

Integrated Care System / Health & Care Partnership Community Listening

Guidelines



What is the purpose of these guidelines and who are they for?

These guidelines are intended to be helpful to people in coproduction / community listening roles within Integrated Care Systems and Health and Care Partnerships.

We recommend that you read our [guide to Integrated Care System coproduction](#) before you start your community listening activity.

The purpose of these guidelines is to enable conversations in communities where knowledge and information about mental health and help available can be shared and people can share who and what is helpful to their mental health, and where that is. During these conversations people can find out about ways they can be involved in deciding what is helpful to them individually, and for others.

These conversations are held in community places where people already go, and where they feel comfortable. They can be group conversations or individual. There are familiar people (group leaders or community organisers) there who can share their perspectives and knowledge, benefit from understanding more about system and service developments, and help the listening to go well.

What everyone shares can be collected to that it can shape what, where and how help is offered to people and communities.

Step 1:

Planning your community listening activity

Addressing inequalities

- Talk with Expert by Experience and Expert by Training colleagues on your project about what is known about specific inequalities of access, experience and outcomes in relation to mental health.

These could be related to factors such as:

- drug and alcohol misuse
- street homelessness or insecure housing
- poverty
- refugee or asylum status
- domestic violence and abuse

and to Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 such as:

- gender and sexual orientation
- mental, learning, physical and sensory disabilities including neurodivergent diagnoses such as Autism and ADHD
- race, religion, belief
- age.

- Read your system's Health Inequalities Strategy and/or Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Talk with system stakeholders who know which community groups, organisations and lived experience reference groups include people who probably have experience of identified inequalities in relation to their mental health. These system stakeholders could include the locality Place Boards, locality voluntary and community organisations, District Councils, and others.

Listening in community spaces:

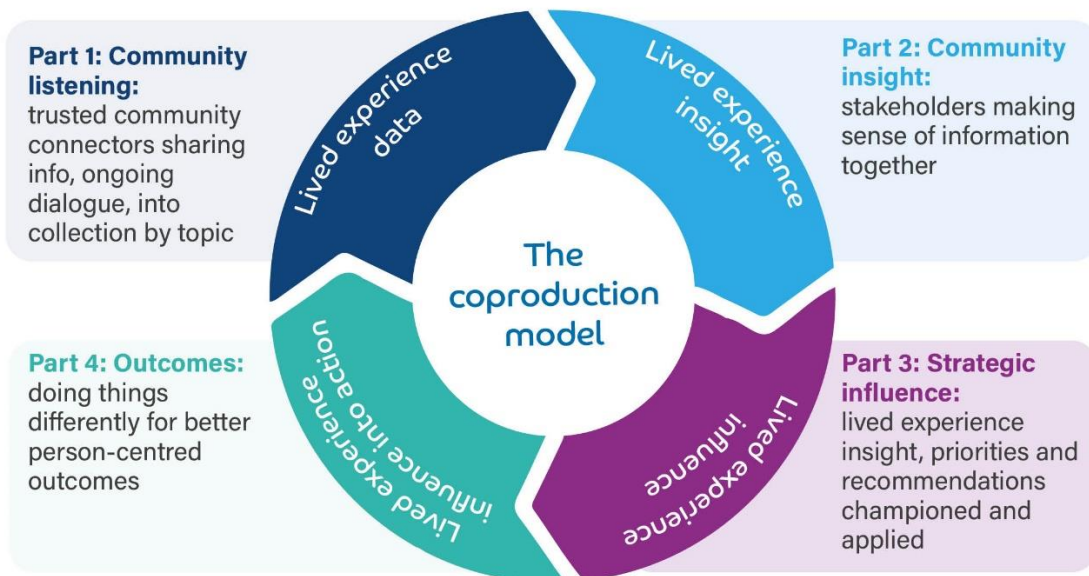
- Make a list or map of group leaders or community organisers who you can approach to see if they can talk with you about your community listening approach. Ask people you find to suggest other people you can approach.

Step 2:

