



# Not another consultation!

Making community engagement informal and fun

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“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”.

**Albert Einstein**

The government has emphasised the central role that local government plays in tackling health inequalities and improving health through enhanced local democratic legitimacy and engagement with the public. However, it is apparent that many of the same old, rigid and inflexible consultation techniques we are used to are not up to the challenge.

Do you feel like you are not getting the true views and opinions of the public you are engaging with? Maybe you feel you see the same faces at all meetings and are not hearing from all the groups or individuals in your community. If so, and you are committed to tackling the health inequalities within your area, perhaps it is time to **try something different**.

Informal engagement events:

- Are a fun and enjoyable way for service providers to work with the public to understand their feelings about their community and how they would like to move forward with improvements.
- Give people greater opportunities to influence decisions through participative and direct democracy rather than formal consultation exercises.

- Are just one of a series of activities that come under the banner of community development. These give people confidence in their capacity to control their own circumstances and have the potential to improve health and wellbeing.

This guide has been written following a successful project with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and NHS West Kent who, as a part of Local Government Improvement and Development's Healthy Communities programme, ran an informal engagement event to inform health improvement in the area. By mixing accessible engagement activities with Indian head massages, face painting, smoothie bikes and jewellery making, alongside health information stalls covering issues such as smoking and sexual health advice, the council was able to run a lively and positive engagement event that broke out of the boundaries of formal consultation and away from methods that simply tick boxes.

If you would like to find out how to plan, run and evaluate this kind of informal engagement event then this guidance is what you need.

## About the authors

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## About Involve

The logo for Involve, featuring the word "involve" in a lowercase, blue, sans-serif font.

Involve is a charity specialising in understanding public engagement in all its forms. Involve provides advice, training, research, events and networking services to organisations and individuals interested in public participation. The organisation focuses on the practical reality of public participation.

Involve is committed to producing work that is of practical use to practitioners on the ground. The research actively involved relevant stakeholders and experts through a participatory workshop in order to ensure the research and guidance is tailored to your needs.

## About Local Government Improvement and Development

Local Government Improvement and Development (LG Improvement and Development formerly the IDeA) supports improvement and innovation in local government, focusing on the issues that are important to councils, using tried and tested ways of working.

LG Improvement and Development work with councils in developing good practice, supporting them in their partnerships. This is done through networks, online communities of practice and web resources, and through the support and challenge provided by councillor and officer peers.

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# Explaining the guidance

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## What is this document?

This practical guidance will help you plan and deliver informal engagement events with a health focus that combine a community fun day with appropriate engagement methods.

The purpose of this guide is to enable local government practitioners to run active and exciting forms of engagement that incorporate drop-in activities in ways that are tailored to the needs of different communities.

This document provides practical guidance on how to develop and plan informal engagement events. It is a set of guidelines rather than a strict blueprint. In order to be successful, any public engagement activity that aims to improve the health of an area must be designed to suit the local context in which it occurs. This is particularly important when engaging for health improvements. A community with large amounts of open space will engage differently on the health of their community, compared to an area that is densely populated but has health promotion classes in their schools. What works for one event or one community may be inappropriate for others.

## When do I use this document?

This guide is a practical document which supports you in the planning, delivery and follow up of specific types of engagement event. It does not help you with the bigger picture, nor help you to develop a complete engagement strategy; you should already be developing or have developed this before you plan and run this type of event.



If you have not already developed an engagement strategy you can use the following guidance to help you decide whether an informal engagement event is right for you.

[Developing Your Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy](#) - (Urban Forum)

## Informal engagement events

Informal engagement events are designed to support you in a specific type of public involvement that will support the delivery of a holistic approach to addressing the root causes of health inequalities. By working in partnership with community networks it will support you in harnessing the civic energy that is so important for the Big Society.

Characteristics of this type of engagement include:

- fun-day aspects so there are lots of other attractions to draw people along to the event
- locating it at a community venue or public space that is often well attended for other reasons
- holding the event at a time which makes it easy for the target audience to attend
- involving the local community in planning and running the day so that they feel ownership of the outcomes.

### Glossary

We talk about **informal engagement** in three ways:

- **as a process:** the entire engagement process from planning to evaluating
- **as an event:** the day itself when the engagement event happens
- **as an activity:** the engagement methods used to gather information.

## How do I use this document?

### Are you new to engagement?

Use [Part I](#) to [Part III](#) if you are new to engagement, and work through the entire document. It will enable you to learn the theory behind engagement and how informal engagement can help you achieve such requirements as your joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) of the health and wellbeing of local communities. If this type of engagement then feels right for you, the rest of the document will help you to plan, run and evaluate your own engagement event.

### Are you confident in engagement?

You should go straight to [Part II](#) 'Planning the informal engagement' event if you know how this type of engagement can fit into your strategic plans for a healthy community. However you may not have organised an informal engagement event before, so this guidance can help you in the planning, running and evaluating of this process.

### Do you want quick fix support?

Go straight to [Part III](#) 'Checklist for an informal engagement event' if you have organised this kind of informal engagement event before. The best way for you to use this guidance is to work through the final part of the document.

## Tools to support you throughout the guidance

### Stop signs



Pay special attention to the information at a stop sign.

### Sign posts



These will direct you to relevant materials external to this document.

### Checklists

These will guide you through what you need for a particular task.

### Case studies

These are examples of how other organisations have approached engagement.

### Suggestion boxes

These will help you to think of different ways of doing things.

### Top tips

This is key advice to make the activity successful.

### Exercise boxes

These help you plan a particular activity.



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# Part I. Understanding engagement

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**Before you run an informal engagement event, it is important that you understand how engagement fits within the community health context. This will give you a better idea of what you need to do and what you can achieve through engagement.**

## Local government's role in health

The health of a community is influenced by multiple and complex factors. The actions of public bodies – councils in particular – are key contributors to promoting sustainable health, tackling health inequalities and creating health improvements.

Health is influenced by a wide range of social, economic and environmental factors. These elements cannot always be controlled or influenced. Instead the individual's ability to make 'choices' regarding their own lifestyle is often constrained by factors beyond their immediate control. The social determinants of health have been defined as "the socio-economic conditions that influence the health of individuals, communities and jurisdictions as a whole. These determinants also establish the extent to which a person possesses the physical, social and personal resources to identify and achieve personal aspirations, satisfy needs and cope with the environment."<sup>1</sup>

Local government services play an important role in influencing the social determinants of health. Without the provisions of local government, individuals would experience less mental and physical wellbeing than they do at present. Lack of income, inappropriate housing, unsafe workplaces and poor access to healthcare are some of the factors that affect the health of individuals and communities that local government can improve upon. Similarly, good education, public planning and support for healthy living can all contribute to healthier communities. Local government enables the discovery of positive patterns of health in respect of strengthening social bonds that go far in sustaining health, even in the face of disadvantage.

Since 1992, a series of white papers, reports and recommendations have put local government at the centre of the national drive to improve health and tackle health inequalities. For example, in 2000, the Wellbeing Power was introduced to increase councils' capability to act on behalf of their areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Raphael, D. (2004). *Social Determinants of health: Canadian Perspectives*. (Canadian Scholars' Press Inc)



The July 2010 NHS White Paper, 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS', outlines how health services are being further strengthened, democratised and legitimised at the local level. A part of this is looking at existing mechanisms, including relevant legislation, to ensure that public engagement is fully effective, and that services meet the needs of neighbourhoods. Councils are to provide local leadership in services that affect our health.<sup>2</sup> Local authorities are promoting the joining up of local NHS services, social care and health improvement and as such are looking outside of their traditional service remit to link up other partners and tackle wellbeing issues their local communities want them to investigate, improving health outcomes for local people.<sup>3</sup> A model of collaboration and co-production with communities in service delivery is an important part of the current move towards the Big Society.

## Local government, the Big Society and health

Local government has a central role to play in supporting the Big Society. Current government statements make it clear that government will play more of an enabling role in the future: setting the scene for communities, civil society and local champions to take a more active role in society. Councillors will still be accountable to the community they serve for local public services, they will play a key role in exercising democratic accountability for all local public services whether they are delivered by the council or health services. As such, councillors will need to be engaged with all the services delivered in their area to ensure that they carry out their democratic

2 Campbell, F. (Eds) (2009). *The social determinants of health and the role of local government*. (LG Improvement and Development)

3 Secretary of State for Health (2010) *Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS*(DoH)

functions on behalf of residents, challenging and scrutinising these services to ensure residents receive excellent health services.

Sustaining better health and wellbeing for communities is also an integral part of the Big Society. There is a shared responsibility developing, where local government and health authorities work together to use resources effectively to deliver better health. The recent white paper on 'Liberating the NHS', which highlighted how important health partnerships are within the Big Society, is marking a new stage in the development of local partnership-working between councils and NHS bodies with the aim of improving wellbeing and reducing health inequalities across the country. There has also been an increased emphasis on the idea of local service users or public sector workers being able to bid to deliver public sector services through mutual and cooperative organisations. Informal consultation can play a key role in implementing these and other changes to how local health services are delivered.

## Healthy Communities Programme

In recognition of the role of local government in health improvement and in tackling health inequalities, the Department of Health has funded Local Government Improvement and Development to develop a Healthy Communities Programme of work which plans to:

- raise awareness among local government elected members and officers of health inequalities and the social determinants of health, including the role of local government and its key partners in addressing these
- build capacity, capability and confidence in local government to address the social determinants of health.

Local government has shown a growing confidence and capability to lead on the issue. One sign of this has been the number of local councils that have chosen to focus on health improvement as part of their local area agreements (LAAs).<sup>4</sup>

This publication is part of that programme. It provides practical guidance on how to develop and plan informal engagement events with a specific focus on increasing health improvements and reducing health inequalities.

## Health inequalities

Many of the poorest communities also experience the worst health outcomes. Although the nation's overall health has improved over the years, the gap in life expectancy between the most affluent and least affluent areas has widened. Tackling health inequalities should be a top priority with the focus on narrowing the health gap between disadvantaged groups, communities and the rest of the country, and on improving health overall.

Central to reducing health inequalities is involving local communities, particularly those experiencing disadvantage. This guidance outlines one of the more accessible ways to engage members of the public.<sup>5</sup>

## Councillors influencing health-related decisions

Many councillors are used to constituents raising issues about health services, assuming that the elected representative has the ability to influence them. Understanding how to influence health-related decisions is therefore a necessary part of any councillor's role.

As the 'Councillor in the Community' guidance is based on London, it is particularly relevant to unitary authorities, however the general patterns are relevant to all councils.

This document gives councillors an overview of how decisions about health services are made and where they are open to influence.

[Councillor in the community website](#)

## Public engagement

### What is it?

Public engagement is the active participation of members of the public in the decisions that affect their lives. These decisions can be specifically related to improvement, delivery and evaluation of services. They can also relate to the public having a role in strengthening the assets of their community and building sustainable and empowered groups and individuals. Public engagement is about engaging in meaningful dialogue with the public to build strong and ongoing partnerships with stakeholders and service providers.

