

Community Engagement Toolkit

One Council Approach to Community Engagement

Why use this toolkit?

Introduction

This toolkit should be used in conjunction with the Engagement Policy when you are thinking about engaging people who use the council's services. It is not prescriptive about what engagement techniques you should use nor does it have to be stuck to rigidly. It has, however, been designed so that you can dip in and out as appropriate: You may, for example, want to use part of one engagement technique or method and combine it with another to achieve your engagement objectives.

This toolkit is based on the following ladder of participation:

This toolkit comprises four sections:

Section 1 - Community engagement in context

Section 2 - Planning your engagement activities

Section 3 - Community engagement methods and techniques

Section 4 - Feeding back about your community engagement activities



Other information on this topic

- Event planning checklist
- Community Mapping Toolkit
- Case Study: Manor Park Consultation
- Adult Social Care Toolkit

Where to go for further advice

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Section 1: Community engagement in context

This section provides some basic information about community engagement and looks at some of the key challenges associated with engaging with people who use our services.

What is community engagement? Community engagement provides people with opportunities to have a say in what happens in their communities and neighbourhoods and to be more active in decision making.

What is a community? Communities can be people in a geographical area or of interest, or people who share a particular experience, interest or characteristic such as young people or disabled people. People often belong to more than one community and communities are always diverse.

What are the barriers to engagement? There are a number of obstacles that can prevent us from engaging with local people. These include:

- Tunnel vision - only seeing something from one point of view
- Work load and time pressures
- Lack of understanding and awareness including cultural awareness
- The void between what we think we know about our residents and what people who live in Slough and use our services actually experience
- Our own experience of trying something that hasn't worked before
- A focus on finances rather than people
- An assumption that we know all the answers
- Towing the party line
- Language
- Trying to fit the people who use our services into boxes based on need

What are the principles of good engagement? For any type of engagement to be successful you need to keep the following principles in mind:

- 1) To avoid duplication make sure colleagues are aware of your engagement/consultation exercise by attending the One Council Community Development

and Engagement meeting. This is an ideal opportunity to discuss your consultation with representatives from a number of service areas and it will offer a useful forum for discussion on how to carry out your engagement exercise and potential support available.

- 2) Making sure no one is left out - this means planning your activities well (see [section 2](#)); engaging with a broad range of people and reducing barriers to participation so that they can make an informed contribution (more information on how to do this is provided on this in [section 3](#)).
- 3) Using the most appropriate methods to enable the people who use your services, or most affected by the issue under discussion, the opportunity to influence what happens next (and where appropriate 'digital' by default) (also see [section 3](#)).
- 4) Giving people enough time to take part and respond and offering support to people who may struggle to understand or who are most likely to be affected by your proposals. This may require using an interpreter or advocate.
- 5) Being honest and upfront with people about why you are engaging with them and about the options available.
- 6) Respecting people's confidentiality and protecting their personal information from unlawful disclosure.
- 7) Respecting people's opinions, comments and suggestions.
- 8) Not seeking to purposely validate a decision you may have already taken by 'cherry picking' the responses that best support your proposal(s).
- 9) Reviewing and evaluating the results of your engagement activities to understand whether your original outcomes have been met) more information is provided on this in [section 4](#)
- 10) Sharing the findings and outcome of your engagement activities with everyone who took part and publishing the results more widely (also see [section 4](#)). Please bring the results of your Consultation/Engagement to the One Council Community Development and Engagement meeting.

Section 2: Planning your engagement activities

This section provides some basic information about how to successfully plan your engagement activities. Whatever type of engagement you are planning to carry out, it is important to plan it effectively and learn from the experience. You might find it useful to think about the following questions when planning the scope of your engagement:

Aims and outcomes

- Are you clear about what outcome(s) you are looking to achieve?
- What do you want to learn and why?

Issues and constraints

- How contentious is the issue you want to engage on?
- Is there a statutory requirement or legal obligation to engage?
- Are there any constraints? - i.e. what can/can't people influence?
- What timescales (if any) are you planning to work too?
- Is there a budget for your engagement? If so, how much and where does it sit?

What do you already know?

- What do you or others already know about this?
- Can any existing sources of information provide intelligence on this issue?
- What engagement have you, your colleagues and partners already done on this issue - can you reuse this rather than engage again?
- The One Council Community Development and Engagement meeting will have an awareness of past, present and future engagement activities and will be able to assist with this area of work.

