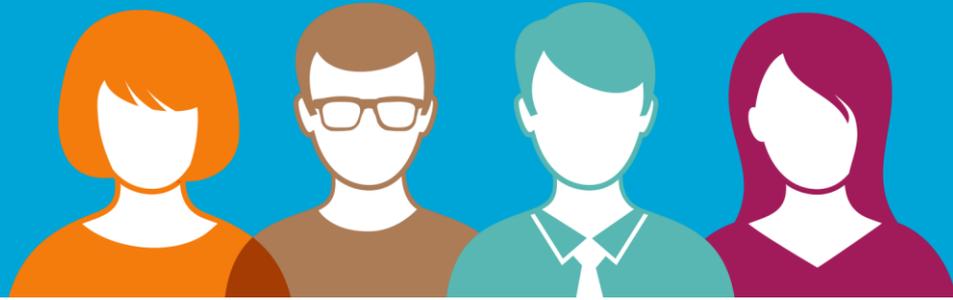


Online community panels for healthcare organisations

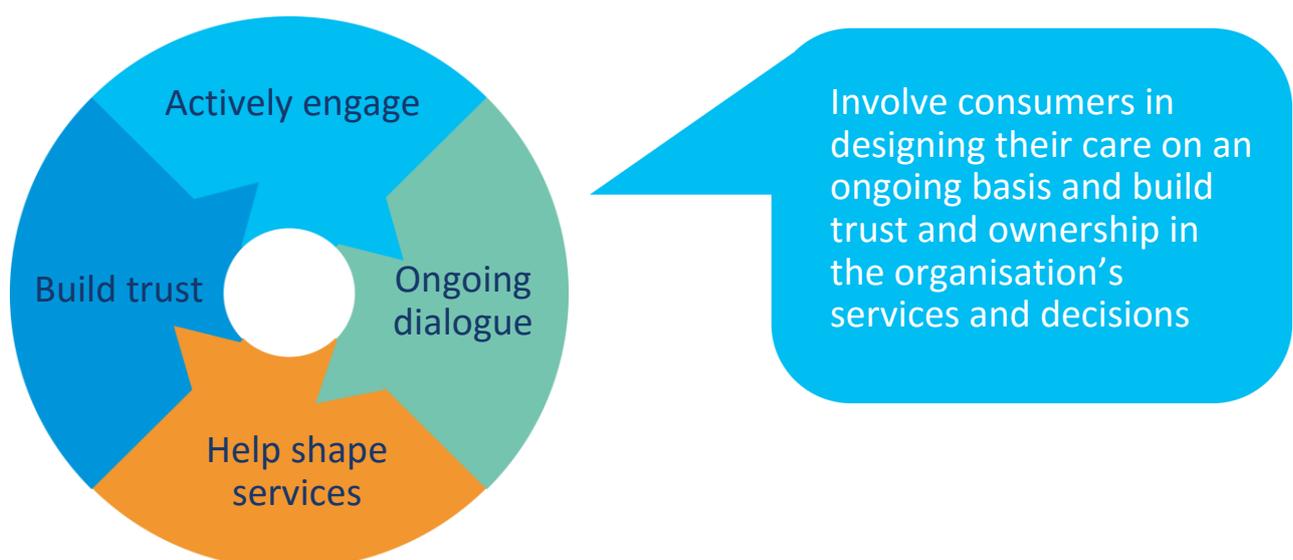


Increasingly health care providers are designing their services in a way that puts consumers, communities, patients and whānau at the centre of decision-making and planning. Community participation and patient experience outcomes, along with the concepts of co-design and patient-oriented care, are important to DHBs and PHOs, and are being embedded in organisational values and priorities. With this comes the need to develop systems and approaches designed to foster ongoing relationships and dialogue with consumers, whānau and the wider community.

For this reason, many New Zealand organisations, including those in the health sector, have established their own online community panels, in order to actively engage and/or conduct research with their consumers and stakeholders.

By joining these panels, members are able to enter into ongoing dialogue with their DHB/PHO - they receive useful, timely and relevant communications and also are able to give input to help shape services, planning and decision-making.

A well-managed panel allows a DHB or PHO to hear from its wider community, involve patients, consumers and their whānau, and ideally, build trust and ownership in the organisation's services and decisions.