In a time where power is being devolved away from the state and into communities, public engagement offers opportunities

<sup>4</sup> Local Government Improvement and Development website, Healthy Communities homepage.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Health website, Health Inequalities page.

to more fully explore why people feel the way they do. It allows the time to develop ideas, options and priorities with the public, enabling improved wellbeing and understanding of health improvements specific to that neighbourhood or community. The outcome of effective public engagement supports the aim of the Big Society that decisions, delivery and evaluation of services, as well as the governance of a community, should be shaped by, informed by and ultimately built by the relevant people and communities.

### Why does public engagement matter?

Involving the public fully in their own care is key to achieving the government's ambition that the UK's healthcare outcomes should be among the best in the world. The principle of shared decision-making will ensure that services meet the needs of neighbourhoods across the nation.

Developing relationships and maintaining an ongoing dialogue with local people and communities is crucial, as is using information obtained to influence future decisions that will affect the health of the community. Establishing effective working relationships across all parts of society will ensure that the needs of local people are understood and acted upon. As a result, councils will have a key role in defining services that will guarantee communities a voice. Strengthened relationships with the council and the service provider can lead to an increase in local citizen activity. This enhances the opportunity for improved health, which directly relates to the social determinants of health mentioned at the start of the paper. These strengthened relationships can also have a positive impact for the Big Society agenda by helping to build a sense of civic engagement from those who take part. For local government, a greater understanding of the aspirations



of a community will support cross sector improvements to health and wellbeing, and will support the ability to maintain these improvements in the long term.



### Language

In this guidance we use the terms 'the public' and 'people who use services', rather than 'users', 'consumers', 'patients' or 'lay people'.

### When not to engage

There are cases where engagement can be counter-productive and damaging, for example if all important decisions have already been made.

For more examples of when engagement **doesn't** work, see the following guidance:

[Involving People: A Practical Guide](#)

## Engagement checklist

Before you begin any engagement exercise, check that you can confidently **confirm the following statements**:

### Checklist for engagement

#### Organisational needs

- Do you and your partners have a shared understanding of what you want to achieve through engagement and what is on the table?
- Are you ensuring that engagement is not a substitute for reflection and thought within your organisation?
- Do you have senior support for engagement?
- Are you able to coordinate information and actions across the organisations involved?
- Are you clear about what information you are seeking and how you or the community will use it?
- Do you know who you need to engage with for this topic?

#### Public needs

- Are you trying to ensure that what you are planning, commissioning or providing meets the public's needs and preferences?
- Are you going to explain to participants why they are being consulted and what their answers will be used for?
- Do you know how you will feed back to the community?
- Are you trying to gain an understanding from all stakeholders of what is negotiable and open to change and what is not?
- Do you have relevant information on the engagement processes that is readily accessible to all members of the community?



# How public engagement fits in with the bigger picture

[JSNA guidance from the Department of Health](#)

## Meeting local needs - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007) places a duty upon councils and primary care trusts (PCTs) to undertake JSNAs of the health and wellbeing of the local community. Proposals by the coalition government in their 2010 consultation 'Liberating the NHS: Local democratic legitimacy in health'<sup>6</sup> affirm this commitment as it sees councils having greater responsibility, which includes leading JSNAs to ensure coherent and co-ordinated health-focused commissioning strategies. With the creation of GP funding consortia, councils will have to take on a more strategic role in the field of health.

Through the JSNA, you can improve local people's wellbeing by ensuring that services meet their needs and aspirations. It is a way to collect, analyse and use evidence to shape service priorities and delivery.

Stages of the process include:

- stakeholder involvement
- engaging with communities
- suggestions on timing and linking with other strategic plans.

Please note: There is guidance provided by the Department of Health on implementing JSNAs. This ties in with the statutory guidance 'Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities' and works as a toolkit.

Informal engagement processes are a less daunting and a more entertaining way to work through the strategic targets placed upon councils.

Informal engagement events can be a useful way to demonstrate compliance with the following requirements:

- service providers need to work with partners to engage communities in identifying their needs and aspirations when developing strategic plans and services or when defining commissioning intentions
- this includes making sure community perspectives – people's preferences, needs and expectations – are built into the JSNA and health needs assessments undertaken with particular communities
- this means moving beyond a solely data-driven approach to needs assessment, to one that is complemented by the views of those in the community.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Secretary of State for Health (2010) *Liberating the NHS: Local democratic legitimacy in health* (DoH)

<sup>7</sup> The Engagement Cycle – (InHealth Associates for the Department of Health)

A number of JSNAs performed in 2008 emphasise how more community engagement needs to be integrated into service planning and provision in order to meet the requirements of future JSNAs.

**Example: Oxfordshire County Council and Primary Care Trust - Improving the process**

The first JSNA for Oxfordshire showed that further improvement is necessary in the process of engagement with communities about what their aspirations for health are and what support they need to achieve these. As a result this will be a key theme of future work to ensure gaps in current knowledge are minimised.

Read more here: [Oxfordshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008](#)<sup>8</sup>

At the time of writing, this duty makes clear the importance of listening to local people's views when making any decision on delivering services, in order to ensure that services are improved to better meet the aspirations of the community.

Section 242 of the consolidated NHS Act 2006 places a duty on NHS trusts, PCTs and strategic health authorities to make arrangements to involve patients and the public in service planning and operation, and in the development of proposals for changes.

NHS organisations must make arrangements to involve users in:

- a) the planning and provision of services
- b) the development and consideration of proposals for changes in the way services are provided
- c) the decisions due to be made that will affect the operation of services.<sup>10</sup>

## The duty to involve<sup>9</sup>

**Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act** came into effect on 1 April 2009. It imposes a duty on all councils and best value authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out 'any of its functions' **by providing information, consulting or 'involving in another way'**.

Councils must engage with a balanced selection of the individuals, groups, businesses or organisations the council considers likely to be affected by, or have an interest in, the council's function. This should include children and young people. Informal engagement provides a great way to do this.

For the statutory guidance, go to: Section 242 of the consolidated NHS Act 2006 is supported by guidance (Real Involvement): **Real Involvement** - [tinyurl.com/yesj9q8](http://tinyurl.com/yesj9q8)

Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act Guidance: **Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities** - [tinyurl.com/66ucaq](http://tinyurl.com/66ucaq)

Current policy documents and white papers have stressed that the government views the empowerment of individual patients and increased local accountability of health services to be at the core of their reform agenda.

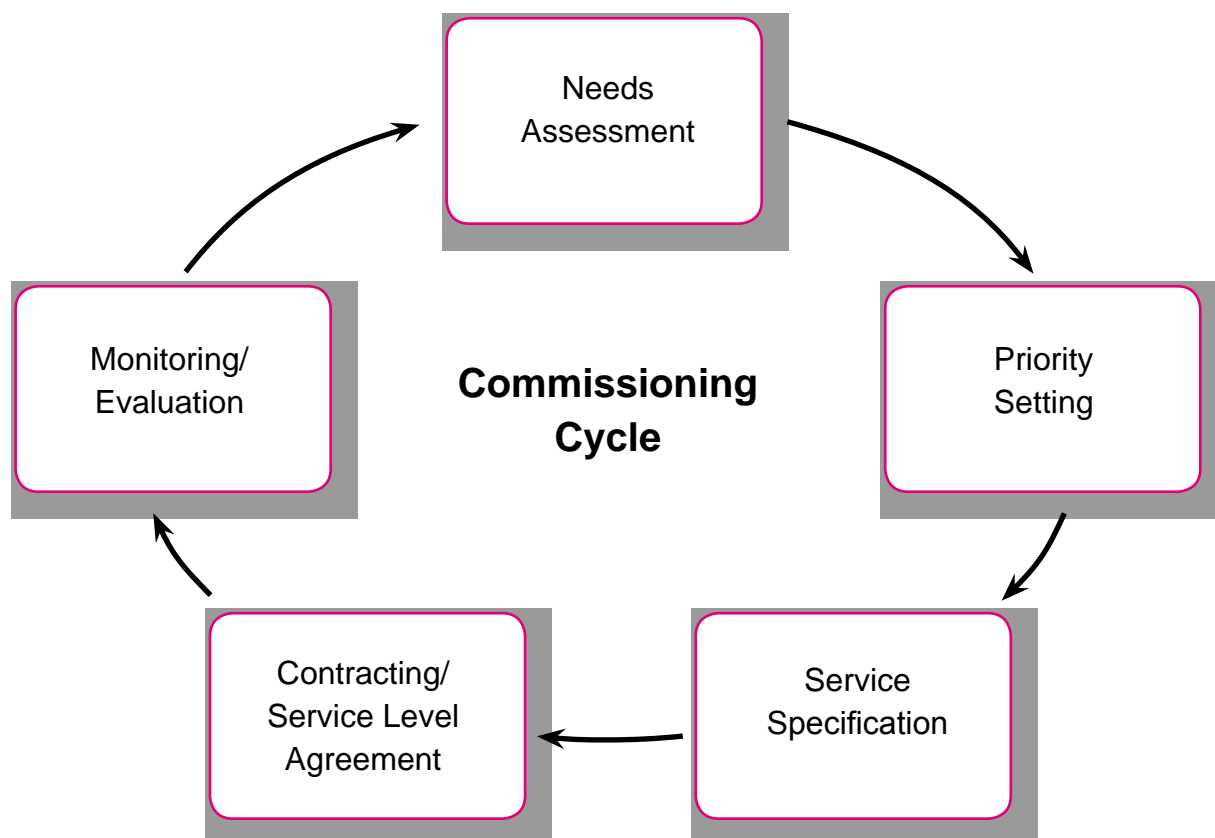
<sup>8</sup> Oxfordshire PCT and County Council (2008) *Oxfordshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008: Using information to keep people well.* [tinyurl.com/yd7ongh](http://tinyurl.com/yd7ongh)

<sup>9</sup> The Duty to Involve was a statutory duty at the time of writing. The duty represents important learning's for councils and health authorities across the United Kingdom, and is an important foundation on which future public engagement and consultation can be built and guided

<sup>10</sup> NHS Institute: Real Involvement PowerPoint presentation

## Engaging people when commissioning a service

Commissioning is the process of planning and paying for services and is at the heart of the way a number of councils and most NHS organisations operate. The commissioning cycle (see below) outlines the various stages involved in planning and paying for services.