People

- Who do you want to engage with and why? e.g. individuals, service users, their families, carers, volunteers, other professionals, specific communities, the people who are most likely to be affected by the issue/decision under discussion, the whole population?
- What methods do you intend to use to reach your target audiences? (See section 3 for further information on this).
- Are there any communication issues that you need to consider - are there any language barriers?
- Are there any ethical issues associated with working with these groups and if so how will you manage them? For example, gaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality?

What information do you need and why?

- What quantitative and qualitative information do you need and from whom?
- How will you collect this information?
- How will the people involved get in touch with you if they need too - what details do you need to provide them?
- The One Council Community Development and Engagement meeting will be able to assist with this area of work.

Analysing the results

- Who will analyse your data? Analysing survey data is a skilled and time-consuming task. Do you have the skills to do this and if not, who can help? It is vital that the information that has been provided is accurately represented and gives a balanced picture of results.
- How will you write up all your findings?
- How will you show what changed as a result of feedback/comments you received?
- What will you do differently/better next time?

How will you feed back?

- Where will you publish your results?
- How will you feedback to everyone who took part - i.e. how will you capture their preferred method of communication - email, text, phone calls, letter, social media. (See section 4 for more information on this issue).



Section 3: Community engagement methods and techniques




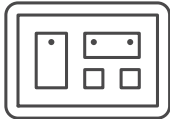

This section provides an overview of some of the basic community engagement methods and techniques that are available. Different people or communities prefer different engagement methods and some methods work better for some activities than others.



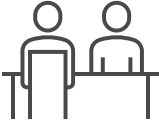
A-Z of community engagement methods and techniques




The following table summarises the relative advantages and disadvantages of a number of different community engagement methods that are commonly used to inform, consult and involve the community.




These techniques can be used on their own or in combination depending on who you need to engage with and what works best with that group or community. Whichever technique or method you decide to use, you should always consider how you will encourage and enable people and different communities of interest (including **hard-to-reach groups**) to take part.




Type of engagement	Method	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages
Informing	Emails, text messaging and MMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and editing skills needed • Administration of responses/feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheap and effective way of reaching a particular group of people • Effective at reaching hard to reach groups • Can send combination of text and images • Imagery can evoke powerful feeling and emotions - can be used to gain better response rate • Easy to respond to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language can easily be misunderstood • Not everyone owns a computer or a mobile phone • Not everyone uses text or MMS • Doesn't work well with older community • Doesn't work well with those for whom English is not their first language
Informing	Exhibitions, stands, stall, open days and road shows <i>Used to provide information and to obtain views on specific projects or services</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable venues • Publicise the event • Hold at times and locations to suit target audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can attract a broad range of people if publicised and promoted well • Effective in publicising services/organisations • Gives public flexibility to attend • Allows contact with public • Allows contact with non service users • Can be high profile • People may ask questions and become more interested in your project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups reached dependant on location/timing of road show, exhibition, etc • Likely to obtain views of a small number of people who are not representative • Feedback may be limited • People may not feel comfortable to come up • People may see it as a sales pitch/unclear on purpose




Type of engagement	Method	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages
Informing	Letters, postcards, adverts and posters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and editing skills needed • Clearly defined objective • Needs of visually impaired • In house branding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be eye catching • Readers can take in information at their own pace • Helps get a message across quickly • Can reach a wide audience • Relatively cheap • Allows you to control the distribution of information • Sense of inclusion for readers • Can be delivered straight to people • Can be used to support other forms of engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited information space • Prevents two way flow of information - so could be regarded as propaganda • Impersonal - may be ignored by target audiences • People don't take time to read them (especially if they look uninteresting) • People may think it is junk mail
Informing	Local media and press releases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local radio and television stations can be a powerful form of communication • Useful way to publicise local initiative • Community radio can be particularly good at reaching a specific geographical community or community of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can reach a relatively large audience • Relatively cheap • The glamour of the media can encourage certain communities to participate • Easy and accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local people might not listen or watch the channel used • You might lose editorial control of your material • Specialist equipment and skills needed • Cultural and religious norms might prevent certain groups from taking part
Informing	Articles, newsletters, flyers, leaflets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and editing skills needed • In house branding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for regular updates • Can reach a wide audience • Relatively cheap • Good way to disseminate large amount of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be costly and time consuming • May be seen as junk mail • Not always read by target audience • Media coverage may slant the story
Informing	Website <i>Using information technology to inform and gather feedback</i> 	Access to computers may be limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost effective • Quick response rate • Easy to keep information current • Potentially wide-reaching • Can be used to engage with some hard-to-reach groups • Useful for panel surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not reach everyone • May exclude some groups, e.g. elderly, low income • Results can be unrepresentative
Informing and consulting	Forums <i>Structured and regular meetings with interest groups</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs effective management • Hold at times/locations to suit target communities • Staffing and facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful link between partner agencies and local people • Can be used to seek local committed involvement • Relatively cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees are unlikely to represent all views • Can be dominated by the most vocal • Will not reach everyone • Some groups may feel uncomfortable talking in public


