

## Engagement, involvement and coproduction in practice

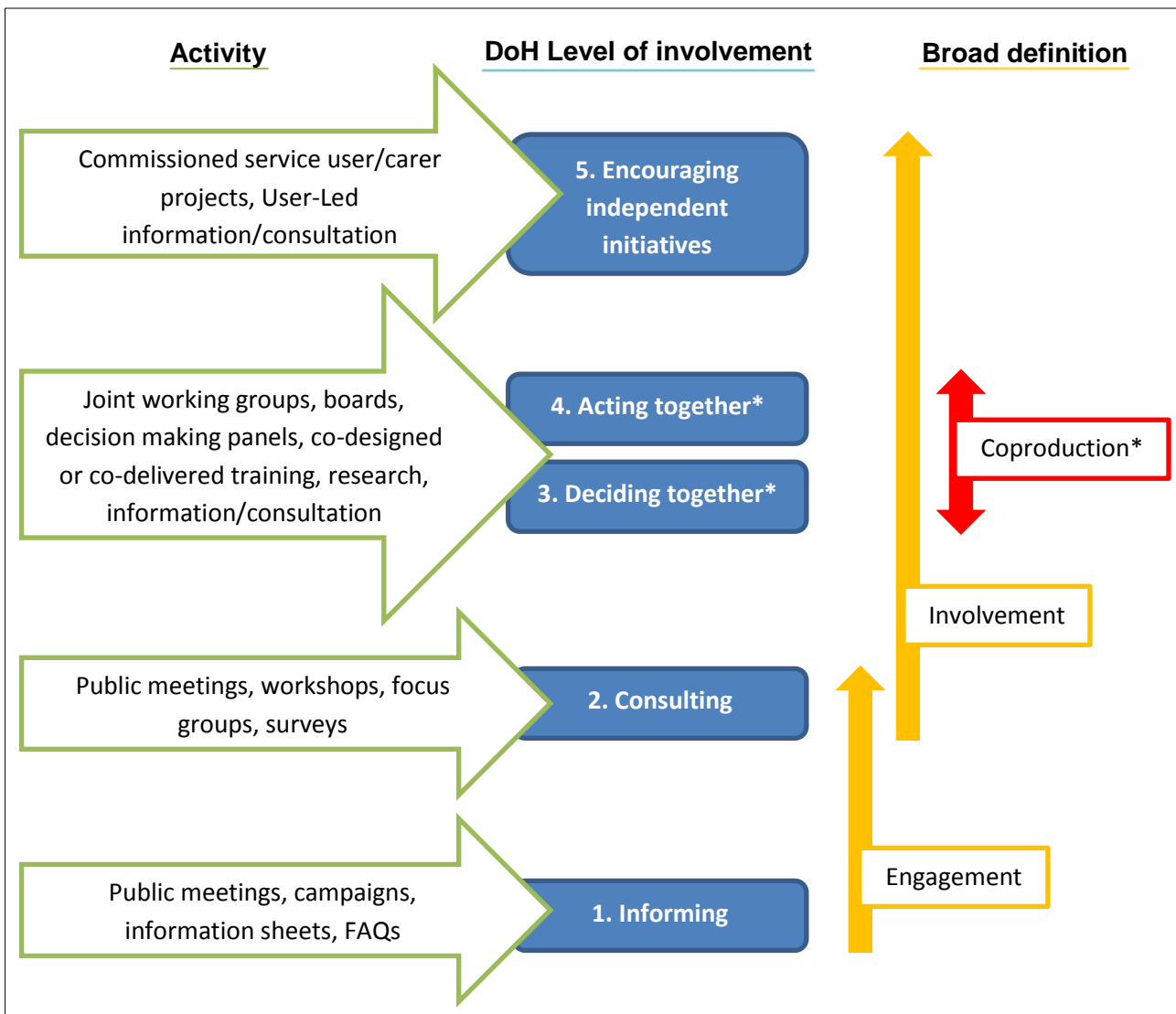
### Legal requirements

Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001, “The Duty to Involve” requires us to involve service users and carers – in decisions about their own day to day care, and in the design, delivery and evaluation of the services they use. Working together in this way also helps us to deliver high quality services that best meet the needs of the community.

We are also legally required to consult with service users and carers on changes to services that affect them. This can be done in a range of ways, but it must be accessible, transparent, honest, and with opportunity to influence. We cannot consult on decisions that have already been made. Consultation activities are also subject to Ethical and Research Governance Approval. For Adult Social Care contact Nicola Maskrey (details below).

### What is engagement, involvement and coproduction?

The Department of Health has defined five levels of involvement (Reward and Recognition, 2006)\*, but we often talk more generally about engagement, involvement, or coproduction. The diagram below shows these five levels of involvement with the broader terms and examples in practice, to help identify and plan the appropriate type of involvement activity.



## Broad terms

**Involvement** and **engagement** broadly describe our relationships and dialogue with residents, service users, and carers. These can be used quite fluidly and even interchangeably (for example when we consult).

- In social care **engagement** is generally shallower and wider reaching so for example informing residents, service users and carers when we're raising awareness of an issue or consulting them on changes to services.
- **Involvement** tends to be more in-depth and focussed on the service users, carers, or residents directly affected by, or with a direct interest in a specific issue, service, or change. This could be through dedicated consultation, or coproduction with us.

**Coproduction** is a specific form of involvement where we are deciding and acting together\*, such as in joint decision making panels and working groups. Coproduction often grows out of engagement and involvement activities as they help us to establish an ongoing relationship and dialogue with service users and carers.

## What does this mean in practice?

Whilst different levels of involvement are appropriate for different activities, we seek to **coproduce** service design and improvement wherever possible. This still has to be underpinned by insight and evidence of the experiences of the wider population for that service so that we can ensure we best meet their needs and wants. We achieve this by;

1. Gathering existing information about the experiences and views of service users, carers, and residents – looking at past feedback and also speaking to current service users and carers to find out their views and experiences. This is sometimes called **pre-consultation**.
2. **Informing** service users, carers and residents of our requirements, intentions and rationale.
3. **Consulting** service users, carers and residents to ask what they think about our intentions, what ideas or needs they have, or how our plans might affect them.
4. Using what we learn to decide and act together\* with service users and carers (**coproduction**) to design and improve services.

We also commission service users and carer representation groups, and statutory bodies such as Healthwatch Islington, as **Independent Initiatives** to provide ongoing independent representation in service design and evaluation. In some instances we will ask or contract them to undertake independent engagement or involvement with the wider community on our behalf, or work directly with us in coproduction.

*When planning a project staff must consider how they will engage and involve service users and carers who have a direct interest, including whether there is a likely to be a legal requirement to consult.*

*Plans should be summarised in the PID or business case, and a consultation and involvement plan completed as required.*

## Where to get more information or advice

\* Reward and Recognition states that where we are deciding together and acting together then payment for involvement must be offered. Please see our [Reward and Recognition Policy](#).

Contact Nicola Maskrey, Project Manager – Collaborative Commissioning, for advice about involvement and coproduction with service users and carers, including consultation and ethical and research governance approval. [Nicola.Maskrey@islington.gov.uk](mailto:Nicola.Maskrey@islington.gov.uk), extension 8157.