Benefits of having a dedicated online community:

- provides an easy way to communicate and engage with consumers, and encourage them to participate in a two-way dialogue about health services
- allows a DHB/PHO to send targeted messages and opportunities to participate, to specific members/groups within the panel (for instance residents of certain areas, members of particular demographic groups or people who have expressed an interest in specific topics or health issues)
- demonstrates an openness and willingness to involve patients, families, whānau and communities in the DHB's/PHO's work
- increases public awareness and knowledge of their DHB/PHO, its services, processes and plans
- gives a recognised and consistent means for consumers to have their say, and allows people to participate quickly and easily, with a low barrier to participation
- provides a quick and cost effective way to find out more about the wider community and/or seek feedback on specific topics – allowing decision makers to build a full picture of issues and potential solutions surrounding the DHB's/PHO's services, plans and proposals
- makes it easy to publicise other consultation/engagement/research opportunities and other DHB/PHO activities e.g. specific health promotion campaigns, events, workshops, open days etc
- acts as a catalyst for broad organisational collaboration and coordination between the various teams within the DHB/PHO (i.e. a central hub) and/or between different health organisations (i.e. regional collaboration)
- enables recruitment for a wide variety of research activities e.g. co-design processes, focus groups, forums, interviews etc
- enables recruitment of consumer or community representatives and can help develop DHB/PHO champions and advocates in the community
- provides a simple mechanism for DHBs/PHOs to 'close the loop' – demonstrate the extent to which public opinions have shaped decisions and what the next steps are – which helps build trust over time.

Allow people to participate quickly and easily, with a low barrier to participation



The screenshot shows the 'Reo Ora - Health Voice' website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, More Info, Reports, Contact Us, and Sign Up. The main content area features a large banner for the 'Auckland District Health Board invites you to participate' in 'Reo Ora - Health Voice'. Below the banner, there is a 'Join Reo Ora - Health Voice' button. To the right of the banner is a 'Member Login' section with fields for 'Email address' and 'Password', a 'Log in' button, and a 'Remember Me' checkbox. Below the login section, there is a section for 'Active & Upcoming Surveys' and a 'Results and Reports' section with a small image of people.

Auckland District Health Board invites you to participate

Join Reo Ora - Health Voice and participate in our confidential online surveys and discussions.

[Join Reo Ora - Health Voice](#)

Member Login

Email address

Password

[Log in](#)

Remember Me

[Forgot your password?](#)

Active & Upcoming Surveys

A survey on advanced care planning is coming soon. If you have been through the complaints process with ACHB, you will also be receiving a survey invitation in early December.

Results and Reports

Make a difference, in 3 simple steps

- 1 Answer a few simple questions - it's that simple to get involved. You can unsubscribe at any time.
- 2 Choose the topics that interest you and have your say in surveys and discussions about these areas. Your feedback will be confidential.
- 3 Look at the results and read the comments. See what changes are happening thanks to your and others' participation.

[More Information](#)

Benefits for panel members

- provides increased understanding of their DHB's/PHO's services and plans through ongoing communications and dialogue
- gives an opportunity to participate in health care decision-making simply and conveniently
- gives them increased confidence in their DHB's/PHO's decision-making over time (provided the organisation does genuinely listen and provides balanced information on how it is using public input to make decisions)
- receiving personalised and regular communication establishes a relationship with the DHB/PHO, with members seeing the panel as an alternative communication channel – a means of raising problems, asking questions etc.



Receiving personalised and regular communication establishes a relationship with the DHB/PHO, with members seeing the panel as an alternative communication channel – a means of raising problems and asking questions

What do members of community panels think?

Members tend to appreciate the fact that their DHB or healthcare provider is delivering them timely information and asking for their views:

- they find it an easy way to give feedback – they don't have to attend meetings and complete submission forms
- they appreciate (and feel empowered by) being involved in the organisation's decision-making processes
- they get to know what is the organisation is planning, and how the consultation/decision making process works.



Hear consumers' experiences of their health services and their thoughts on how these can be improved

However, panellists also want to be assured that their views are being listened to:

- they want to know why their opinion is being sought and how it will be used
- they like to be kept informed about the findings of panel surveys and other engagement exercises
- they don't want to be asked to give their opinion if it will not influence decision makers.

This makes it critical that if panel members are asked to give their views, the DHB/PHO must commit to genuinely listening to what they have to say, and ensuring that panel members are kept informed about how their feedback has affected services, influenced decision-making or has been otherwise used. Otherwise, panellists will grow increasingly cynical and interest in the panel will wane.

Ways to communicate

While surveys and feedback forms are often the simplest way to seek feedback from panel members, Buzz Channel encourages our clients to use their panel to conduct a range of other engagement and two-way dialogue with members – online forums, regular emails, newsletters, sharing results and generally working to build a sense of community among the panel.



Engage the public in formal and informal consultation topics – most members of the public are more likely to have their say in an online survey delivered directly to their email

Find out more about online community panels and how they can be used by healthcare organisations

If you'd like to discuss the pros and cons of a community panel for your organisation, whether this might be right for you, how to recruit panellists or any of the other considerations in establishing and managing a successful community panel, please get in touch.

We manage a number of successful community panels for clients, including Auckland DHB's Reo Ora Health Voice panel <http://www.healthvoice.org.nz/> and we'd love to share some of our experiences with you.

Prue Street,
Communications Manager
prue@buzzchannel.co.nz
09 379 8920

Ben Parsons,
Managing Director
ben@buzzchannel.co.nz
09 379 892