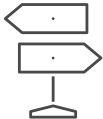
Type of engagement	Method	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages
Informing & consulting	<p>Public meetings <i>Formal meetings with scheduled agendas. Used to provide information, seek views and develop/endorse local plans and strategies for the community or whole town</i></p> <p>Also see separate checklist on how to plan a public meeting/event (Event planning checklist)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold at times/locations to suit target communities • Publicity for event • Clearly defined objective • Defined meeting structure • Staffing and facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to provide information and receive feedback • Large numbers of people can participate • Builds relationships with local community • Can be used to seek local committed involvement • Relatively cheap • Allows public to let off steam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees are unlikely to represent all views • Large group may be a barrier • Can be dominated by the most vocal • Turnout can be poor • Can be difficult to separate individual and general complaints • Some groups may feel uncomfortable talking in public
Informing	<p>Seminars/Workshops <i>A formally organised discussion group to exchange and gather information. Usually in the format of presentations followed by small group discussions, ending in a large group discussion of key issues</i></p> <p>Also see separate checklist on how to plan a public meeting/event (Event planning checklist)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires skilled facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to share large amounts of information • Opportunity to engage in multi-disciplinary discussions • Participants can ask questions and explore issues in detail • Encourages participants to network and share experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a great deal of organisation and specialist moderation skills • Can be costly and time consuming • Can be dominated by the most vocal • Some groups may feel uncomfortable talking in public
Consulting	<p>Face to face interviews</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good listening skills required • Useful for obtaining information on views, attitudes and behaviours. • Usually conducted by trained interviewer using a structured questionnaire. This enables interviewers to clarify any ambiguities, explain issues and answer queries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide detailed information form a representative sample of the population • High response rate • Good for exploring sensitive issues • Suitable venues • Safety of interviewers and participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not appropriate for complex issues where respondent needs time to think about the issues • Not representative of the whole of the population • Can be expensive - a fifteen minute door to door survey of 500 participants = £10,000

Type of engagement	Method	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages
Consulting	<p>Focus groups <i>Facilitated group discussion to explore issues in depth and seek views of particular interest groups</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires skilled facilitators Selection of group of prime importance May need several groups to gain different perspectives Generally 8-10 people per group Can be formal/informal Need a representative group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows brainstorming of ideas Can be designed to involve hard-to-reach groups Can explore complex issues Provides in-depth information Useful for building on survey findings Allows interaction and spontaneity between participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be costly and time-consuming Requires specialist expertise to facilitate discussion Lack of confidentiality Can only achieve limited representation Discussions can be difficult to transcribe and analyse Can be difficult to get people to participate Can get hung up on negatives and needs
Consulting	<p>Questionnaires/surveys - Self-completion <i>Effective way to gather views and opinions and to measure attitudes, satisfaction and performance. Postal surveys usually used. Can also be managed in house electronically.</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing and editing skills needed Administration of responses/feedback Full details need to be provided Publicise event Allow time to respond Needs statistical and research expertise to administer and avoid bias Most suitable for attitudinal surveys How to access hard-to-reach groups How to provide feedback to respondents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good starting point for consultation Provides an opportunity to test various options/assumptions Effective way of quickly gaining information from a lot of people Analysis relatively straightforward Data can be compared against local and national benchmarks Can be used for sensitive issues Open-ended questions can explore issues in-depth Can be tailored to meet the needs of different groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be costly to produce and circulate Not always read by target audience Needs to be accessible by all, e.g. other languages, etc May have poor response rate Can be resource intensive Can get hung up on negatives and needs Unsuitable for complex issues Open-ended questions difficult to analyse Can yield a low response rate Cannot be certain of veracity of responses Unsuitable for those without access to computers Certain population groups are more likely to respond which can affect results Not effective for gathering in depth information
Consulting	<p>Questionnaires/surveys - Telephone <i>Effective way to gather views and opinions and to measure attitudes, satisfaction and performance.</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs statistical and research expertise to administer and avoid bias How to access hard-to-reach groups How to provide feedback to respondents May need external resources and trained researchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can ensure a good response rate Easier to engage with hard-to-reach groups Can be used to obtain responses from demographically representative sample Allows issues to be explored in depth Allows flexible structure of interview May be used to explore sensitive issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewer cannot respond to any questions Not necessarily representative Can be costly and time consuming Personal safety of field-workers may be a risk Specific skills are required to conduct the interview Can be difficult to analyse

