

# Patient and Public Engagement Strategy to 2030



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# Introduction

[Our Strategy to 2030](#) outlines the critical role our organisation plays in addressing the challenges facing the NHS. Collaboration with our patients, families, carers, and communities is essential as we continue to deliver high-quality care, across our hospitals—Guy's, St Thomas', Evelina London Children's, Royal Brompton, and Harefield—and community services in Lambeth and Southwark.

We know there is much more we can do to improve how we collaborate with our patient-public stakeholders, as we deliver **better, faster and fairer healthcare for all**.

Together, we will meet the challenges head-on and ensure we continue to provide the care our patients and diverse communities need and deserve.

## The purpose of our patient and public engagement strategy

This strategy provides a framework for patient and public involvement across the Trust. It describes our goals and priorities for patient and public engagement as we deliver [Our Strategy to 2030](#). These goals and priorities will inform the way patients, carers and communities are involved in delivering the Trust strategic objectives,

related projects and programmes, innovation and research.

All Trust departments will take account of this strategy in the implementation of their strategies and day-to-day work. This includes all clinical groups, Essentia and corporate departments.

The implementation of this patient and public engagement strategy will help us demonstrate all three of our **Trust values**: **Caring** – we will put patients first in all our work, **Ambitious** – we innovate and strive for excellence, **Inclusive** – we respect each other and work collaboratively.

This strategy will also help to ensure we meet the legal and regulatory duties incumbent on all NHS providers. Including the public involvement duty and Quality Statements used by the Care Quality Commission to assess the quality of care, safety and effectiveness of our organisation.

Our [Involvement and consultation policy](#) supports the delivery of this strategy and outlines our principles for patient and public engagement.

## Why patient and public engagement is so important to us

Whilst we recognise the 'public involvement

duty' and regulatory requirements for involving patients, in GSTT patient and public engagement goes beyond this.

By truly listening to and working alongside people and communities, we can better understand their needs and experiences, allowing us to continuously improve the quality of care.

We believe that genuine participation is key to ensuring that often underrepresented and marginalised communities have a voice. Their insights are vital in helping us improve the health of our populations, tackle health inequalities and promote equity across all our services.

We also know that patient and public engagement supports informed decision-making and enhances accountability.

The help and support of patients, their families, carers, and communities is vital to finding better ways to provide more joined-up care across our networks, services and pathways.

**“Health professionals often think they are involving parents in making decisions but they aren't really. They are just looking for you to rubber stamp their decisions. We've worked with one therapist who genuinely involved us... I know it takes more time. But it is so much better.”** (Parent of a patient)

## Introduction continued

Patient, family and carer participation will be crucial as we work to improve and modernise our hospitals and community buildings, particularly when resources are limited.

Most importantly, it is through working in partnership that we can really harness the unique perspectives of patients, families, carers and communities. Their personal, and often courageous insights, help us to design and transform care that makes a meaningful difference to people's health outcomes.

We consider it a privilege when people share their care experiences with us. They can and do spark the “lightbulb moments” that inspire and fuel our ambition, motivate and drive ground-breaking research that tackles the most complex and rare health conditions and inspire cutting-edge, healthcare innovation.

## How we developed our patient and public engagement strategy

This strategy has been developed by the Trust Patient and Public Engagement (PPE) Team, in collaboration with a multi-disciplinary PPE Strategy Development Group. This group was co-chaired by a patient-public Governor and the Trust Head of Patient and Public Engagement. Membership included representatives of:

- Patient and public Trust Governors
- Clinical and non-clinical Trust staff
- Local Healthwatch Bodies
- South East London Integrated Care Board

The patient and public engagement strategy has been developed to respond to the Trust's strategic priorities and the patient priorities, identified through extensive

engagement activities supporting the development of our Strategy to 2030. We asked patients, carers and communities to prioritise a list of 10 topics. From 750 responses, the top five areas were:

- Waiting for diagnosis and treatment
- Preventing ill health
- Communication – contacting the Trust
- Joined up Care
- Research

The most frequently raised additional priority area was getting the basics right: focusing on well-run services, as well as innovation (**See *Appendix for further information***).

To highlight what patients told us matters most, we have incorporated their priorities throughout the strategy, aligning them with our four goals, which are described on the next page.



