, then you should reconsider the purpose of your planned engagement, and whether it should take place at all.</p>
Do you have shared clarity on the general type of outputs you are seeking?	If not, you will need to work with your team and the key decision maker in order to establish how best to use the information gathered in ways that are able to genuinely influence the decision making process.

Social context	
Have you considered why potential participants might want to engage with you?	Central to this is a consideration of what your potential participants might get out of engaging in the process i.e. what is their motivation for participating? (more advice to help consider this can be found here [link to step 4])
Have previous attempts at involving the public been successful? What have you already learned?	<p>Participation is not new. It is important to speak to those involved in organising previous processes and find out what happened there.</p> <p>It is also important to be aware of where things have not worked well in the past, the history of the relationships, and where things need to be improved going forward.</p>
Is your process the only current attempt to initiate participation around key issues?	<p>Here it may be worth considering partnering with other organisations or departments working in a similar area.</p> <p>Are there opportunities to use the participation of the same target audience in addressing more than one topic?</p>

Resource context	
Do you have enough resources, both time and money, to run the process?	<p>Both time and money are needed to secure success. It may not be wise to undertake a process which may fail due to lack of resources.</p> <p>Further you may want to consider, if time or resources are pressed, whether this is the right time in the delivery cycle to initiate participation, or whether a simpler approach could serve your needs at this point.</p>

It is important to recognise here that duplication may not be simply a matter of content, but also duplication in relation to geographic area and/or targeting the same participants.

Step 3: Identifying the outputs required

The outputs of an engagement exercise refer to the specific type(s) of information that the process will deliver.

Determining the type of outputs you require will involve considering your overall [purpose](#) and how you will use the information i.e. whether, as outlined in the [spectrum of participation](#), it is designed to:

- inform those with an interest in the outcome (i.e. the public and stakeholder groups)
- inform those making the decision or developing proposals
- enable participants to directly influence the decision / options developed
- share the development and decision-making process (as much as possible)
- hand over the ability to make decisions and / or take action

Identifying the type of outputs you are seeking at the early stage of planning for participation will help ensure that you are able to choose the most useful approach, as different participatory methods are designed to produce different types of outputs, and will help you frame the question(s) you pose to participants. It will also help you to identify [who needs to be involved](#).

To assist staff to make decisions about how they take forward engagement processes a range of types of outputs you may be seeking have been codified below.

Identification of issues

When initiating a new policy, or expanding existing programmes into a new area, you may require a greater understanding of the pertinent issues, and what they mean to different sections of the population or different stakeholder groups. Engagement activities designed to deliver this type of output will involve opening up the issue to explore participant concerns and the implications different policy or delivery approaches may have.

New ideas

In situations where policy or delivery challenges are persistent, or where the context may have changed (such as changed demographics in a neighbourhood, or a different regulatory environment), you may want to engage with people to generate new ideas for how to respond. Engagement activities designed to deliver this type of output will encourage creative problem solving and should only be undertaken when there is a genuine appetite and opportunity for innovation.

Specific decision on preferences i.e. verdicts

This type of output is achievable where there are a clear and defined set of options to be considered. Delivering this type of output will require a well-designed process that has given adequate information, and time, for participants to evaluate the options presented and where the make-up of participants involved gives sufficient

legitimacy to them being able to draw conclusions on behalf of the wider public it is representing.

Better understanding of the needs of service users

This type of output is when you are seeking insight directly from service users about their needs and experiences in order to be better able to design, implement, or evaluate a policy, service, or programme.

Assessments of how services are currently being delivered/ current situation

At times it may be useful to establish a greater understanding of the status quo (i.e. evaluative outputs) in order to then be able to identify options for change. This type of output could be sought in relation to a specific service or more widely, for example about the experience of single-parenthood or homelessness.

Overview of perspectives

This quite open form of output is focussed on achieving a greater understanding of the range of perspectives, opinions, and experiences around a topic to be able to identify concerns, generate options, and develop solutions.

Recommendations for delivery

Outputs of this type focus on generating feedback from service users and/or other stakeholders to pre-existing or proposed options for how, when or where services are delivered. This type of output is most useful when there are genuine choices to be made about how a goal can be achieved or a policy implemented.

Priorities for improvement

This type of output seeks to move beyond providing an overview of concerns or ideas about a topic to provide a clear indication of participants' preferences (or the relative acceptability levels) of different options for improvement, including reasons why

While this list is not necessarily comprehensive, and there may be occasions where you will have a different purpose for engaging, it has been developed as a tool to prompt context specific consideration of the type of [methods](#) [link to methods section] that will be best able to deliver what you need.

Key questions for identifying the type of outputs required

Defining the type of outputs you require from your engagement activity needs to take place in the context of an understanding of the purpose and scope for influence of your engagement activity.

<p>What, specifically, should the engagement process achieve/deliver?</p>	<p>Here it is about being clear about what type of information is most needed to achieve your purpose.</p> <p>You'll also need to be thinking about what specifically the engagement process is going to add to what you already know to avoid duplication and conserve resources.</p> <p>It may also be useful to differentiate between 'primary' (essential) and 'secondary' (nice to have) outputs, as this will help focus your choices relating to methods and participants</p>
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Step 4: Identifying who needs to be involved

When initiating an engagement process it is important to recognise that 'the public' is not a useful answer when considering the target group for participation.

The type of participants who need to be involved must be informed by your purpose and the outputs required i.e. what is it specifically that these people can bring to the process. Achieving clarity on 'who' needs to be involved will also help determine the most appropriate method to use for your engagement activity.

Some points you may want to consider when thinking about who you want to participate in your engagement include:

- Do participants need to agree with a specific objective or goal to be able to participate? Or is diversity of participant opinions important to your purpose?
- Do participants need to have 'lived experience' of the issue under in order to add value to the process?
- Should the process be open to anyone who wants to participate, and will do so because they have an interest in the outcome? Or Is it important for the legitimacy of your findings that participants are representative of the population?
- Is it important to your outputs that participants bring 'fresh eyes' to the question? Or will it add more value if participants are already engaged with the issues?
- Should those with professional/technical expertise be participating alongside members of the public on an equal footing? Or should the role of 'experts' in the process be simply to provide information?

Identifying your public

To assist in identifying the types of participants that will need to be involved in your engagement process a range of potential participant groups have been codified below. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of possible grouping, but rather a tool to help identify the types of outputs that different targeting when opening participation to 'the public' can support.

1. Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic

If you were, for example, evaluating the impacts of a policy change or the effectiveness of a service delivery model, then it may well be the case that the people who can add the most value to your engagement will be those who have direct experience of its delivery. Likewise, if, at the visioning or appraisal stage of a new initiative, it may be most useful to target specific groups within society, for example rural residents, the elderly, families experiencing in work poverty, as they are 'experts in their own lives'.

2. People with a particular interest in the issue

Sometimes the purpose of opening something up to participation is to hear from a wide range of people and understand the different views and perspectives they bring

to the matter. When that is the case opening the engagement process to everyone, usually through public advertising of the consultation or event, allows anyone who is interested, or believes that they will be impacted by the outcome, to participate. This is a recognised way of engaging with the 'public at large', and at the core of most government consultation processes, however it is important to recognise that it is a self-selecting group that will participate, often with an existing interest or position, and the outputs cannot be taken to represent public opinion.

3. Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future)

At the appraisal stage of a policy or delivery proposal, for example, it may be most valuable to engage specifically with the people most likely to be impacted by the decision. Depending on the context this may be a particular local community or a segment of the wider population (e.g. families with young children or cattle farmers). This can help to identify any unforeseen impacts of the proposals and enable steps to be taken to mitigate against unintended consequences of a decision.

4. Representative sample (i.e. mini public)

Mini-publics are made up of randomly selected participants, chosen from the wider population to function as a proxy for the relevant population as a whole. Participants are typically selected through stratified random, so that a range of demographic characteristics from the broader population are adequately represented – e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, disability, income, geography, education, religion, and so on. The purpose is to use social science methods to assemble a microcosm of 'the public', with each person having an equal chance of being selected. This approach to engaging the public has traditionally been used for public opinion polls and national surveys, although it is growing in popularity as an approach to recruiting participants for workshops or deliberative events.

5. People with technical knowledge/ specialists

This categorisation of the public would usually be reserved for engagement with businesses, scientists or other academics about matters of public policy and implementation.

6. Professional or public stakeholders

In many parts of government there are networks of known stakeholder who represent the interests of their sector (e.g. the oil and gas industry), their local community (e.g. Community Councillors) or segment of the population (e.g. people with a disability, migrants, women). These representatives, which could be operating in either a professional or voluntary capacity, are often called on to speak on behalf of others and may participate in engagement activities in an advocacy role.

