

# A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT for the Isle of Wight

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A copy of the Toolkit in large print is available from North Harbour Consulting Limited.

If we can help you to develop your approach to community engagement, or if you need advice in this area, please contact

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## INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is one of three publications that result from a project to review community engagement by public authorities and the voluntary sector on the Isle of Wight. A research report – [Community Engagement on the Isle of Wight](#) – describes what kinds of community engagement are being carried out and what the public's reaction to them has been. The [Community Engagement Framework](#) and the [Community Engagement Toolkit](#), build on the report to create a new, more joined-up approach to involving the Island's residents and communities in decisions being taken by public and voluntary sector organisations. These three documents are available from North Harbour Consulting.

### Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is intended to provide practical information and advice on how to carry out community engagement for public authorities, voluntary organisations, communities and members of the public on the Isle of Wight.

### Why does the public need to be involved in decisions?

Public service providers of all kinds have either a statutory or ethical duty to consult the public and to involve local people in developing and reviewing policies, plans and services that affect them. There are six ways in which this helps to build strong communities and strong public service organisations.

- Engaging with local people helps these organisations make better decisions.
- Feedback from local people is a way of making sure that services meet their needs and that the organisation providing the service has got its priorities right.
- Community engagement helps break down barriers and negative views of organisations.
- Any failure by public bodies to understand peoples' needs leads to inefficient service delivery and low levels of public satisfaction with the services they receive.
- Being involved in discussing how services and projects should be delivered can help people have a sense of belonging and pride in their local area.
- Involving people in debate about local needs and priorities strengthens the democratic accountability of elected representatives and people who are appointed to the boards of hospitals, schools, the police service, housing associations and similar organisations. Failure to involve people can lead to a loss of confidence in the local democratic process and a feeling that people are unable to influence the decisions that affect them.

### Why do we need a community engagement toolkit?

Most organisations that provide public services involve the public in some form of consultation about their services. The problem is that these different initiatives are not joined up, and sometimes they get in each other's way. Experience from many places shows that there can be too many initiatives going on, too many meetings, and too much information for the public to take account of. The result is 'consultation fatigue' – people get fed up and do not bother any more. At other times, important decisions are taken without enough consultation. This is confusing for the public who do not know who is doing what until a public announcement is made about something that affects them. Then, as one member of the public interviewed for the review of community engagement said, "I thought 'Where did that come from?'"

There is a growing recognition nationally that the community engagement activities carried out by different public bodies need to be coordinated in some way. The most common approach is for coordination to be arranged through a local partnership such as the local strategic partnership or one of its boards. The **Isle of Wight Community Engagement Toolkit** is intended to provide a basis for the Island Strategic Partnership's (ISP) or a bespoke Community Engagement Partnership to adopt a joint approach to community engagement. It is also intended to become a useful resource for community groups, voluntary organisations, businesses and the general public who may want to become involved in community engagement activities.

### How to use the toolkit

The Toolkit is divided into short, easy to read sections with illustrations and action points. It is not prescriptive about when or where tools are used. For instance, when working with older people, the skills and information set out in the young people and children's section may be useful. You may want to take part of one tool and then part of another and mix them up.

You do not have to read the whole of this toolkit at once – you can look at individual sections as you need them. However, the more that you read the better your understanding of community engagement will be. You can also supplement the information here with research and training, and by contacting other organisations for more information. We have included useful references and contacts in the relevant sections and in an appendix at the end of the toolkit.

## DEFINITIONS AND TECHNIQUES

### DEFINITIONS

There are many different terms used to describe 'community engagement'. Terms commonly in use include: public consultation, public participation, community engagement and community empowerment. Quite often these terms are used without defining them. There is confusion about the meaning of the terms, and there is sometimes a degree of dishonesty when very tokenistic approaches to informing or consulting the public are dressed up as genuine 'engagement'. In this toolkit, and in the [Isle of Wight Community Engagement Framework](#) that is published with it, we have used terms in the following way.

#### **'Community'**

'Communities' are groups of people with something in common. They can be:

- geographical communities – people living in particular neighbourhoods or areas;
- communities of identity – for example, people who identify themselves as being from a particular national or ethnic group, or as pensioners or teenagers;
- communities of interest - people identified by their common interests or activities such as housing association tenants;
- communities of need - people who have similar needs, for example, vulnerable people with personal care needs;

- communities of experience - people who come together through shared experiences, for example, people who might be involved in consultation about a particular service that they have used.

People increasingly have multiple identities. They may see themselves as belonging to one geographical community but more than one community of interest or identity. This means that communities defined in terms of a particular geographical area can be very diverse. Organisations carrying out community engagement need to adopt a number of different engagement techniques to ensure that all sections of the community are reached.

Electronic and digital communication (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, LinkedIn etc) are creating opportunities for new types of community to form outside all the traditional mechanisms for public participation and community engagement. This is something that needs to be taken into account when thinking about how community engagement can be organised.

#### **'Community groups' and 'voluntary organisations'**

We use the term 'community group' to mean people who come together to pursue a common cause or interest. A group might be formal or informal in the way that it is set up, but in either case there is a common sense of purpose underlying the way people come together.

A 'voluntary organisation' is an independent non-profit distributing body, lead mainly by volunteers, that is run for the benefit of others in the community. Some are registered charities; others might have a different kind of constitution. However, they are all accountable to their members and service users, and more generally to the people and communities they serve or represent.

There is an overlap between the definition of community groups and voluntary organisations. The term used to describe all these groups is 'the Community and Voluntary Sector'. It is also sometimes called the 'Third Sector' or 'Civil Society'.

#### **'Public services' and 'public service organisations'**

Public services are services that are provided for the benefit of the general public or of a particular social group. They are either free at the point of delivery even though they are paid for through taxation, or they are means-tested so that those on low income receive them free of charge. Traditionally, they have been provided by public authorities or by the community and voluntary sector, who are known collectively as public service organisations. However, public services are increasingly commissioned from private companies under a contract. Businesses are not usually considered to be public service organisations because a distinction is being made between organisations that work for public benefit and organisations that work for profit. The emergence of hybrid organisations known as 'social enterprises' blurs this distinction.

#### **'Consultation'**

Consultation is the process by which organisations obtain opinions or feedback from people about their needs or their experience of services they receive, as a basis for decisions made by the organisation that is consulting them.

#### **'Community engagement'**

Community engagement is the process of involving individuals and communities in decisions about the development and management of services that affect them, such as health, education and housing. It may also involve other issues - for example, tackling the problems of a neighbourhood such as crime, or lack of play facilities for children.

Community engagement involves different kinds of activity. It can involve simple exercises in providing information through to the formation of multi-agency partnerships with a high level of community involvement. Underlying effective community engagement is the commitment of service providers to listen to the people for whom services are being planned. This means that it should be seen as a continuous process rather than a one-off exercise. Community engagement involves a two-way flow of information as in any form of conversation.

#### **'Community empowerment'**

Community empowerment occurs when members of a community feel sufficiently confident and able to achieve their goals to take action for themselves on the issues that they define as important.

## The difference between ‘community engagement’ and ‘community empowerment’

Community engagement is the term used to cover a wide range of activities that result in people and communities becoming involved in decision-making. Community empowerment is often one of the objectives of community engagement – its purpose is to give people and communities the confidence to speak for themselves<sup>1</sup>.

## The ‘duty to involve’

Public authorities (local government, police, health services etc) have statutory duties to inform the public about the way their services are run, and to involve the public in decisions that affect them. These duties do not always apply to community groups and voluntary organisations unless:

- there is a requirement placed on the organisation to consult the public by its funder under the terms of a grant or contract; or
- it is a requirement of a regulatory body such as the Tenant Services Authority.

It is nevertheless considered good practice – indeed, almost an ethical requirement - for community and voluntary organisations to involve service users and the communities they serve in some form of engagement activity.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, The Urban Forum, IDeA, NAVCA and the National Empowerment Partnership (2009), Developing your comprehensive community engagement strategy: a practical guide for LSPs, page 4, available from <http://www.navca.org.uk/publications/cces/>. This report is a useful general guide to community engagement.