## Our four goals - Amplifying the patient voice

One of the findings of Lord Darzi's 2024 rapid investigation into the state of the NHS is that the **"Patient voice is not loud enough"**. Through the four over-arching goals in this strategy, we will amplify and make the patient voice louder and stronger, listening to and acting on people's views and concerns. These goals are interconnected, with the priorities of each working together to support the successful delivery of the overall strategy, however, each priority addresses a distinct aspect of the strategy. The following section of this strategy describes our four overarching goals and 17 priorities that will help us to deliver them.



**Build a culture of involvement.** We will make patient and public involvement everyone's business by increasing staff awareness, understanding and skills. We will build strong relationships and trust with the communities we serve by ensuring that meaningful involvement is central to the way we design, develop and improve our services.

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**Act on what matters most to patients, carers and communities.** We will ensure that patient and carer voices drive the improvement, transformation and development of our services. We will support the delivery of patient-led care by prioritising involvement activity and resources on the areas that patients, carers and communities care about most.

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**Promote health equity through meaningful involvement.** We will identify and challenge health inequalities, and the barriers to accessing services by involving our diverse patients, carers, and communities. We will ensure people who are often under-represented are involved in planning, innovating, and improving our services and research.

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**Work in partnership with people, communities and our health and care partners.** We will strengthen our partnerships with patients, carers and communities who need and use our services. We will harness our dynamic local and national health and care partnerships, using every opportunity to align our involvement plans, share learning, good practice and impact

**Build a culture of involvement.** We will make patient and public involvement everyone's business by increasing staff awareness, understanding and skills. We will build strong relationships and trust with the communities we serve by ensuring that meaningful involvement is central to the way we design, develop and improve our services.

**To build a true culture of involvement,** we must continue to go beyond involving patients, families, and carers in their care. We will create an environment where people feel empowered to collaborate, share ideas, and influence how services are designed and delivered. This requires transparency, openness, and inclusivity — recognising peoples' contributions every step of the way. A strong involvement culture will lead to deeper engagement, stronger relationships, and greater trust between us, our patients, and our communities.

#### **Our priorities: To achieve this, we will**

**Increase staff and patient awareness of patient and public engagement at the Trust.** To make involvement everyone's business, we will share success stories and best practice with all staff across the Trust, and make sure they know where to find support and resources. We will make it easier for patients, carers, families, and communities to get involved, and provide staff with the tools they need to share these opportunities with others.

**Equip staff with the skills and confidence to engage patients and the public.** We will develop further training, tools, and support resources for Trust staff, to help foster meaningful participation in

service design, delivery, research, and innovation, creating solutions that truly meet patients' and communities' needs.

#### **Build on best practice and find ways to embed the patient-public voice in all clinical groups.**

We will ensure this voice is ever-present in our daily work and decision-making. By learning from the successes in Essentia, Cancer and Surgery, and Heart, Lung, and Critical Care groups, which have shown the value of ongoing patient-public engagement, we can improve everything from daily patient experiences to large strategic projects. We will learn from engagement activities by asking those we involve for feedback. Evaluation of what has gone well and what could be improved will be a routine part of involvement.

**Embed patient-public engagement in the assurance process for all projects and programmes** that affect how services are designed and delivered. Assurance of patient and public engagement plans will be built into the way projects are managed at the Trust to ensure patients, carers, families, and communities are engaged from the start. This will include capital and non-capital projects, including joint ventures with independent sector partners. By doing this, we will ensure that those who rely on our services have a direct say in the decisions we make.



#### **What matters most to patients**

In shaping the Trust's strategy for 2030, we asked patients, carers, and communities what matters most to them and the areas where they want to be actively involved. This insight drives our commitment to addressing these key priorities:

- **Waiting for diagnosis and treatment**
- **Preventing ill health**
- **Communication – contacting the Trust**
- **Future of healthcare**
- **Joined up care**
- **Relationship between patients and staff**



**Act on what matters most to patients, carers and communities.** We will ensure that patient and carer voices drive the improvement, transformation and development of our services. We will support the delivery of patient-led care by prioritising involvement activity and resources on the areas that patients, carers and communities care about most.

Understanding the experience of patients and communities is fundamental to how we deliver patient-led care and improve our services. This means we must **listen to and act on what patients, carers and communities tell us is most important to them.** Patients, carers and families will be involved in the delivery of Trust strategic priorities and projects addressing priority areas that matter most to patients.

