

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00655 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Social Work Adult Services None	Lead Officer Name:	Jennifer Faichney
		Team:	Planning, Performance and Policy
		Tel:	07483920653
		Email:	jennifer.faichney@falkirk.gov.uk
Proposal:	<p>Participation and Engagement Strategy 2024 - 2027</p> <p>The Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act 2014 requires each HSCP to produce a Participation and Engagement Strategy as part of the suite of documents that underpin the Strategic Plan. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies to engage with communities and community organisations. The first Participation and Engagement Strategy was approved by the IJB in 2016 and was renewed in 2021. The current strategy is due for renewal by June 2024.</p> <p>The new strategy will closely align with the National Standards for Community Engagement, Planning with People national guidance, and Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Quality Framework for Community Engagement. National guidance sets out principles of engagement to support the HSCP to measure the quality and impact of our engagement activity. By following the national guidance closely, the renewed strategy sets out our commitments to improve how we deliver engagement and will continue to ensure that people are meaningfully involved and actively engaged in the design and development of health and social care within the Falkirk area.</p>	Reference No:	

A joint Communication and Engagement action plan will sit alongside the Participation and Engagement Strategy and Communication Strategy to support how we carry out community engagement across the Partnership. Alongside the strategy and action plan, a toolkit will be developed and regularly updated to support staff to plan, deliver, and evaluate their engagement activity.

The Participation and Engagement Strategy aims to have a positive impact on groups with protected characteristics. Two principles of the National Standards for Community Engagement are inclusion and support. These principles outline the importance of identifying and involving people and supporting them to get involved in engagement activities.

One of the ways we can follow these principles is through the development of an Inclusive Engagement Resource. This resource will provide knowledge and understanding for staff, so they know how to involve and support people that best suits their participation needs and avoids any negative impact on protected groups. The development of this resource will be a key part of the strategy consultation so that it is accurate and can become a valuable resource for staff.

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	No	Yes	No	No
Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Other, please specify:				

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):

28/06/2024	Publish the reviewed Participation and Engagement Strategy, Action Plan, and Community Engagement Toolkit on the Partnership website following IJB approval.

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:		Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average	
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:		
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:		
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:		
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:		
	Expected Annual Income Total:		
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:		
	End Date (if any):		

SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

A - Quantitative Evidence This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

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B - Qualitative Evidence This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other

The [Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) Scotland Act 2014](#) requires each HSCP to produce a Participation and Engagement Strategy as part of the suite of documents that underpin the Strategic Plan. The [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) requires public bodies to engage with communities and community organisations. The new strategy closely aligns with the [National Standards for Community Engagement, Planning with People](#) national guidance, and [Healthcare Improvement Scotland’s Quality Framework for Community Engagement](#). National guidance sets out principles of engagement to support the HSCP to measure the quality and impact of our engagement activity. By following the national guidance closely, the renewed strategy sets out our commitments to improve how we deliver engagement and will continue to ensure that people are meaningfully involved and actively engaged in the design and development of health and social care within the Falkirk area.

Best Judgement:	
Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	Yes / No
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	
What gaps in data / information were identified?	
Is further research necessary?	Yes / No
If NO, please state why.	

SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	No	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.		
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.	Consultation with service users was not required for the development of this strategy. However, we received feedback from the Strategic Plan consultation relating to engagement and communication which was taken into consideration in the development of this strategy. For example, people feel excluded for a variety of reasons, e.g., people who use sign language as their first language. This strategy focuses on inclusion and accessibility, improving our understanding of who we're engaging with and identifying gaps in participation, providing opportunities for participation, and adopting an outreach approach to our engagement by going into communities rather than expecting them to come to us.	
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	No	
Survey	No	
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	No	
Other: please specify	<p>In the development of the strategy, we have sought feedback from staff. This included presentations to the Community Empowerment Action Team (CEAT), a cross-council engagement networking group, team meetings, Strategic Planning Group, and a HSCP staff session.</p> <p>Since the strategy has been developed to closely align with national guidance and set a consistent standard of engagement, feedback from these staff presentations is focused on informing and promoting the strategy to staff as well as sense-checking that the outcomes and actions planned are correct and will support the implementation of our strategic plan. Any feedback on the strategy or action plan is taken into consideration before the documents are taken to the IJB for approval in June.</p>	
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	No	

Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	No
Is further engagement recommended?	No