## IDEAS ABOUT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### The Framework for Participation

A lot has been written about public participation and community engagement. A good place to start is with the Guide to Effective Participation<sup>2</sup>, which builds on the 1960s concept of a ‘ladder of citizen involvement’ to develop a Framework for Participation. This has formed the basis for many of the community engagement strategies developed by local authorities and their partners across the UK.

Figure 1: The Framework for Participation



<sup>2</sup> David Wilcox (1994), The Guide to Effective Participation, Partnerships Online, available from <http://www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/index.htm>

These terms are defined in the following way:

- Information – this means giving people information about the services they receive; or asking them about their needs to inform your decisions;
- Consultation – asking people what they think about the services they receive, or about the options for delivering them, then listening to the feedback you get;
- Deciding together – people and communities are encouraged to provide additional ideas and options to your own, and then jointly deciding the best way forward;
- Acting together – not only do organisations and communities decide together what is best, but they form a partnership to carry it out the decisions they have made;
- Supporting independent community initiatives – organisations can also help people and communities to do what they want by providing advice and support, delegating responsibility and also by providing funds.

### **The Spectrum of Public Participation**

It has also been suggested that there is a spectrum of public participation activity<sup>3</sup> that more accurately reflects where power really lies. Figure 2 gives an adapted version of the Spectrum. A number of English local authorities have used it as the basis for their community engagement strategies.

The main difference between the Framework for Participation and the Spectrum of Public Participation is that the Framework implies that there is a hierarchy – or ‘ladder’ - of approaches with some approaches being better than others. The Spectrum on the other hand identifies the different types of participation as alternatives to be used whenever it is appropriate. Many local authorities in England have preferred to adopt this ‘horses for courses’ approach.

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<sup>3</sup> Brodie, E, Cowling E and Nissen N (2009), [Understanding Participation: a literature review](http://pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk/2010/01/understanding-participation-a-literature-review/), NCVO, Institute for Volunteering and Involve, page 17, available from <http://pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk/2010/01/understanding-participation-a-literature-review/>

Figure 2: The Spectrum of Public Participation

Level of participation					
Information giving	Information gathering	Consultation	Involvement	Collaboration	Empowerment
<p><u>Purpose:</u> To provide people with information about plans and services that will help their understanding</p>	<p><u>Purpose:</u> To obtain information about attitudes, opinions and preferences that will assist the organisation's understanding and decision-making</p>	<p><u>Purpose:</u> To ask people for their views on specific policies or proposals</p>	<p><u>Purpose:</u> To discuss what the issues and priorities are. To actively involve people and facilitate participation</p>	<p><u>Purpose:</u> To work together to improve and design new services, or to plan the future of communities</p>	<p><u>Purpose:</u> To support independent community initiatives and action – helping communities to develop projects and services of their own</p>
<p><u>Expectation:</u> That information will be accurate, balanced and up-dated as necessary</p>	<p><u>Expectation:</u> That information gathered will be treated and used responsibly and reported honestly.</p>	<p><u>Expectation:</u> That feedback will be taken seriously, decisions will be influenced and people will be informed of the influence they have had.</p>	<p><u>Expectation:</u> That people will be able to shape the process, that it will be transparent throughout and that they will have some influence over decisions.</p>	<p><u>Expectation:</u> That decision-making will be shared and some resources will be held in common. That partnering with the community to work out how the decision is to be implemented will take place</p>	<p><u>Expectation:</u> That decisionmaking and action will be put in the hands of the community, and that support will be given through advice, funding, or forms of assistance</p>
<p><u>Examples:</u> Newsletters, Websites, Exhibitions, Local press, Fact sheets</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u> Surveys, Questionnaires, Focus groups, Quality of life surveys</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u> Public meetings, Focus groups, Service user panels, Surgeries</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u> Workshops; Area forums; Planning for Real / Parish planning</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u> Citizens' Juries, Co-optees, Joint management or partnership arrangements</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u> Delegated decisionmaking; Delegated resources; Community management</p>

Adapted from: Thurrock Council (2009), *Thurrock Community Engagement Toolkit*, page 4. Go to: [http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/i-know/pdf/perf\\_how\\_01\\_engagement\\_v1.pdf](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/i-know/pdf/perf_how_01_engagement_v1.pdf)

## GETTING STARTED

### What is the purpose of the exercise?

The first thing to do is to decide why you want to carry out community engagement. Use Figure 3 to help you decide.

Figure 3: What do you want to do?

Reason	✓
Develop a policy or strategy?	
Identify priorities, issues or improvements to services?	
Carry out consultation as a statutory requirement?	
Get feedback for service improvements?	
Identify gaps in service provision?	
Deepen understanding of key issues?	
Get feedback on options for service development?	
Inform a decision?	
Develop skills and capacity amongst local people?	
Measure satisfaction with or use of services?	
Involve local people in management of a service or resource?	

### Action point 1

You should only engage the public if you are going to make a decision that can be influenced by the consultation. You should say clearly why you are doing it and how you will use the results. You should also tell them how the consultation links to your organisation's aims and objectives.

### Action point 2

Carrying out unnecessary engagement activity is a waste of the time and resources for your organisation, and for the people you are engaging. Be clear about why the activity is necessary. Check whether what you want to do has already been done. If so, ask: do I need to do it again? Check whether your engagement project can be combined with a similar project that another organisation is planning.

## PLANNING<sup>4</sup>

You will need to plan your engagement activity carefully. This will increase the chance of you delivering the project successfully. Timing is important. Isle of Wight people told the community engagement researchers that they want to be consulted well in advance of decisions being made, so that what they say can be taken into account. Allow enough time for people to consider their responses, and avoid holiday periods. Figure 4 provides a check list of things to think about.

Figure 4: Developing your plan

Reason	✓
What is the purpose of the activity? What mix of engagement methods will you need? Refer back to the <u>Spectrum of Public Participation</u> .	
What do you already know? How recent and reliable is this information? Do you need to know more?	
Consider what background information you will need to give to participants. Ensure that information is provided in plain language and is available in alternative formats.	
Who will deliver the activity? Will you deliver the activities yourself; will it be a joint effort with someone else?	
Develop a timetable for the activities.	
Develop costings for your activity and identify resources.	
Set up a communication plan and work out how you will publicise and promote what you are planning to do.	
Identify the stakeholders and make contact early.	
Take equality and diversity principles into account, and how you will involve people who do not usually get involved.	
Consider what could go wrong. Do a risk assessment.	
Think about whether any confidentiality and Data Protection issues need to be considered at this stage.	
Remember to include things like Health and Safety at events that involve the public. Are CRB checks needed?	
Keep good records of your planning and also the community engagement initiative as it proceeds.	

<sup>4</sup> This section of the Toolkit is based on material developed by Newcastle City Council, Manchester City Council and Wolverhampton City Council. Web sites are listed in Appendix I.

## Who will be involved?

The range of people you will involve will depend on the reason you are starting an engagement activity. There are three types of people that you may want to involve.

### The public and people outside your organisation

- Service users
- People affected by the service (e.g. parents of children)
- Residents of the area or local authority
- People who are affected by policies or developments;
- Suppliers / businesses / service providers and their workers.

