

Quality Pathway Information Sheet 3

Customer Engagement

This Information Sheet summarises customer engagement in planning and delivery of services.

Understanding and working with customers about their service delivery needs is a critical part of ensuring that services are designed to meet customer needs and that customers are at the centre of service delivery. Customers can also provide valuable input and direction to broader service policies and procedures, feedback on how well the service is performing and advice on the overall direction of the service.

Customer engagement supports positive customer outcomes and improves service provision.

Customer engagement can occur at a number of levels:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Individual	Involvement in individual service and care planning and provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Collaborative case planning · Collaborative case conferencing · Consumer directed care
Program	Involvement in co-design, implementation and evaluation of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Consultations, surveys, focus groups · Project reference group membership · Planning groups and activities
Organisation	Involvement in higher level decision making and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Formal governing body and organisation committees · Governing body representative · Staff training · Staff recruitment panels

Engaging at every level will depend on the customer's knowledge, skills and experience, as well as the service provider's capacity to resource, train, support and engage them. However, even limited capacity and resources should not prevent customer engagement, and service providers should plan for and develop strategies for increasing customer engagement as part of quality improvement.

Increasing customer participation

▶ **Action: Develop a culture of customer participation**

Ensure the service enacts and communicates its principles, goals, and policy of customer participation throughout all documentation, and charge leaders with responsibility for building meaningful customer participation.

▶ **Action: Guide customer participation**

Implement policies, procedures and plans to guide the service in customer participation.

▶ **Action: Support customer participation**

Provide information, training and opportunities to increase customer's participation capacity.

▶ **Action: Allocate resources**

Ensure resources are available to support participation by customers and for participation activities.

► **Action: Monitor, review and improve**

Establish processes for monitoring participation and for improving the level and quality of customer participation.



Practice tip: Keep in touch and make it meaningful

- ✓ *Customer engagement should be an ongoing part of service provision.*
- ✓ *Think about what customers are really interested in, rather than what the organisation thinks they should be interested in.*
- ✓ *Look for opportunities to ask customers about their experiences, their ideas and their suggestions.*
- ✓ *Ensure that customers are the centre of any service related activity – look for opportunities to involve them in planning or development of services.*
- ✓ *Ensure that engagement activities are appropriate for different customer groups.*
- ✓ *Consider social activities or other non-service related activities or issues that may engage customer interest.*