Type of engagement	Method	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages
Consulting & Engaging	<p>Referenda, polls and ballots</p> <p><i>Usually used to obtain an answer on a single issue. Asks for a response to a single question. Can be postal or traditional. The outcome (that is, a 'yes' or 'no') is binding</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiated by government Issue should stand on its own (not overly complex) Results usually binding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion of entire population can be obtained quickly and efficiently Postal ballots can be used to improve turnout The organisation must act on the outcome All voters are equal Incites discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive Limited use Requires publicity to improve response rate Should only be used for issues that require little or no explanation Can only give a yes/no response or a choice between limited options Turnout can be low
Consulting & Engaging	<p>Service user comments and complaints</p> <p><i>Provides a system for direct feedback from service users</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes feedback forms accessible Data confidentially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early warning system for problems Helps to develop a rapport with users by having continual dialogue Allows you to see things from the users point of view Can be used to track change attitudes/improvements over time Relatively cheap way of focusing on user issues Easy to set up Provides input from service users Can identify weaknesses and strengths Formal mechanisms of pursuing a complaint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlikely to yield positive comments Not representative Essentially reactive to existing systems Subjectivity of personal views can prevent objective consideration of an issues One person can easily dominate the group and influence what others say Excludes non users
Consulting & Engaging	<p>Staff feedback and suggestions</p> <p><i>Provides a system for feedback and suggestions from frontline staff who deal with the public</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train staff to deal with complaints Establish feedback systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show you value staff and are open to suggestions Valuable source of information on service use and users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relies on staff participation Time consuming Not necessarily representative

Type of engagement	Method	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages
Engaging	<p>Ward councillor contact (surgeries)</p> <p><i>A contact point for residents to express their views and concerns about issues that affect them</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold at times/locations to suit constituents • Accessing hard to reach constituents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for public relations • Makes people feel that they are being listened to and that their issues matter • Enhances the representative role of local councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited and unrepresentative perspective
Engaging & Co-designing	<p>Advisory committees</p> <p><i>A group to advise partner agencies on policy decisions and services</i></p> <p><i>Group may consist of professionals and/or key stakeholders</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define roles and responsibilities • Be forthcoming with information • Interview members before selection • Ensure members communicate with their constituents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can use existing groups • Permanent, regular method • Group will be familiar with issues • Group are able to give advice from a variety of perspectives • Can offer an expert opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be embraced by general public • Members may not reach consensus • People may become experts and/or be unrepresentative • Can only involve limited number of participants • Time and labour intensive
Co-designing & Co-producing	<p>Citizens' juries</p> <p><i>Small sample of population (usually paid) who debate an issue in a quasi-judicial setting with witnesses. Aims to obtain informed and considered opinion or verdict on a specific, often controversial issue</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires skilled moderator • Commissioning body must follow recommendations or explain why • Need to be clear about how to use results • Consensus not required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops deep understanding of issue • Can be used to address very complex and controversial issues • Participants can be made fully aware but can still come to a decision from a 'lay' perspective • Public identify with representative residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • May not be representative • Difficult to include all interest groups • Can be time-consuming and resource intensive • Not suitable for all issues • Extensive preparatory work