In practice there may be many opportunities for participation throughout the delivery cycle, and at different stages it will be important to engage with different types of participants. However, being clear about who needs to be involved at each stage will support the selection of the most appropriate method.

A reason to participate

In order to secure participation in an engagement initiative prospective participants have to know what the impact of their involvement will be. This will allow them to make an informed choice about getting involved. It is therefore important to be clear in any invitation to engage at what level participation is being sought [link to spectrum of participation].

As noted in the Introduction to the Participation Framework, people participate and engage with government initiatives for a variety of different reasons. For some of the groupings noted above the ability to shape the services they receive in ways that best meet their own needs will be enough motivation to take part. For others, having a stake or position on a proposed government policy or activity will motivate them to act, leading to self-selecting participation around causes or issues that are important to people individually.

In other cases however, it may be necessary to recognise that participation in engagement is an 'opportunity cost' for some of those you could benefit from hearing from. This is particularly relevant for initiatives that seek to involve representative and stakeholder groups and participants that are demographically representative of the population.

- **Involving community and stakeholder representatives** – Many representative groups report 'engagement fatigue' as they are constantly bombarded with participation requests. While large organisations may be able to resource this, smaller, community based or voluntary organisations are faced with making an opportunity cost choice – whether to miss the chance to influence or not? It is therefore increasingly being recognised as good practice that, particularly when representatives are being asked to engage in more involved or collaborative processes, it is the government's responsibility to cover the costs associated to the organisation.
- **Involving a representative cross-section of the population** – This is, in essence, a group that should cut across the range of levels of interest in the content of the engagement and motivation for civic participation. It is therefore becoming accepted practice that people recruited to these exercises receive an 'thank you gift' for their participation. In practice this could range from a small gift voucher or entry into a prize draw for completing a survey to a cash honorarium for participating in an ongoing engagement process.

This helps to ensure that a diverse range of participants (e.g. those on low-incomes, unemployed or on zero-hour contracts, or with caring responsibilities etc.) can participate. It can also encourage people not intrinsically motivated by the issue to give their time to the engagement. The importance of this is evidenced in the conclusions drawn in the [What Works Scotland Evidence Review](#) (2017) where they conclude that financial incentives go a long way in supporting traditionally under-represented groups to participate.

Role participants are being asked to play

When thinking about who needs to be involved it is also important to consider the role participants are being asked to play. This will help sense check that the decisions made about who to involve enable people to participate most effectively.

There are four key roles that members of the public are typically given in an engagement process:

- **Individuals** - where they are being asked to participate as consumers. In this case participant's contributions are generally driven by a desire to ensure that the outcome will meet their needs
- **Stakeholders** – where participation is driven by the fact that they have a stake in the issue – either being affected by any decision or being able to affect that decision. In this case participants (whether general public or organisational representatives) often take on an advocacy role, sometimes from a pre-determined position.
- **Citizens** – where people are participating on behalf of the wider public who may have a right and interest in being able to influence decisions. Here participation is an act of citizenship that encourages participants to take on a responsibility on behalf of the wider society and help determine the best outcome for everybody.
- **Community Representatives** – where people are participating as the voice of a wider group (whether they are self-appointed in that role or been entrusted with that responsibility). Communities in this context may be defined by identity (e.g. Muslim community) activity (e.g. Business community) but most often, in terms of participation, communities are defined geographically (e.g. by neighbourhood or village).

Key questions to help define who needs to be involved

In identifying the participants you need to hear from in order to fulfil the purpose of your engagement activity there are a number of key questions you will need to consider.