### People inside your organisation

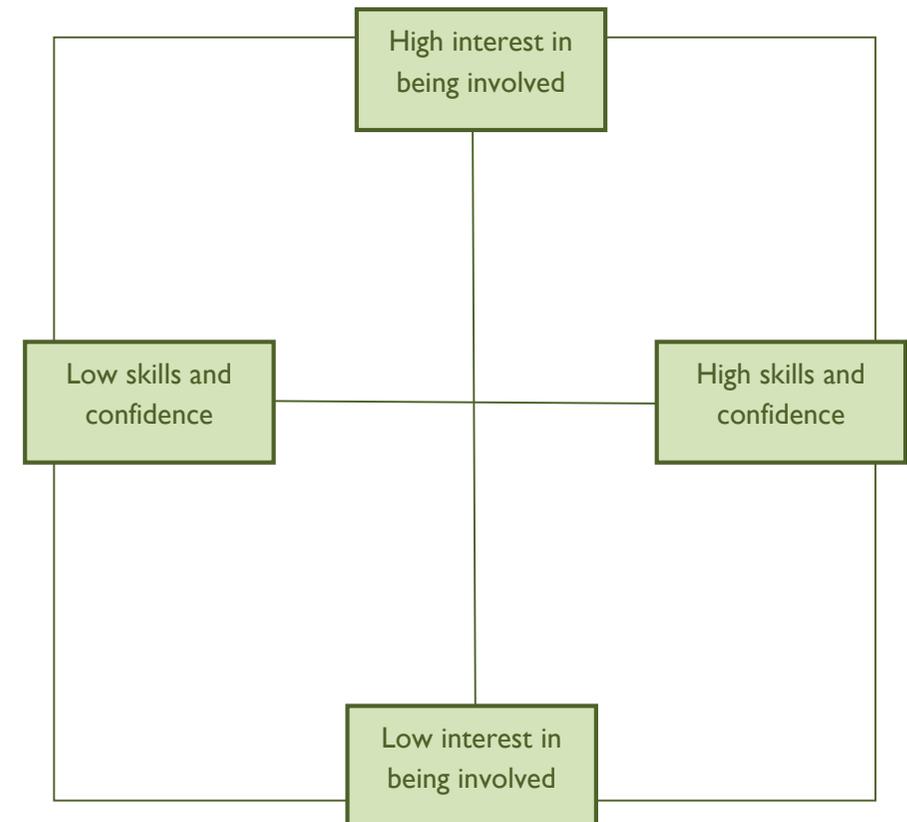
- Managers and staff
- Volunteers
- Elected and board members
- Other parts of your organisation
- Trade union representatives and staff consultative committees including equality working groups.

### Stakeholders and Interest groups

- Organisations with particular knowledge of or contact with service users / advocacy groups
- Community groups and voluntary organisations with an interest in the service, issue or neighbourhood
- Communities that receive a service or who are affected by policies and developments
- Particular socio-demographic groups (children and young persons, older people, single parents etc.)
- Equality groups
- Statutory stakeholders (Local council, NHS, Police, etc).

Try mapping the people you want to be involved in the grid below. It will help you to identify the risks and challenges. It may also help you to prioritise resources.

Figure 5: Participation Grid



Source: [London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Community Engagement Strategy](#)

## What methods will you use?

You need to think at an early stage about the methods of engagement that you will use. Figure 5 is based on The Spectrum of Public Participation. Use it as a guide to what you want to do and what type of approach is appropriate.

Figure 6 – Methods of engagement

Objective	Methods	✓
Give information	Newsletters, Websites, Exhibitions, Local press, Fact sheets	
Obtain information	Surveys, Questionnaires, Focus groups, Quality of life surveys	
Consult	Public meetings, Focus groups, Service user panels, Surgeries	
Involve	Workshops, Area forums, Planning for Real / Parish planning	
Collaborate	Citizens' Juries, Co-optees, Joint management or partnership arrangements	
Empower	Delegated decisionmaking; Delegated resources; Community management	
Refer back to the <a href="#">Spectrum of Participation</a>		

## Other things to think about in planning

### Managing expectations

The main motivation for people who take part in consultation is that they hope that policies will address their needs, that services will improve and that developments that affect their community will be appropriately and sensitively handled. It is therefore important not to raise unrealistic expectations. Always tell people what you are offering when you consult them. If there are limits to what they can influence, explain what they are and the reasons for them. Check that they have understood what they can and cannot change, and how their input will be used.

Also, make sure you tell people what will happen with the information you are getting from them. How will it be pulled together, when will they see the report, where and when will it be discussed, and when and how will they learn what happened as a result? One of the main criticisms made by members of the public who were interviewed by the community engagement researchers on the Isle of Wight was that they rarely receive any feedback on the results of any consultation they were involved with.

### **Action point 3**

People don't always know which organisation provides which services, so joint consultation can benefit everyone. Tell other directorates and partner organisations what you are doing and try to coordinate and share consultation activities as much as you can. This Toolkit and the Community Engagement Framework that accompanies it aim to encourage collaboration between organisations on community engagement activity. That is what people say they want.

### Being inclusive

Community engagement should be based on principles of fairness and inclusiveness. This means thinking about the needs of:

- disabled people, including people who have a visual, speech or hearing impairment
- black and minority ethnic people
- older people
- people who have reading and writing difficulties
- non-English speakers or those with English as a second language
- people in poor health, who may be house-bound or unable to travel far
- people from different faith communities
- people on low pay
- unemployed people
- children and young people
- lesbian, gay and transgender people.

If you are planning an event, think about how you will provide the support people might need, such as British Sign Language or other interpretation. Make sure your invitations tell people what support will be there, or what they can ask for in advance.

Do not assume that everyone will be able to fill in questionnaires or respond to your consultation in writing. Arrangements need to be made for people to give verbal feedback. Try to come up with a range of approaches to suit people's different needs and preferences. Provide information in the plainest language possible, try using pictures and stick to a minimum font size of 14 point.

You can encourage participation by:

- being clear about what the consultation is for and how its findings will be used;
- having meetings at places people already know and use;
- organising events that bring people together, giving them opportunities to obtain information or comment on services;
- providing transport or paying transport costs;
- adding your consultation onto the agendas of existing meetings, or into sports, leisure and cultural activities;
- offering prizes for taking part in surveys or providing childcare or childcare costs;
- providing refreshments – remember vegetarian, kosher, halal and other special dietary needs;
- making sure information and surveys are available in large-print, Braille, audio and/or relevant languages;
- using accessible buildings for events;
- timing events so that people can get to them, perhaps repeating them at different times of day;
- providing signers and interpreters, interviewing people who might have difficulty reading and writing;
- including reply-paid envelopes for postal surveys.

#### **Information**

All public authorities have statutory duties to promote fairness and equality for certain protected groups under the Equality Act 2010. Find out more at:  
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/>

Confidentiality

Make sure everyone involved keeps information that is collected during the engagement activity confidential, in order to comply with the law and ensure that people who take part can feel confident about providing information about themselves. Ensure that names and addresses are kept separate from questionnaires or other data collection documents. Tell people they won't be identifiable in any report from the consultation.

Data protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 gives people rights over their personal information. You must explain to them what their information will be used for, how it will be stored, get their consent to its use, and use it fairly and lawfully. Do not collect any information that isn't necessary; do not use it for another purpose; and do not pass the information on to other departments or organisations without the person's written permission. It may be necessary for you to obtain a person's written permission if you want to store personal information about them – their telephone number or email address for example. A data protection act sign-off form is provided alongside. This has been checked by a local authority legal department and complies with all the requirements.

**Action Point 5: Data Protection Act Permission**

 The Data Protection Act 1998. The personal information that you provide will be used for the purpose of [insert reason] unless you have stated otherwise below. Administration of the information that you provide will include storing your data electronically. The information you provide will not be shared with other departments or organisations without your permission. At the conclusion of the [inset name of project], your personal information will be deleted from our systems in accordance with good practice.

I do / do not consent to my personal information being used for this purpose (delete as appropriate)

Signed: .....

Print name: .....

Date: .....

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

As with any significant activity, it is important to plan how you will monitor and evaluate your engagement activities at the planning stages of a community engagement project.

Monitoring is statistical and measurable information about what you have done; evaluation is the analysis of this information.

Monitoring the community engagement methods you are using can provide early warning about the results of the project. Decision-makers cannot wait years to see if the outcome of the process is successful. Monitoring the process itself allows them and you to judge, on a short-term basis, whether the process is likely to be successful.

We have set out a 'health check' on the progress of your community engagement work (Figure 6). Ask these questions while you are planning the project, and again when it is finished.

Figure 7(a): Are you using the right techniques?

<b>Check on the techniques you will use</b>	✓
Is the choice of engagement technique appropriate for the objectives? Refer back to the <u>Spectrum of Participation</u> .	
Are there engagement techniques that could have been used that are not being used?	
Is the information you want already available within the organisation or from other partners? Is there other consultation or public contact that can be made use of?	
Have an appropriate range of techniques been used, in this and / or other exercises, to ensure a balance of factors are taken into account in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Target audience</li> <li>▪ Process (see 6b)</li> <li>▪ Quantitative and qualitative information</li> <li>▪ Sample size and response rate (if relevant)</li> <li>▪ Opportunities for participation (2 – way process etc)</li> </ul>	
Has there been a general opportunity for people generally to be involved? Are engagement methods likely to achieve involvement by a representative group of people?	
Who has been given an opportunity to take part?	

