

An Economic Case for Involvement

Meaningful involvement and shared decision making with patients and the public is a key enabler to improvements in quality, innovation, productivity and performance.

Work undertaken exploring 14 detailed case studies identified how meaningful and effective involvement can drive the realisation of economic, quality and user experience benefits for NHS and partnering organisations as well as the populations that they serve. This briefing highlights how:

- Applying a **process of business case and economic thinking** to involvement planning and activity can yield valuable results such as preventing delays and reducing costs
- Consideration of the economic case for involvement is **an innovative form of risk assessment**
- Good involvement utilises **untapped resources** and turns them into a valuable business assets
- A **Decision Support Tool** can promote the systematic capture of information prompting an **'involvement culture'** to inform key decisions around current and future involvement effort

We face challenging times

With radical organisational change and challenging levels of growth it is essential that all parts of the NHS remain focused on helping drive up quality and productivity. As important, more robust processes for public accountability mean organisations responsible for commissioning and providing care should leverage meaningful involvement as a key enabler to meet these challenges.

Without such activity organisations could face lengthy and costly delays to improvement efforts, decommissioning and disinvestment strategies. In this context effective involvement is probably your organisation's most valuable, yet possibly untapped, asset.

'No decision about me without me' in these terms goes far beyond traditional methods of engagement and consultation to include patients and the public as shared decision makers at all levels of healthcare organisation and delivery.

Who needs an economic case for involvement?

A range of organisations will benefit from thinking through the economic case for involvement:

- **Commissioners** including Clinical Commissioning Groups to inform and monitor commissioning decisions
- **Local Authorities and Health and Wellbeing Boards** in partnership with the NHS to inform needs assessments and strategies
- **Healthcare providers** factoring in economic considerations to decisions on how involvement activity is undertaken to inform the quality and productivity agenda
- **Voluntary organisations** including Local HealthWatch to better understand the links between economic considerations and involvement activity
- **Regulatory and statutory bodies** who will benefit from a more systematic approach to involvement interventions allowing them to consider and assess both decision making and outcomes

Patients and carers should be at the heart of the NHS, through shared decision making about their care and meaningful involvement in how services are organised

DH June 2011

- **Partnerships, Federations and Collaboratives** when service or pathway redesign cuts across organisational boundaries and/or requires a multi-agency approach to share information and best practice and avoiding duplication
- **Patients, the public and our communities** will value the transparent and considered approach used to reach decisions that directly effect them

A systematic approach to involvement and shared decision making

Organisations should be wary of thinking of costs and benefits as a one-off calculations achieved in isolation to give definitive answers. If they do the opportunity to arrive at informed decision making will be missed.

The Engagement Cycle (Fig 1), developed for the Department of Health by InHealth Associates provides a systematic approach to how 'solid' involvement at one stage of the cycle enables more successful involvement at subsequent stages. Used together, the Engagement Cycle and the Decision Support Tool (described below) provide a systematic approach to capture and demonstrate how involvement activity and shared decision making align with predicted benefits and value for money.

Together these tools provide a powerful yet transparent process for demonstrating how public money is being spent as well as the role that good involvement plays in realising this at both macro and micro level.

Organisations have made good use of involvement to improve quality whilst reducing costs

An Ethical Framework for Decision Making

There was a need to address ethical challenges in the allocation of resources for healthcare. Commissioners developed an ethical framework using involvement to draw on knowledge and views of a broad section of people to consider the principles to be applied to commissioning decisions.

Economic benefit was subsequently realised across all commissioning activity by ensuring a rigorous, consistent and transparent decision making process.

Figure 1: The Engagement Cycle



Acute Trust Rebuild

Involvement was a necessary part of facilitating the provision of improved services through a new building. Whilst difficult to directly attribute economic benefits, delays in the approval of the scheme resulting from legal challenge brought further direct costs in terms of consultation costs, staff time and a delay in the flow of benefits from the scheme.

Stroke Services

A long standing programme was established with the primary aim of providing stroke care of the highest quality within a culture of continuous learning, innovation and development.

At the heart lies a commitment to service user involvement, seen as the fundamental driver for results that are grounded in the patient experience and which have, and continue to deliver, a responsive and sustainable programme of service improvement. All of these benefits can be evidenced as well as savings realised by replacing in patient beds with early supported discharge.

Redesign of access to community physiotherapy services

This commissioning organisation's social enterprise business model includes involvement costs in all its commissioning activities.

Benefits realised relate to the socio-economic implications of early intervention for patients needing physiotherapy through improved and timely access.

New Pathway for the Termination of Pregnancy

This cross-organisational project saw involvement costs of £41,000 bringing recurrent savings of £85,000 through the increase of medical terminations and associated decrease in surgical terminations.

Additional socio-economic benefits were predicted through the on-going engagement of women, leading to improved contraception advice and reduction in unplanned pregnancies.

Changing the involvement mind-set to include costs and benefits

Meaningful involvement is more than systems and process. An 'involvement culture' has a big part to play. Key cultural elements identified from case studies include:

- **Influencers and decision makers** at all levels of the organisation providing leadership and assurance for involvement activities in terms of how it adds value
- **Support from the top** leading and prioritising activity both internally and externally
- **Budgetary awareness** of where resources are held, how they can be accessed and managed efficiently
- **Expert support for involvement** not only in providing expertise and advice but also in coordinating involvement activity, sharing best practice and connecting current and previous interventions

Cost savings are not the only benefits

Thinking of benefits only in terms of cost savings may miss out on some of the most important benefits that can be achieved. From a clinical point of view these are often the drivers for service redesign or change.