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age		✓		<p>The following data represents equalities information gathered from 332 participants across eight consultations during the period 2021-2023. Please note that this data is incomplete and does not represent every participant who has been involved in a consultation or engagement event since 2021.</p> <p>68% of participants are adults aged 16-64 and 24% are older adults aged 65+. This compares to 63% of adults aged 16-64 and 19% of older adults locally. 8% of our participants are under 16 and this would comprise of young carers who took part in our Carers Strategy consultation in 2022.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>

Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:

				<p>incomplete and does not represent every participant who has been involved in a consultation or engagement event since 2021.</p> <p>49% of participants consider themselves to have a disability or long-term health condition and 51% do not. This compares to 30% of the local population that consider themselves to have a disability or long-term health condition and 70% do not. Of the participants that consider themselves to have a disability or long-term health condition, 81% experience a reduction in their day-to-day activities either a little or a lot. This compares to 20% of the Falkirk population.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>
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<p>Sex</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>The following data represents equalities information gathered from 332 participants across eight consultations during the period 2021-2023. Please note that this data is incomplete and does not represent every participant who has been involved in a consultation or engagement event since 2021.</p> <p>72% of participants are female and 26% are male. Locally, 51% of the Falkirk population is female and 49% are male. This suggests that there is an over-representation of women and an under-representation of men in our engagement events.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>
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<p>Ethnicity</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>The following data represents equalities information gathered from 332 participants across eight consultations during the period 2021-2023. Please note that this data is incomplete and does not represent every participant who has been involved in a consultation or engagement event since 2021.</p> <p>89% of participants are white (including white British, white Scottish, or white Irish) and 4% are Asian or Asian British. This compares to 98% of the Falkirk population being white and 1.3% are Asian or Asian British. 0.6% of the local population is Other Ethnic Group which compares to 7% of our participants which includes Black, African, Caribbean, Black British, Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups and Other Ethnic Group.</p> <p>A significant amount of work was undertaken to improve the representation of BME people participating in public consultations. During the Equality Outcomes consultation, 35.5% of survey responses were received by people who identify as part of the BME community. We are keen to continue building on this work and including representation from the BME community.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>
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Religion / Belief / non-Belief		✓	<p>The following data represents equalities information gathered from 332 participants across eight consultations during the period 2021-2023. Please note that this data is incomplete and does not represent every participant who has been involved in a consultation or engagement event since 2021.</p> <p>52% of participants have no religion or belief, 34% are Christian, 8% are Muslim, and 1.9% are Roman Catholic. In Falkirk, 39% have no religion or belief, 36.5% are Christian, 0.9% are Muslim, and 12.3% are Roman Catholic.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>
Sexual Orientation		✓	<p>The following data represents equalities information gathered from 332 participants across eight consultations during the period 2021-2023. Please note that this data is incomplete and does not represent every participant who has been involved in a consultation or engagement event since 2021.</p> <p>90% of participants identify as Heterosexual/Straight which compares to 95% of the Scottish population. Please note that the 2011 census didn't include a question regarding sexual orientation but this was included in the 2022 census.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>

Transgender	✓		<p>From data gathered from 332 participants across eight consultations during the period 2021-2023, <5 participants identified as trans-male/non-binary. There is no local data available related to this protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>
Pregnancy / Maternity	✓		<p>No data has been collected related to this protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>

Marriage / Civil Partnership		✓	<p>The following data represents equalities information gathered from 332 participants across eight consultations during the period 2021-2023. Please note that this data is incomplete and does not represent every participant who has been involved in a consultation or engagement event since 2021.</p> <p>62% of participants are married, 23% are single, 7% are divorced, and 3% are widowed. 49% of the Falkirk population are married, 31% are single, 9% are divorced, and 8% are widowed.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>
Poverty		✓	<p>The following data represents equalities information gathered from 332 participants across eight consultations during the period 2021-2023. Please note that this data is incomplete and does not represent every participant who has been involved in a consultation or engagement event since 2021.</p> <p>52% of participants are employed/self-employed, 17% are unemployed, and 31% are retired. Locally, 65% are employed/self-employed, 5% are unemployed, and 16% are retired. This suggests that people who are unemployed and retired have greater flexibility and more likely to engage and attend events during working hours than people who are employed/self-employed.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>