Figure 7 (b): Are you adopting the right processes?

Check on the process you will use	✓
How will those being engaged be identified?	
Do those being consulted understand what they are being consulted on and what account will be taken of their views?	
Are clear timescales set out and will they be kept to?	
Will sufficient time be allowed for responses? (e.g. a Voluntary Sector Compact standard of 12 weeks for groups to respond)	
Will sufficient background information be made available to those consulted and involved?	
Will information and explanation easily accessible in terms of plain language, translations etc?	
Have appropriate efforts been made to involve 'hard to reach' and / or disadvantaged groups?	
Will feedback be given to those consulted? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individuals?</li> <li>▪ The wider community?</li> </ul>	

Figure 7(c): How will you assess the outcomes?

Check on the outcomes	✓
To what extent were service users, residents, communities, interested bodies involved in the decision making process?	
Was it made clear to those involved how much influence they would have? (e.g. collecting information from them for the organisation to decide; influencing decisions; joint decision making; devolving responsibility for decisions; delegation etc). Refer to the <u>Spectrum of Participation</u> .	
To what extent did your organisation's views match those of the public? If there were serious discrepancies, how were these resolved?	
What analysis of consultation information was used to help decision-making? E.g. have the responses been broken down by category of respondent (age, gender, etc.) and have relevant cross references been made (e.g. opinions on a service by extent of its use)?	
Were relevant comparisons made over time and with other areas (e.g. benchmarking with others, peer review of service satisfaction surveys)?	
What processes were used to translate the results of consultation into policy or decisions?	
Was information from the consultation presented in the most effective way to help decision making?	
Was consultation used to influence other bodies and partners?	

Source: Figure 7 is based on material developed by Wirral Borough Council. The web site address is given in Appendix 1.

## ENGAGING WITH SPECIFIC GROUPS

### Children and young people<sup>5</sup>

When working with children and young people, the best results can come from working in partnership. This can be difficult, because adults become used to having power over children and young people and the idea of devolving some of that power may be hard for some people to accept. It may also be hard for children and young people to feel confident that their views are really going to be taken into account. For these reasons it is important to understand why involving children and young people is important. If you need advice, the Children, Young People and Families Network run by the Council may be a useful resource.

#### Children

- Involving children as fully as possible is good for their social and educational development.
- Children are part of the community and have views on the services that affect them.
- Children are experts on some issues of provision, such as what is interesting play equipment.
- They have knowledge of their neighbourhood such as areas that can be used for informal play and dangerous places to avoid.
- The UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child requires their views to be considered.

#### Young People

- Young people have the experience of what it is like to be young now.
- They are part of the community and have their own views on the services that affect them.
- They are active members of their communities - particularly during evenings, weekends and holiday periods - and therefore knowledgeable.
- Many of them make regular use of shopping centres as shoppers, to meet friends, as part-time workers and for recreation.
- They are also service users - schools, colleges, health services, training providers, youth clubs, parks, concert venues, public transport, libraries, sports & leisure facilities and public events.
- Young people generally want to be treated with respect rather than classed as a problem.
- They often have a keen sense of justice but feel their views are ignored.

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<sup>5</sup> Save the Children Fund has a number of useful resources on its website at: <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/resources.htm> Save the Children Consultation Toolkit is useful.

### Action Point 6: Ideas for involving children and young people

- Involve children and young people in designing, creating and planning events and projects.
- Work with them throughout the entire process to make it 'by young people for young people'.
- Consider how young people could be rewarded for their effort.
- If there are constraints or limits – money or time, for example - tell them at the outset.
- Target specific groups around needs/ability/age and to think about the levels of support individuals will need, including assessing risk (CRB checks, support workers etc).
- Consider using video, interactive material and the internet.
- Consider the wording of documents and their design carefully. Could young people reword them?
- Challenge your own perceptions.
- Arts can be a useful tool to help engagement with young people.
  - Keep meetings short.
  - Listen and learn - some young people may be interested in a local focus, some more borough-wide.
- Know how many young people there are, what services they use, what they are doing, where they like to hang out.
- Dress appropriately – for example, wearing a suit could sometimes be a barrier to engagement.

### Case study: Arts as a Tool in Consultation

#### The Children's Fund Arts Consultation

Children across Wolverhampton were given a voice during the development of the Children's Fund Programme. A multi-agency steering group decided that using the Arts would be an effective way to engage children of all ages, especially those normally not involved in mainstream provision. Arts workers were contracted and approaches were tailored to the needs of specific groups. Photographs, mobiles, a giant 'listening ear' and two quilts were displayed at a number of community information forums. The Children's Fund Arts Consultation raised awareness about the needs of children across a wide range of organisations. Information gathered was used to inform the play strategy and its findings were fed into Wolverhampton's Community Plan. Ongoing dialogue is now being kept up through the Children's Parliament.

**Source:** [Wolverhampton Partnership Involving the Public Resource Pack](#)

### Case study: The Isle of Wight Youth Council (IWYC)

The IWYC was established in 2003. There is an annual election of young people aged 13 – 18. It is supported by the Isle of Wight Council and the two bodies work together on a variety of issues and projects. Elected members of the IWYC have access to council meetings, and have the opportunity to work with their councillors at the local level, to advise them on issues related to young islanders and to try to improve the life of young people across the Island.

**Source:** [Chris Smy, IoW Council Youth Empowerment Officer](#)

### Case study: The Rural Youth Activities Project

Funded by the Local Network Fund the project employed a part-time youth worker to co-ordinate activities and sports in identified rural villages on a regular basis. In partnership with Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People and a mobile ITC bus, activities were provided for 8 years and upwards. The young people were consulted to establish what type of activities they wished to undertake. The project also employed a part time community development worker to work with parents and community members to set up a steering group to take over the running of the activities by forming a youth club. The community worker assisted parents by helping them develop a constitution, child protection policy and health and safety policy and apply for independent funding to take the club forward. Five clubs have been established in this way between 2003 and 2006 and serving up to 50 young people in each session. They all receive ongoing support and training from Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People.

**Source:** [Downland Youth Network](#), Berkshire  
(web address given in the Appendix)

## Older people

### Why they should be involved

- A high proportion of the people defined as 'older people' are very actively involved in the economic, social, political, educational and cultural aspects of their community. Many attain positions of influence after reaching the age of 50.
- Collectively they have a broad knowledge and experience of life. For example, people who have been residents in neighbourhoods for long periods may be aware of changes that are needed and may have extensive social networks through which information can be conveyed.
- Older people are experts on their own needs.
- Many older people use a wide range of public services and are able to offer suggestions and comments on how services may be improve
- Older people, like other people, want to be treated with respect and can make a significant contribution to the communities they live in.

### Barriers to involvement

There are barriers to older people's participation which include:

- organisational inflexibility in undertaking involvement in a way and at a pace that suits older people;
- the disabling effect of professional language, jargon and acronyms;
- negative attitudes towards older people.

### Action Point 7: Ideas for involving older people

- A range of approaches needs to be adopted so that individuals with different needs and preferences can be included.
- Ask the Older Persons Network (IWRCC) to put you in touch with organisations, groups and networks, and the places/spaces that are older people friendly.
- Develop links with external agencies and existing groups that work with older people and carers. The Older Persons Network is available for advice.
- Do not make ageist assumptions about older people and the amount of experience and expertise they may or may not have.
- Look at how meetings are conducted, where they are held, times of meetings and use of language.
- Ensure that the print, format and content of documents for consideration at meetings are accessible and that they are written in plain language.
- Engage older people using appropriate feedback mechanisms. For example, do not presume that every person has access to email or the internet – but do not assume that just because they are older that they don't. Ask them.
- Go to places where older people gather - for example, older people's accommodation and housing, libraries and leisure centres. Or use techniques such as a video link for events.

