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Brent Engagement Strategy

**The Strategy for Community and Stakeholder
Information, Consultation and Engagement**

2010-2014

Partners for Brent

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Target Audience	Public, Service Users, Staff, Partners, Providers, Opinion Formers in Brent

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Foreword from Partners from Brent

Forward from Partners for Brent

Welcome to the Brent Engagement Strategy 2010 – 2014. This is a partnership framework document which sets out our priorities and ambitions for how we will inform, consult and engage with our community and stakeholders in all aspects of the services we provide, from design through to delivery. The strategy also sets out our minimum quality standards for consultation and engagement activity and outlines our commitment to making consultation and engagement a partnership endeavour for Brent.

Chair of the Brent Local Strategic Partnership

What is Partners for Brent?

Partners for Brent is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Brent that brings together a range of organisations within the public, private, community and voluntary sectors responsible for delivering services at a local level.

The key values of Partners for Brent are:

- To deliver efficient, accessible and sustainable services to excellent standards;
- To develop tailored solutions to meet the needs of individuals, families and communities;
- To celebrate the Borough's diversity and build upon our national reputation for nurturing successful community cohesion.

The effective engagement of all our stakeholders (people who can affect or are affected by the services that we deliver) is a key factor in ensuring that Partners for Brent is able to meet the needs and aspirations of Brent's residents and service users.

The partnership membership consists of:

- Brent Council
- NHS Brent
- Metropolitan Police
- London Fire Brigade
- Central and North West London Mental Health NHS Trust
- North West London Hospitals NHS Trust
- Brent Association Voluntary Agencies (BrAVA)
- College of North West London
- The Employer Partnership
- Brent HAG
- Learning and Skills Council
- Brent schools
- Job Centre Plus
- London Development Agency
- Brent elected community members

What is community engagement?

Community engagement is a term covering a spectrum of activity carried out with people who make up our communities. It's about making sure that people can influence the strategies and policies as they engage in lots of different ways to make Brent a better place.

In recent years various engagement models have been developed and refined which attempt to describe a range of opportunities for stakeholders, from passive recipient of information to active participant in the delivery of public services. Conventionally these can be summed up as informing, consulting and engaging.

1. **Informing** – Giving people information

Information is the basic building block of community engagement. People need information to know how, why, when and where to access services; to understand the quality of services and what to do to change services. Good public service organisations will strive to communicate effectively and continuously with their stakeholders. Information can include written, verbal, visual, pictorial or digital

2. **Consulting** – Seeking information and opinions from people

Consultation is the process by which public services seek advice, information and opinions about strategies, policies and services, to inform decision making and design good services which reflect the aspirations of stakeholders. Consultation can include surveys, focus groups and public meetings.

3. **Engaging** – Working in partnership with people

Engagement is the process of partnership working between public services and stakeholders to influence the strategies and policies to design, shape and improve the delivery of local services. Engagement can include strategy groups, workshops and service assessments.

Policy context

Community engagement has become increasingly important for all organisations. It is at the heart of central government policy to improve and modernise local services. Some of the government's key policy initiatives which drive community engagement include:

- ***Legal duties to inform, consult, engage and respond including the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act Sustainable Communities Act; Sections 242/244 NHS Act 2006; NHS Constitution***

- **Legal duties towards equalities** including Equality Act 2010; Sex Discrimination Act; Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- **Performance frameworks** including the National Indicator set; local performance indicators; partner policies and strategies; World Class Commissioning
- **Empowerment tools** including participatory budgeting; the councillor call for action; community ownership;

The rise of community engagement is also driven by its potential opportunities to shape the place that people live, study and work in, increase well-being and benefit the services they use.

Research shows that effective communications is a key driver of resident satisfaction. Brent residents are increasingly interested in being more involved in the decisions made at local level (Brent Council's 2009 Residents' Attitude: 39% of people agree with this). By engaging these residents we hope to both improve our local services and improve people's satisfaction with them.

Vision

We share a common public; community empowerment, citizen satisfaction and service accountability are shared themes across all public services. Citizens and communities have knowledge about the wider concerns of an area, the different causes of and solutions to local problems and ideas about what would be a better use of available resources. With this in mind, we will put our community and stakeholder priorities at the centre of service planning and provision. We will do this in a coordinated way, adhering to shared principles and standards and in such a way as to avoid duplication and enhance the citizen experience with local public services.

Aim

We aim to improve the lives of local people through effective engagement and communication with our stakeholders including the public, service users, patients, staff, other partners, providers, voluntary and community groups, opinion formers and seldom heard and under-represented groups to better understand each other's needs and priorities.

Strategic Objectives

1. We will empower local people

We will develop and put in place regular and effective processes which enable local people to work in partnership with local services to ensure local voices are heard and valued. We will take action to ensure the needs of local people are met and the satisfaction with our services is improved.

2. We will include under-represented groups

We will seek to understand who our multi cultural and multi racial communities including 'under-represented' or 'seldom heard' groups, are by using comprehensive monitoring data. We will strive to better engage these groups,

using the most appropriate communication methods available. No community or group, however big or small, will be disadvantaged by the way that we engage.

3. We will improve satisfaction with our services

We will use existing internal and external processes to measure resident and service user satisfaction with public services in Brent. We will work in partnership with local people to make improvements in our services.

4. We will communicate clearly and simply

We will ensure that communication and information materials are written clearly and simply to get the right message across and can be accessed at home, at work, at school and on the move. We will use plain English and provide access to translations. We will use different forms of communication for different communities and groups as appropriate including written, verbal, visual, pictorial and digital.

5. We will use the best tools and techniques

We will encourage the use of different and innovative tools and techniques when planning to engage local people. We will look to improve our use of new technologies. We are committed to community outreach and working with community leaders. We will share intelligence and best practice with each other in practitioner forums.

6. We will work in partnership

We will work together to make best use of information, consultation, engagement and empowerment opportunities. We will share resources and not waste them. We will ensure that consultation and engagement protocols, procedures and quality standards are routinely applied across the partnership ensuring efficiency, value for money and consistency of approach. We will publish a calendar of future consultations.

7. We will engage elected members

Elected members, (local councillors and members of parliament), will use their role as community leaders to engage local people, using established consultation and engagement methods such as the area forums and neighbourhood working. A constructive relationship between elected members' and their constituents provides useful information for the partners and helps enhance democratic engagement and participation in the borough. We will explore ways that all partners can improve their links with elected members.

8. We will share results

When consultations are complete they will have a feedback report and an outcome report. The feedback report will detail what the consultation was on, who was consulted and a summary of the views expressed. The outcome report will detail what has/hasn't changed as a result of the consultation and why. We will aim to get a feedback report to participants within one month from the closing date of the consultation. If this is not possible then a letter explaining what is happening will be issued to participants. Where possible the outcome report will also be sent within this timescale but due to the complexity of some consultations this may be harder to achieve. As well as personal correspondence results from consultation and engagement will be published on the internet and where appropriate in local media and via community meetings across the partnership so everyone can make use of the information available for service planning and strategy development and avoid unnecessary duplication.