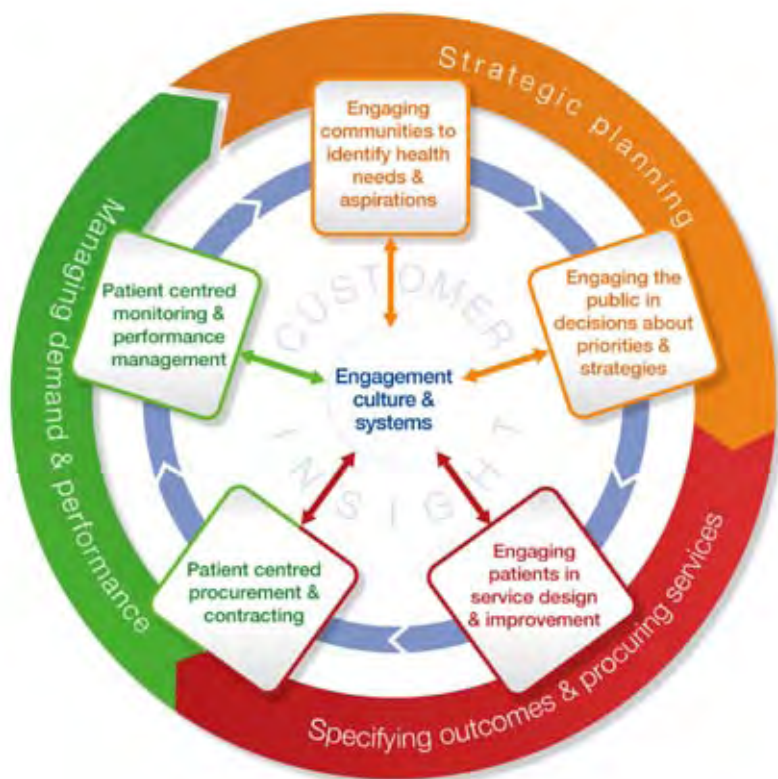
It is important to involve people at each stage of the cycle to ensure services meet the needs of those who use them. **The engagement cycle** is a way of approaching patient and public engagement when **commissioning services**. It highlights what needs to happen to engage people at each stage of the commissioning cycle.

The model can be used by a wide range of organisations to facilitate improvements in engaging with patients and the public when commissioning services. As both local

government and NHS organisations think about involving people in this context, it is a good opportunity to work together and coordinate the way in which you do so. In times of change and uncertainty in the field of health and social care, public engagement and consultation provides a vital source of information about where to target scarce resources.

# The engagement cycle

– Developed by *InHealth Associates* on behalf of the NHS<sup>11</sup>



Informal engagement events fit productively into all parts of this cycle depending on how you frame your process, and can help you meet your targets when planning and paying for services. At all stages the method can be amended to ensure it works with the type of engagement that is required. As informal engagement events enable wider outreach across society and are a more active and asset-driven type of engagement, the public insight gained will create much improved engagement culture and systems.

For a more in-depth understanding of the engagement cycle, follow the links below:

More information on the engagement cycle:

[Department of Health](#)

[InHealth Associates](#)

<sup>11</sup> [InHealth Associates](#) on behalf of the NHS



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# Part II. Planning the informal engagement event

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**This part of the guidance will help you with everything you need to know about the planning stages of the engagement process. If you cover all of these mechanisms you will have a much more coherent and manageable experience.**

## Why run an informal engagement event?

The combination of a large community event with informal engagement activities that we outline in this guidance helps you reach out to busy citizens in a way that enables them to contribute and have an enjoyable experience.

When managing public engagement you need to remember that not everyone wants to, or is able to, participate in a formal event. For example, people may be unfamiliar with formal meetings. This is particularly the case when engaging on issues relating to health improvements; there may be sensitivities that people don't feel comfortable talking about in a formal setting in front of others. As a result they may not be confident in taking part even when they have an interest. Sometimes the key groups to target for improvements on health, such as carers, will have caring responsibilities that may prevent them from participating. Many people have commitments that mean they have little spare time, but they still would like to have a say.



## Why informal engagement events are worth doing

There are a number of benefits to running an informal engagement event.

They are very good for harnessing creative ideas that are often stifled by more structured forms of meetings, as well as creating new ways of working together. For example, this could be via cross-functional collaborations, partnerships and building cohesive communities.

The way that informal engagement events are developed and run allows you to involve diverse groups in the process, it inspires creative thinking around an issue, and allows the community to develop ownership of results.

Using this process will ensure your engagement is:

- informal and inclusive
- flexible and adaptable
- participant-driven
- tailored to encourage learning, listening and sharing views
- held in a space where the public can meet and build relationships with new people and groups.

## When not to run this kind of event



**You should not use this process:**

- when the achievement of a predetermined specific outcome is essential
- when the community cannot have a say in the outcome
- if you are looking for clear and accountable direct decisions
- if you need to make detailed plans
- if you need a statistically significant sample of participants.

### Example: Shepherd's Bush Healthy Living Centre - food and nutrition project

This Healthy Living Centre delivered a health and nutrition-focused engagement process through six 'cook and eat' sessions in an informal and fun environment. To ensure the engagement was accessible to the widest number of people, a number of activities were on offer which required varying levels of participation.

Activities included fruit tasting, and discussions about nutritional advice, meals and snack ideas.

The project made contact with 160 people through local venues. Feedback concluded that the informal environment was an effective way to reach a wide range of people who would not normally attend more formal sessions. Many people requested regular sessions and opportunities to 'drop by'.

One visitor said:

"It's been a vital learning experience for me. I will really miss these sessions. They really helped me build my confidence in preparing and cooking food. Thanks".

[Food and nutrition project](#)

## How the informal engagement process will benefit you

This section outlines what the benefits are for different groups involved.

### Local government

Local government is a key player in the improvement of health in the community and tackling health inequalities. Outlined below is how informal engagement processes will help you with these challenges.

Informal engagement activity will:

- ensure public opinion is built into the JSNA
- reach out to 'overlooked' and vulnerable groups to combat health inequalities
- support the Duty to Involve which requires involvement in service planning and development
- highlight what assets the community holds and how best to work with these to develop sustainable initiatives around services
- ensure you coordinate engagement processes and events with partners where appropriate, enabling health improvements to be supported through a wider range of agencies
- help to build trust between the council and the local community, improving relationships.

### NHS bodies

The coalition government white paper 'Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS' promotes an NHS that is more responsive to individuals who use services, with new bodies such as GP commissioning consortia being accountable for ensuring that local communities have the opportunity to be fully engaged in decisions.

Informal engagement activity will therefore help you:

- improve the patient experience
- support policy and practice guidance that emphasises joint working
- support the Duty to Involve which requires involvement in planning and development
- encourage contribution to enhanced public health programmes
- improve partnership working.

Please note: The Duty to Involve also applies to the providers of NHS services including NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts, which also need to involve people.

### Community and voluntary sector organisations

With a move towards the Big Society, community and voluntary groups will have the opportunity to design and deliver services that can improve the health of the communities you work with. To be effective in this new role it will be essential for you to show how you have engaged with your constituents. Informal engagement events are a really useful way to build initial relationships with the public and also to create partnerships and networks across the local area. Informal engagement can also provide useful evidence to bolster community and voluntary sector campaigning.

Some points to keep in mind:

- Most charities that deliver services are committed to user involvement.
- Informal engagement will help you expose the assets of the community that you work with. This is an essential part of determining and harnessing the civic energy available to you when designing more collaborative services that work with the public, for the public.
- The information gathered by a forward-thinking programme of engagement will allow community and voluntary groups to adapt to changing circumstances and to remain relevant within the changing contexts that the Big Society will bring.

### **The public**

From the public's viewpoint, the informal engagement initiatives mentioned in this guide are aimed at building trust and confidence in local service providers. As a result, informal engagement should provide you, the event organiser, with:

- increased commitment to, and ownership of, the services provided in your community
- better information about the health of your community and how wider determinants can effect health and how local services (including healthcare) are working to change unequal outcomes
- better understanding of the assets the community holds and how they can be used to reduce health inequalities
- increased awareness of the complexities and constraints that local government faces when planning for health
- local services that are working towards meeting your needs and preferences in order to improve your health and wellbeing.

## What to run an informal engagement event about

Before you can plan your informal engagement event you need to decide exactly what it is going to be about. This will help you structure the event.

### **You need to decide the topic.**

The government requires engagement on given issues. However there are many other reasons for engagement, such as the development of corporate, portfolio and service plans. Priorities need to be set for when you are engaging, and why.

Reasons for engagement could include:

- working with a specific target group where there are wellbeing and equality issues that you want to investigate in more depth
- controversial decisions that might have a high level of public interest
- defining issues and problems, as well as making decisions about possible solutions
- holistic issues related to health improvement, promotion and wellbeing at individual and collective levels
- issues relating to the experience of ill-health and the design and delivery of services
- debates about the implications of current government policies around choice, for example, and the importance of recognising how to empower communities through engagement.

Ask yourself what is the central issue or key question that you want to ask people about? How will this improve the health of the community you are working with?

## Check what's happened already and what is planned for the future

For example, when engaging with the public over priorities within current budgetary cuts, it is important to understand what other processes are taking place across the council so that you can build health improvement assessments and decisions into the wider context.

This is particularly important because, as we saw earlier, the social determinants of health are very broad. Avoid duplication by doing a thorough search to find out what other engagement activities on health and wellbeing have been done or are planned across the council or partnership. There may be other health improvement engagement projects, so find out whether your plans could be undertaken alongside others, and who may find the results of your work useful.

Guidance on how to do a quick audit of engagement in your area: [Mapping patient and public involvement activity \(standard 4\)](#)

## Example: Middlesbrough - Linx youth health project

Linx is a voluntary sector detached youth project that works with young people between the ages of 12 and 25. The focus of this project was to engage and consult young people in order to identify their health needs and address them. As such, Linx was able to tailor the topic for their informal engagement. In order to specifically engage young people, the Linx project held a number of informal health days and workshops on aspects of health which disproportionately affect young people. Issues included:

- sexual health and unplanned pregnancy
- breast cancer awareness
- stopping smoking
- healthy eating.

[Middlesbrough - linx with youth health project.](#)



## Who to run an informal engagement event with

Working in partnership with statutory, third sector and independent providers will help you to achieve better outcomes. Here we encourage you to work closely with the community in order to run a successful informal engagement event.

### Partnerships

Working with partners supports the efficient use of resources and means you can share outcomes.

### Key partnership: councils and NHS organisations

Where possible, councils and NHS organisations should share information about the assets, needs and preferences of their local population as part of integrated strategies for engagement.

Partnering in this way will enable the authority to access wider networks and gain routes into understanding health and wellbeing that would not be so easily accessible otherwise.

### Community partnerships

Successful informal engagement events involve representatives from all the areas of the community that are influenced by the proposed engagement. Meaningful involvement encompasses the planning, running and development of the informal engagement event. Partnerships commonly facilitate collaboration between agencies, bringing together statutory and voluntary sector agencies and local people.

Working with partners beyond the public sector can reap real benefits in an informal engagement event.

For example, if you partner with a school, this means involving teachers, governors, parents' groups and pupils, ensuring they are not only participating in the event, but are involved in planning it too.