### Case Study: Bexley Older Person's Panel

The Older Persons' Panel is a consultative group, made up of 20 older Bexley residents. Group members meet quarterly and are involved in designing various service development proposals in Adult Social Care. During a recent public consultation, Bexley wished to produce an explanatory leaflet and feedback form, containing "Frequently Asked Questions" about proposed changes to services. The drawback was that nobody had yet had the opportunity to ask any questions!

Ahead of the official consultation period, the Older Persons' Panel were asked to get involved, learn about the proposals, give their feedback and ask all the questions they wanted to. The questions they asked formed the basis of the "Frequently Asked Questions" pages in the public information leaflet.

The input of the Panel was vital in achieving an authentic, independent and objective view on the development of services, and enabled the Council to gain an understanding of the sorts of concerns and issues that were likely to be raised by members of the public.

**Source:** [London Borough of Bexley Community Engagement Toolkit](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

### Case Study: Isle of Wight Age Concern Neighbourhood Volunteers

Age Concern has had a list of volunteers to assist older people with tasks like shopping for some time. It has now started to cluster volunteers to be more effective in providing support in particular localities; and in delivering better volunteering at neighbourhood level. This will provide cover, for example, for emergency responses, and eventually the volunteering service is intended to evolve into all-round community engagement for older people. Working with parish and town councils, local councillors, schools and a wide range of community organisations, the initiative aims to develop a more cohesive approach to volunteering and support for older people. The idea is that active older people will help to manage a group of volunteers in their area, freeing up Age Concern staff time to focus on service delivery. Age Concern will then use the volunteer group to be part of a mechanism to feed back to policy makers what is going on in their local area.

Source: [Jo Dare, IoW Age Concern](#)

### Disabled People

18% of people nationally are disabled or have a long term life-limiting illness. This suggests that more than 23,000 disabled people might be living on the Isle of Wight. Disability is not a medical condition. Individuals might have a physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, learning or other impairment. Disability results when society creates barriers to disabled peoples' ability to live a normal life by designing a world only suitable for people without impairments or a long term limiting illness.

Perceptions of disabled people have a lot in common with other attitudes that are not acceptable such as racism and sexism. Disabled people are subject to what Hampshire Police call 'hate crime'. If we plan our services and community engagement well, we can enable disabled people to receive the services and support they need, and be involved in engagement activities in a meaningful way.

#### Barriers to engagement for disabled people

Main barriers can be:

- prejudice and stereotyping disabled people;
- inflexible organisational procedures and practices that do not take their needs into account;
- inaccessible information, buildings and transport that prevent their involvement.

### Action Point 8: Ideas for involving disabled people

- Attend training on disability awareness;
- carry out access audits with disabled people, not only of buildings and equipment, but also of publications, websites and other sources of information;
- map your community to understand what organisations are there, what support you may be able to get from them and what places and spaces are access friendly – ask the IWRCC;
- there is currently no disability network on the Isle of Wight, but the Learning Disability Partnership Board can advise on involving people with learning disabilities, and a list of disability-related organisations can be found on the Isle of Wight Council website;
- examine all your engagement methods and consider them from different perspectives;
- Support the development of community engagement projects run by and for disabled people.

### Information

The Equality Act 2010 contains a public sector Equality Duty which brings together the Disability Equality Duty with other existing duties on race and gender. It also covers age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender reassignment. The public sector Equality Duty came into force in April 2011. See also: <http://www.odg.gov.uk/disabled-people-and-legislation/disability-equality-duty-and-impact-assessments.php/>

### Information

The Equality and Human Rights Commission publishes guidance for public authorities on how to involve disabled people. See: [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/PSD/18\\_ded\\_and\\_involvement.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/PSD/18_ded_and_involvement.pdf)

### Case study: Camden responds to feedback from disabled residents and provides disability awareness training to improve services

As a result of involvement work with disabled residents, the London Borough of Camden identified issues with repairs contractors employed by the Council. In particular this highlighted a lack of awareness amongst contractors about the access needs of sensory impaired residents. Action was taken to address this by running training sessions for contractors who attended from 22 companies.

**Source:** [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

### Case study: Training disabled people to comment on planning applications

Hull City Council established a group of disabled people who were trained in reading planning documents and able to provide training to other disabled people. The regeneration partnership undertook extensive public consultation on new planning policy guidance that included the group. They then agreed to incorporate 'lifetime homes' standards into the planning requirements for redevelopment.

**Source:** [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

## Gender

It is important to ensure that you have a balance of men and women taking part in community engagement activities if they are to be genuinely inclusive.

### Action Point 11: Ideas for involving men and women

- Monitor gender balance in participation.
- When conducting surveys and interviews try to ensure that 50% of the respondents are male and 50% female. In any case representation of either gender should not fall below 40%.
- Consider using a female/male co-facilitating team in engagement activities.
- Consider alternating the chairing of the meetings between men and women.
- Pay attention to the contributions in a meeting. If a meeting seems to be dominated by one gender, make efforts to invite people from the other gender to express their views.
- Use inclusive language so that each group feels included.
- Consider using people from both genders in the promotion of an event.
- Some women feel more comfortable expressing their views in a separate process. This may be a particular concern for some BME and faith communities.
- Equally, some men may prefer a male-only group for some topics, such as health.
- Provide childcare to enable people with young children to participate.

### Case study: Gender equality in Waltham Forest

The London Borough of Waltham Forest has developed a gender equality scheme that focuses on both men and women. The scheme aims to increase information and support to men and women in balancing their work and caring roles and in developing their careers. Promoting gender equality for both sexes has also encouraged a broader and more inclusive understanding of the equality agenda throughout the council.

Gender equality objectives were developed in light of evidence gathered and analysed during 2006/07. The initial findings were used to identify a broad base of potential issues for further investigation in a focus group setting. Three focus groups were established: discussions within these groups led to up to four themes being prioritised as the basis for setting objectives and outcomes.

In addition to equal pay, the scheme focuses on:

- improving women's safety
- raising boys' achievements and girls' aspirations
- promoting men's and women's involvement and participation in decision making
- supporting parents and carers in the workforce.

**Source:** [IDeA - Local Government Improvement and Development](#) (web address given in the Appendix)

## Black and minority ethnic groups (BME)

The Isle of Wight has a relatively small population of people from BME, national and cultural minorities, but it is very diverse and is growing. The Island now provides a place to live, work and study for people from all over the world. Lack of knowledge about national and local organisations, language, culture and social customs can be barriers to effective engagement. Remember that Roma Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised as a protected minority under race equality legislation (New Age Travellers are not).

If you want find out more about the Island's minority groups, contact Equals, or the Isle of Wight Council's Equality Unit.

### Action Point 12: Ideas for involving people from BME, national and cultural minorities

- Don't classify minority groups together. They have different needs whether they are due to identity, culture or language.
- Challenge stereotypes – personally and with others.
- Research what minority groups and networks live in your area and meet people to develop relationships. Find out how long communities have been there. What are the customs and traditions that they bring? How many languages are spoken and written? Ask Equals for advice.
- Establish links with the relevant community leaders.
- Recruit BME residents or tenants onto boards or steering groups for initiatives or projects.
- Connect and build relationships with existing networks of groups and/or help support the development of new ones to address any gaps.
- Consider the need for translation of leaflets and the use of translators at meetings.
- Explore the opportunities for training on racial awareness to help challenge stereotyping, perceptions and assumptions.
- Find out where people from minority communities can be reached e.g. shops, restaurants, schools, colleges, faith organisations, English language classes, mother and baby clinics, local festival celebrations.
- Respect each other's differences, and value the perspectives and experiences that people from different backgrounds bring.

### Action Point 13: Cultural issues

- Find out which names are first names and which are family names;
- understand that in some cultures it is the norm to speak loudly;
- familiarise yourself with the basics of the group's religion – its main festivals, religious book, customs and traditions (see Faith below);
- understand that in some cultures, women do not shake a man's hand;
- be aware that there are cultural differences around body language, such as whether or not it is accepted to look people in the eye;
- remember, women may not like to be questioned by a man, or may not attend the same meetings as men;
- expect to be asked to take off your shoes or cover your head when you go into a prayer room;
- ask people associated with the group how best to communicate effectively with it, and don't assume everyone in the group shares the same faith or way of living.

