

How we run our engagement events

We've written this guide to NHS Cheshire and Merseyside engagement events to explain what you can expect from us, and to set out clear guidelines for making sure sessions are safe and enjoyable for everyone who takes part.

The guide covers all types of engagement events, including online and face-to-face sessions, both those which happen in our own offices or buildings, and those which take place at external venues.

Please note: There are separate arrangements for our Board and Committee meetings held in public, which you'll find alongside [dates for each meeting](#).

Promotion

Depending on the type of event we're running, and who we think it will be most relevant to, we'll use different methods to let people know it's happening. [This might include advertising on our website](#) and social media channels, asking partner organisations such as local hospital trusts and Healthwatch to share information using their channels, or contacting people directly.

[The best way to keep informed about our work is to register for updates.](#)

Often our events will be open to anyone who wants to attend, but sometimes we might focus on a specific group of people, such as those who have used a particular service or part of the NHS.

On the day

Usually, we will ask people to let us know that they'll be coming to an event by registering in advance. This is important because it helps us to ensure that we don't have too many people in the room we're using, to comply with health and safety regulations at the venue and ensure the comfort and safety of everyone there. It also helps us to plan for the right number of people, so that each event is staffed correctly and can run smoothly.

We will always try to be flexible, however if you're asked to register in advance but you haven't, please be aware that you may not be able to join the event on the day – particularly if an event is at full capacity.

We want to make sure that everyone can participate in our events, so please let us know in advance if you have any access or communication requirements, or if there's anything else you need us to put in place for you to attend.

Understanding who is coming to our events

It's important that we know who is coming to our events – and whether there are any particular groups or types of people we aren't reaching as well as others – so when you attend, we will often ask you to complete a form (known as an equalities monitoring form), either as a printed or online questionnaire. This is completely anonymous and won't be linked to your name or any other information you provide.

Respect

We want our engagement events to feel safe for everyone who takes part, both members of the public and our own staff.

At the start of each event, we'll usually talk through the running order and set out some basic ground rules for the discussion. However, whatever the format, all our events run on the basis that participants will show respect and kindness to others in the room (or virtual room), and allow inclusive, meaningful discussion.

We know that people are passionate about the NHS – we are too – and will often have strong views about the issues we're discussing. However, we also have a duty of care to those taking part, and to the people who work for us, and need to make sure that everyone feels comfortable, and that the event is able to run as it is meant to. We are mindful that members of the public are giving up their time to participate in our events, so it's important that sessions are well-structured and effective.

We therefore won't allow any form of disrespectful behaviour, including:

- Aggressive, threatening or offensive behaviour.
- Verbal abuse, including heckling, swearing, shouting, interrupting or speaking over other participants or members of the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside team and/or other health and care staff attending the event.
- Individuals or groups deliberately disrupting the running of an event in any way, or seeking to dominate discussion. If we become aware of any of the behaviours above during an engagement event, a member of NHS Cheshire and Merseyside staff will speak to the person (or persons) involved and ask them to stop.

In the event that the behaviour continues, the person (or persons) will be asked to leave the event. If required, we will pause the event to allow this. In the case of an online event, we will remove the person (or persons) from the session.

Filming and photography

Sometimes, we might want to take photographs or film at an engagement event, perhaps to use as part of a report, or to help promote future sessions. We'll let you know if we're going to do this – for example, by emailing you in advance, or putting a notice at the registration

desk – so that you have a chance to say if you'd rather not be included in any photographs or footage captured.

For privacy reasons, please don't take your own photographs or carry out filming unless you've agreed this with us in advance and we've secured the permission of other people attending.

Your feedback is really important to us, so if you have further questions or want to share any comments on this guide, please get in touch at engagement@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk