ENGAGEMENT GUIDE [OPTIONAL GUIDE]

INTRODUCTION

Engaging with the relevant people in your organisation (i.e. potential ASCS and PSS SACE stakeholders) early on in and throughout the survey process can help you to identify and fulfil local information needs using the data collected by the surveys and, in turn, ensure that your analysis findings are disseminated appropriately and used to inform local decision-making and service improvements.

Our earlier research activities with LA staff confirmed the numerous benefits of stakeholder engagements but also widespread engagement difficulties, particularly among survey administrators (usually analysts). The purpose of this short guide, therefore, is to provide an overview of potential ASCS and PSS SACE stakeholders and strategies that can be used to engage with them.

> This guide complements the **MAX PLANNING GUIDE** and amalgamates existing LA practice and recommended practice in the change management and stakeholder engagement literature. The guide includes links to other relevant elements of the MAX toolkit, so you will need to be logged in to the MAX toolkit.

IDENTIFYING WHO TO ENGAGE WITH

ASCS and PSS SACE stakeholders are the individuals or groups within and beyond your organisation who can support the survey process and/or use the data collected by the surveys to inform their decision-making and service improvement activities.

Stakeholders include **administrators** who help run the surveys (e.g. back-office staff, finance officers), **potential consumers** who can use analysis findings to guide local decision-making and service improvement (e.g.LA managers and commissioners, practitioners), **gate keepers** who can allow or block your access to potential respondents (e.g. care-home managers), and **experts** who can help to make sense of the findings from your ASCS and PSS SACE analysis (see Figure 1**.**).

Figure 1: Potential ASCS and PSS SACE stakeholders.

A more detailed overview of potential ASCS and PSS SACE stakeholders is provided in **Appendix 1** and may help you to identify the relevant colleagues within and beyond your organisation that you need to engage with.

> 💡 **Seek guidance on who to engage with**
>
> You may also find it useful to seek guidance from members of staff who have a strategic overview of your organisation (e.g. the senior management team).

ESTABLISHING THE MOST APPROPRIATE METHOD OF ENGAGEMENT

Selecting and using the most appropriate method for engaging with each stakeholder or stakeholder group is key to successful engagement and the most appropriate method for a given activity is determined by the overall purpose of the engagement and the engagement opportunities available to you.

THE PURPOSE OF YOUR ENGAGEMENT: the objective of the particular engagement activity should be the primary factor in determining the most appropriate approach and can be classified as *consultation*, *communication* and *information-sharing* (see Table 1and **Appendix 2** for a more detailed overview).

Table 1: Primary engagement objectives and approaches

Objective	Description
Consultation	Two-way engagements where stakeholders jointly examine and discuss an issue of mutual interest or concern, and attempt to agree upon an acceptable solution and/or path of action through active debate and negotiation. Particularly useful when stakeholder opinions and preferences are required to inform decision-making (e.g. when identifying local info needs).

Communication	Two-way engagements where stakeholders exchange information and ideas and/or negotiate responsibilities and timeframes for a given activity (e.g. when organising the survey fieldwork).
Information-sharing	One-way engagements where stakeholders are provided with information of potential interest and/or relevance to them. Particularly useful, when initiating contact, encouraging engagement and/or circulating information (e.g. when sharing analysis findings).

In general, most engagements during the planning and analysis stages of the ASCS and PSS SACE process require stakeholder consultation (e.g. to identify local information needs, to review headline findings and discuss further analysis) and are best conducted via face-to-face meetings. Engagements during and after the reporting stage, in contrast, are primarily to inform stakeholders (e.g. to provide potentially useful survey data) and can therefore often be fulfilled remotely via email.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE: the most appropriate engagement approach will also be determined by practical factors, in particular, the opportunities available to you to engage with potential stakeholders. Setting up meetings to discuss survey-related matters can be challenging, due to conflicting demands on time, but is often unnecessary. Where possible, request slots at existing meetings instead. For example:

> **Senior management team meetings** are usually attended by a representative range of 'consumers' and 'experts' so can be used throughout the survey process to fulfil a range of objectives (e.g. identifying local information needs, making sense of survey findings).

Regional performance meetings: are usually attended by a range of LA representatives and can provide valuable engagement opportunities for organisations to share survey findings, potentially useful practice, and their experiences and expertise.