### Action Point 14: Languages and translations

- find out what the language is, and the dialect, before you book your interpreter;
- speak slowly and clearly;
- allow extra time;
- talk to people in the group, not the interpreter;
- provide translated materials, or use pictures;
- avoid any jargon or slang;
- remember, even if a person appears to speak English, they might not fully understand everything you say;
- do not assume that if a person is from a particular country, they will be fluent in the language used there.

### Case study: Equals Forum 2010

Equals is the Isle of Wight's inclusive equality organisation. It aims to celebrate equality and diversity on the Isle of Wight, to raise awareness and actively challenge discriminatory practice and attitudes. It organises a range of activities that bring together people from different communities. This includes an annual forum for minority ethnic community members to exchange ideas with each other and with leading statutory and voluntary sector agencies including the Council, NHS and Police. At the 2010 Forum, participants emphasised the importance in getting relevant information out to all communities, even when there are language and cultural barriers. Racist bullying at schools was felt to be a serious issue for parents from different backgrounds.

**Source:** [Isle of Wight Equals](#)

### **Case study: Equality Impact Assessment of complaints improves services to Muslim residents as well as Travellers and their families**

An equality review of Fenland District Council's complaints service revealed that a significant number of Muslim residents from one area were concerned about the refuse service. A particular issue was the collection of refuse on Fridays, the Muslim holy day. By involving local residents and staff in discussions about the service, an agreement was reached to switch the collection day in that area to Wednesdays. There have been no further complaints and residents have indicated significant improvement to their quality of life.

The same review highlighted issues regarding refuse collection on Travellers sites. There was no recycling taking place: all refuse was mixed together, and different materials were not separated into the bins provided. To resolve this, equality staff worked with the recycling team to provide relevant information to all Travellers in the area. This included leaflets with pictures of everything that can be placed within each bin, general refuse and recycling. This action has resolved all concerns and, in addition, the children are using the pictures to share this learning in their schools.

**Source:** [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

### **Faith Communities**

There is a wide range of faith groups present on the Isle of Wight, including various Christian denominations, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Bahais and others. Faith communities provide opportunities for community engagement with significant numbers of people, and faith groups are important networks to use for community engagement purposes. The Anglican Arch Deacon chairs the Church Leaders Group; Equals is in touch with most of the non-Christian faiths. IWRCC commissioned a report on BME and minority faith groups in 2005/2006<sup>6</sup> that drew on earlier work commissioned by the Isle of Wight Council.

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<sup>6</sup> Salma Ahmed and John Palmer (2006), [Towards an Infrastructure Development Programme for diverse communities on the Isle of Wight](#), Isle of Wight Infrastructure Group, available from: <http://www.raise-networks.org.uk/changeup/yourArea/localDocuments.html>

### Action Point 15: Ideas for involving faith communities

- Target resources and specialist time for engaging with different faith groups;
- develop links with inter-faith bodies, and find out about the faith groups are in your area from the Church Leaders Group, from Equals, Portsmouth Interfaith Forum, or from the Isle of Wight Council's Equality and Diversity Section;
- carry out formal consultation with faith communities, but also develop informal networks and contacts;
- develop a long-term approach to engagement with faith groups. Engagement with faith communities makes demands for 'religious literacy' and understanding of differences;
- always include a range of faith groups;
- be sensitive to differences; be ready to challenge assumptions that you may bring and learn about different faiths and the cultural background that they have;
- buy a faith calendar, firstly to make sure your engagement does not clash with faith days and secondly so that you can build your knowledge of when to engage with groups and what events may be appropriate to link to;
- consider dietary requirements – for example is halal meat or kosher or vegetarian food needed for your event?
- avoid holding meetings where alcohol is consumed, for example a pub, a hotel with a bar or a licensed function room.

### Case study: Thames Valley – tackling antisocial behaviour

Following issues of antisocial behaviour and criminal damage by young people in the town of Crowthorne, the local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) worked with the Methodist and Baptist churches in Crowthorne to set up a film night with free pizzas and refreshments. The two churches catered for different age groups on Friday nights and up to 40 young people attended each week. Summer activities were also established, supported by a collective of churches, and this led to churches setting up HOPEZONE, a weekly drop-in service offering support, gaming equipment and snacks to local young people. This proved popular with up to 100 youths attending regularly.

**Source:** [Working with Faith Communities – a guide for neighbourhood policing teams and partners](#)  
(Web address given in the Appendix)

### Case study: Developing budget priorities

The London Borough of Wandsworth budget priorities have been developed through a process of democratic endorsement and consultation with service users and the community. Using this information the Council's priorities reflect the views of local communities. These priorities are additionally subject to wide consultation, including a consistent focus on public response to trade-offs between cost and service level and quality. The feedback from this consultation is then used to inform the budget.

The consultation process draws on a survey programme and consultation which uses a wide variety of mechanisms to understand and communicate the needs of the local community.

For example, the Council has established an inter-faith group that is used for consultation, exchange of information and as a conduit to the broader faith community.

These methods and a high investment in ward work, including a programme of Ward 'Report Back' meetings and regular Saturday morning members' surgeries, ensure the council has good intelligence, a clear picture of what matters and a good early warning system for future issues. Much of the consultation effort is co-ordinated centrally but financial and other responsibility rests with service managers.

**Source:** [User Focus and Citizen Engagement, Audit Commission, undated](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

### Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT) are almost certainly a significant hidden minority on the Isle of Wight. Research carried out nationally by National Statistics suggests that 1.5% of the adult population declare themselves openly as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. However, research by Stonewall suggests that the real figure is nearer 8% and some estimates put it higher still. These communities are often the victims of harassment, assault and discrimination through ignorance and fear by others. When engaging with different LGBT groups it may be helpful to go on gender and sexuality awareness training.

#### Terms to understand

- Homosexual – this is an unacceptable term that has been widely used in the medical and legal fields to describe lesbians and gay men and associated with assumptions that lesbians and gay men are sick.
- Bi or Bisexual - this is an accepted term to describe people attracted to both genders.
- Queer - this is a term of abuse which some lesbians and gay men have reclaimed to use in a positive way. There are many other negative terms used to describe lesbians and gay men, including poof, fag, or lezzie. Some lesbians and gay men also reclaim these terms to describe themselves. If heterosexuals use reclaimed terms they would still be seen as offensive.
- Trannie – this is a derogatory term used for transgendered people that has been reclaimed by this community to use in a positive way. This is not a term to be used by heterosexuals.

### Action Point 16: Ideas for involving LGBT people

- Not everyone is heterosexual, so do not assume that everyone in your focus group, consultation or presentation is;
- discuss your approach to consultation with participants beforehand;
- ensure confidentiality from the beginning;
- consultation should take place in an LGBT friendly environment;
- information and publicity should also be LGBT friendly – are all the images in your publications of heterosexual people and families?
- use LGBT researchers and facilitators if possible; heterosexual researchers and facilitators must be knowledgeable about LGBT issues;
- have a statement of values that spells out clearly that homophobia will not be tolerated. This agreement should document what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable. This is an agreement to work within the parameters of respect for all, so that each individual is allowed to participate openly and safely;
- agree a list of inappropriate words;
- hold meetings in a safe place and at a safe time – recognise that LGBT young people aren't always safe in the same places as straight people;
- consider the need for training on sexuality and gender issues if you are not in the LGBT community.

### Case study: Involving Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people

A council brought together a steering group of representatives from the local gay, lesbian and bisexual community to organise a consultation event, with the overall aim of improving communications and links between these communities and the council.

The group used 'walker talkers' – people who targeted gay pubs and asked people to fill in questionnaires. The information they gathered allowed the council to make sure they had officers at the event who could address the issues that came up. The officers were trained in advance to ensure they could respond sensitively. Just one result of the event was that council publicity is being redrafted to include positive references to these communities.