<p>Who do you need to hear from to deliver the outputs you are looking for?</p>	<p><i>Here you will need to be considering the types of knowledge and experience that different segments of the population could bring to address your question.</i></p> <p><i>You will also need to address questions of scale and proportionality. If you are engaging on an issue where there is widespread public interest and/or existing controversy you may want to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to share their views. Alternatively, if there are known stakeholders, or the matter is of specialist interest, it may be sufficient to restrict the opportunity to participate to a targeted invited group rather than investing resources in promoting the opportunity to a 'general public' audience.</i></p> <p><i>A further consideration might be the perceived legitimacy of your outputs as a tool to influence decision making (The Gunning Principles [link to Gunning Principles page]). If it is matter of national or regional importance that will impact</i></p>
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	<i>the whole population it may be necessary to ensure that 'the public' engaged with is representative.</i>
Why would the public choose to participate? What is in it for them?	<p><i>Here you will need to reflect on whether what you are seeking input on is something that your known stakeholder or the public (or at least segments of the public) are interested in already and will self-select to engage with.</i></p> <p><i>If not, you may need to consider whether a recruited, rather than open approach to securing participation might be needed – including whether additional incentives or compensations might be required to ensure those that you want to hear from can do so in a way that minimises the 'costs' to themselves.</i></p>
What is the role you are asking them to play?	<p><i>Here you will not only need to consider the outputs you are seeking to achieve but also the participation offer you are making (spectrum of participation).</i></p> <p><i>Participants themselves also need to understand the role they are being given within any given participatory process. Members of the public can be very sophisticated about this and will behave differently when acting as citizens (tasked with protecting the public good) or as consumers (defending their own interests as service users).</i></p>
Are there any barriers to participation for your target group?	<p><i>Here you will need to consider structural and practical factors that may restrict a person's ability to engage with your initiative. These could include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Timing of meetings (whether online or in person)</i> <i>• Length of time given to respond</i> <i>• Access to technology</i> <i>• Language requirements</i> <i>• Opportunity costs</i> <i>• Awareness / knowledge / interest in the issue</i> <i>• And more...</i> <p><i>Additional guidance and signposting to further support will be available soon.</i></p>

Step 5: Choosing a preferred method or approach

The choice of method should respond to the decisions made in the planning stage about:

- [The purpose of initiating participation](#)
- [The level and stage of your activity](#)
- [The type of outputs you require](#)
- [The people that you need to involve](#)

Methods for enabling participation

This section outlines a range of common engagement methodologies. It is however important to note that engagement methods are not fixed, and often the best engagement results come from developing a bespoke approach to meet your specific needs. There are however some established methods that are recognised across government and wider society, which have been developed to deliver specific types of outputs.

The table below sets out to map the types of methods that are best suited to delivering on different types of outputs using a traffic light system – green to indicate this is what the method is designed to do, amber to indicate the method could be adapted to deliver this, red to indicate that this is not something the method is able to deliver/should be used for.

METHOD	Identification of issues	New ideas	Specific decisions	Better understanding of needs of service users	Assessment of current delivery/ situation	Overview of perspectives/concerns	Recommendations for delivery	Priorities for improvement	Assessment of proposals
Appreciative Inquiry	Green	Green	Red	Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Red
Citizens' Assemblies	Amber	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green
Citizens' Juries	Amber	Amber	Green	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green	Green
Citizen Research	Green	Green	Red	Green	Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Amber
Deliberative Workshop	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

<i>Distributed Dialogues</i>									
<i>Focus Groups</i>									
<i>Multi-Stakeholder Steering Groups</i>									
<i>Online Crowdsourcing</i>									
<i>Opinion Polls</i>									
<i>Participatory Budgeting</i>									
<i>Participatory Strategic Planning</i>									
<i>Pop Up Democracy</i>									
<i>Public or 'Town Hall' Meetings</i>									
<i>Qualitative Interviews</i>									
<i>Stakeholder Roundtables</i>									
<i>Traditional Written Consultation</i>									
<i>User Panels</i>									
<i>World Café</i>									

The next page expands on this to provide an overview of the methods that can best be used to deliver specific types of outputs and the types of participants you would typically want to involve.

METHOD	Outputs method is designed to deliver	Participants Typically Involved
<p><i>Appreciative Inquiry</i> Appreciative Inquiry (often shortened to AI) works with a small core group of participants building outwards through friends/family/strangers into a much larger group, potentially encompassing hundreds of people to explore what has worked well in the past to build a vision for the future.</p> <p>Appreciative inquiry is conducive to collaboration at the visioning, development and evaluation stages of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • New ideas • Assessments of how services are currently being delivered/ current situation • Recommendations for delivery • Priorities for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • People with a particular interest in the issue • Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future)
<p><i>Citizens' Assemblies</i> A particular type of deliberative workshop that involves a fairly large body (50-250) of citizens, selected to be demographically representative of the general public (i.e. a 'mini-public') coming together to deliberate on an issue. A Citizens' Assembly will typically take place over several days, often spread out over weeks or months.</p> <p>A means of involving participants at the visioning, development and/or appraisal stages of the delivery cycle. More rarely, it can be used as tool for delegation at the decision-making stage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas • Overview of perspectives/ concerns • Recommendations for delivery • Priorities for improvement • Assessment of proposals - preferences / acceptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative sample (i.e. mini public)
<p><i>Citizens' Juries</i> A particular type of deliberative workshop that involves a small group of people (12-24), representative of the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific decision i.e. verdict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative sample (i.e. mini public)

