



Partnership and Engagement
Involving you, improving care

Partnership and Engagement Strategy Public Consultation Report

March 2026



Background

The PHA sets out a commitment to partnership and engagement in its Corporate Plan 2025–2030:

“We must take a ‘whole system’ approach and make partnership, involvement and engagement central to our work, to make the best use of our combined resources. We must work collaboratively with service users and carers, the community and voluntary sector and across government to have a positive, lasting impact on health and wellbeing”.

Following a 2019 directive from the Department of Health (DoH) to Health and Social Care (HSC), the Public Health Agency (PHA) committed to the integration of the Patient and Client Experience and Personal and Public Involvement teams into one Partnership and Engagement team.

Working together through the Regional HSC Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Forum, service users, carers, experts and advocates in the fields of Involvement and Consultation and other HSC partners, a process was put in place to develop an integrated strategy for Experience and Involvement: the PHA Partnership and Engagement Strategy.

The Strategy seeks to outline the PHA’s Vision and Aim for Experience and Involvement from 2025–2030, with clearly defined priority areas and indicators to support how these will be met.

A 12-week consultation was undertaken between September 2025 and December 2025 on the new Strategy to understand the view of service users, carers, the public and any key partner organisations with an interest in Experience and Involvement.

The methods for engagement and response were through a Citizen Space survey, email submissions, and online and face to face information and engagement sessions.

Background

The public consultation on the Involvement and Consultation Schemes ran from 09/09/2025 to 21/12/2025. Members of the public were offered several ways in which to participate and give feedback. These included in-person and online sessions, an online questionnaire and email submissions.

A total of **seven engagement sessions** were held throughout the timeframe of consultation being live, with **three face to face engagement sessions** and **four online**. In total **81 people** attended these engagement sessions. **114 people** registered to attend the sessions. All those who registered received the Draft Strategy Document, a link to view an online explanatory video to the strategy, and a link to complete the online survey.

46 participants took part in the online survey. This was promoted through various communication channels and working through HSC partners, Community and Voluntary Sector partners, and online platforms such as the regional Engage site and the PHA site.

This summary report gives an overview of responses and the main themes and findings of consultation responses, both through the online survey feedback and the engagement sessions.

Who Responded?

Service User/Carer



Community and Voluntary Sector



Government Body



Health and Social Care



Public

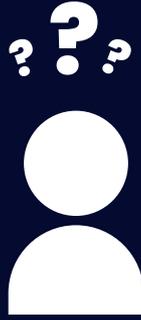


Other



List of respondents by organisation

ARC NI (Association for Real Change)	NDCN (Community Network)
Ards Community Network	NOW Group
ArtsEkta	Omagh Forum for Rural Associations
Barnardo's	RHPSA
Belfast Healthy Cities	RNIB
CAUSE	Resource Centre NI
CRUN	Resurgam Trust
Cancer Lifeline	Start360
Centre for Independent Living NI	Suicide Awareness NI
Community Development & Health Network	Ulster Supported Development Trust
Compass People	WISPA NI
Cookstown & Western Shores Area Network	West Belfast Partnership/Federation
Easilink Community Transport	Ulster University
East Belfast Community Development Agency	Open Learning Technologies (Ireland)
Extern	Derry City & Strabane District Council
Forward South Partnership	Mid Ulster District Council
HEART Project Belfast	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Inspire Wellbeing	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Lower Oldpark Regeneration Group	Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Public Health Agency	Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Western Health & Social Care Trust	Strategic Planning and Performance Group
RNIB	Patient and Client Council