The involvement of the target audience creates an event which has greater appeal to the communities and makes the most of their community links. Reaching out and encouraging the affected community to get involved can be done in many different ways depending on what works best for each individual community. This could mean setting up a small steering group, working informally with community association members, or attending existing meetings and asking for assistance. Gaining support from the community in this way can create savings as they may contribute with additional skills and resources. This would make it a cheaper process compared to sourcing and running everything from inside the organising body.

Working with local partners is a great way to identify appropriate ways of involving people who are 'easy to overlook'. In this way, inclusive processes can be developed and you should gain a better understanding of the needs and preferences of the whole population. In particular, you should work with groups that may be under-represented and those at increased risk of poor health, such as black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, older people, those with disabilities and people living in rural communities.

## Checklist: How to build a strong partnership between you and the community

At the beginning:

- find out if you can piggyback on existing partnerships
- give wholehearted commitment
- include all interested parties from the outset, including those from community, private and public sectors
- ensure everyone has the necessary skills and resources to be fully involved
- allow time to build trust among the partners

When working together:

- make decisions by consensus, and respect the views of others
- develop an exit strategy so that the work of the partnership can continue after the initial project
- evaluate the partnership as you go along, and make changes as required
- clearly state the responsibilities of all parties involved and put in place mechanisms to track accountability
- celebrate the partnership's achievements, both big and small!

## People to work with

A great way to access groups and individuals for partnership on your engagement project is to link up with already available community networks.

### Resources to help you reach out to community networks

#### Local support groups and organisations

For general information on accessing local support groups and community organisations within your constituency, the following link to Directgov is very useful. It will direct you to local organisations that work with the community in a range of areas, including social care, housing, local environment, groups for young people and families, groups for people with disabilities and those focusing on arts and leisure. Neighbourhood community groups are a great way to access those members of the community who are active, but not necessarily directly involved in the structured mechanisms that lead to engagement.

[Direct.gov - local support groups](#)

#### Housing associations

One way of improving the health of a community is in the design and management of the built environment. Particularly important in this context is housing. Working with housing and tenants' associations in your community will enable you to access a range of individuals who are either stakeholders or residents of social housing.

[Housingnet - housing associations and local authorities](#)

## Carers forums

Find out about local care and support networks for adult carers in the target community. It is important that you are aware of how to access these individuals and involve them in your engagement process because they are key recipients of health and wellbeing improvement work.

[Direct.gov - advice and support for adult carers](#)

## Charities and organisations for older people

Contacting these organisations is a very good first step when you want to involve older people in your health improvement work. There are a wealth of wellbeing support networks that can be accessed through these large charities. You can also ask their engagement coordinators about the best way to approach and contact older people if you want to involve them in the engagement project.

[Age Concern](#)  
[Alzheimer's Society](#)

## Charities and organisations for young people and children

Children and young people are also often highly affected by improvements to health and wellbeing in the community. Locally, you can access schools and colleges, youth centres and community groups, as well as children's centres for families with pre-school children. The large national charities such as Barnardo's and the NSPCC also have local support groups and networks that will help you reach these age groups.

[Barnardo's](#)  
[NSPCC](#)

## Partnering with marginalised community groups

One answer to the difficulty of accessing marginalised groups and communities is to partner with organisations that speak on behalf of these communities.

For example, it may be useful to approach marginalised communities where they are based and try to understand their culture, building a relationship on mutual trust. However, you must be aware that sometimes the perceived community leaders and organisations may not wholly represent those communities. It is important to check that there are not people within these communities who struggle to speak out through established organisations.

Co-hosting engagement events with community groups can be a great way to run engagement events sensitively.

[Involving vulnerable and marginalised people](#)



### **Example - Haringey: Transforming services, citizen engagement and empowerment**

The huge diversity of residents, and the fact that some groups are transient, presented a massive challenge to the council. The level of deprivation and social exclusion required information to be gathered on which they could act. The involvement and engagement of local people was essential in this process.

A whole range of faith, interest, and ethnicity forums played a part in the overall engagement process. The faith forum and peace alliance led engagement within their communities, and were actively involved in professional dialogue. Peace breakfasts and a peace week brought religious, political, ethnic and professional communities together to tackle problems such as crimes revolving around guns and race.

For more information:

[Transforming services: citizen engagement and empowerment](#)

### **Example - NHS Fife:**

Fife NHS and Social Work have developed a positive relationship with the FRAE (Fairness, Race, Awareness and Equality) Fife Partnership, a thematic social inclusion partnership that aims to develop the capacity of minority ethnic communities in Fife and work with agencies to ensure they promote equality. FRAE Fife employs a dedicated link worker who works with Fife NHS and Social Work to ensure that minority communities in Fife have a say in service planning.

[Diversity lunches](#) - involving people from ethnic minorities.

[Navca](#) - national body for local support and development organisation

### **National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)**

The NAVCA directory of members and local contacts provides a list of local and regional infrastructure organisations in England. This includes all NAVCA members which operate on a district-wide, county-wide or region-wide basis, as well as other selected non-member local infrastructure organisations. This can be a good search tool.

### **Large voluntary organisations**

These are a great way to access community groups and networks. Organisations include The Women's Institute, The Scout Association, Shelter, Friends of the Earth, and Oxfam. There is a useful voluntary organisations search tool at [www.guidestar.org.uk](http://www.guidestar.org.uk)

### **Neighbourhood managers and neighbourhood committees**

Neighbourhood committees are usually made up of councillors representing the relevant wards and up to five co-opted members (usually local residents elected to represent their community). They discuss council priorities. They can also raise matters of concern within the local community, as well as taking the lead on neighbourhood development activities. They are often supported by a community development officer and so building a relationship with the committee should be easy to manage.

It will also be useful to talk to the neighbourhood manager for the area who works cross-sector to support the delivery of a more joined up, bottom-up style of working. As such they will have more in-depth local knowledge of the types of groups

and organisations to speak to, depending on the target audience of your engagement process.

### **Local strategic partnerships (LSPs)**

Speak to the coordinator of your LSP. The LSP brings together at a local level the different parts of the public sector as well as private, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together. They should be able to help you to tap into a range of community bodies and networks. It may be worth running the event through the LSP rather than an individual public body.

[Working with Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements](#)

### **Local HealthWatch**

At the time of writing, HealthWatch England was being developed as the national independent champion for health and social care consumers. Your local HealthWatch is designed to be a 'citizens advice bureau for health and social care' and it aims to ensure that views and feedback from patients and carers are an integral part of local commissioning. They aim to create a strong local infrastructure and enhance the role of local authorities in promoting choice and complaints advocacy through the HealthWatch arrangements they commission.

### **NHS Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS)**

Your local PALS is attached to the health trust. Each PALS is part of a local network of PALS that work together to provide a quality service for patients and their family members and friends. PALS may be aware of areas of concern among community members that need to be covered in the engagement event.

[PALS - looking after patients concerns](#)

### **Health promotion and improvement teams**

Health improvement teams work with a range of groups and have excellent networks to tap into, including community nurses, healthy living centres, sports developments, voluntary organisations and family centres. It would be great to partner with these teams as they would be able to use the informal engagement event to deliver their outreach work and so it would be of mutual benefit.

### **Centre for Public Scrutiny**

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) works to meet the demands that scrutiny places on local government through research, practical guidance, training and consultancy. CfPS supports existing regional networks through a forum where practitioners can meet online and at events to share experience and best practice. This is a useful place to speak to other professionals about the networks and links in the community that are available and used for scrutiny.

[Centre for Public Scrutiny](#)

### Example: Bury - Public Access to Health (PATH)

The purpose of the community engagement was to develop an informed impression of the public's perception of their local health services and the barriers to access. A further aim was to understand how mainstream health and wellbeing services can be improved in order to support community groups and organisations.

The programme had two stages.

**Stage 1** – Desk research and stakeholder interviews were carried out in each area to identify what services currently exist in the local setting.

**Stage 2** – Informal engagement events took place in local community centres to reach a wider sample of the population and to identify why the services outlined in stage one were not being accessed.

Additionally, a number of groups were identified as a target for the engagement process. These included refugees and asylum seekers, BAME communities (especially women), economic migrants, the elderly, working professionals, young people aged 16 to 24, and those with disabilities.

In order to support the engagement of these groups, partnerships with other agencies in the voluntary and community sector were developed. Partners included:

- Jobcentre Plus
- Refugee Support Group
- Refugee Action
- Age Concern
- Six Town Housing
- Bury Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) Adult Care Services
- Bury MBC Children's Services
- Bury Curriculum Access Service (CLAS)
- Bury and District Disabled Advisory Council (BADDAC).

[Bury - Public Access to Health \(PATH\)](#)

## Who to run an informal engagement event for

You should consider who is, or could be, affected by any proposed changes so that you can make an informed decision about who needs to be involved.

### Audience

You need to put considerable thought into the question of exactly who are the right people to involve given the purpose of the engagement task. People who use services can help to ensure that the issues that are identified and prioritised are important to them and therefore to health improvement and social care services as a whole. You will gain a perspective from the experiences of those 'on the outside looking in'. This will ultimately give you a more complete picture.

Learning how to ask communities what they have to offer in terms of their existing skills and knowledge leads to opportunities for them to work with professionals for mutual benefit. As a result, the main beneficiaries of the recommendations will also play a key role in implementing them. In general, these groups include:

- communities and groups with distinct health needs
- communities that experience difficulties accessing health services or have health problems caused by their social circumstances
- people living in disadvantaged areas, including those living in social housing or who live in areas where national and neighbourhood renewal initiatives operate.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> [NHS Nice public health guidance \(2008\) Community engagement to improve health. \(NICE\)](#)

## Suggestion box: who to involve in health improvement engagement projects

Issue area	Targets for recruitment
<b>obesity</b>	schools, sure start centres, parks user groups, local youth groups, community health and nutrition groups, local health centres, council adult and children services, supermarkets
<b>mental health</b>	community services including nurses and home visiting, mental health charities, carer groups, service users, residents of the area
<b>adult education</b>	individuals who use Jobcentre plus, Connexions Direct, local colleges and libraries
<b>living conditions</b>	housing associations, tenants associations, landlord associations, residents of the given neighbourhood

Think about other departments within the council and other organisations and individuals in the community. You may need to undertake a stakeholder analysis to make sure that you focus your effort and resources in the most appropriate places. This will avoid failing to involve people or organisations that may have an interest, or involving those that don't.

Early in the planning process, undertake an initial stakeholder analysis. Help with this can be found at:

[NHS Centre for innovation and improvement](#)

Overseas Development Institute - [tinyurl.com/ygv19rw](http://tinyurl.com/ygv19rw)

When carrying out a stakeholder analysis, **remember to consider:**

- relevant pressure groups
- gender, disability, and ethnicity-specific groups
- community groups and community activists
- carers, friends and families of patients
- other staff.

