

Response ID ANON-Y3X3-JBCN-M

Submitted to Draft National Consumer Engagement Strategy for Health and Wellbeing
Submitted on 2023-09-04 10:21:09

Introduction

1 What is your name?

Name:
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2 What is your email address?

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3 Are you responding on behalf of an organisation, or as a consumer/individual?

On behalf of an organisation

4 Are you a policy-maker?

No

5 What is your organisation and/or field of expertise?

What is your organisation and/or field of expertise?:
Institute of Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University

6 If representing an organisation, which sector does your organisation belong to?

University/Education/Research Institution

If representing an organisation, which sector does your organisation belong to?:

Consultation Questions

7 Purpose

Is it clear what this Strategy is for? - Is the purpose of the strategy and/or the target audience clear?:

Not clear

If not, what would make it clearer?:

The target audience is somewhat unclear which creates some confusion about the purpose of the Strategy. The Executive Summary provides a more specific "definition" of a policy maker, in comparison to page 9 of the Strategy. While it is stated that "throughout this Strategy, policy making is used in its broad sense to include all stakeholders," we are unsure whether it will be read and understood in this way. At times, the Strategy appears to be a consumer-facing document (e.g., healthcare service consumer). It may be worth reconsidering use of the word "mobilising" as it does not necessarily reflect ongoing engagement as per the three objectives. The word "enabling" may better reflect the Strategy's statement of intent. The expansion of preventative health (as contained in the glossary) to include minimisation of burden of disease is commendable and enables integration of healthcare across the lifespan e.g., disease prevention initiatives for youth and the health span e.g., preventing clinical deterioration in chronic disease.

8 Objectives

Are the objectives for the Strategy clear and appropriate? - Are the objectives for the Strategy clear and appropriate?:

Not clear

If not, what is missing?:

Overall, we support the three objectives. However, we would suggest considering rewording objective 3 from "empower and facilitate consumers..." to "facilitate and empower consumers". While this document presumably does not seek to include consumer engagement in research, given the link between policy and research, we would suggest that objective 3 includes "health systems policy, programs, research and services".

9 Fundamentals

Do the Fundamentals capture what you see as essential for consumer engagement? - Do the Fundamentals capture what you see as essential for consumer engagement?:

Not clear

If not, what is missing?:

Overall, we strongly support the fundamentals but would suggest the following be considered. "Respectful" - Consumers and organisations resourced

appropriately is indeed a fundamental for consumer engagement. We would suggest that the allocation of resources to support consumer engagement be further emphasised here and throughout the Strategy. "Transparent" - Training for consumers is a fundamental, as it can result in more meaningful engagement. It can also help ensure that the relationship between consumer and policy maker is more balanced. For this reason, we would suggest that consumers having access to training and resources fits better under the "inclusive" fundamental. It is important to acknowledge that training and support is also essential for policy makers (and other stakeholders). There will be a need to build the skills of policy teams in consumer engagement. A better understanding of meaningful consumer engagement will help consumers feel heard and valued. We strongly recommend a commitment to training that supports consumers and training that builds the capability and capacity of policy makers, be resourced as part of the Strategy. "Collaborative"- A commitment to meaningful consumer engagement needs to come from the top and be embedded within the culture of an organisation or department. Leadership support and commitment to consumer engagement should be included as a fundamental within the Strategy.

10 Good Practice Guidelines

Do you think the Guidelines describe what is needed to help policy-makers work effectively with consumers? - Do you think the Guidelines describe what is needed to help policy-makers work effectively with consumers?:

Well

Do you think the Guidelines describe what is needed to help policy-makers work effectively with consumers? - Are the Guidelines explained in a way that makes them useful?:

Useful

Do you have anything to add about the Guidelines?:

The Guidelines contain information about consumer engagement that is both very relevant and useful. However, the Strategy does not clearly propose actions to deliver on its objectives. While the Guidelines describe what is needed to help policy makers work effectively with consumers, we recommend a commitment to training that builds the capability and capacity of policy makers, is resourced as part of the Strategy. We also reiterate the need for leadership support and commitment as a critical enabler for consumer engagement. We would recommend that "documenting throughout the engagement process" be added in the Guidelines, as it can help ensure that expectations and roles are clear for all involved. For some of the Guidelines e.g., seek and support diverse engagement participation, we would recommend leveraging off existing toolkits and resources that have been developed to support engagement with diverse populations (e.g., CALD, ATSI). This could be achieved by providing links to these documents within the Strategy. "Monitor engagement and evaluate impact": We would recommend that there are some overarching indicators and measures included in the Strategy. This would promote consistency in what areas of consumer engagement are being monitored and evaluated.

11 If you have been involved in policy-making before as a consumer, what made your engagement in that process

A positive and welcome experience :

A dissatisfying experience :

12 HELP Toolkit

HELP Toolkit - Do you think the Toolkit will be easy to use?:

Unsure

Do you think the Toolkit will help policy-makers better engage consumers in policy-making? - Do you think the Toolkit will help policy-makers better engage consumers in policy-making?:

Unsure

Do you have anything else to add? :

We would recommend the inclusion of any examples or case studies of where consumer engagement has been done well. These can help to put the "theory into practice". Our experience has been that consumer remuneration is a frequent topic of discussion. It might be useful to include links to existing consumer remuneration policies or to even provide a costing policy as part of the Strategy. Likewise providing links within the Strategy to existing best practice training options for consumers and policy makers is recommended.

13 Are you supportive of the overall purpose and objectives of the Strategy?

Yes, with proposed changes

Please specify proposed changes:

We strongly support a National commitment to consumer engagement for health and wellbeing. The Strategy has clearly been informed by a range of best practice consumer engagement resources. It contains a range of useful information in the form of guidelines and strategies for consumer engagement. However, in its current format the Strategy reads more like a resource or toolkit. The Strategy does not clearly propose actions to deliver on its objectives. The Strategy also lacks indicators and therefore it is unclear how its implementation will be monitored and evaluated. We would recommend that the Strategy include some measures and/or achievement milestones. These could be used to review the strategy (e.g., at 12 months, 2 years etc.) to see what progress has been made. We think it is important to monitor and evaluate the strategy from the perspectives of both policy maker and consumer.

14 If you are a consumer and haven't been involved in policy making, would you like to be? Why/Why not?

Not Answered

If you have wanted to be involved, what has stopped you from doing so?:

15 Are there any other engagement approaches that you have found helpful and effective?

Are there any other engagement approaches that you have found helpful and effective?:

16 Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions? :

The current Strategy document is repetitive, so we agree with the idea to separate out the Strategy document and the companion documents (e.g., the HELP toolkit and fact sheets). Currently p. 7 and p. 33 are the same page repeated. Then there is repetition in pages 14-19 with pp 42+. This may also be resolved if the audience for the document is clarified e.g., are some sections of the Strategy consumer facing.