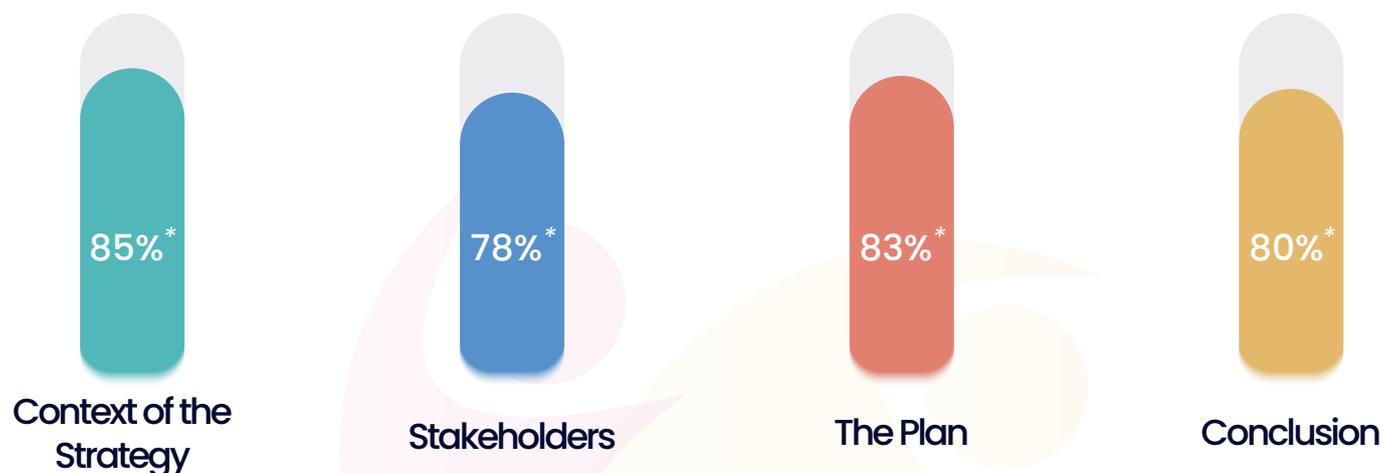
Section 1

**How Easy is the Strategy
to Understand?**



The questions in this section refer to how easy it was to understand the various sections in the Partnership and Engagement Strategy.

We asked participants to tell us if the information contained in each section was easy to understand. The sections of the Strategy they were responding to were:



** % of people either agreed or strongly agreed the information in this section was easy to understand.*

Whilst these generally match the findings of the engagement sessions, and show that the majority of respondents found the Strategy easy to understand, there was some feedback for further consideration.

Key Strengths

Strong emphasis on partnership and participation



A clear alignment with public health priorities



Clear commitment to reducing health inequalities



Areas for Consideration



Accessibility & Language – a need for an Easy Read version of the Strategy



More detail on how the Strategy will be implemented in practice



Strategy could embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles more strongly

PHA Response



There will be an Easy Read version of the Strategy published when amendments from the consultation phase are adopted.



An action plan aligned to the key performance indicators will be published along with associated timeliness.



Language and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles will be emphasised more clearly.

Supporting Quotes

Overall, the information in each section is clearly presented and easy to follow. The strategy provides a good overview of the purpose, aims, and importance of partnership working in improving public health.

Many acronyms used throughout documents - full terms should be used throughout, with acronyms in brackets if required.

I understand the concept within the draft, but I am a PHA funded community health worker so the language is easy for me to know - perhaps not so much if you are in the public, with no concept of who the PHA are and what they do. I know with working in communities the draft could be streamlined with easier bullets to read and the draft isn't so long.