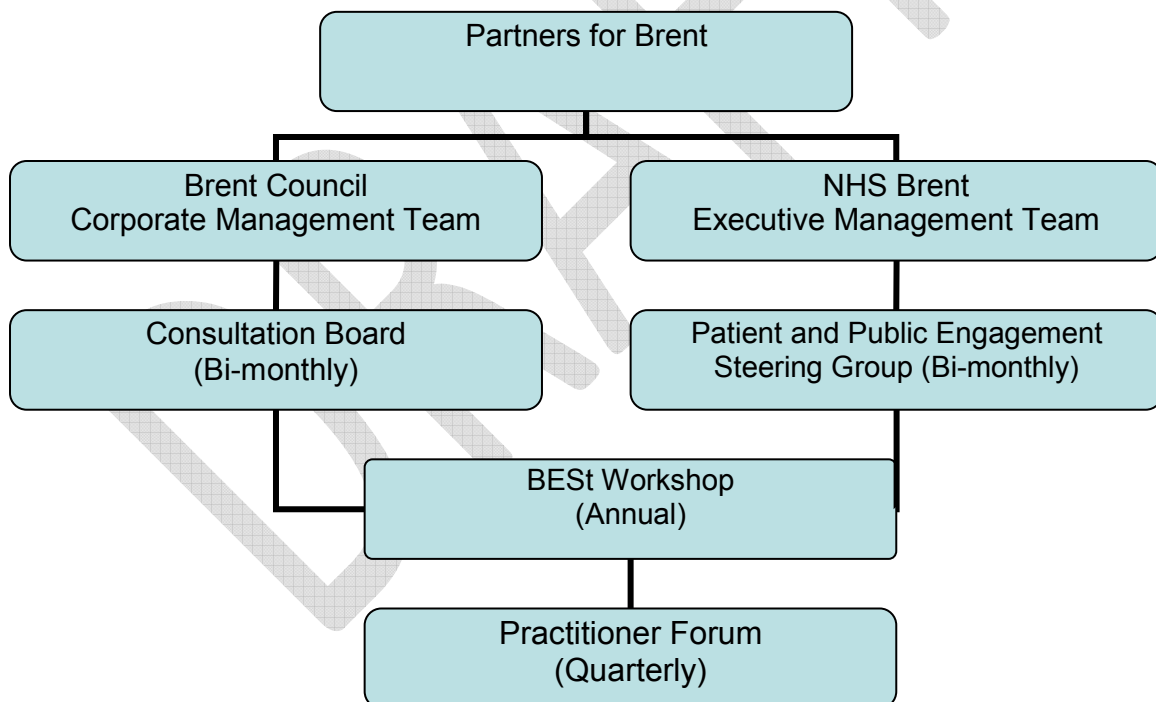
Measures of success / evaluation

We will evaluate individual engagement activities using a variety of tools including action logs, training logs, workshop evaluations, survey trends, feedback reports, web hits, meeting minutes, etc.

The effectiveness of the strategy will be monitored and our principal measures of success will be:

- *The Place Survey – specifically the measurement of National Indicator (NI) 4 – ‘Opportunities to influence local decision making’ (Brent Council);*
- *Brent Residents’ Attitude Survey – a face to face survey measuring, liveability, service satisfaction, health, policing, community safety and service satisfaction (Brent Council);*
- *Consultation annual report (NHS Brent);*
- *Patient survey (NHS Brent);*
- *Staff surveys;*
- *Ad-hoc research using the Brent Citizens’ Panel;*
- *Media monitoring.*

Governance and partnership working



Communication and engagement is governed in Brent Council by the Consultation Board and in NHS Brent by the Patient and Public Engagement (PPE) Steering Group. Both the Consultation Board and the PPE steering group report directly to their respective executive management teams, as shown in the diagram above. Both Brent Council and NHS Brent are represented in the membership of Partners for Brent and we will look to have

an overall steering group for this strategy. We will establish a Quarterly Practitioner Forum open to all partners to share good practice and local intelligence on community engagement. We will also commit to hold an annual Brent Engagement Strategy Workshop so that we can review our progress and plan for the year ahead.

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Appendix 1

Engagement standards

Principles and quality standards will bring about improved coordination and consistency between consultation and engagement activity undertaken in Brent. Revised standards, (below) are the minimum quality standards with which all consultation and engagement activity should comply. The revised standards have been arranged around the key headings of:

- **Clarity**
- **Inclusiveness**
- **Valuing people**
- **Results**

The standards are

1. Clarity

Engagement will be deemed clear if it has:

- *A clear lead with contact details*
- *A clear purpose that states why the engagement is happening and what change is possible*
- *A clear list of stakeholders that are affected by or can affect the outcomes of the engagement*
- *Clear boundaries on what can be consulted on and what cannot*
- *A clear plan on what is happening, with who and the timescales*
- *Clear information that is concise, uses plain English and no jargon*

