PRIORITISING YOUR AUDIENCES:
a workshop plan

Section **1**

The Health Foundation

After you have identified all of the audiences you could engage with to achieve your project's objectives, the next task is to prioritise the most important ones.

In doing this, you can focus your time and communications resources on reaching the people who can help achieve your objectives in the quickest and most efficient way.

Audience prioritising: the process

As with the audience mapping, the recommended way of doing this is to work together with colleagues on the task. Set out below is a process you can follow to identify your priority, target audiences.

The most efficient way of conducting this exercise is to use the same people involved in the mapping of your audiences (Identifying your audiences). Others can join in, but by including those who have contributed to the first stage of the process you should be able to complete this task quickly.

Allow at least an hour to complete the exercise.

Audience prioritising: how to

Write each potential audience identified in the mapping exercise on a large post-it note in thick, clear lettering.

Use flip chart paper to recreate the quadrant in this document (use four pieces of flip chart paper stuck on a wall, if space allows).

Taking one post-it note at a time, the group should ask the following questions:

- What level of interest does this person/organisation/group currently have in helping us achieve our project objectives?

- What level of ability (or influence) does this person/organisation/group have in helping us achieve our project objectives?

The group then decides, on the basis of the discussion, where to place the post-it note on the quadrant.

See the full Communications in health care improvement toolkit at www.health.org.uk/commskit
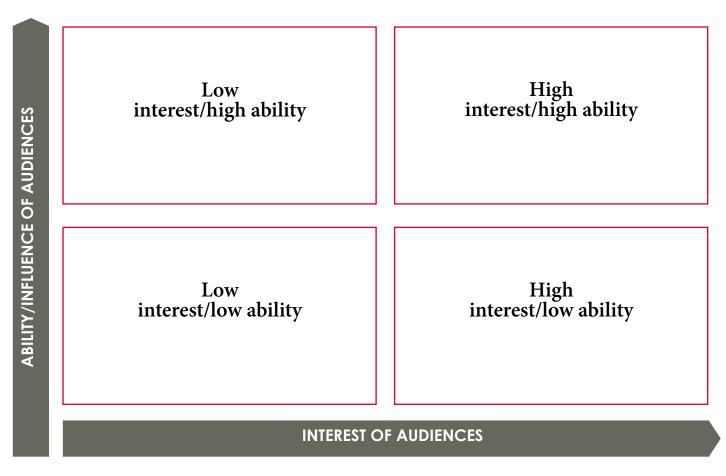
TOP RIGHT. These audiences have a shared interest in what you are trying to achieve AND they are in a good position to help you achieve it (ie they make or influence policy, spending decisions, practice behaviours, processes, etc).

BOTTOM RIGHT. These audiences have a shared interest in what you are trying to achieve but have little direct ability or influence over the outcomes.

TOP LEFT. These audiences currently have a low interest in (or are opposed to) what you are trying to achieve, but a high ability/influence.

BOTTOM LEFT. These audiences have a low level of interest in your objectives and low levels of ability/influence.

Low interest/high ability	**High interest/high ability**
Low interest/low ability	**High interest/low ability**

ABILITY/INFLUENCE OF AUDIENCES

INTEREST OF AUDIENCES

Once all post-it notes are placed, **REVIEW.**

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This needs to be done quickly. There is not the time, nor is there much merit, in agonising over where each group sits. Be reassured that the group instinct about where they sit is normally right.

If there is disagreement on where a group sits, put it aside and come back to it at the end. Don't allow this to hinder the process.

Have your communications and project objectives available to help the group focus on the questions.

Identifying the priorities

- Ideally, you are looking to identify four priority audiences. You should have no more than eight.

- The most easily engaged will be those in the top right. It is most efficient to make between one and four from this quadrant your priority audiences.

- In some circumstances, you may wish to target those in the top left (low interest/high ability). However, be aware it is likely to require more time and resources to engage these audiences.

- It is rare to prioritise any audiences in the bottom two quadrants – although you may decide to keep those in the bottom right (high interest/low ability) informed of your project.

- If you have too many audiences in top quadrants and need to narrow down further, you can ask each participant to 'vote' for their preferred priorities and see if a consensus emerges. Otherwise, you will need to assign the final choice to one member of the team.

Writing into your communications strategy

Once you have identified your priority audiences, record them in your communications strategy.