**Key questions** to ask during a stakeholder analysis:

- Who is the decision-maker on this topic?
- Who will be affected by any decisions made?
- Who runs organisations with relevant interests?
- Who can obstruct a decision if not involved?
- Who has or hasn't been involved in this issue in the past?

Certain groups are 'easy to overlook' (incorrectly referred to as 'hard to reach'). To ensure you involve the right people, it is important to be clear from the outset exactly who you need to involve in the work you are planning and how best to communicate with them. This is important when working with groups where the way you communicate may need to be particularly sensitive, such as when contacting **young offenders, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, and migrant communities.**

**You need to include people who use services with a variety of perspectives** in order to get a rounded view. It is better to bear in mind the interests of different groups and include different viewpoints instead of choosing between one or the other.

**It is also important to consider the views of those who don't use a service.** This is because the reason they choose not to use the service may be enlightening, but also they may be future users or stakeholders in the service and so their opinion and understanding is valid and important.

**Suggestion box: Target audience.**  
**Things to consider include:**

**What is the topic area you hope to address?**

For example, if you hope to collect data on the care provided for people with Alzheimer's disease, you will need to contact the local Alzheimer's Society.

**How many people do you need to engage with?**

These events can cope with approximately 15 to 200 people, although due to the drop-in nature of the activities, more can be accommodated if the event is run for a longer period.

**Have you accessed people through your local community networks?**

The 'snowballing technique' will help you to reach a wider range of people. By asking existing contacts to suggest three or four names of others to speak to, the sample group grows like a rolling snowball.



## Open access event

Informal engagement events are often known as 'open access'. This means that anyone can attend and contribute their views. When running this type of event, you should be aware of the benefits and risks.

### Benefits:

- nobody feels excluded
- it helps ensure a large number of meaningful engagements with the public
- a large cross-section of the community is likely to attend
- it can generate a great deal of popular support and energy.

### Risks:

- open access recruitment is unlikely to provide a scientifically representative sample because you cannot tightly control the demographics of people attending
- some groups are unlikely to find out about the engagement process or think it as relevant to them.

## Example: Maidstone - Kent County Show

A health promotion and information marquee – 'Your NHS...Your Health' – was one of a number of attractions at the show including a fair, a farmers' show and animal events. Key health improvement activities covered healthy eating, BMI checks, ear inspections, free blood pressure checks, and work to promote good kidney health.

This event showed that open access engagement is a very good way to ensure a large number of participants; 45,000 people visited the NHS marquee. Staff reported that from the first day of the show the stall was inundated with individuals wanting health checks. The team recorded 850 blood pressure readings and referred 18 per cent of visitors to their local GPs.

[Past editions of trust news](#)



## Where to run an informal engagement event

Choosing the right venue is critical. The best option is to use informal spaces and places that are often used by busy parents and carers, rather than formal public sector settings.

### Venue

This guidance was based on the Tunbridge Wells informal engagement event, which was held in a volunteer-led community centre. Local community centres that have active voluntary associations work particularly well. For example, tenant groups or religious associations can help design and run the event.

The format has also worked well at **libraries and educational facilities** with strong community links. Crucially the venue should have an existing relationship with local residents, and the facilities should be able to support a mix of fun and interactive activities.

This means having a large hall or open area in which engagement activities can be set up alongside social activities such as refreshments or face painting for children, so participants can easily move between the two.

**Top tip:** book the venue as early as you can to avoid disappointment.

### Go to the public

Another way you can approach the community informally is to go to them. For example you can set a smaller scale informal engagement event in the local supermarket, the library, at the local leisure centre or after school. You would minimise the number of fun stalls and engagement activities so that

you only had one or two of each. Or, if there was very limited space, you could add an incentive to participation by offering a free carbon monoxide monitor or health checks for example. You would need to run the engagement stand at a number of different locations to make sure you reached the whole community.

### Example: Bolsover - Derbyshire Food Fair

In Bolsover, Derbyshire County Council incorporated their engagement on health improvements into the Derbyshire Food Fair. This is a well-established local event that draws huge crowds of people, including many families with children. The council took this opportunity to hold a food and nutrition stand to educate people about healthy eating, food hygiene and personal cleanliness.

In total 10,000 people attended the fair. Fun and accessible activities ensured the stand was able to engage a wide spectrum of people. Small incentives were also provided in order to reward individuals for their enthusiasm. For example, young people who participated in an activity promoting healthy eating and good hygiene received free pieces of fruit.

[Bolsover - Derbyshire Food Fair](#)

### Perform a risk assessment of possible venues

Points to remember:

- How many people can be accommodated safely and comfortably?
- How accessible is it?

- Will it accommodate all the activities you want?
- If your event is going to be held outside, are there amenities close by?
- Identify whether there are any venues that people would be unhappy attending, for example some faith groups are unhappy attending venues where alcohol is sold or regularly consumed.
- Remember to consider practicalities at this stage, including public transport (don't forget weekend closures), parking, the importance of the Disability Discrimination Act, and ensuring there is a hearing loop enabled.

### Example: Healthcare for London Community Group – Camden

The Healthcare for London (HCFL) Community Group in Camden wanted to provide an opportunity for Camden residents to learn more about local health plans. The informal engagement event was focused on the promotion of polyclinics, and stroke and trauma centres.

#### Problems experienced and lessons learnt

- The venue was quite hidden and there were few passers-by.
- It was held in a church hall, and this might have put off some people, or it could have been wrongly perceived as a religious event. A more central venue might be more appropriate.

Information on the case study gained from a telephone interview with NHS Camden.

## When to run an informal engagement event

The time you hold your informal engagement event is important as it will determine whether or not your target audience will be able to attend, and will ultimately determine the success of the outreach.

### Timing

You can pick a specific time of year or period of importance in order to help frame your event with the public. For example, an autumn engagement event entitled 'Autumn Watch: Health Watch'.

Also, having it during the week or at the weekend makes a big difference to who can attendance. The timing should be based on a good understanding of your target audience.

#### Top tip: timing

It is best if the event is open for around half a day so people have time to attend when it is convenient to them.

Check what is happening locally and make sure there will not be a clash. Even better, think about linking your fun day to something else that is already happening locally.

A suitable time of day will be different for different target groups. Evenings are often less appropriate because parents, carers, children and young people are unlikely to be able to attend. Similarly, older people may be reluctant to be out after dark, especially if there is a perception that the area is not safe at night. With some groups, evenings may be difficult for women to attend. However, if you hold your event in the day during the week, you will exclude those who work.



Remember to consider each of these factors when deciding the time of your event.

**Please note: It is best to talk to groups or organisations already working with your target audience. There may be factors you have not considered which will influence attendance at events.**

Informal engagement events work well alongside fun activities. This means they can be easily incorporated into events that may already be planned, such as sports days, summer fairs or community open days. Combining these activities can be beneficial to all concerned as councils can help support volunteers, such as governors or parent teacher associations at schools who organise such events.

The costs and organisation of an event can be shared between the venue and the council. Such events will also naturally increase the potential audience for the engagement process.

## Making sure everyone can take part

It is important at this stage that you plan to ensure that everyone will be able to take part. A successful informal engagement will be accessible and inclusive. Briefing your staff well can have a massive impact on how successful your event is.

People want to be engaged in ways that are:

- inclusive
- positive and optimistic
- non-judgemental
- respectful, making them feel valued.

### Cater to all audiences and their needs

Participants who speak English as a second language, groups with physical disabilities, and those with low literacy all have different needs that must be incorporated into the design of the engagement activities. Try to use methods which are very visual and tactile (involve moving things around/doing things with your hands) as a way to engage those who do not like activities which are mostly based on writing and reading.

You can tap into the knowledge of the community networks you have contacted to find out who they expect to attend and how best to address these issues.

#### Example: Community Centre for Older People (SCIE Seldom Heard Report)

Older people from three different community groups, the Greek community, Asian elders and Caribbean pensioners, used a community centre as a base to meet. The centre staff built up membership of these groups through outreach work and offering relevant advice, information and support services.

The groups used **festivals and cultural events** to invite members of other groups to join them and share food and customs. These group sessions enable collective involvement in service design and provision as engagement officers are able to go to the community centre and run drop-in engagement events where the users felt comfortable and confident, while responding to the complexities of diversity.

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) [Seldom Heard](#) - developing inclusive participation in social care.

## Avoid jargon or vague ideas in the questions asked

Make sure that the questions being asked are clear, precise and jargon-free. Try to test the questions with the community groups you are working with in plenty of time beforehand to make sure that the questions are understandable to all and rewrite them if necessary. We recommend using direct questions, and acknowledging a conscious choice between open-ended and closed questions. Also, avoid the use of acronyms. Ensuring that your facilitators are well trained, and are confident and well versed in the questions to be asked, will help keep the event focused.



## Physical accessibility

Points to consider include:

- Is it easy to get to the venue? For example, is it close to public transport and car parking?
- Check if there is disabled access available, whether there is a lift and if not, how many stairs there are. Is the internal layout negotiable?
- Check that the building is well signposted. For example is there sufficient colour contrast for people with partial sight?
- Deaf/blind, deaf and hard of hearing people find it useful to have interpreters who are not staff of the agency providing services. All information should be in plain language with pictures to back up text.
- Plenty of notice about arrangements, changes and cancellations must be given.
- It is beneficial if the engagement activities don't take too long to participate in.
- It is important all information materials are written and provided in plain English.
- It is a good idea to check if guide dogs will be accompanying participants. If so, make sure that they are catered for.
- Make sure that all rooms in the building are accessible to all, including toilets and communal areas.

Guidance on inclusive participation:

[Accessibility and diversity checklist](#) - Community Power Pack

[Seldom Heard](#)

## Case Study: TN2 Community Health Day, Sherwood

Before we go into the detail of how to run an informal engagement event, it is important that you get a precise picture of how an informal engagement event works. This will help you to understand the stages in the next section of the guidance.

In January 2009, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and NHS West Kent ran 'A New Year, A New You' Health event in a community hall in the deprived Sherwood Estate of Tunbridge Wells. The event formed part of a support offer from the Healthy Communities Programme, with the aim of 'improving Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and NHS West Kent's capacity to deliver on health inequalities and health improvement agendas'. At the event, engagement activities took place in a hall with numerous other fun activities, including Indian head massages, health checks, hand massages, face painting, smoothie stalls and jewellery-making.

The aim of the event was to get a better understanding of what local people thought the community health needs and problems were in the Sherwood area.

The logistics and engagement aspects of the event were managed by the council and NHS West Kent in collaboration with partners. The council and PCT partnered with a volunteer-led venue which enabled access to networks (TN2 Community Trust), and cross-sector engagement prevented duplication of engagement activities. A variety of methods were used to gather community views on health issues in the area. The event featured stalls and activities from a broad range of public bodies.

The event engaged a large number of people who would not otherwise have given their views on health issues. It also brought together a wide variety of organisations in the public sector to engage with and provide advice and support to the public. The event was lively and the numbers who took part were in line with expectations. Feedback on the activities and venue were positive.