Care Experienced	✓			<p>No data has been collected related to this protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.		✓		<p>The following data represents equalities information gathered from 332 participants across eight consultations during the period 2021-2023. Please note that this data is incomplete and does not represent every participant who has been involved in a consultation or engagement event since 2021.</p> <p>59% of participants have a caring responsibility and due to the Carers Strategy Consultation, we've been able to identify parent carers (17%) and young or young adult carers (14%). 41% of participants do not have a caring responsibility. In Falkirk, 9.6% of the population have a caring responsibility.</p> <p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy.</p> <p>One of the key actions is to improve how we gather participant data to better understand who we engage with and ensure that they are representative of the local population and the people who access or are supported by HSCP services.</p>
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)				
Evidence of Due Regard				

<p>Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):</p>	<p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy and our action plan.</p> <p>One of the key actions of the new strategy is to improve how we collect data to better understand our participants. To do this we will develop guidance for staff so they have the confidence to ask for this information. An outcome of the strategy is for staff to have the knowledge and skills to deliver effective and meaningful engagement. This will involve training for staff so we can provide a safe place for people to get involved in strategy development and co-design services and be able to share their feedback as an equal partner without fear of discrimination.</p>
<p>Advance Equality of Opportunity:</p>	<p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy and our action plan.</p> <p>There are key actions in the new strategy that focus on providing opportunities for people to get involved beyond consultations. This will involve opportunities to co-design services, join a lived experience panel, be recruited as a carer or service user representative, get involved in strategic and operational meetings, etc. There will be training and support given to both staff and participants/representatives.</p>
<p>Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):</p>	<p>The Partnership is committed to meaningfully involve people and groups affected by the focus of engagement as well as ensure our engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and reflect our communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of the revised strategy and our action plan.</p> <p>The aim of community engagement is to develop working relationships between HSCP and individuals or community groups. One of the key learnings from the Equality Outcomes consultation was that we understood the importance of reaching people in community settings as opposed to organising centralised events where stakeholders approach us. This allowed us to build relationships with third sector partners and community groups to allow for open discussions and receive feedback as well as better understand the needs of the communities we are engaging with. This has led to improvements in accessibility of our engagement.</p>

SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
Business	No	
Councils	Yes	Falkirk Council are currently developing their own community engagement strategy. We are working with the Community Empowerment Team to ensure that both Falkirk Council and HSCP strategies are closely aligned.
Education Sector	No	
Fire	No	
NHS	Yes	The Participation and Engagement Strategy and its accompanying Community Engagement Toolkit will be useful resources and guidance for our NHS colleagues to carry out their engagement activities.
Integration Joint Board	Yes	The IJB is required by the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 to produce a Participation and Engagement Strategy. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires the IJB to engage with communities and community organisations, to put in place a participation process, and to report on how engagement has shaped the delivery of local outcomes. The publication of the revised Participation and Engagement Strategy allows the IJB to meet its legislative requirements.
Police	No	
Third Sector	Yes	We are keen to continue developing our relationships with third sector organisations and community groups to better understand the needs of the people we wish to engage with as well as access key groups that are the focus of our engagement. Close working relationships with the Carers Centre, for example, is key to understanding the needs of carers in the development and implementation of our local carers strategy as well as recruit carer representatives for our IJB as well as sit on other strategic meeting groups.
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.		

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.

The Participation and Engagement Strategy aims to involve people and communities in a positive way and to be inclusive, accessible, and ensure that people engage in a meaningful way that positively impacts on service change and strategy development. As part of the strategy, staff will be given the resources and tools so they can deliver effective and meaningful community engagement. One of the immediate key actions is to improve how we gather equalities data and embed it into engagement practices so we can better understand our participants and identify any gaps so we are listening to people who are representative of our local community and people who use or being supported by HSCP services.

Are actions being reported to Members?

Yes

If yes when and how ?

We will be reporting our progress on the strategy and action plan to the IJB every quarter to ensure that we remain accountable and transparent about our engagement practices. There are three elected members that sit on the IJB.

SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	Yes	No negative impacts on protected characteristics have been identified. A key aim of the Participation and Engagement Strategy is to involve people in a positive way.
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	No	
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:	<i>Jennifer Faichney</i>	Date:	16/02/2024
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SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA: Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?	Yes / No
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ASSESSMENT FINDINGS If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA	
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Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u>?	Yes / No	If YES, please describe:
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LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA

LEVEL		COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes / No	
MEDIUM	Yes / No	
LOW	Yes / No	

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:			
Signature:	<i>Martin David Thom</i>	Date:	10/04/2024