### **Our priorities: To achieve this, we will**

**Ensure that patients, carers and communities are involved in setting the priorities for service development and improvement.** Patient and public involvement will be embedded in service design, development and improvement programmes from the start. This means involving them in every step - from developing ideas and shaping proposals, to creating selection criteria, evaluating options, and making decisions.

**Prioritise our patient-public engagement resources in programmes delivering on priority areas, from getting the basics right to major service transformation.**

The Trust strategy outlines numerous service improvement and development programmes. Patient and public involvement activity and

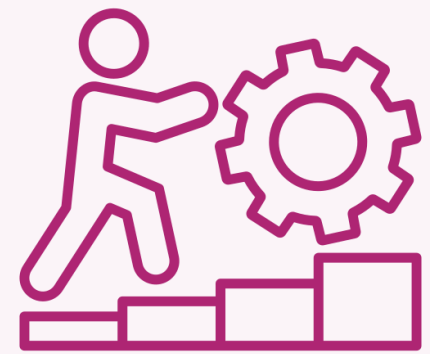
resource will be prioritised in these areas, to ensure that the patient voice is central to the way our services are developed, transformed and improved.

### **Drive continuous improvement by listening to and acting on patient feedback:**

We will make the most of the resources we already have to hear patient feedback. We will use insights gathered from patient experience surveys, PALS, patient and public involvement activities to identify opportunities for improvement. We also need to go beyond our existing methods. To make sure patient, carer and community voices are a driving force in service improvement and transformation, we will proactively seek their views using new sources (for example social media, public reviews). Gathering advice and ideas where people provide them, not waiting for them to come to us.

### **Measure and showcase the impact of patient, carer and community involvement.**

We will show people how their input has made a difference. We will share with stakeholders the outcomes of their involvement and the impact. We will be transparent about what we cannot change, while celebrating their contributions to the changes we achieve. We will also involve them in evaluating service improvements to track progress and ensure their views are considered



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- **Waiting for diagnosis and treatment**
- **Preventing ill health**
- **Communication – contacting the Trust**
- **Joined up Care**
- **Getting the basics right: focus on well-run services as well as innovation**

**Promote health equity through meaningful involvement.** We will identify and challenge health inequalities, and the barriers to accessing services by involving our diverse patients, carers, and communities. We will ensure people who are often under-represented are involved in planning, innovating, and improving our services and research.

The Trust strategy and values are underpinned by a commitment to **promote health equity** and deliver inclusive healthcare. To do this, we must be better at identifying and challenging barriers to access and understanding differences in patient experience and health outcomes. We will involve those most at risk of health inequalities in the planning and improvement of services, as well as in innovation and research. The involvement of patients experiencing health inequalities will be a priority across the Trust and will be essential to the delivery of Trust strategic priorities.

### **Our priorities: To achieve this, we will**

#### **Work with patients, carers and communities to identify inequalities and at-risk groups**

Involving underrepresented groups and people facing health inequalities will be central to all our programmes, service development, improvements, innovations, and research. When engaging with patients and the public, we will use data to plan our engagement and understand how experiences vary across different protected characteristics. We will also include patients, carers, and families in equality impact assessments, asking them how service improvement and development programmes might affect their experiences of care.

#### **Ensure equity of access to involvement opportunities across the Trust.**

True equity of access requires adaptability and a willingness to meet the varied needs and communications preferences of those who use our services. We will provide a range of ways to take part in service development, innovation and research.

#### **Proactively reach out to people who are often under-represented in our work**

We will build trust within often under-represented communities in our work to show that we want to listen to their views and encourage them to take part in shaping high-quality care, research, and innovation. We will identify and meet people and our diverse communities where they live and work, joining their activities and forums to understand what matters most to them.

**Make inclusive patient-public involvement central to research and innovation.** Patients, families, and communities will play an active role in developing new ideas. Their input will inform every step of the process, from setting priorities and shaping projects to designing and testing solutions. This approach ensures that our research and innovations genuinely reflect the needs and experiences of those who use our services.



### **What matters most to patients**

In shaping the Trust's strategy for 2030, we asked patients, carers, and communities what matters most to them and the areas where they want to be actively involved. This insight drives our commitment to addressing these key priorities:

- **Health inequalities:**
- **Preventing ill health**
- **Joined up care**
- **Relationship between patients and staff**
- **Patients, carers, communities as partners**
- **Inclusion: responding to individual needs**



**Work in partnership with people, communities and our health and care partners.** We will strengthen our partnerships with patients, carers and communities who need and use our services. We will harness our dynamic local and national health and care partnerships, using every opportunity to align our involvement plans, share learning, good practice and impact.