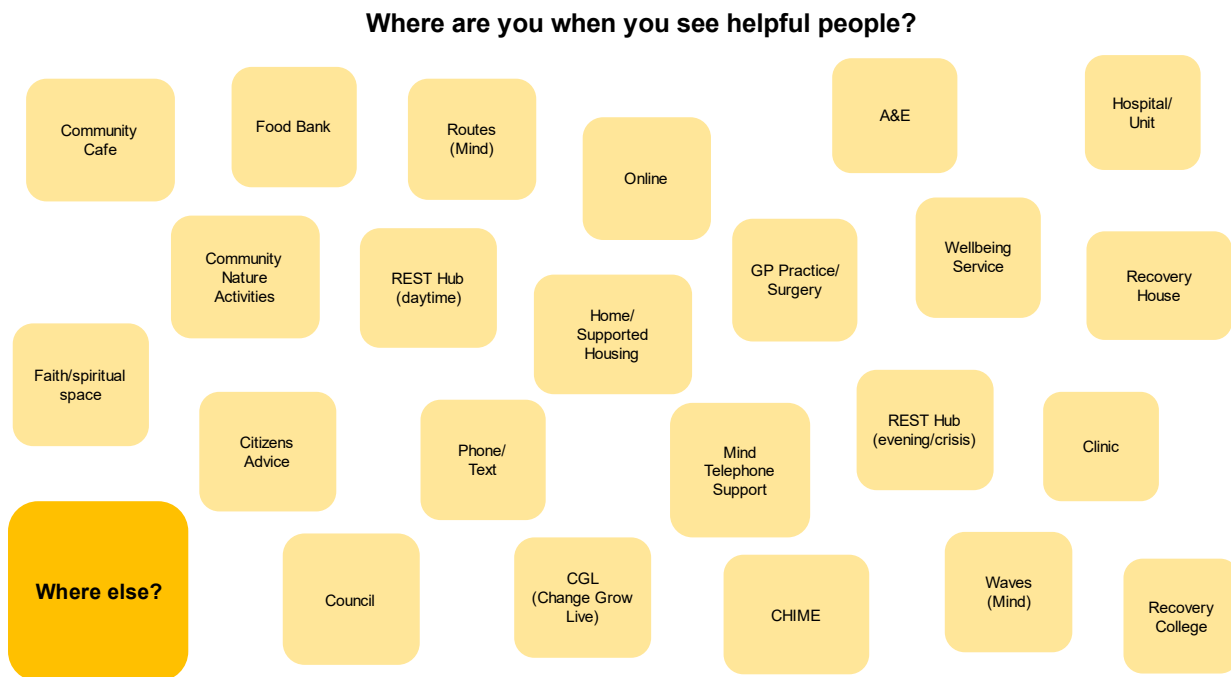
Connecting with people and communities

Contacting community group leaders/community organisers

- Contact people working in community groups using your plan from Step 1.
- Share the purpose of the community listening project, who you are working with in the locality or system, how the lived experience information will be shared, what it will influence and lead to, and what the feedback loop to them and the support they support will be. You may want to use a diagram like this one:



- Share the information you have about help options for mental health in their locality. This can be a coproduced diagram and text.
- Share the listening resources you intend to use eg activity sheets with the different roles people may recognise and say who is helpful and why, activity sheets with the different places people find helpful people:



Step 3:

Connecting with people and communities

Doing a community listening visit/event

- Make arrangements to visit the community group space, by asking your group leader/community organiser contact:
 - Can you visit the space and talk with people there.
 - What is the best approach to use, for example fitting in with other planned/usual activity.
 - Will the group leader/community organiser be there and if they can be involved too.
 - Can you arrange a separate time to listen to the group leader/community organiser's perspectives and knowledge – and that of colleagues.
 - What people will need to feel comfortable talking and sharing.
 - What can you bring or contribute, for example wellbeing resources, refreshments.
 - Is there anything you need to know before visiting, for example group of individual participation needs and/or agreed approaches.
 - Do they use a group agreement or can you bring/use one.

- Before your visit
 - Complete your organisation's event risk assessment form, including any considerations about information the host group/organisation may have shared with you.
 - Prepare your group agreement to use if the host does not have one.
 - Read/follow your organisation's Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Data Protection and Privacy policies.
 - Ensure your Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Awareness training is up to date.
 - Print off activity sheets, group agreement and any other resources.
 - Take pens, post-its/cards and a post-box for any suggestions.

➤ During your visit

- Group agreement if in a group.
- Share the information about what's there and developing in the locality to help people with their mental health – set the scene.
- Introduce the optional sheet activity: which roles do they recognise, who is helpful and why, where is that, any ideas? Keep a focus of discovery and innovation.
- Give the option to write on the sheets individually or on post it/s notes and post in the box.
- Be clear about how what people share will not identify them/anonymous and how it will be stored and shared – purpose for shaping service development and improvement for better outcomes for people.
- Keep focused on what is helpful and hold boundary around conversations getting into personal stories.
- If running the activity as a group discussion, use a group agreement.
- Thank people for their time and say there will be updates on lived experience influence and opportunities to get involved via their community organiser/group leader.

➤ After your visit

- Debrief with your line manager, particularly about any concerns.
- Collate information and arrange an insight session with Experts by Experience on the project.
- Share learning about the process and lived experience information and insight gathered with colleagues (Experts by Experience and Experts by Training).