

# **Q&A**

# **Engagement platform grant**

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FAQ - grants for trialling and testing engagement platforms.

## 1. What is the project for?

Since the start of the pandemic, Healthwatch across England have been forced to adopt a 'digital first' approach to engage safely with their local communities. While face-to-face engagement will eventually return we are likely to be restricted to online methods of engagement for many months to come.

Because of this, many network colleagues have been asking Healthwatch England how they can better engage with people online and build on the increased levels of engagement with the public.

## 2. Why have Healthwatch England chosen the platforms CitizenLab and Engagement HQ?

Both platforms have been created to deliver public engagement activities and in use by a number of local authorities. They closely meet the core needs of Healthwatch e.g. gathering views, stakeholder relationship management and data sharing data.

## 3. What are the main features of the products? How will this enhance our online engagement?

Both serve the same overall purpose, aiming to provide better ways to engage with people online and make analysis of feedback easier.

Specific functions include:

- online forum discussions and breakout rooms
- surveys and quick polls
- petitions, questions and answers
- email marketing
- interactive mapping (maps within the platforms which can be marked and manipulated as part of a discussion on local geography)
- idea collection and voting

Both platforms may also help organisations better engage with seldom-heard communities and bring added accessibility features. They could also be listed in project proposals and bids for commissioned work.

## 4. What does the software do that we can't do now?

The platforms provide better opportunities for two-way dialogue, as well as the ability to create interactive online communities, all in one place.

Their functionality includes:

- Understanding and addressing demographic profiles - protected characteristics and other profile information is built into the sign-up and data capture processes, allowing targeted engagement.
- Results from non-digital engagement (e.g. telephone interviews) can be added to the platforms to include in analysis.
- Track a group of respondents over time to see how their situation has changed over time.
- Both models offer a hub and spoke approach, whereby data from your local Healthwatch is automatically shared with Healthwatch England, allowing more time for analysis rather than the transfer of data.
- Healthwatch England can publish a campaign to all Healthwatch accounts, locally branded for you to promote and manage. Equally you can run your own campaigns or projects.

## 5. How could the products support current internal projects and engagement priorities?

You will have control over discussion topics listed on product landing pages, which could reflect key local issues that matter to your local area.

For example, you could ask communities to join in discussion forums about proposed changes to services, or participate in Q&A sessions with clinicians or commissioners.

## 6. How much staff commitment is needed and over what period of time?

You will be asked to nominate a project administrator who will lead on the implementation of the platform and monthly reporting back to Healthwatch England over the six-month pilot period.

We may also carry out a small number of test exercises which we would ask you to participate in, but we will ensure the time commitment required for this is kept to a minimum.

Project leads will also be expected to contribute to the evaluation of the software at the end of the six-month pilot, which may include focus groups and/or evaluation interviews.

## 7. Who is the most appropriate person to appoint as a project administrator?

Staff member(s) that currently manage your website content, such as a Communications Officer, would be ideal however is not necessary.

We're keen to pilot the tool with varied skillsets and will be providing full training and support to all of those taking part.

## **8. What are the associated costs, if any, and will we receive any financial support for participating?**

Other than factoring in the staff time outlined above, there will be no costs to participating Healthwatch.

Each selected organisation will be allocated a £2,000 grant for their help in testing the engagement platform.

## **9. If Healthwatch England roll-out software after the pilot period, will there be any associated ongoing costs for Local Healthwatch?**

If we do decide to proceed with one of the platforms, Healthwatch England would aim to eliminate or minimise any costs involved for local Healthwatch in order to maximise uptake and usage.

## **10. What support and training will there be for both the set-up phase and throughout the six-month period? Who will this be provided by?**

Full training will be provided by the software suppliers at the start of the trial. Ongoing support will be available from the suppliers, Healthwatch England and James Skipper from Healthwatch Norfolk.

## **11. How will being a part of this pilot benefit my local Healthwatch?**

Aside from the £2,000 grant to cover the staff time involved, participating Healthwatch will receive free use of one of the engagement platforms for six months, allowing for more efficient ways of carrying out in-depth engagement activities. Full features listed above.

## **12. How do our stakeholders/members of the public use the platforms? Do they have to sign up?**

Yes, but both platforms aim to make this process as simple as possible.

Both suppliers believe the login-based model allows for longer-term relationships to be developed.

## **13. What happens at the end of the six-month period?**

Once the pilot comes to an end in June, we will evaluate the feedback we have received and make a recommendation to Healthwatch England on which one to invest in.

## **14. Will I be able to continue to use the platform that I've been trialling after the pilot?**

If it is decided that one of the platforms should be used, we will aim to have it in operation as quickly as possible.

We will also prioritise its roll-out to the Healthwatch that took part in the trial, irrespective of which platform they helped to test, in recognition of their help.