The results of the event led to changes in the way drug paraphernalia was dealt with in the area, and this was fed back to those in the community who gave their details at the event. The event also informed the council and NHS West Kent staff about different ways of carrying out public engagement approaches which can be used across the organisations' services.

Information on the case study gained from a telephone interview with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

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# Part III. Checklist for informal engagement event

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## 1. Make the business case for the event

You need to make sure that you have buy-in from a range of people before you can start to plan the informal engagement event, specifically from relevant managers. This section will help you to convince these people of the benefits of informal engagement and help you gain their support.

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### Establishing the business case

#### Suggestion box:

- What can you do to encourage service managers to actively contribute to and support the engagement?
- Do you have the resources and appropriate backing from managers/ councillors/service providers to affect change?

Speaking to key stakeholders will allow you to develop this understanding further.

**It is important to remember that public engagement can be used to gain useful insight and find efficiency savings.**

Engagement should not be seen as just an addition to the work you already do. Good public engagement should be part of everyday working that helps you to make tough decisions, find efficiency savings, and innovate through difficult times.

[Consumer Focus](#) - guidance on making the case for public engagement.

This toolkit will help you to understand and make the business case for engagement and present it to internal and external audiences.

[Valuing Health](#) - developing a business case for health improvement (Healthy Communities Programme)

[Developing a business case for community empowerment](#) (LG Improvement and Development)



You can support your case by highlighting successful examples of other innovative forms of community engagement to managers and budget holders.

### **Example: Barking and Dagenham Primary Care Trust Informal Engagement (2009/2010)**

Directory of Strategy at NHS Barking and Dagenham, Rebecca Scott, said:

“I’ve been really pleased with the strength of response to the engagement so far. We’ve heard a lot of good ideas and residents are really taking an enthusiastic interest in the future of health services in East Dagenham. I’m not surprised by that. Local people know better than anyone what services they need and want and we’re really keen to listen”.<sup>13</sup>

Below are suggested business cases tailored to the needs of a range of stakeholders:

#### **Public sector managers**

Informal engagement will:

- engage communities in identifying their assets and needs, to strengthen strategic plans
- help you work through the strategic targets
- build stronger relationships with the community and encourage further involvement
- demonstrate compliance with statutory requirements, including the Duty to Involve and JSNAs for example
- contribute towards the organisation’s understanding of and compliance with the health improvement agenda and develop your commitment to reducing health inequalities.

#### **Elected members**

Informal engagement will:

- strengthen the reputation of the council
- provide a potential opportunity for the councillor to run a surgery at the event
- increase the members’ firsthand knowledge of their wards and influence the activity they wish to take place to maximise results
- play a key role in shaping the development and tailoring the methods of engagement to suit their own wards and communities.

#### **The media**

Informal engagement will:

- allow them to talk with the public and decision-makers about service provision
- give them easy access for interviews and human interest pieces
- highlight the work the organisation is doing to engage with the public
- present the new, innovative methods councils are using to engage with the public.

#### **The public**

Informal engagement will:

- be fun and enjoyable
- build relationships with new people and groups
- help them find out about health and health services
- allow them to ask questions and find out more about their area
- create ownership of service provision and health in the community
- allow them to influence decision-making.

<sup>13</sup> [NHS Barking and Dagenham website, feedback on Dagenham Health Services](#)

## 2. Set your objectives for the engagement process

It is important to set your objectives for the informal engagement event at this point so that you are able to monitor them throughout the development of the process.

### Establishing objectives

#### Outcome

##### What is your purpose?

Your engagement with the public should be based around how such work can influence decisions. You should know clearly why you are doing it and how you will use the results. You should also be aware of how the engagement links to your organisation's aims and objectives. If the reasons why you are engaging the public are unclear, make sure you figure out what the purpose of the process will be before carrying on.

For example, if you know you want to run an informal engagement event, you need to first ask yourself why. Is it to improve health and wellbeing within a given community? To reduce health inequalities? To improve social cohesion? Improve the quality of services?

Determining this will allow you to select the most appropriate and meaningful engagement methods to use.



**WARNING:** If people attend an engagement event where they do not see the benefits or any impact from their involvement, it will be harder to engage them again in the future.

##### What are your priorities?

Public engagement is not an end in itself. In most cases you will be reading this guidance because you want to engage people as part of a specific activity or piece of work within the council.

You should therefore consider:

- What is the central issue or key question that you are seeking to engage people in?
- How will you report back to them once decisions have been made?

#### Setting objectives

Setting your objectives is crucial at this point so you have a clear understanding of why you are running an informal engagement event. You can then use them to aid your **evaluation** throughout the project.

When setting your objectives, try to be as clear and concrete as possible. A concise vision will help you run an efficient and effective engagement event. Be clear about what difference you want your engagement to make. What do you want to know? What do you hope to have changed as a result of the engagement? Clarity on this will help you choose the right venue, time, participants and activities for your engagement process.

A framework to help you to define these objectives is **SMART**, a process for setting goals and delegating in a structured manner that helps goal achievement. You need to make sure that your objectives are:

- S** specific
- M** measurable
- A** achievable
- R** relevant
- T** timely

[Implement SMART goals](#)

Please note: It is a good idea to test out your objectives on colleagues and external stakeholders to ensure **that you agree on the aims of the engagement process.**

**Exercise: Set your main objectives below**

**Example response:** The aim is that the public, providers of care and local government work in partnership to determine policy priorities for health improvements based on the assets of the local area of West Oxfordshire.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Exercise: Use the space below to establish your objectives**

How will the findings inform future plans around health improvement and inequality reduction?

Will the findings form part of a range of inputs for a particular decision and what will this be?

Can the people engaged influence the decision-making process and how?

### 3. Evaluating engagement processes

It is important to evaluate in order to learn from what has worked and what hasn't, and to develop an ongoing process that builds on experience.

#### Why do an evaluation?

Evaluation can help work on public engagement in four main ways:

- clarifying the objectives by finding practical ways to measure success (for example by identifying clear criteria for success against the objectives)
- improving project and programme management by building in review and reflection as the work progresses, especially monitoring progress towards the objectives of the exercise
- improving accountability (for example for public funds) by fully reporting what is done and what it achieves, possibly linking this to performance management
- improving future practice and policy by developing hard evidence and knowledge about 'what works' and the range of impacts different approaches can have.<sup>14</sup>

**Evaluation arrangements should be part of the initial plan for engagement, not added later once the work has started.**

You need to be clear about what you are evaluating. This will be easier if you are clear what the outcomes of the event are. You need to make sure you have a clear understanding of the objectives and the processes and how success will be defined in order to carry out the evaluation. The focus should be on capturing whether or not the aims and objectives defined for the work before and during the planning stages of the process have been achieved.

<sup>14</sup> Making a difference: A guide to evaluating public engagement in central government

An important aspect is the perception of participants, staff and partners. It is important that you explain the evaluation to participants in advance of the engagement process. An evaluation should ask participants if they felt the event had achieved what it set out to do and if there were lessons to be learnt for future service delivery and engagement planning.

It can also help the evaluation process to collect data on the day from participants about their experience of the event. Again, explain to people prior to participation in the engagement activities that they will be asked to evaluate them afterwards. This will ensure a higher response rate for the evaluation and also encourage participants to become critically involved in the process, allowing for more substantive responses.

See example evaluation and monitoring form – [Appendix 1](#)

See example 'on the day' monitoring wall chart – [Appendix 2](#)

For guidance on running an evaluation see the links below:

#### Running a simple evaluation

[Tools and resources to support PPI](#)

[Involve evaluation guidance](#)

[National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement](#)



## 4. Plan the budget

Engaging the public will require resources and a budget. Budget planning is a key component of the planning process. By working through established groups and networks where possible, these costs can be kept to a minimum.

In preparing the budget, take account of the following:

- all costs associated with the venue (including refreshments)
- any costs associated with the use of an external facilitator or speakers (including costs for activities)
- costs to participants, for example reimbursing travel expenses, if running a smaller event
- reimbursing private travel expenses for those with accessibility difficulties
- reimbursing expenses incurred by public representatives, for example carer costs
- any costs associated with the preparation and production of materials.

If involving, for example, a group from an ethnic minority community or people with specific communication needs, you may need to provide translators or signers. Take the time to think about who it is you are

involving and what their needs will be, and ask if you are unsure.

### Insurance and licences

Check if you will need any additional cover for entertainers and activities that are organised as a part of the fun day.

Check with the relevant council department and the Performing Rights Society to find out if a licence for music, events, or entertainments is required on the day.

It is important at this point to ensure you have planned the budget effectively, ensure you have covered everything you will need to spend money on, and also make sure that you have got the timings for expenditure correct.

Some things to consider are: refreshments, venue hire, travel expenses, display stands, display materials, posters, stationery, couriers, printing, cleaners, promotional items, postage, marketing, advertising, and leaflet distribution.

### Exercise: Use this space to start thinking about your budget.

Total budget \_\_\_\_\_

Costs

Staff overheads (including follow-up) \_\_\_\_\_

Venue costs \_\_\_\_\_

Publicity \_\_\_\_\_

Entertainment \_\_\_\_\_

Materials \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Coordinate roles and responsibilities

At this stage you need to start coordinating the roles and responsibilities you will need covered for your engagement event. Clear roles from the outset can make the difference in ensuring a smooth running event.

Identify explicit roles and responsibilities for all staff members. Each event needs at least one 'event officer' with strong local knowledge to lead on liaison with the venue, partner agencies and the council. It is their role and responsibility to ensure commitment to the event and its outcomes from all participants. This also means there is a point of contact for all involved.

### Suggestion box:

Role	Responsibility
<b>project manager/ leadership role</b>	central manager and coordinator
<b>method designer</b>	you may need to bring in external support to design the engagement methods and activities
<b>support staff</b>	to help with the planning and organisation of the event. This may include volunteers on the day
<b>facilitators</b>	running the engagement activities
<b>scribe</b>	to support the facilitator in capturing information
<b>community groups</b>	to perform a number of outreach activities
<b>local councillors</b>	they can invite constituents to the event or run a surgery at the same time

### Responsibility checklist: what you can delegate to others

Involve recommends that someone from the partnership community takes responsibility for the following duties:

- choosing, organising and staffing entertainment activities and suitable refreshments for the event
- risk assessment of the event including child protection, fire safety, and first aid issues
- applying for a temporary event notice from the council if needed
- arranging a contingency plan in case of poor weather if the event is planned for outdoors
- preparing young people in advance for the event including organising discussion in order to help them participate

## Responsibility checklist – what you may want to do yourself

Involve recommends that someone is responsible for these duties:

- overseeing the logistical and publicity arrangements for the event (This can include managing budgets for activities, organising flyers and posters and inviting partner agencies)
- liaising with the venue representatives including organising meetings with partners to support their involvement
- designing the consultation, including deciding which methods to use and how best to explain them to participants
- finding and briefing staff and facilitators for all engagement activities
- collating the data and feeding it back to local policy decision-makers
- organising the evaluation of the process and feeding back to participants on the outcome of the event and its impact



## 6. Publicity

The publicity needed for the event is very important and you need to plan it in advance to ensure outreach and to boost attendance rates.