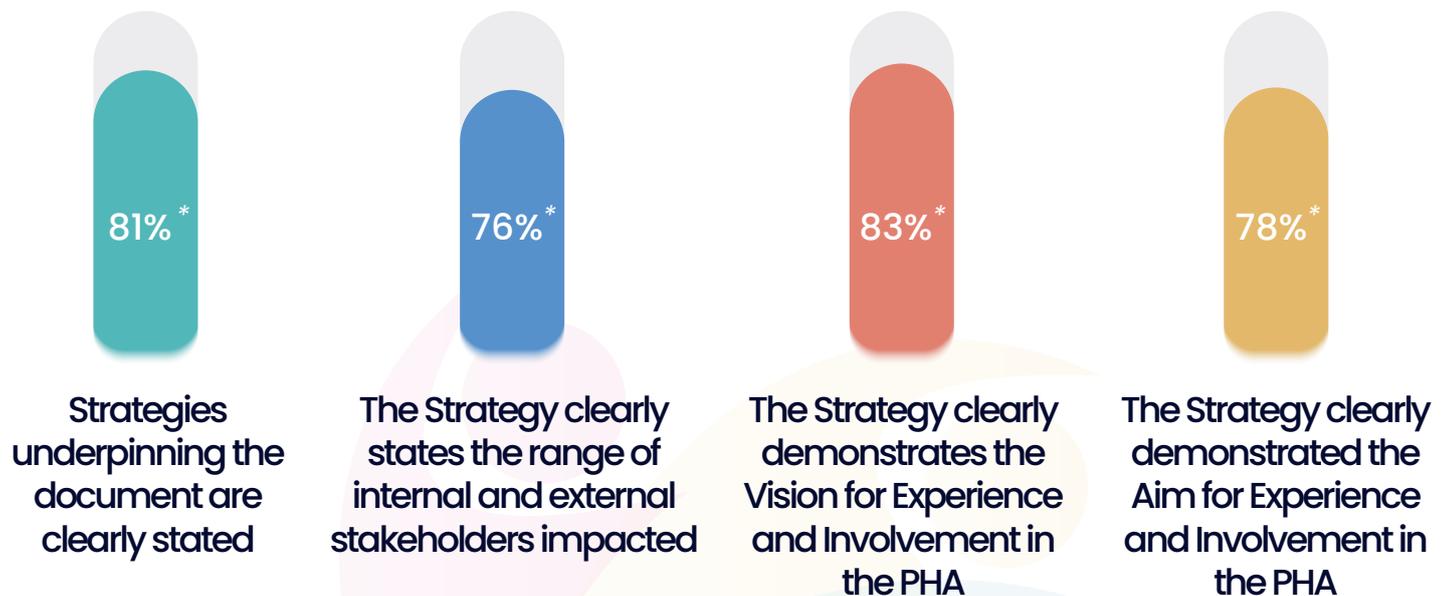
Section 2

Demonstration of Vision and Aim of the Strategy



This section asked respondents about the Vision and Aim of the strategy and if the underpinning strategies and stakeholders were appropriate.

The below show the responses to each of these areas:



* % of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

These results show that most people felt the Strategy was effective at setting out its Vision and Aim, reflecting conversations during the engagement sessions. Some key findings from the additional comments are highlighted below.

Key Strengths

Clear statement of collaboration and engagement principles



Recognition of lived experience and stakeholder involvement



Alignment with inclusion health principles



Strong stakeholder mapping and commitment to reducing health inequalities



Areas for Consideration



Clarity on accountability, governance, and measurable outcomes



Vision and Aim positioned too late in the document, reducing prominence



A need for accessible formats



More focus on partnership with the Community and Voluntary sector

PHA Response



Stakeholders will be more clearly set out.



Aim and Vision will be highlighted earlier in the Strategy.



An Easy Read version will be made available along with consideration of other accessible formats.



Collaboration with Community and Voluntary sector will be clarified in the strategy and included in the action plan.

Supporting Quotes

The Vision and Aim of the Strategy sets out everything so clearly and emphasises the need to include the people who use our services to be included in the decision making and planning and in easy to read and understand terms - wonderful.

The Vision and Aim are well articulated. The challenge will be to underpin this with action to secure representative carers/service users from across society whose stories and experiences can have a positive impact on service delivery



Section 3

Consideration of Priority Areas



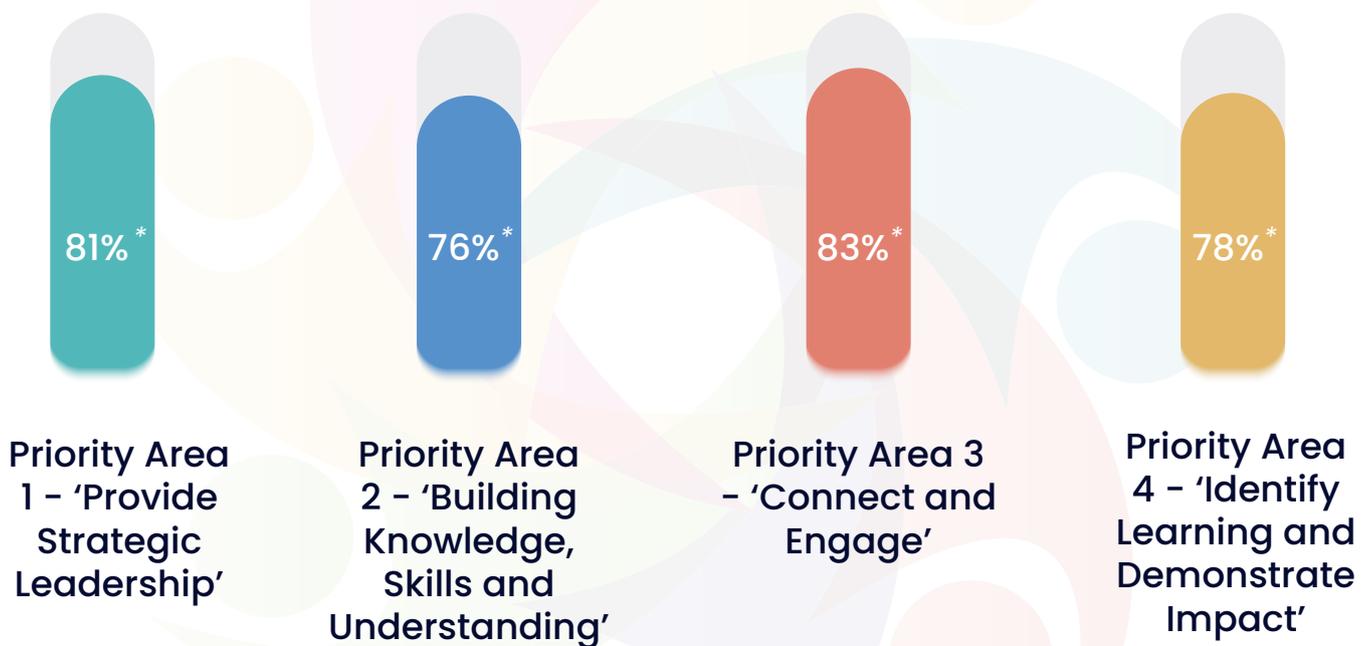
This section asked respondents to consider if the priority areas and associated indicators listed support the implementation of the Vision and Aim of the Partnership and Engagement Strategy.