2. Inclusiveness

Engagement will be deemed inclusive if it:

- *Includes a wide spectrum of people that match the community as much as possible*
- *Includes under-represented, marginalised and seldom heard people*

- *Includes community outreach to where people are in existing places, groups and networks*
- *Includes times and places that are convenient and accessible to people*
- *Includes partners and works with them to engage communities*
- *Includes service users; past, present and future*
- *Includes actions to identify and remove potential barriers for people to get involved based on existing or new data*
- *Includes communication that is accessible to all whether written, verbal, visual, pictorial or digital*
- *Includes a range of methods, techniques and technologies for people to engage*
- *Includes enough time for people to respond*
- *Includes access to translations where appropriate*

3. Valuing people

Engagement will be deemed to value people if it:

- *Values peoples needs and responds to them*
- *Values peoples input from the outset and throughout the whole process*
- *Values peoples knowledge about their own communities and neighbourhoods*
- *Values peoples skills and areas of interest*
- *Values peoples feedback and helps them to feel comfortable to give it*
- *Values peoples time and input with incentives for involvement*
- *Values peoples commitment by making processes enjoyable and interesting*
- *Values peoples confidentiality and privacy*

4. Results

Engagement will be deemed to show results if it:

- *Results in a Feedback Report, which details what the consultation was, who was consulted and a summary of the views expressed, one month from the deadline of the consultation*

- *Results in an Outcome Report, which details what has or hasn't changed as a result of the consultation and why within a specified deadline*
- *Results in recommendations that will improve services, programmes and quality of life for residents and service users*
- *Results in more people getting involved in making changes to local services*
- *Results in an evaluation of how effective the engagement was*
- *Results in partners and stakeholders knowing about the engagement and its outcomes*

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Appendix 2

Consultation Framework – listed below are some of Brent’s standing forums and user groups that partnership members might want to engage in the process of community consultation.

Consultation Opportunity	Frequency	How to access
Five area consultative forums	Quarterly meetings	Brent Council
Service user consultative forums covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pensioners ○ Disabled users ○ Voluntary sector ○ Private sector housing ○ Black & minority ethnic 	Quarterly meetings	Brent Council
Multi faith forum	Ad-hoc	Brent Council
Brent Citizens’ Panel	Ad-hoc	Brent Council
Brent LINk	Ad-hoc	Hestia
Safer Neighbourhoods’ Panels	Ad-hoc	Police SN Teams
Neighbourhood working	Ad-hoc	Brent Council
Brent Youth Parliament	Ad-hoc	Brent Council Children & Families
4 Area Housing Boards	Quarterly meetings	Brent Housing Partnership
Community Safety Board	Ad-hoc	Brent Council Community Safety Team
Brent Health and Social Care Forum	Bi-monthly	NHS Brent

Appendix 3

Techniques for Engagement

The following table states the main techniques that will be used by Partners for Brent for engaging, consulting and informing. There is often overlap between the techniques:

Level	Technique	Brief Definition
ENGAGING	Meetings	Small or Large Events to examine issues, reflect on evidence and decide on options e.g. strategy groups, workshops, forums
	Community Outreach	Going to where the community are to explore relevant issues e.g. drop ins, community groups
	Service Assessments	Working together to audit services e.g. mystery shopper, enter and view, shadowing
CONSULTING	Road-shows	Informal stalls and activities e.g. health fairs, festivals
	Surveys (Quantitative)	Measuring opinion e.g. questionnaires, (paper and on-line), structured interviews.
	Focus Groups (Qualitative)	Focus, discussion and workshop groups, other deliberative engagement activity with small groups.
INFORMING	Publications	Printed information e.g. posters, leaflets, reports
	Technology	Use of technology to communicate e.g. Internet, Email, Texting
	Media	Advertisements or editorial e.g. press, radio, TV

Partners for Brent are:



OTHER LOGOS TO BE ADDED

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