Type of engagement	Method	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages
Co-designing & Co-producing	<p>Citizens' panels/young persons' panels</p> <p><i>Comprise between 500 and 2,500 residents who are demographically representative of the population. Used as a sounding board to test, assess and develop proposals over an extended period of time</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel members need to be clear of their roles Can be conducted in partnership with other organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographically representative Readily available 'pool' of willing respondents Can yield a good response rate Relatively cheap once the panel has been set up Can be targeted Track views over time Relatively cost effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot be used for complex issues Can be expensive and time-consuming to set up Risk of over-consulting May not be represented as panel self-selecting and want to be consulted Panel may become experts and conditioned to providing the right answers Panel membership needs to be refreshed regularly
Co-designing & Co-producing	<p>Neighbourhood panels/area forums</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts as a focal point for community engagement on a ward basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All ward members involved regular meetings Limited decision making powers allow community access to members and officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be overly influenced by some people Not truly representative Difficult to reach consensus
Engaging & Co-designing	<p>Future conferencing/ visioning</p> <p><i>Considering future scenarios and ways to influence outcomes in uncertain situations</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent and skilled facilitator No pre-set proposals Seeks consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a real sense of involvement by using local knowledge and understanding Can build consensus Promotes community ownership of the results Allows many viewpoints and exchange of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time consuming Resource intensive Can raise unrealistic expectations Costly Difficulty in reaching consensus Can be captured by large interest groups

Type of engagement	Method	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages
Co-producing	<p>Physical planning (Planning for Real) <i>Structured consultation method that uses a 3D plan of the neighbourhood to ascertain what physical changes people want for their local area</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning for Real is a registered trademark of the Neighbourhood Inclusive Foundation (NIF) and is a technique which promotes community involvement through the use of visual materials. This type of activity needs to be undertaken by a trained practitioner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be available as a tailored package, so easy to set up Is entertaining and involves those who would not normally participate Makes it easy to obtain honest and wide-ranging opinions Can deal with complex issues Gives people ownership of their community Removes confrontation about issues which can be a feature of some public meetings Directly involves the community Informal way of encouraging and discussing new ideas Useful when developing a plan of action for a particular area - parish plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to ensure representation Can be a costly exercise Size of the model limits how many people can be involved Numerous models may be required Language and literacy barriers can be an issues Time consuming Needs a trained practitioner
Co-producing	<p>Customer experience/ journey mapping <i>A process of capturing and understanding complex customer interactions. It relies on local knowledge to build a consensus across the organisation about your customer's experience of a particular service. It can uncover key customer moments that if improved could unlock a more compelling and valuable customer experience.</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process helps create a shared frame of reference around a customer's experience of the service. The map allows you understand current customers experience (of a service) and to identify specify opportunities/actions that if implemented would create and support a better customer experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively cheap and easy to set up Directly involves service users Allows many different viewpoints and exchange of information Creates a real sense of involvement Can identify the weaknesses and strengths in current arrangements Promotes service users ownership of the results Can be used to track change/ improvements over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be time consuming and resource intensive May be difficult to reach consensus - as no two customers experience likely to be the same Excludes non service users Subjectivity of personal views can prevent objective consideration of an issue

Engaging with hard to reach groups in Slough

There are many reasons why it may be more challenging to involve some people or communities in your engagement activities. Complex physical disabilities, language barriers and other cultural differences can make it hard for some people to participate, communicate verbally or understand more complex issues.

Group	Tips for how to involve people who find it hard to speak for themselves
Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one size fits all approach won't work - you will need to develop specific tailored approaches for the particular BME groups you wish to reach. • Work with colleagues and partners who are experienced in working with BME communities to plan, test, execute and evaluate your activities. • Read the "engaging people" a guide produced by BRAP equality and human rights group. This guide points out some of the common pitfalls associated with engaging with BME communities • Attend training to help you challenge stereotyping, perceptions and assumptions. • Think about undertaking some capacity building activities with this group before you start to engage. • If you are planning an event make sure the venue, time and day is culturally appropriate for those you need to involve - for example don't arrange meetings at the same time as Friday prayers • Do you need an interpreter or translator to engage with this community? • If you are planning an event think about whether your attendees have any special dietary requirements. • Avoid locations where alcohol is consumed, for example pub, a hotel with a bar or a licensed function room.
Children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of modern technology to reach this audience: Use social media such as Facebook and Twitter and/or text messaging. • Work with colleagues and partners who are experienced in working with this group to plan, test, execute and evaluate your activities. • Also try and involve children and young people in the design, creation and planning of your events and activities. • Always work alongside colleagues and partners who are experienced in working with the children and young people and never take children or young people away from this supervision. • Hold activities in open, friendly neutral locations, not official environments like schools or council buildings. • Dress appropriately - wearing a suit or ID badge can be a barrier to engagement with some children and young people.
People with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend training on disability awareness so that you are clear about what being disabled means. • Spend some time experiencing what life is like for individuals - shadow them for a day or two. • Work with people who know this group best - carers and both paid and unpaid support networks - to plan, test, execute and evaluate your engagement activities. • Use technology and communication aids. • Consider using Easy Reader for people with learning difficulties • Consult local disability groups/networks on what adjustments may need to be made for this group. • Look at the Accessible Information Standard which aims to make sure that disabled people have access to information that they can understand and any communication support they might need. This includes making sure that people get information in different formats if they need it, such as large print, Braille, easy read and via email. For further guidance on this Standard click here.
Older People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with people who know this group best to plan, test, execute and evaluate your engagement activities. • Consult local organisations, groups and networks on what adjustments may need to be made for this group. • If you are planning on holding an event consider the timing of it as - some older people don't like going out in the evening and prefer morning events. • Ensure print, format and content of any documents you plan to use are accessible.