They were asked about the overall priority areas, and then to consider each specific priority area with key indicators.



The priorities listed in section 2.4 are clearly stated and support the implementation of the Vision and Aim of the Partnership and Engagement Strategy

79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement



The indicators set out in these priority areas are clear and will support meeting the goal of this priority area

** % of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement*

Key Strengths

The priorities provide a strong framework for partnership, engagement and reducing health inequalities



Emphasis on connection, inclusion, and learning aligns with best practices



Support for training and development for staff and service users to enable meaningful involvement



Areas for Consideration



A need for indicators in priority areas to be clear, measurable and with clear timelines



A need to show how indicators will be implemented with clear actions



A need to highlight inclusion of various stakeholder groups, including Section 75 groups



A need to develop an effective evaluation framework for involvement

PHA Response



An Action Plan will be published alongside the Strategy, setting out actions to implement priority areas along with timeliness for implementation.



Work will continue to develop robust evaluation frameworks for Partnership and Engagement, demonstrating impact of effective Experience and Involvement initiatives.



Proactive efforts made to reach out to and into groups impacted by health inequalities to have their experiences and voices heard.

Supporting Quotes

All the priority areas set out their goals so clearly and concisely which is exactly what is needed

It would be beneficial to include measurable outcomes or timeliness for each priority area, helping track progress and ensure accountability. Additionally, continuing to involve service users and carers in reviewing these priorities over time will help keep the strategy grounded in lived experience.



Section 4

Final Comments and Thoughts



This section will consider any further comments and suggestions from respondents.

As can be seen from the survey data presented above and in breakdown paper of responses, the overall feeling towards the PHA Partnership and Engagement Strategy is positive, with many seeing it as a positive step toward improving public health through partnership and engagement.

It was felt the Strategy is clear in its aims, with a recognition of health inequalities, and that the joining of Patient and Client Experience and Personal and Public Involvement is a positive one.

The main cross cutting areas for consideration across comments received were around the areas of:



This Consultation report has set out how the strategy will be updated to reflect these comments and a commitment to publishing an Action Plan to sit alongside the Strategy document.

Supporting Quotes

I think the strategy is very clear and it is easy to understand the aims of it.

I think that this will be a great strategy overall and benefit everyone. It always helps to have many voices and experiences brought together to make our health service better.

The narratives, insights and experiences of service users and patients holds great potential to enhance health and social care delivery across many different sectors. I look forward to seeing the strategy implemented in full.

If possible further expanding on impact - how to know if meaningful and that the strategy will be successful in its impact - how will this be measured?



Moving Forward



The PHA Partnership and Engagement Team would like to thank all individuals and organisations who took the time to respond to this consultation via the online survey, face to face and online engagement sessions and email submissions. The time given to providing constructive, meaningful feedback is appreciated and will be demonstrated in the final published Partnership and Engagement Strategy.

Next steps will be:



- 1** Publication of the Consultation Report
- 2** Updating of the PHA Partnership and Engagement Strategy to reflect consultation responses
- 3** Development and publication of a PHA Partnership and Engagement Action Plan, with clear actions and timeliness
- 4** Further work to consider how impact of Experience and Involvement is measured and demonstrated
- 5** When Strategy is updated and a final document published, a commitment to making this available in accessible formats, including Easy Read



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