**Working in partnership with people, communities, and our health and care system partners** is essential for successfully delivering the Trust's strategy. We and our system partners recognise the vital role that patients and communities play in shaping services, driving research and innovation, and ensuring the success of the NHS. We know there is more we can and must do together to work closely with patients and communities, as their experiences are key to delivering high-quality, integrated care.

#### **Our priorities: To achieve this, we will**

**Build stronger relationships with our Foundation Trust members.** We will work with Foundation Trust governors to implement the Trust Membership Plan. We will actively promote opportunities for involvement to our members, making participation a central part of our engagement and communication efforts.

**Collaborate with people, communities and system partners to develop patient-public engagement plans** that support delivery of shared strategic priorities. Together, we will identify and enable opportunities for patient participation across projects. Examples include MyChart with King's College Hospital, reducing wait times, implementing sustainability plans with the Acute

Provider Collaborative, improving heart and lung care, and optimising our healthcare facilities across multiple Integrated Care Systems.

**Support the Voluntary Sector and Social Enterprise Charter,** finding new opportunities and different ways to collaborate with people and community organisations to deliver diverse and meaningful patient-public participation, recognising and drawing on the expertise in our communities.

**Strengthen our role as a proactive member of our health and care system and community.** We will work with Healthwatch, community organisations, and primary care services to listen to, learn from, and act on the experiences and insights of our communities. We are committed to building new partnerships and maximising opportunities to work with more community organisations, ensuring their voices are heard. We will respond openly and transparently to their feedback, taking action and making improvements wherever possible.

**Make the most of our local and national system partnerships** by learning from our partners and sharing insights from our patient and public engagement activities, we can build on successful initiatives and expand their benefits and impact across the system.



#### **What matters most to patients**

In shaping the Trust's strategy for 2030, we asked patients, carers, and communities what matters most to them and the areas where they want to be actively involved. This insight drives our commitment to addressing these key priorities:

- **Joined up care**
- **Waiting for diagnosis and treatment**
- **Patients, carers, communities as partners**

# Putting our patient and public engagement strategy into action

## Delivering our goals and priorities

We will actively engage with patients, staff, and partners to implement this strategy. Our goals and priorities will be achieved through the dedication of all Trust teams and departments working to put this strategy into action.

Our four clinical groups, Essentia, and corporate services will play a key role in delivering this strategy by integrating patient and public engagement, along with the outlined priorities, into their plans and strategies.

It is essential that our patient and public engagement strategy continues to support the delivery of Our Strategy to 2030, focusing on the areas that matter most to patients, carers, and communities. We will regularly review our priorities and adjust them as needed.

It is not always easy to measure the impact of patient and public engagement, but as we implement this strategy, we will consider ways to assess the impact of our strategy.

We will use a range of data from across the Trust, including reports on engagement activities from the Trust's many projects and programmes.

The Board will monitor our progress through our annual patient and public engagement report. We will assess our achievements against each goal and provide examples of how the strategy is being implemented across the Trust.

We will review and adjust our priorities, as necessary, to ensure that our patient and public engagement strategy remains aligned with Our Strategy to 2030 and, most importantly, continues to address what matters most to patients, families, carers, and communities.

