

Mental Health Engagement 2024-2028

Policy and Practice Alignment



HSE
Mental Health
Engagement
& Recovery





**Nothing
about me,
without me.**

This document explores the policies and strategies underpinning the National Office of Mental Health Engagement and Recovery's Engagement Framework. It has button links to current policies for those who wish to learn more.

This framework reflects the principles, values and actions of several government programmes, policies and strategies both nationally and internationally which are outlined herein.

It encourages personal responsibility and compassion across all stakeholder groups.

There is an increased focus on working in partnership with people with lived experience, family members and carers in mental health settings, and recovery principles have emerged as a driving force behind public mental health policies.

The Health Service Executive, along with healthcare systems around the world, is responding to the demand of "nothing about me, without me" and the requirement to shift from "what's the matter" to "what matters to me"¹.

International policy and practice context of Lived Experience Engagement

In 2023 the World Health Organisation published a **Framework for Meaningful Engagement** which underscores the need to **engage and empower people with lived experience to fully participate in related health processes, addressing the systemic inequalities and inequities experienced around the world**. When meaningfully engaged, individuals with lived experience can provide invaluable understanding of barriers and gaps and can inform innovative, inclusive and contextually appropriate solutions. Relatedly, **Article 21 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)** – which Ireland adopted in 2018 – asserts that persons with disabilities have a right to freedom of expression and opinion, **the freedom to look for, receive and send information and ideas on an equal basis**

1. Roseman, D., Osborne-Stafsnes, J., Amy, C.H., Boslaugh, S., Slate-Miller, K. (2013). Early Lessons From Four 'Aligning Forces for Quality' Communities Bolster The Case For Patient-Centered Care. *Health Affairs* 32, NO 2.(2013);232-241. DOI:10.1377/hlthaff.2012.1085

with others. In the UK, the **NHS Engagement Cycle (2012)**, aims to ensure that patients, users and communities have a voice in the commissioning process, leading to better-informed decisions, improved services and enhanced healthcare experiences. Furthermore, there is a movement towards public and patient involvement in mental health research. The widely used definition of Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) is ‘research carried out with or by members of the public rather than to, about or for them.’² This means working in collaboration with patients, carers, service users or the public in planning, designing, managing, conducting, dissemination and translation of research. PPI ensures that mental health research is better aligned with the concerns and priorities of the people it seeks to serve.

MHER’s Enhancing Engagement Project and resulting *Mental Health Engagement Framework* closely aligns with the National Health Service, UK 4PI National Involvement Standards of principles, purpose, presence, process and impact³ in that it clearly outlines its purpose and process, is underpinned by principles and has developed metrics for measuring impact.

Trauma-informed Practice (TIP) is a model that is grounded in and directed by an understanding of how trauma exposure can affect a service user’s neurological, biological, psychological and social development.⁴ TIP is applicable across all sectors of public service including mental health engagement. Trauma can inform how people present and engage with services. The processes entailed by this engagement, such as listening, understanding and responding, are not unique to trauma-informed practice but synonymous with good practice in any service, in any setting.

Key principles of trauma-informed practice:

- 1. Safety** – efforts are made to ensure the safety of clients and staff.
- 2. Trustworthiness** – transparency in a policies and procedures, with the objective of building trust among staff, clients and the wider community.
- 3. Choice** – clients and staff have meaningful choice and a voice in the decision-making process
- 4. Collaboration** – recognise the value of staff and clients’ experience in overcoming challenges and improving the system as a whole.
- 5. Empowerment** – efforts are made to share power and give clients and staff a strong voice in decision-making

2. <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/patients-carers-and-the-public/i-want-to-help-with-research/>

3. <https://www.nsun.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/4PiNationalInvolvementStandardsExecutiveSummary20152.pdf>

4. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/trauma-informed-practice-toolkit-scotland/>

National policy and practice context of Lived Experience Engagement

Recent History

In Ireland, service user engagement has been driven by our national policies for mental health services for many years. In *A Vision for Change* (Department of Health, 2006), a consultation process with service users and providers found that there was a universal call for significant change at all levels of service, from training of health practitioners to involvement of service users in service planning and for delivery of community-based interventions that are accessible and effective in promoting recovery and reintegration.

The *HSE Corporate Plan* (2005-2008) objective 4 stated “we are committed to learning from the experience of our service users, partner service providers, staff and other stakeholders. We will actively consult around the planning, delivery and evaluation of our services.”

Similarly, the *HSE National Strategy for Service User Involvement in the Health Service 2008-2013* stated “The service user should be central to their own care and the design and delivery of health and personal social services. This will result in more appropriate services of a higher quality with increased service user compliance and satisfaction.”

Current context

The current national policies in Ireland hold recovery and engagement at their core. **Sharing the Vision - a mental health policy for all** (Department of Health, 2020), moves to integrate service user, family member, carer and supporter experience into the design, delivery and evaluation of services. The **HSE Corporate Plan 2021-2024** Enabler 1 aims to create an environment **where patients, families and carers are listened to and actively involved in making our services better and safer.**

The **Sláintecare Action Plan** has engagement as a key pillar of its implementation strategy, it puts the public voice at the heart of the reform process and commits to empowering people to look after their own health and to holding the health service to account. It also includes the **Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2023-2027** (HSE, 2023) that underpins the drive for active stakeholder engagement across related services and programmes such as the need for implementation metrics around engaging those using services.

Additionally, The **Patient Safety Strategy 2019-2024** names as its first commitment *“Empowering and Engaging Patients to Improve Patient Safety: We will foster a culture of partnership to maximise positive patient experiences and outcomes and minimise the risk of error and harm. This will include working with and learning from patients to design, deliver, evaluate and improve care”*.

The 2024 **HSE National Service Plan** (Mental Health) objectives included assurances that the views of service users, family members and carers are central to the design and delivery of mental health services. Within this plan, there are commitments to expand public engagement feedback mechanisms and develop a national volunteer co-production panel.

The **Mental Health Commission Quality Framework** (2023) (Standard 1.3) states that the mental health service values and actively seeks feedback from service users by, for instance, auditing the experience of service users, family members and carers across the continuum of care and planning services in consultation with service users and other key stakeholders. A key theme of the framework is a compassionate, holistic, non-discriminatory and person-centered service responsive to the needs of the service users including their families, carers and representatives.

The *National Screening Service Patient and Public Partnership Strategy 2019-2023* is committed to building trust between the patient and the healthcare services as it recognises that patient and public partnership in healthcare delivery is an ethical right and enhances communication and transparency.

The HSE is currently developing roadmaps and pathways to innovation, for example, MHER has co-produced an enhanced *Mental Health Engagement Framework* and the HSE Office of Quality and Improvement recently published a roadmap to engagement – **Better Together: Health Services Patient Engagement (PE) Roadmap**. It outlines that PE is an essential component of today's healthcare system where the delivery of patient-directed and person-centered care, improved safety and quality of services, trust and confidence and greater transparency are being prioritised.

The National Office for Mental Health Engagement and Recovery's Strategic Plan **Engaged in Recovery 2023-2026** commits to co-produce an enhanced good practice model for meaningful engagement in mental health services.

- > **Agree a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) for all healthcare organisations**
- > **Commission and evaluate a CAMHS engagement process in partnership with regional management**
- > **Publish guidance documents to support a variety of engagement methods**
- > **Create a National Volunteer Panel as a model for Regional Areas**
- > **Complete and evaluate the following pilots: » A Smart Survey digital engagement mechanism**
- > **Continue to develop strong and practical partnerships with our community partners, in particular mental health organisations**
- > **Review and agree upon a consistent regional Engagement Framework**
- > **Publish and implement good practice for working with seldom-heard groups**

Area Leads for Mental Health Engagement are based in each regional healthcare area and are essential partners in these policy-driven activities that will demonstrate genuine engagement with service users, family members and carers of mental health services.

Finally, in October 2023, Bernard Gloster, HSE CEO, said: *"We recognise that partnership initiatives are currently taking place across the Irish health sector, but in different ways and with varying degrees of success. We know that common approaches are needed to ensure shared expectations are realised and agreed goals are met. Partnership with patients and service users (and their families, carers and supporters) will be a cornerstone of how we work across our health system and broader health sector. This requires a cultural shift, but this move is in line with international best practices and offers numerous opportunities. The HSE is committed to partnering with patients to ensure more and more patients will influence decisions on the design, delivery and evaluation of health services."*⁵

5. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/our-health-service/making-it-better/hse-promotes-patient-partnership.html>



**National Office of Mental Health
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