**Source:** [Newcastle Community Engagement Toolkit](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

## Non-users and non-joiners

The term 'non-users' refers to people who do not make use of facilities or services provided by the Council or other agencies. This might include any of the following:

- people who would like to use the services but are unable to – for example, disabled people who find the service inaccessible, people on low incomes for whom it is too expensive, people who do not know about the service because it is poorly advertised, or people for whom the service is culturally inappropriate;
- ex-users who include people that no longer need the service, people who can no longer afford the service or people who can no longer get access to it;
- people who are not interested in using the service, either because they can afford to buy an alternative, or because the service no longer meets their needs.

Non-joiners are people who are not interested in being involved in community engagement activities, or who feel excluded.

The general principles about engaging non-users and non-joiners are:

- start from people's needs and priorities;
- use open-ended questions to understand their perspective;
- use appropriate sampling, so a range of opinions are represented if you are trying to carry out a survey;
- proceed from general issues to more specific ones.

Some groups will be particularly reluctant to be involved. This may be because they are suspicious of authority, or because of negative experiences when involved in previous consultation exercises. This reluctance should not be treated as a barrier. Build up a list of potential contact points, develop these by talking to people from the particular group and other people who may know the group well (support workers etc.) The view of those who work with the group may be interesting but this is not a substitute for direct contact with the people in question.

Community centres and residents' organisations can be particularly effective channels for two-way communication. People in deprived areas may have particular difficulties in communicating with the council and other public bodies, such as:

- living on estates that do not receive the council newspaper
- lack of access to IT – the 'digital divide'
- lower literacy levels
- limited social interaction outside their immediate area because of higher unemployment, poor health and low incomes.

### Action Point 17: Ideas for involving non-users and non-joiners

- Using a combination of methods is the best way to involve people you are interested in;
- use social events to bring people together;
- involve people in focus groups or discussions where they have time to express their views;
- methods of contacting people in the Community include door to door surveys, street surveys or through community organisations that are knowledgeable about local people and who might be useful contacts;
- use advice centres, leisure centres, clubs, churches, temples or mosques where people go for other reasons;
- use other people to spread the work - make contact with non-users and non-joiners through their friends and relatives who are service users or who do join engagement activities;
- survey particular streets with a relatively high concentration of particular communities.

### Case study: Developing a community plan

A community group got together to draft a plan for the regeneration of its neighbourhood. The group sent invitations to all residents, with a short description of what it wanted to do. There were monthly meetings to which all residents were invited, from which a draft plan was drawn up. This was circulated to all residents, with a comment sheet. Everyone was asked to say whether they supported the draft plan, or what changes they would like to see in it. A display of the plans was held in the community centre, with group members on hand to answer questions. Three meetings were organised at different times of day to enable more discussion. Only when the community fully agreed the plan was the council approached.

**Source:** [Newcastle Community Engagement Toolkit](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

### Case study: How not to do it (1)

A council engaged a developer to regenerate an area. Consultation events just seemed to show people what would happen, rather than asking what they wanted. Planners tried to make residents look stupid, ignored their fears and did what they intended all along. No one knew who was in charge or where to get answers. They did not see the final plan until the council had approved it.

**Source:** [Newcastle Community Engagement Toolkit](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

### Case study: How not to do it (2)

At one consultation event, people were expected to write on post-it notes and put their comments up on a board. This excluded large numbers of those present – some just didn't feel comfortable writing because of literacy issues, and others couldn't reach to put their comments up because they were in wheelchairs. At the same event, people were constantly asked to move from table to table, making them feel they were being ordered about, and also again it was difficult for disabled people. There was no opportunity for people to ask questions or just to talk. Jargon and abbreviations were used that alienated people.

**Source:** [Newcastle Community Engagement Toolkit](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

### Case study: Early education, healthcare, children and family support

A Sure Start programme involved parents, carers and professionals right at the start in planning services. The process started off with consultation events, and moved on to encourage local people to be involved in all aspects of programme development, including planning a new building. A user forum allows views of carers of children to be heard

**Source:** [Newcastle Community Engagement Toolkit](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

### Case study: How not to do it (3)

A pressure group was asked to comment on a large draft local transport plan. At a meeting, they were given a copy of the plan, then a facilitator went through over 40 slides, taking two and a half hours. When people asked for acronyms to be explained, the facilitator expressed amazement that they didn't understand, making them feel embarrassed to ask for more clarification. After the slides, the group was expected to prioritise six groups of (on average) 15 actions into a matrix. They had only 15 minutes to do it.

**Source:** [Newcastle Community Engagement Toolkit](#)  
(web address given in the Appendix)

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER – CASE STUDIES OF ENGAGEMENT THAT PRODUCE RESULTS

In this final section of the Toolkit, we describe briefly a number of initiatives from the review of community engagement on the Isle of Wight and from other places that illustrate a positive approach to forms of engagement that achieve partnership, collaboration and community management. These case studies illustrate many of the principles of good community engagement that are identified in this Toolkit. In particular, they show that attention has been paid to:

- being clear why community engagement is needed and on the best way of approaching it;
- careful planning that may involve other agencies or community organisations;
- using existing information as a basis for organising community engagement work, and where necessary designing information systems to support effective engagement;
- ensuring that community engagement sets out to be inclusive;
- use of appropriate methods of engagement;
- use of the information gained to drive policy or service decisions;
- giving feedback on how engagement has influenced decisions and actions.

### Case study: Isle of Wight Council's Big Day Out

This is an annual festival that marks the start of Family Learning Week on the Island. It brings together all the services on the island that offer help, support and activities for children and young people including the council, Connexions and the fostering service. In addition to information and on-the-spot advice from wide range of agencies, there is music and games. This event is an interesting combination of fun mixed with information and advice, with the potential to make it a basis for ongoing involvement between the council, other agencies, and families, children and young people. In 2009 more than 5,000 people and 100 organisations and services both from the private and public sector, exhibited on the day. The event has been so successful that it is used as an example for other local authorities by the government's Myplace scheme – a programme aimed at delivering world class places for young people to go. **What is significant about the event is that people are attracted by the 'fun and games' element of the event rather than by the information and advice that is given out. Yet it seems to be an effective way of engaging people with council departments and other agencies.**

### **Case study: Local Councils and Parish Planning**

West Berkshire Council, is a member of the West Berkshire Partnership, and supports Community Planning. It has a dedicated officer who works closely with Community Action West Berkshire to advise and support communities during the Community Planning process and beyond.

Parish Planning plays a crucial role in helping the Council engage and work effectively with local communities. It also informs elected members, officers and partners about the needs and aspirations of people across West Berkshire.

Underpinning the Parish Plan process is wide ranging consultation with the community, undertaken by the community. This can often produce response rates in excess of 85%. West Berkshire Council, both officers and councillors, can thus have confidence that the issues raised in Parish Plans have a real basis of support and legitimacy coming from within the communities involved.

West Berkshire Council (and the wider West Berkshire partnership) sees Parish Plans as being key documents that drive the policies, strategies and work programmes of the Authority, both as a whole and also its individual services

**Using the techniques of community engagement described in this Toolkit, Parish planning offers opportunities to inform, consult with and involve a wide range of people in service development and community planning.**

**Source:** [Step by step guide to the production of a parish plan](#), West Berkshire Council, 2008

### **Case study: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police - Evolution of an approach to community engagement**

Work on community engagement started in 2006 with the promotion of community forums in each town or neighbourhood. However, these meetings had a variable response. In areas where there is a good response, the police continue to run them. In other areas, the police started to run street briefings - standing in streets with clip boards interviewing members of the public about their concerns and about what they thought the police should do to respond to them. The forums and street briefings were then extended to include surgeries in a variety of public places (e.g. supermarkets). The police now also use a mobile office from which a multi-agency team acts as a drop-in centre to give people information, answer their questions, and deal with crime and quality of life issues that are brought to them by the local community. Extending this, the police have started to use crime and other data to identify streets that might have a problem with crime or antisocial behaviour. The process starts with a letter drop through every front door about five days before the event. On the day in question, officers go to every door and ask the household what their problems are. The police then take away the issues for discussion; plan and implement a response in that area – if necessary with the involvement of other agencies; then report back in a leaflet targeted at the street or neighbourhood. **It is significant that this approach is not carried out by specialists but is one of the core responsibilities of local sergeants and their locality teams - people providing the service engage with their community to find out what they want.**

**Source:** [Inspector Bill Pinnell and Inspector Paul Savill](#)

### Case study: Neighbourhood Agreements

Neighbourhood Agreements are mutual contracts between communities and service providers which allow residents to influence the way services are provided in their area. They define minimum service standards, allowing local people to hold service providers to account. In Oldham, there are agreements covering housing, environment, community services, policing and health. The agreements cover local residents in all types of housing tenure, bringing different parts of the community together.