The following are some effective and low cost ways to advertise your event:

### **Print and distribute flyers and posters with the event details**

Producing leaflets and posters telling residents about the event is a simple but effective form of advertising. They do not have to be glossy or in colour to get the message across.

### **Tap into local networks**

Ask local residents and partners to help spread the word about the event, perhaps through electronic mailing-lists, local interest groups, political parties or by word-of-mouth.

See **partnerships section** above, who to run an informal engagement event with, for information regarding **community networks** to tap into.

### **Issue a press release to local newspapers**

This is often an effective way to reach people in the locality. Make sure the press release includes key details such as what the event is, where and when it will be held and what activities will be on offer.

### **Example: Banbury – The Better Healthcare Programme**

Running from April 2008 to March 2010, the Better Healthcare Programme incorporated four open deliberative events and two informal drop-in events.

#### **The methods of publicity used included:**

- **website:** All documents relating to the engagement were made available on the web.
- **email:** A dedicated email was set up to communicate with the project team.
- **newsletter:** This was short and in plain English, used to communicate progress of various areas of work and for sharing information on events and activities planned. Additionally, other newsletters published by councils covering the area were used to share information.
- **media:** This was key for sharing information about the programme, because local print media is often read by the local community. Broadcast media was also encouraged to cover news from the event.

[Plan for engaging the public and other stakeholders](#)<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> [Banbury Better Healthcare Programme](#)

### Ask other departments to advertise the event

Ensure other departments and public bodies that interact with local residents are also aware of the event and ask them to circulate the flyer. This is a great way to ensure that publicity reaches the widest audience possible. GP surgeries and libraries are often useful venues to distribute flyers.

Creative ways of distributing them can help keep costs low. For example, a community centre in Lambeth asked local sixth formers to distribute leaflets door-to-door.

### Ensure you are reaching all parts of the community including 'overlooked groups'

People who use services can help to access other people who are often marginalised. Ensuring there are community representatives involved in the publicity strategy is very important. If needed, translations can be obtained through interpreting services such as CINTRA, INTRAN or Language Line.

One answer to the difficulty of accessing people from marginalised communities is to partner with organisations that speak on behalf of these communities when planning the informal engagement event.

#### Suggestion box: distribution

1. Ask the community groups you are in contact with or have partnered with to help give flyers out.
2. Local community or public sector venues can be used for distribution and display. For example doctors' surgeries and clinics, civic centres, libraries, and sports centres.
3. When working with young people and families, a good way is to give flyers to pupils through their school registers.
4. Recruit councillors to act as ambassadors for the event, informing residents about it.

### How to get people involved and attending the informal engagement event

Go to the community

Make it fun!

How do they want to be involved?

Make it easy to do

Explain what it is, and the impact

Have a publicity strategy

## 7. Planning the day

### Considerations when planning methods for engagement

You need to ensure that you have your methods for engagement planned and tested before the day. This is so that you can gather the most relevant and useful information from the community.

### Health improvement information: collection and provision

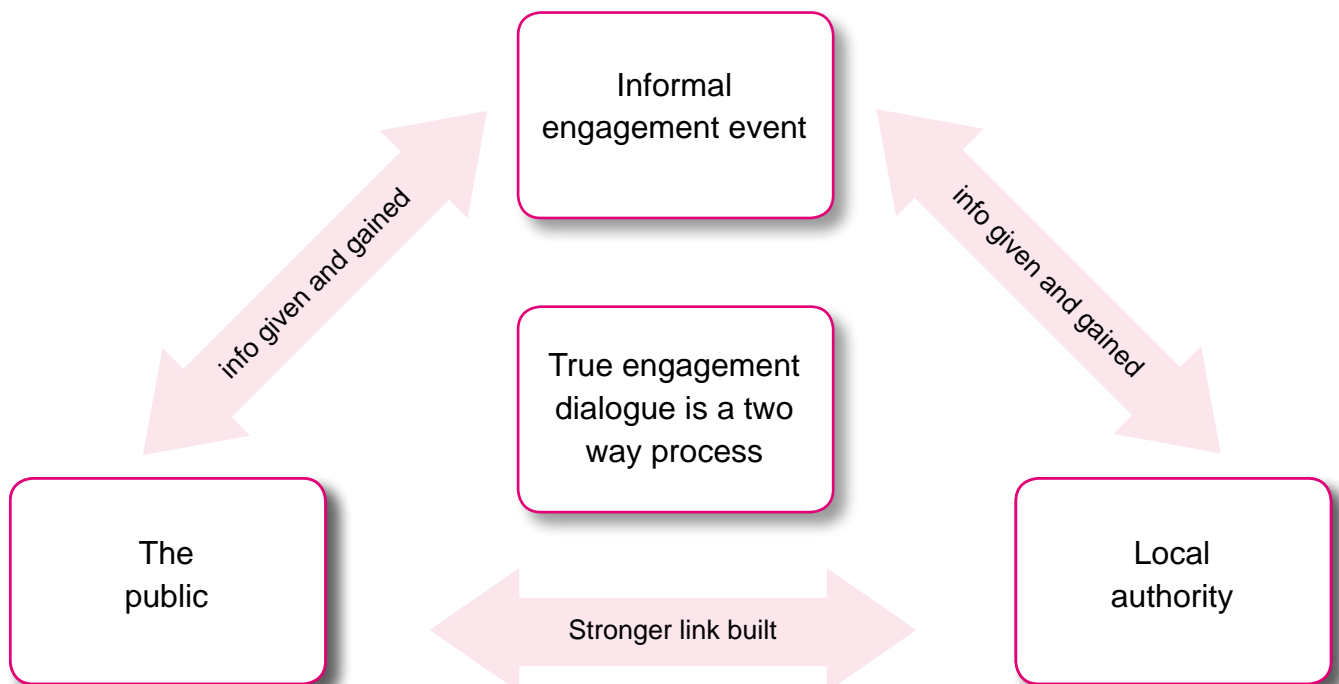
This type of engagement event is a two-way process and is a great opportunity to do two things. It can be used to gather information from the public about what assets they want to develop in order to influence your decisions on community development. And it can also influence and support public behaviour change.

Central to your engagement event is collecting qualitative data in order to support your commissioning and delivery strategies. However, it is important to remember that partners involved in the engagement event

may have different objectives. For example, if health promotion teams and health trainers are involved in the event, their specific focus will be on changing the individual's health behaviour.

It is important for the public that the event is beneficial to both the citizen and the decision-maker.

**It is important that you ensure there is a balance of activities at the informal engagement event. Health information stalls and health engagement activities can be present, but also, it is important to have stalls and activities that do not explicitly refer to health so as to not overwhelm people with health information.**





## An asset-focused approach to engagement activity

Asset-focused community development presents a framework to help you as practitioners recognise that as well as having needs and problems, communities also have social, cultural and material assets. These are what help communities overcome the challenges they face. A growing body of evidence shows that when professionals begin with a focus on what communities have (their assets) as opposed to what they don't have (their needs) a community's ability to address its own needs increases.

Taking an assets-based approach to your informal engagement event will mean that the results offer practitioners and communities a clear road map based on people's strengths. Asset-based engagement has proven applications in challenging health inequalities: developing safer communities, building partnerships and ensuring positive bridges are built to both socially excluded people and marginalised groups.<sup>16</sup>

The community assets approach:

- starts with what is present in the community
- concentrates on building the capacity of residents and enabling them to set the agenda for service planning/reform/delivery
- stresses local determination, investment, creativity, and control.

[A glass half-full](#) - how an asset approach can improve community health and wellbeing

The report 'A glass half-full' from the then IDeA, offers a fresh perspective on how to reduce inequalities in community health and wellbeing. It proposes assessing and building on the strengths and resources in a community to increase resilience and social capital, and develop better ways of delivering health outcomes.

**It is important that you keep this in mind when you are developing your engagement methods.**

**For an example of how the West Durham Rural Delivery Pathfinder Project used the asset-mapping model for service planning, visit the LG Improvement and Development website at: [Using the asset mapping model for service planning](#)**

## Make sure engagement methods are accessible

The opportunity for young people to take part in the consultation is important. But it is also important not to make the activities feel too playful and therefore exclude adults. A balance must be achieved and it needs to be made clear that the consultation is for everyone.

You can use different colour pens to record views of children, young people and adults. This enables you to distinguish the views of different groups without making it obvious at the time. You could do the same to compare the views of women and men.

<sup>16</sup> Mathie, A. and Cunningham, G. (2003) 'From clients to citizens: Asset-based Community Development as a strategy for community-driven development'. *Development in Practice*. 13 (5)

Consider whether a hearing loop will be needed to help those with hearing aids take part in the conversation. Also consider recording certain parts of the day so that those with communication needs can use audiovisual records as a form of documentation.

### **Learning preferences**

A common framework of understanding 'learning style' is VAK: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic.

This method explains that these separate learning styles mean teaching and training should be approached in different ways. For example, visual learners have a preference for seeing; auditory learners learn best through listening; and kinaesthetic learners prefer to learn via experience, such as moving, touching, and doing.

It is important that you include engagement methods that cover all learning styles so that everyone involved will find the engagement activities easy to understand on the day. Informal engagement activities should therefore include drawing, movement, visualising and discussing, combined with more formal approaches such as comment slips.

In general, informal engagement activities are very simple and quick to participate in and do not require advanced reading and writing skills. They are also good for individuals who are not comfortable speaking in front of large groups, for example in a public meeting. However, comment slips or video diaries, which will enable people to have a more detailed say in the issues that are being discussed, should also be considered.

### **Your information must take account of health, literacy, disability, and visual impairment**

- **Consider using local statistics**

To ensure the information that you are gathering and providing is relevant to your participants, it is also important to know the demographic profile of your population. The Neighbourhood Statistics website contains a lot of information on health, education and deprivation status, and you can search by postcode. This will help you find useful area-specific data to help tailor your questions.

[Office of National Statistics](#) - neighbourhood statistics

- **Toolkit for producing patient information**

This toolkit includes guidance on how to produce written information for patients. It has been designed to make it easier for the NHS to produce good-quality information for patients, and assess how it is used.

[NHS brand guidelines](#)

- **Plain English Campaign**

This is an independent organisation campaigning for crystal-clear language. Plain English is defined as something that the intended audience can read, understand and act upon the first time they read it.

[Plain English Campaign](#)

- **'How to Use Easy Words and Pictures'**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced this booklet made for people with learning disabilities. The ethos behind the booklet is that everyone has a right to know what's going on and 'Easy Read' is needed because people sometimes use words that are hard to understand.

