Involving local people in developing local health services

PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP FORUMS

Encourage, involve, support, influence, develop

Scottish Health Council
Making sure your voice counts
involve

influence

support
What is this leaflet about?
This leaflet is about Public Partnership Forums in Scotland – what they are, what they do, and why you may want to get involved in one.

Who is the leaflet for?
This leaflet is for anyone interested in giving their views about their local health services and helping influence how those services develop. This includes people using NHS services, carers and members of the public.

What are Public Partnership Forums?
Public Partnership Forums are networks of local people with an interest in improving NHS services in Scotland.

They usually involve a range of people, such as members of local community groups or voluntary organisations, and other interested individuals.

They are set up and supported by Community Health Partnerships.
What are Community Health Partnerships?

Every NHS Board has at least one Community Health Partnership for its area. Some of these partnerships are called Community Health (and Care) Partnerships, and are also responsible for providing social care services.

Community Health Partnerships bring together NHS staff, local authorities, the voluntary sector and others involved in providing health and social care services to work together on improving services and tackling inequality.

They ensure that different health and social care services fit together to create a system of care that works efficiently and smoothly. Services include GPs, community health services, hospitals and social care services.

Every Community Health Partnership has to have a Public Partnership Forum to help it have an ongoing discussion with the local community it serves. The Public Partnership Forum is not the only method that a Community Health Partnership should use to hear the views of local people, but it does play an important part.
improving services

tackling inequality

efficiency
What do Public Partnership Forums do?
Public Partnership Forums have three main roles:

1. To support the Community Health Partnership to inform local people about the range and location of services and information that the Community Health Partnership is responsible for providing.

2. To involve local people in discussing how to improve health services.

3. To support wider public involvement in planning and making decisions about health services.

Public Partnership Forums must communicate regularly with Community Health Partnerships.

Public Partnership Forums do not deal with individual cases or complaints about services. For information about pursuing individual cases or complaints, contact your local NHS Board or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Why do Public Partnership Forums exist?
We have Public Partnership Forums because NHS Boards have a duty to involve communities in planning and developing health services, using guidance from the Scottish Government.
Why should I get involved in a Public Partnership Forum? Here are just a few of the reasons why you may want to think about getting involved:

• Everyone uses health services at some stages in their lives – through their GP, a hospital, local health centre or one of the many other services available throughout Scotland. So your views are important in helping the NHS understand what works and what doesn’t, and what to consider when changing or improving services.

• As well as treating people who are ill, the NHS works to promote healthy living and prevent people becoming ill. It also plays an important role in helping people manage their own symptoms. The NHS is vital for everyone’s health and wellbeing.

• The NHS is there for the people of Scotland and is funded by public money, so people in Scotland have a right to a say in how health services are designed, provided and improved.

• Involving local people in shaping health services means services are more likely to reflect what people really want and need.

• Getting involved in helping improve services can be very rewarding.
Can I get involved in a Public Partnership Forum?
Membership of a Public Partnership Forum is open to anyone living or working in the area it covers, or anyone who has a ‘substantial connection’ with that area.

Public Partnership Forums should encourage people from all parts of the community to be involved. This is to ensure there is a good mix of people in terms of age, race, gender, ethnic background etc. This helps the Public Partnership Forum represent the views of the community it serves.
interests

opportunity

views
What happens if I join a Public Partnership Forum?
Public Partnership Forums across Scotland may be set up and work in different ways, but they usually offer a range of options for people to get involved, depending on what they are interested in and how much time they have.

Some ways you may be able to get involved are:

• Signing up to receive information, updates or newsletters about local health services.

• Having opportunities to give your views about services through, for example, responding to consultations.

• Being able to take part in working groups or attend events.

• Attending Public Partnership Forum meetings.

You don’t get paid for getting involved in a Public Partnership Forum, but you should be able to claim any reasonable expenses, for example, travelling costs to attend meetings.

If you become a Public Partnership Forum member, you should be able to get training and support to help you carry out your role.
How can I find out more?
For more about your local Public Partnership Forum or other opportunities to get involved in developing your local health services, contact your NHS Board.

Details of all of the Public Partnership Forums across Scotland are on the Scottish Health Council’s website: [www.scottishhealthcouncil.org](http://www.scottishhealthcouncil.org)

You can also phone 0141 241 6308 and ask to have a copy of this information in email, in large print, on audio tape or CD, in Braille, or in other languages.

Local contact information (optional)