An independent evaluation of these and similar agreements elsewhere concluded that:

- they offer a framework for accountability to local communities that resulted in improvements to services and neighbourhoods.
- there were notable examples of progress on engaging a wider group of residents, which were being replicated elsewhere.
- where councillors had been positively involved in contracts they played different roles, ranging from practical contributions on the ground to strategic roles as ‘unblockers’ of problems with services and the local authority, and as champions of the contract.

**To be successful, agencies need to be committed to the concept and practice of neighbourhood working, be able to collaborate on services at a local level and put staff into areas and let them engage with communities.**

Source: [Oldham Borough Council](#)  
(web address in Appendix I)

### Case study: Pan Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership

The project is one of 35 national ‘pathfinder’ projects promoting neighbourhood management in deprived communities. It is concerned with empowering the local community to overcome low income, low aspirations and a low level of involvement with local statutory agencies before the project was established. It is run by a management board made up from elected residents, the local councillor, service providers (including the local housing association and the police), plus faith, business and local community representatives. It has a staff team of seven people, some of whom have been recruited from the Pan community. The project’s successes, all of which result from close involvement by the area’s residents, include:

- consultation over the provision of new facilities;
- bringing together the various public agencies with the housing association and other voluntary organisations to improve the way these services work together on the state;
- promotion of a free or subsidised home insulation programme;
- LearnDirect courses and health mornings in the community centre; and
- appointment of estate wardens to act as go-betweens for the community and the police;
- social and leisure activities.

**This project has Island-wide implications in its approach to community engagement, even though its budget is not likely to be repeated.**

Source: [John Norledge and Cheryl Snudden](#), Pan Neighbourhood Project

## APPENDIX: SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

### General resources on community engagement

- David Wilcox (1994), The Guide to Effective Participation, Partnerships Online, available from <http://www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/index.htm>
- Brodie, E, Cowling E and Nissen N (2009), Understanding Participation: a literature review, NCVO, Institute for Volunteering and Involve, available from <http://pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk/2010/01/understanding-participation-a-literature-review/>
- The Urban Forum, IDeA, NAVCA and the National Empowerment Partnership (2009), Developing your comprehensive community engagement strategy: a practical guide for LSPs, available from <http://www.navca.org.uk/publications/cces/>. This report is a useful general guide to community engagement partnerships.
- Community Engagement Toolbox, available from <http://www.community-toolbox.org/default.aspx>
- Local engagement and empowerment: our resources; Local Government Improvement and Development, available from: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagel=19527709>
- Community empowerment, Local Government Improvement and Development, available from: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagel=16639499>

### Community engagement strategies and toolkits

- Barking and Dagenham Partnership Community Engagement Toolkit: [www.barkingdagenhampartnership.org.uk/](http://www.barkingdagenhampartnership.org.uk/)
- Cambridgeshire Community Engagement Toolkit, Shaping places, shaping services: [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk)
- Hertfordshire county Council and Dacorum Borough Council, Guide to engaging the public ('Engage'): [www.hertslink.org/engage](http://www.hertslink.org/engage)
- City of Manchester and Manchester Partnership Community Engagement Toolkit: [www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/ManchesterCommunityEngagementToolkit.pdf](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/ManchesterCommunityEngagementToolkit.pdf)
- North East Lincolnshire Community Engagement Framework and Toolkit: [www.nelincs.gov.uk/community-people-and-living/local-strategic-partnership/community-engagement-framework-toolkit/](http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/community-people-and-living/local-strategic-partnership/community-engagement-framework-toolkit/)
- Newcastle Partnership Community Engagement Strategy: [www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/engagementstrat?opendocument](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/engagementstrat?opendocument)
- Newcastle Partnership Community Engagement Toolkit: [www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/engagement](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/engagement)
- London Borough of Waltham Forest, Community Engagement Strategy 2007 – 2010: [www.walthamforest.gov.uk/community-engagement-strategy-2007-2010.pdf](http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/community-engagement-strategy-2007-2010.pdf)

- Thurrock Partnership, Community Engagement Toolkit:  
[www.thurrock.gov.uk/i-know/pdf/perf\\_how\\_01\\_engagement\\_v1.pdf](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/i-know/pdf/perf_how_01_engagement_v1.pdf)
- West Berkshire Council Consultation Toolkit:  
[www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1706](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1706)
- Wolverhampton Partnership Community Engagement Strategy:  
[www.wton-partnership.org.uk/page.php?identity=commeng](http://www.wton-partnership.org.uk/page.php?identity=commeng)
- Wolverhampton Partnership Involving the public resource pack:  
[www.wton-partnership.org.uk/page.php?identity=commeng](http://www.wton-partnership.org.uk/page.php?identity=commeng)
- National Association of Parish Councils Toolkits:  
<http://www.nalc.gov.uk/Toolkits/Toolkits.aspx>

### Engaging children and young people

- Save the Children Consultation Toolkit  
<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/resources.htm>
- Downland Youth Network, Berkshire  
[www.downlandyouthnetwork.org.uk/](http://www.downlandyouthnetwork.org.uk/)

### Engaging older People

- Age UK:  
[www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/older-peoples-forums/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/older-peoples-forums/)
- Policy Studies Institute and Better Government for Older People: [www.psi.org.uk/pdf/bgop\\_release.pdf](http://www.psi.org.uk/pdf/bgop_release.pdf)

### Engaging disabled People

- What the law says about involving disabled people:  
[www.odi.gov.uk/involving-disabled-people/index.php](http://www.odi.gov.uk/involving-disabled-people/index.php)
- Involving disabled people  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/PSD/18\\_ded\\_and\\_involvement.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/PSD/18_ded_and_involvement.pdf)

### Engaging men and women

- Gender Equality  
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelD=5145520>

### Engaging BME People

- See Equality and Human Rights Commission and local authority toolkits
- Isle of Wight Equals: [www.equalsiw.org.uk/](http://www.equalsiw.org.uk/)

### Engaging Faith Communities

- Interfaith Network for the UK, The Local Interfaith Guide:  
[www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/lifg2005.pdf](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/lifg2005.pdf)
- National Policing Improvement Agency:  
[www.npiadocuments.co.uk/faithguidance.pdf](http://www.npiadocuments.co.uk/faithguidance.pdf)

### Parish planning and neighbourhood agreements

- The Complete Parish Planning Resource Centre:  
<http://www.parishplanning.co.uk/>
- Setting up a neighbourhood agreements – some advice and tips, Oldham Borough Council:  
[www.oldham.gov.uk/setting\\_up\\_a\\_neighbourhood\\_agreement.pdf](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/setting_up_a_neighbourhood_agreement.pdf)

### Equality Act 2010

- Equality Act Guidance  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/)
- Public Sector Equality Duty  
[www.odi.gov.uk/disabled-people-and-legislation/disability-equality-duty-and-impact-assessments.php/](http://www.odi.gov.uk/disabled-people-and-legislation/disability-equality-duty-and-impact-assessments.php/)

### Other sources of information

- Community Development Exchange:  
[www.comm-dev.co.uk](http://www.comm-dev.co.uk)
- Community Development Foundation: [www.cdf.org.uk](http://www.cdf.org.uk)
- Development Trusts Association: [www.dta.org.uk](http://www.dta.org.uk)
- Local Government Improvement and Development:  
[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)
- International Association for Public Participation:  
[www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org)
- Local Government Association: [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)
- Neighbourhood Renewal: [www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net)
- Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation: [www.nifonline.org.uk](http://www.nifonline.org.uk)
- New Start Magazine: [www.newstartmag.co.uk](http://www.newstartmag.co.uk)
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation: [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)