Group	Tips for how to involve people who find it hard to speak for themselves
Faith communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always include a wide range of faith groups in your activities. • Develop links with inter-faith bodies before you start to plan your activity. • Work with people who know these groups best to plan, test, execute and evaluate your engagement activities. • Attend training to increase your 'religious literacy'. • If you are planning an event think about whether your attendees have any special dietary requirements. • If you are planning an event make sure the venue, time and day is culturally appropriate for those you need to involve - for example don't arrange meetings at the same time as Friday prayers. • Avoid locations where alcohol is consumed, for example pub, a hotel with a bar or a licensed function room. • Always check to make sure your community engagement activities do not clash with a particular religious festival.
Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend gender and sexuality awareness training if you are not in the LGBT community. • Work with people/local groups who know the LGBT community best. • Consult LGBT groups/networks on what adjustments may need to be made for this group. • Use LGBT researchers wherever possible or heterosexual researchers who are knowledgeable about LGBT issues. • Always hold meetings in a safe place and at a safe time (LGBT people aren't always safe in the same places as straight people).
New and emerging communities, refugees and asylum seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with people/local groups who are trusted by this community. • Consult local groups/networks on what adjustments may need to be made for this group. • Consider using paid interpreters for some engagement activities. • Hold activities in open, friendly neutral locations, not official environments like council buildings. • Dress appropriately - wearing a suit or ID badge can be a barrier to engagement with this group. • Think about undertaking some capacity building activities with this group before you start to engage. • Do you need an interpreter or translator to engage with this community?

Section 4: Feeding back on your community engagement activities

Providing feedback is one of the most important stages of the engagement process and is all too often the one that is missed. You should always review and feedback the outcome of your engagement activities to everyone who took and explain how their contributions contributed to what you plan to do next. Evaluating your approach will also help you learn and improve your approach for next time.

Top tips for feeding back to the public

- The way that you feed back will vary depending upon the type of engagement activity undertaken and/or how the people who took part in it asked for this information fed back.
- The easiest way to feed back to the public is to prepare a short summary statement or report about your engagement activities that can be shared with your original participants (if you collected their contact details) and published on the council's website. As a minimum this should include:
 - o The number of responses received
 - o What impact the responses received had on the final decision to be taken i.e. we asked you this, you told us ... so we have decided to do
 - o What comments/views had to be discounted and why
 - o What's going to happen next
 - o Who to contact for more information
- If you are going to use this method, please use plain English; avoid jargon and try not to baffle people with confusing statistics. Also keep it short and to the point as lengthy reports are often ignored and your key messages could get lost.
- Diagrams, charts and pictures are a great way to convey your message rather than reams and reams of text.

- You should aim to feedback within 12 weeks of your engagement activity finishing. Where you are unable to do this, you should prepare and publish a brief statement explaining why you have not been able to do so.
- Be creative - Try to think "outside in" that is, put yourself outside your service area and ask yourself how you can make this information more understandable to the public: Posters are great way to feedback to large numbers of people in particular buildings or locations, newsletters and/or articles in the local press are also good ways of feeding back to the public.
- Video clips on the council's website might also be another way to feedback.

Top tips for feeding back to partners, decision-makers and stakeholders

- You should also share your findings with colleagues, partners (where appropriate), other decision makers and relevant stakeholders - since this helps to improve coordination and reduce duplication.
- How you feedback to others will also depend very much on the type of engagement activity you originally undertook and how they asked for this information to be shared with them during your planning stage.
- Some of the most popular ways of feeding back to this group include:
 - o Preparing a detailed report that includes analysis and interpretation of all of the comments received, with your recommendations in response to the information provided (with key recommendations, where appropriate).
 - o Preparing a short summary report that is accessible to all participants and partner organisations.

Community Engagement Toolkit