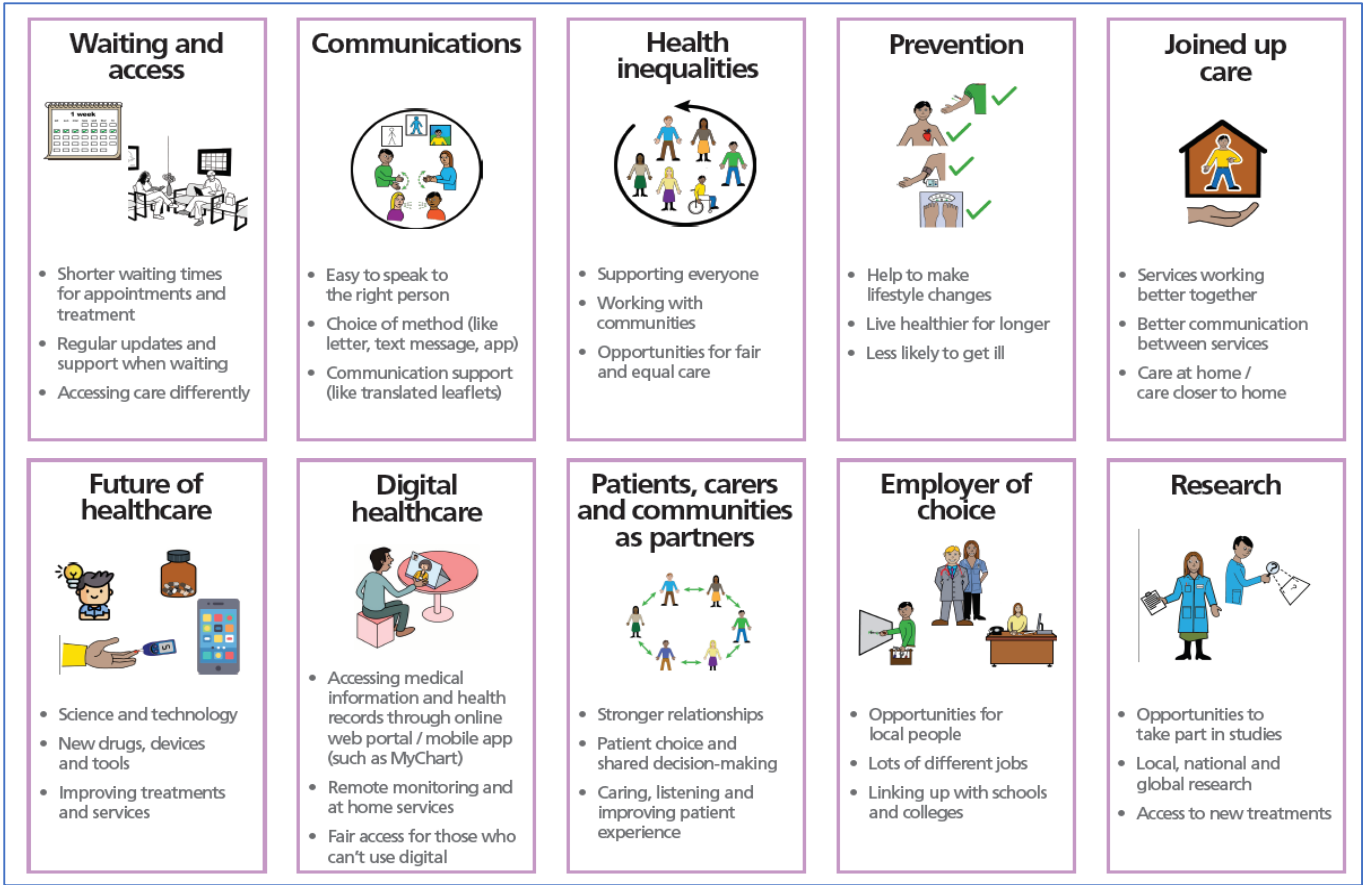
For more information about this strategy or getting involved in our work please contact the Patient and Public Engagement Team at [gstt.getInvolved@nhs.net](mailto:gstt.getInvolved@nhs.net).

## Appendix

Appendix A  
GSTT 2030: Patient priorities

Patients and carers have been involved in developing GSTT2030. The graphic shows the 10 topics that we identified from reviewing around 50 patient engagement and experience reports (2020-23), from GSTT and partner organisations in south east London such as Healthwatch. We asked people which of these 10 topics we needed to focus our attention on first and what else matters to them that isn't covered by these 10 topics. The most commonly raised "other" topics were:

- **Workforce:** addressing staff shortages and supporting frontline staff
- **Funding:** both Trust use of public and charity funds and NHS-wide funding
- **Relationship between patients and staff:** patient centred care and the importance of face-to-face contact
- **Getting the basics right:** focus on well-run services as well as innovation
- **Transport:** access, patient experience and cost
- **Healthcare records:** access, transparency and accuracy
- **Inclusion:** responding to individual needs
- **Privatisation of the NHS:** concern about perceived privatisation



**Top 5 priority topics**

We asked people to give their first, second and third choice. The 5 most prioritised topics were:

1. Waiting and Access
2. Prevention
3. Communications
4. Joined up care
5. Research