<p>demographics of a given population, who come together to deliberate on an issue over a period of 2-7 days.</p> <p>A means of involving participants at the development and/or appraisal stages of the delivery cycle. More rarely, it can be used as tool for delegation at the decision-making stage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations for delivery • Priorities for improvement • Assessment of proposals - preferences / acceptability 	
<p>Citizen Research</p> <p>Citizen Research involves identifying a group of those most affected by a particular decision or policy, and then training and supporting them to lead on wider engagement with their peers and bring this information back to government.</p> <p>It is most conducive to involving and collaborating within participation, especially at the visioning and appraisal stages of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • New ideas • Better understanding of the needs of service users • Overview of perspectives/ concerns • Priorities for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • People with a particular interest in the issue • Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future)
<p>Deliberative Workshop</p> <p>Deliberative Workshops are a form of facilitated group discussions that provide participants with the opportunity to learn about an issue, consider it in depth, understand and challenge each other's opinions before reaching an informed conclusion.</p> <p>They are a means of consulting, involving and collaborating that can be effectively used at all stages of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • New ideas • Better understanding of the needs of service users • Assessments of how services are currently being delivered/ current situation • Overview of perspectives/ concerns • Recommendations for delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any group of participants

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities for improvement - • Assessment of proposals - preferences / acceptability 	
<p><i>Distributed Dialogues</i></p> <p>Decentralised conversation-based events wherein stakeholders and other interested parties set up groups and events to discuss a topic set by the commissioning body, using an agreed format and background material.</p> <p>Most conducive to consulting at the visioning, development, appraisal and/or evaluation stages of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • New ideas • Overview of perspectives/ concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • People with a particular interest in the issue • Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future)
<p><i>Focus Groups</i></p> <p>A focus group is a guided discussion with a small group (6-15) of people. They are normally one-off sessions (1-2hrs), though several may be run in different locations or with different groups on the same topic.</p> <p>Effective as a means of consultation most often at the visioning and/or appraisal stages of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • Better understanding of the needs of service users • Assessments of how services are currently being delivered/ current situation • Overview of perspectives/ concerns • Recommendations for delivery • Priorities for improvement – • Assessment of proposals - preferences / acceptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • Representative sample (i.e. mini public) • Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future)
<p><i>Multi-Stakeholder Steering Groups</i></p> <p>Multi-Stakeholder Steering Groups are made up of stakeholders (professional, public and/or community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with technical knowledge/ specialists

<p>representatives) who meet at key stages during the course of a project to oversee it and influence strategic decisions.</p> <p>Conducive to participation at the involving and collaborating levels, and at all stages of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations for delivery • Priorities for improvement • Assessment of proposals - preferences / acceptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional/ public stakeholders • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future)
<p>Online Crowdsourcing</p> <p>Crowdsourcing harnesses collaborative problem-solving and innovation through an open call for help and ideas, allowing any internet user to contribute via an online space, usually according to a loose framework.</p> <p>Online crowdsourcing is relevant to consulting and collaboration at the visioning and development stage of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas • Identification of issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with technical knowledge/ specialists • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • People with a particular interest in the issue
<p>Opinion Polls</p> <p>The polling of a representative sample to gather qualitative or quantitative data, in order to understand and quantify public opinion.</p> <p>Opinion Polls are most conducive to consulting at the visioning and/or appraisal stages of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • Specific decisions • Overview of perspectives/ concerns • Priorities for improvement • Recommendations for delivery • Assessment of proposals - preferences / acceptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative sample (i.e. mini public)