Case studies clearly identified benefits including:

- Reductions in **waiting times** in terms of clinical and social value
- Improvements in **patient and carer experience and satisfaction**
- **Quality of care** improvement
- **Safety** improvements

- **Economic productivity** and reduction in benefit claims
- **Quality of life** benefits
- **Access, equity and choice**

Traditionally, such benefits may have been excluded from cost-benefit analysis as they are 'difficult to calculate'. However, research is available that indicates the 'price' users would put on such benefits. In particular, published guidance on estimating the social return on investment (SROI) of initiatives is a valuable source of information for putting monetary values to such benefits.

By using tools for cost-benefit calculations organisations can undertake more holistic cost-benefit analyses that better reflect and communicate the needs of service users and partners.

In addition benefits can be realised for the whole organisation in terms of:

- **Organisational reputation and risk management** leading to improved relationships with the local community and minimising costly conflict
- **Valuing on-going involvement** as a precursor for further economic benefits
- **Clinical and staff involvement** leading to . . .
- **Improved staff satisfaction,** motivation and development in terms of a better understanding of the patient and public perspective

Most effective involvement is achieved through partnerships

Few organisations work in isolation, particularly when it comes to delivering services locally. Even when joint-working arrangements have not been formalised, organisations need to recognise the impact of their actions on partners and other related organisations. In particular, it is important to identify:

- **Negative impacts** - e.g. not commissioning a service reduces costs for the commissioning organisation, but also reduces revenue for the provider organisation
- **Common stakeholders** - so that they can be involved jointly to avoid duplication
- **Activities with common benefits** - e.g. tackling antisocial behaviour leading to a reduction in demand on A&E and other emergency services whilst also reducing crime and the longer term health implications of alcohol abuse

One of the real benefits of involvement is when it is used across organisational boundaries as part of an investigation or modelling of the impact of proposed activities.

In addition, the public should be involved to show them the impact of taking their views on board.

..... involvement is the 'enabler' to release savings; without the 'involvement key' the lock to the door where the savings are cannot be opened

A decision support tool to make life easier for organisations

Recognising the importance of the economic benefits of involvement, a decision support tool has been developed and made available free of charge.

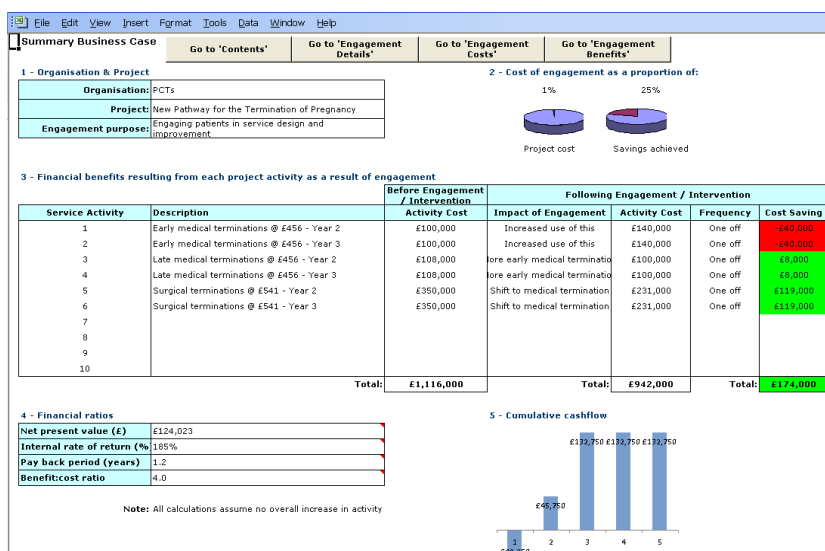
The tool is aimed at:

- **Involvement specialists** - to help them to plan activities with costs and benefits in mind
- **Commissioners, planning & performance managers and finance staff** - to help them make judgments on the economic case for involvement

Key components of the tool provide organisations, teams and individuals with the means to:

- **Estimate costs** to identify and quantify involvement and other related costs
- **Estimate benefits** to identify and quantify the full range of benefits possible from the engagement activity
- **Produce a business case** to summarise the key costs, benefits and return on investment (Fig 2)
- **Investigate** the effects of different interventions and answer the 'what if' questions
- **Sharing and learning from best practice** to provide a repository of previous activity with costs, benefits and lessons learned
- **Searching** the repository to find information from earlier involvement activities and projects

Figure 2: The Summary Business Case in the Decision Support Tool highlights the key costs, benefits and return on investment



All tools are contained in one Excel spreadsheet file. They have been designed with a range of users to make them user-friendly and relevant.

Used together with the Engagement Cycle they can provide transparent justification for decisions for change with involvement as a key enabler to reaching those decisions, decision making.

The NHS Commissioning Board will assess how effectively Clinical Commissioning Groups have discharged their duty to involve patients and the public

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Contacts

For further detail on any of the information contained in this briefing as well as how to access the free Decision Support Tool, please contact:

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