DETERMINING WHEN TO ENGAGE DURING THE SURVEY PROCESS

Engaging with stakeholders at key stages of the survey process can yield a number of benefits. Engagements during the planning stage, for example, can help you to streamline the administration of the ASCS and PSS SACE and identify and fulfil local information needs using survey data. Engagements during the analysis and reporting stages, on the other hand, can help you to focus your analysis and reporting activities and ensure that your analysis findings are disseminated to the most appropriate people, both within and beyond your organisation. A recommended engagement strategy is provided in Table 2 for guidance.

Table 2: Recommendations on who to engage with, when and why during the survey process

Purpose of engagement	Stakeholder group(s)	Objective	Method of Engagement
Planning			
Organise effective administration of survey	Administrators	Communication	Meeting
Identify local information needs and establish strategies to fulfil them	Consumers	Consultation	Meeting
Increase response rates from care home residents	Gatekeepers	Communication	See NHS Digital guidance
Analysis and interpretation			
Review findings of initial analysis and identify areas for further analysis	Consumers	Consultation	Meeting
Interpret findings of further analysis	Consumers, experts	Consultation	Meeting
Reporting			

Share analysis findings and/or local practice	Consumers, administrators	Information	Email
Discuss and/or share analysis findings and/or local practice	Consumers, Administrators	Consultation	Meeting

† Ideally, early on to enable changes (if any) to be made to survey and/or sample frame prior to distribution.

ENCOURAGING ENGAGEMENT

Encouraging potential consumers to engage with you and/or the surveys can sometimes be challenging. Alongside time limitations, which may restrict the opportunities to engage, some may be unsure about the purpose and potential local value of the ASCS and PSS SACE and/or may have concerns about the robustness of the data collected by the surveys and, as a result, may be reluctant to engage with you or the survey process.

ASCS and PSS SACE development summaries are included in the MAX toolkit and can be emailed directly to potential consumers during initial discussions about the surveys (direct links are provided in the box below).

> 🔗 **Survey development summaries:** [ASCS] [PSS SACE]. See also our blog on the development of the surveys, available at https://www.maxproject.org.uk/category/blog/ .

Alternatively, if this strategy is unsuccessful or unsuitable (e.g. due to time limitations), the guidance and strategies contained in the **MAX ANALYSIS GUIDES**, available to download here, and **REPORTING GUIDE** may help you to conduct potentially useful analysis and produce interesting analysis reports that will encourage future engagements. The **creating engaging analysis reports presentation** may also provide you with some inspiration.

DISCLAIMER

The MAX toolkit and website are based on independent research commissioned and funded by the NIHR Policy Research Programme (Maximising the value of survey data in adult social care (MAX) project and the MAX toolkit implementation and impact project). The views expressed on the website and in publications are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NHS, the NIHR, the Department of Health and Social Care or its arm's length bodies or other government departments.

APPENDIX 1: POTENTIAL ASCS AND PSS SACE STAKEHOLDERS

STAKEHOLDER	POTENTIAL ROLE IN SURVEY PROCESS
ADMINISTRATORS *Individuals and/or groups associated with the administration of the ASCS or PSS SACE. These stakeholders are usually employed by the LA and perform a range of activities that directly or indirectly affect the efficiency of the survey process and, in turn, the potential local value of the survey data.* ***Early engagement is recommended.***	
Analysts/info officers	Usually involved in all stages of the survey process (planning, analysis and reporting) and can help to ensure ASCS and PSS SACE **can help fulfil local information needs** (e.g. by making local modifications, conducting further analysis). **Early engagement, ideally several months before the surveys are distributed, and ongoing consultation is advised.**
Front-line staff	Work directly with the public (e.g. call-centre staff, receptionists and practitioners) and may deal with survey-related enquiries and/or have the opportunity to **encourage engagement with the surveys**. **Early engagement is advised to ensure that they understand the purpose and potential local value of the surveys.**
Back-office staff	Work 'behind the scenes' (e.g. print- and post-room staff, data entry clerks) and help with the **preparation of the surveys and data return**). **Early engagement is advised to enable them to allocate time to the surveys and manage their remaining workload.**
Finance officers	**Provide the financial details for the data return**. **Early engagement is advised to enable them to allocate time to the surveys and manage their remaining workload.**

The survey guidance provided by NHS Digital includes the key dates for the survey process (e.g. when surveys need to be distributed) and the financial details that are required for the data return, and should be used to co-ordinate administrative activities.

GATEKEEPERS

Individuals and/or groups who can support or block access to potential participants. These stakeholders particularly affect the ASCS and include care home managers, home care providers, formal and informal carers, and family members. Early engagement, before the surveys are circulated, is strongly recommended.

NHS Digital provide covering letters that can be used to encourage 'gatekeepers' to engage with the surveys.