<p><i>Participatory Budgeting</i></p> <p>Participatory Budgeting is an umbrella term for mechanisms that delegate decision making power over public budgets and investment priorities to citizens. In Scotland these practices are most often used to influence spending in local areas.</p> <p>Participatory budgeting is conducive to delegating at the decision-making stage of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas • Specific decision i.e. verdicts • Assessment of proposals - preferences / acceptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • People with a particular interest in the issue / area
<p><i>Participatory Strategic Planning</i></p> <p>A consensus-building approach that helps a community come together through workshops of 20-50 people (with public and expert stakeholders working together), to agree how they would like their community or organisation to develop.</p> <p>Relevant to involving and collaborating at the development and appraisal stages of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific decision i.e. verdicts • Recommendations for delivery • Priorities for improvement • Assessment of proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with technical knowledge/ specialists • Professional/ public stakeholders • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future)
<p><i>Pop Up Democracy</i></p> <p>The use of temporary, site-specific installations / or exhibitions that invite unplanned participation. These types of opportunities are often held in busy public places e.g. supermarkets, high streets and local festivals and offer passers by the chance to learn about an issue or proposal and leave comment.</p> <p>Most useful as a means of informing or consultation at the visioning and/or development stages of the delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • Overview of perspectives/ concerns • Priorities for improvement - • Assessment of proposals - preferences / acceptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • People with a particular interest in the issue • Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future)

cycle.		
<p><i>Public or 'Town Hall' Meetings</i></p> <p>A meeting where members of a community come to discuss relevant issues and concerns with a public official, government representative or decision-maker of some sort. They typically operate as question and answer sessions and will not usually provide space for in-depth discussion or engagement with participants. Town hall meetings are most conducive to informing and can be utilised at all stages of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of perspectives/ concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional/ public stakeholders • People with a particular interest in the issue
<p><i>Qualitative Interviews</i></p> <p>As established form of social science research where participants are taken through a semi-structured interview designed to explore a topic or issue in depth. Interviewees are given space to expand their answers and accounts of their experiences and feelings and the goal is to get below the surface of their concerns and opinions.</p> <p>Qualitative interviews are an established means of consulting at the visioning, development, and evaluation stages of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • Better understanding of the needs of service users • Assessments of how services are currently being delivered/ current situation • Overview of perspectives/ concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • People with a particular interest in the issue • Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future) • Professional/ public stakeholders
<p><i>Stakeholder Roundtables</i></p> <p>Roundtable Discussions are small group discussions (generally 10-15 people) where everybody has an equal right to participate. Participants are invited by the organisers to take part because they are recognised as having a 'stake' in the question the organiser is posing.</p> <p>Stakeholder roundtables are suitable for involving and,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • New ideas • Better understanding of the needs of service users • Overview of perspectives/ concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with technical knowledge/ specialists • Professional/ public stakeholders • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic

<p>potentially, collaborating at the development, appraisal and evaluation phases of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations for delivery • Priorities for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with a particular interest in the issue
<p><i>Traditional Written Consultation</i></p> <p>An established practice within Scottish Government and, in some limited situations, the required approach to engagement. Typically Traditional Written Consultation will be underpinned by a written Consultation Paper providing information on the topic and setting out questions for response, registered on Citizen Space and published as a Consultation on the Scottish Government website (gov.scot). Importantly a traditional written consultation is open to anyone who chooses to respond.</p> <p>A means of consulting that is most useful at the appraisal stage of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • Better understanding of the needs of service users • Overview of perspectives/ concerns • Assessment of proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with technical knowledge/ specialists • Professional/ public stakeholders • People with a particular interest in the issue
<p><i>User Panels</i></p> <p>User Panels are regular meetings of service users about the quality, management and or direction of a specific public service.</p> <p>User panels are relevant to involving (and at times collaborating) at the development, appraisal and implementation stages of the delivery cycle. They can also be used to evaluate a service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding of the needs of service users • Assessments of how services are currently being delivered/ current situation • Recommendations for delivery • Priorities for improvement • Assessment of proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future)

<p><i>World Café</i></p> <p>An engagement method that makes use of an informal cafe setting for participants to explore an issue by discussing it in small table groups over multiple rounds. It is a method characterised by a strong underpinning philosophy based on the wisdom comes from people engaging in ‘conversations that matter’.</p> <p>It is most conducive to both consulting (gathering public feedback) and involving (incorporating concerns and aspirations) in the development stage of the delivery cycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of issues • New ideas • Overview of perspectives/ concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional/ public stakeholders • Existing users of a service / those with lived experience of the topic • People with a particular interest in the issue • Those likely to be most impacted (now or in the future)
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Further details on each of these methods can be found in the Methods Glossary, which can be [found here](#).

There are a wide range of other methods available for enhancing opportunities for participation, and many methods libraries if you are interested in exploring other forms of engagement:

- [Participedia](#)
- [Open Policy Making Toolkit](#)
- [Civic innovation Toolkit](#)
- [Involve's Knowledge Bank](#)
- [Engage2020 Action Catalogue](#)