CONSUMERS

Individuals and/or groups who can use ASCS or PSS SACE data to guide local decision-making, service planning and improvement activities, and/or changes to practice (e.g. procurement, service re-design, strategic planning). LA decision-makers are the primary consumers of survey data but practitioners, voluntary organisations and other LAs may also benefit. The information needs of these stakeholders can often be fulfilled by the ASCS and PSS SACE so early and continued engagement throughout the survey process is recommended [see also expertise group]*.*

Commissioners:	Usually responsible for particular service user groups or geographical areas, and can use ASCS and PSS SACE data to monitor and evaluate services, evaluate local needs, and/or inform market development and procurement activities.
Heads of services and team / area managers	Usually are responsible for particular service user groups (e.g. Adult Social Care, mental health, carers, learning disability) or geographical areas, and can use ASCS and PSS SACE data to support operational management and/or performance improvement activities.

Senior managers and executive group	Can use ASCS and PSS SACE data for a wide range of local activities including strategic planning, performance monitoring (e.g. measuring impact of services), and both internal and external accountability
Practitioners:	Often work directly with service-users and/or carers and include social workers, care leads and managers. This group can use ASCS and PSS SACE data, in particular respondent comments and feedback, to inform their day-to-day activities.
Other local authorities (LAs)	Other LAs, particularly those within your region and/or who share similarities to your organisation (i.e. 'comparator LAs') can use your ASCS and PSS SACE data to make sense of their own findings. The sharing of survey data between LAs can help both organisations establish the potential reasons underlying differences in ASCOF scores and identify instances of local practice, and is advocated by NHS Digital.

The **Further analysis of ASCS and PSS SACE data: Case studies of local authority (LA) practice** report, available in the MAX toolkit, provides examples of how ASCS and PSS SACE data has been used to inform local planning and performance improvement activities.

EXPERTS

Individuals and/or groups who can provide insight (e.g. through experience or expertise) and can help interpret survey results. These stakeholders are often potential consumers of ASCS and PSS SACE data but further "experts" include councillors, health and well-being board representatives, Healthwatch, providers and third sector organisations. Public, user and carer involvement organisation representatives may also provide useful insight [see also consumers group].

The MAX toolkit includes two short guides on how identify, analyse and prioritise potential stakeholders within and beyond your organisation. These are based on

two of the more popular stakeholder analysis approaches and can be accessed via the links below:

[**Power-interest approach**] [**Expertise-willingness-value approach**]

APPENDIX 2: APPROACHES TO ENGAGING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

CONSULTATIONS	
Description	Two-way engagements where stakeholders jointly examine and discuss an issue of mutual interest or concern, and attempt to agree upon an acceptable solution and/or path of action through active debate and negotiation.
When to use	When multiple stakeholders may affect or be affected by the issue of interest or concern. Consultations are particularly useful when you are seeking information and want to use stakeholder opinions and preferences to inform decision-making.
Methods	*Group format*: meetings, teleconferences, focus groups *One-to-one format*: interviews (face to face or by telephone)
Examples	Identifying local information needs and establishing the most appropriate strategies for fulfilling them using ASCS and PSS SACE data [planning stage] Reviewing findings from exploratory data analysis and determining areas of interest, concern and/or further analysis [post-initial analysis stage] Considering the potential causes underlying noted variations in survey analysis (i.e. establishing attribution) [interpretation stage]
Tips	The success of a consultation exercise depends on stakeholders having adequate information about the issue to be consulted on. Ensure that the relevant documents, if any, are circulated well in advanced of the consultation.

COMMUNICATION	
Description	Two-way engagements where stakeholders exchange information and ideas and/or negotiate responsibilities and timeframes for a given activity.
When to use	When one or more stakeholders or stakeholder groups requires information and/or is required to participate in a given activity.
Methods	*Direct*: face to face meetings; *Indirect*: email, telephone
Examples	Establishing responsibilities and time-frames and co-ordinating activities with survey administrators [planning stage] Knowledge exchange [interpretation stage]

INFORMATION SHARING	
Description	One-way engagements where stakeholders are provided with information of potential interest and/or relevance to them.
When to use	When initiating contact, encouraging engagement and/or circulating information of potential interest or relevance.
Methods	Usually via reports, presentations and/or summaries circulated via email or made available via the organisation's website or data warehouse (*indirect method*) or presented at a meeting (*direct method*).
Examples	Promoting the purpose and potential local value of ASCS and PSS SACE data to potential consumers [planning stage] Circulating reports of ASCS and PSS SACE analysis findings [Reporting stage]