[How to use easy words and pictures](#)

- **Translations**

These can be obtained through interpreting services such as CINTRA, INTRAN or Language Line. However, it is important to recognise that, as with formal English, many people may not be able to easily read documents written in formal versions of their spoken language. Testing out the information before releasing it is therefore important.

**Make sure someone is always on hand to help**

Use facilitators who have the skills necessary to explain activities to participants and to clarify the purpose of the engagement exercise. Managing the participation of children and young people can be particularly time-consuming and Involve recommends that youth workers are present on the day to help facilitate this.

**Please note: If children are involved you must find out what Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks are needed.**

Strong safeguards to protect children and vulnerable adults were set out in detail by the government during the launch of the vetting and barring scheme (VBS). It is important to familiarise yourself with current as well as future regulations.

For more information on CRB checks and the new vetting and barring rules that have come into place go to [Criminal Records Bureau](#)

[Vetting and barring scheme FAQs](#)

**Example: Involving people with communication difficulties – NHS Ayrshire and Arran**

In order to gather the views of people with dementia, the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Health Board organised two ‘Getting Together’ days where dementia sufferers were invited with a carer to discuss their needs and experiences of public services.

The terminology used throughout the course was carefully chosen so that the word ‘dementia’ was replaced with phrases such as ‘people with memory problems’ and ‘people having problems with words’. Participants and carers were encouraged to record their thoughts using pictures, words and photographs, which could be used in the future to remind participants of their involvement.

Discussion included **how participants get information on local services**, where they get it from and what they want to know. Service providers were present to note the views and experiences arising from the discussion. The second day focused on the **promotion of dementia services**.

Health care professionals attending the event believed that participants were able to make a positive contribution to the discussions.

[Community Engagement: How to Guide case studies](#)

## Designing methods for engagement

The informal engagement event format works best with engagement activities that can be drop-in/drop-out for participants.

A balance must be achieved between making it clear that these are serious and important activities, without intimidating potential participants by making things too formal. The option to submit written feedback should also be provided for those who wish to use a more traditional format.

**Suggestion box:** Informal engagement events work best with methods that are:

- quick, taking no more than 2 to 3 minutes to participate in
- simple to understand, requiring only limited explanation
- not reliant on reading or writing to participate
- supported by a facilitator who can explain and assist as required
- visually appealing
- physically stimulating, for example having a physical aspect such as voting with a sticker
- mentally stimulating, for example encouraging people to weigh up different options.

### Engaging for health improvements

Asking questions about people's health and personal life in an informal setting can be sensitive. You will need to consider how best to gather this information.

Participants need to feel comfortable and confident in their environment. Different

methods suit different purposes. Talking about GP surgery locations is very different to talking about illegal drug use in the community.

What to say to individuals:

- explain what you want in a straightforward way
- make it clear that the individual can opt out at any stage and remove their contribution
- if appropriate, make it clear that it will be anonymous and confidential.

Many people, specifically when discussing health issues, think that it won't make a difference, and that they aren't going to be listened to. Reassurance is a huge part of engagement and you must ensure that people feel their contribution is valuable.

Key considerations:

- if offering video blogging, it is better if people can record their message alone rather than in front of a group
- comment boxes can be used for issues that people find difficult to openly discuss, such as mental health concerns
- anonymous feedback forms can be used for those not comfortable airing views in public.

### Confidentiality

There are issues about confidentiality that you will need to address when you involve people who use health and social care services.

As informal engagement relies on activities where participants can drop-in and drop-out, there will be a certain level of anonymity from the outset. As you are not collecting named data on people's health, confidentiality issues should be lessened. However, the face-to-face aspect of the activities may make

people feel uncomfortable expressing their needs and views in front of other members of the community. For this reason you need to ensure that there are feedback forms and anonymous comment boxes as a part of the engagement exercise to allow for this.

It is very important that public involvement is implemented well and that individuals' wellbeing and dignity are defended. It is probably best to seek the advice of your local research ethics committee (LREC) if you are concerned about the ethical implications of informal engagement on your topic of choice. They will be able to help you draw up a checklist of good practice and offer guidelines for determining when LREC approval will be necessary.

[Improvement Leaders' Guide Involving patients and carers](#) - general improvement skills

### Drop-in and drop-out informal engagement methods

[The table on page 53](#) provides some general guidance methods for informal engagement activities.

To find further examples and guidance please follow the [resources signposted on page 54](#).

[Appendix 3](#) covers a number of drop-in engagement methods in further detail.

### More structured informal engagement methods

If you are looking for engagement that is slightly more structured than what we have outlined for the drop-in/drop-out activities of the informal engagement event, [Appendix 4](#) gives a number of innovative methods that are slightly more formal in nature.

Formal public meetings held in council or other public venues can be off-putting for many participants who find the rules and highly structured process intimidating.

New types of meetings **differ from old-style public meetings** in several ways, including the **discussion structure**, the **level of formality** and the approach to **agenda-setting**. In [appendix 4](#) there are examples of innovative methods for each of these factors and an explanation of how they differ from a public meeting.

There are also examples of approaches that encompass an **assets-based approach to community engagement** and development.

[Appendix 4](#) covers more structured informal engagement methods in further detail.



## Example of more structured informal engagement methods in practice:

### London Borough of Hackney – Communities for Health

The communities for health team in Hackney is run by representatives from the council and NHS City and Hackney. Using innovative methodologies they have involved residents, the local community and the voluntary sector in identifying local projects that empower communities to improve their health and that help reduce health inequalities.

For example, they lead the City and Hackney 'healthy weight strategy'.

The strategy was developed in four overlapping stages between October 2008 and May 2009. Each stage was designed to maximise the participation of individuals, communities and organisations by using open space events and interactive workshops to support and engage stakeholders and residents.

#### Stage 1 – Professionals 'open space' event

**Event achievements:** It generated new commitments to joint working on healthy weight and led to the identification of priorities for action locally. Namely:

- to increase the amount of exercise in schools as a compulsory part of the day
- promote physical activity through building it into people's everyday lives
- identify barriers to the use of open spaces and alternative transport options
- ensure exercise and activities are accessible, fun and culturally sensitive.

The events included representatives from health and social care, the police, education and planning.

#### Stage 2 – Community 'open space' event

Two open space events took place involving members of the local community. Key priorities identified at the events were:

- to provide affordable activities, via subsidised facilities, for example
- to address barriers to exercise, for example on issues related to disabilities and medical conditions
- to provide community-based activities.

[London Borough of Hackney Open Space](#) - Communities of health

(For more information on [how to run a team meeting](#))



## Drop-in and drop-out engagement activity methods

Method	Purpose	Process	Checklist
<b>People's priorities</b>	To capture people's concerns for an area or relating to a council or health organisation strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using sticky dots and flipcharts to vote on priorities.</li> <li>- Each person receives 3 sticky dots to vote on their top 3 priorities.</li> <li>- Can use all dots on one priority, or spread out.</li> <li>- Different colour sticky dots for children and adults.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Flipcharts, sticky dots, wall space, facilitator.</li> <li>2. Different coloured dots for different ages.</li> <li>3. Instructions and questions/statements written.</li> <li>4. Translation needed? Visible and accessible?</li> </ol>
<b>How did we do?</b>	To find out how people think the organisation is performing on the priorities (above).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marbles in jars.</li> <li>- Each question is written up on the wall, 3 jars are placed in front.</li> <li>- One jar is 'doing well' one is 'not doing well', and one 'don't know'.</li> <li>- Different colour marbles for children and adults.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jars, beads, table, sticky notes, facilitator.</li> <li>2. Different coloured beads for different ages.</li> <li>3. Instructions and questions/statements written.</li> <li>4. Translation needed? Visible and accessible?</li> </ol>
<b>Shout-outs</b>	Help put faces to names and to hear real citizens' views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Video blogging.</li> <li>- Participants invited to provide free-form comments on the topic.</li> <li>- This exercise can be time limited to 2 minutes to ensure access to a large number of participants.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Camera, blank tape, microphone, facilitator.</li> <li>2. Technology tested before and during event.</li> <li>3. Is there a quiet space? Is lighting appropriate?</li> <li>4. Arrangement for video editing after the event.</li> </ol>
<b>Wouldn't it be great if we could...?</b>	To brainstorm ideas and help identify issues in the locality that may not be captured by the other exercises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two spaces to be creative with writing and drawing up ideas.</li> <li>- One could have a map of the area and the other a blank 'graffiti table' with a relevant question written on it.</li> <li>- Participants to be creative and respond by writing up ideas for services and to identify geographical concerns on the map.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graffiti table: plain wallpaper, pens, facilitator.</li> <li>2. Map: sticky notes, pens, facilitator.</li> <li>3. Instructions and questions/statements written.</li> <li>4. Translation needed? Visible and accessible?</li> <li>5. Is the activity safe for young children?</li> </ol>
<b>Quick questions</b>	To monitor who participated in the consultation exercises. There can also be an option to leave a contact address.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traditional monitoring form with approximately six questions. They could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have you ever taken part in an engagement session before?</li> <li>- What were the good/bad points about the engagement activities?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forms, pens, clipboards.</li> <li>2. Translation needed?</li> <li>3. Is there a scribe available?</li> <li>4. A safe place to store completed forms.</li> </ol>
<b>Comment forms</b>	To obtain more in-depth feedback on questions from engagement exercises about which participants feel particularly strongly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The organisation's departments can commit to contacting each person to discuss the issue. Comments can be forwarded to the relevant department.</li> <li>- Clipboards with small comment sheets placed alongside all consultation activities. Space for participant contact details on form.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forms, pens, clipboards, facilitator.</li> <li>2. Translation needed?</li> <li>3. Is there a scribe available? Are forms visible?</li> <li>4. Should the forms be printed on coloured paper?</li> </ol>
<b>Cafe conversations</b>	These are meant to complement the shorter activities by providing more considered opinions about community health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 30 minutes to hour-long small group discussions with a facilitator at cafe tables with food and drink available. Questions set in advance.</li> <li>- Often it is difficult to get people to come to the conversations at set times. Works better as a drop in activity.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facilitator and sign up sheets.</li> <li>2. Flipchart and pens.</li> <li>3. Engagement questions written in advance.</li> <li>4. Stopwatch.</li> </ol>
<b>Graffiti wall</b>	This technique can be helpful for learners who are reluctant to join group discussions, as it allows them to share their ideas without having to speak.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A space to be creative with writing and drawing up ideas.</li> <li>- Graffiti wall/table should have relevant questions written on it.</li> <li>- The public are then encouraged to add to a second wall throughout the day as they gain new knowledge. This is a colourful way to display what they know and what they have learned.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plenty of floor or table space.</li> <li>2. Some long sheets of paper (lining paper for walls is ideal).</li> <li>3. Some coloured pens.</li> </ol>

### **For further advice and examples of engagement activities:**

[Having a say in health](#) – guidelines for involving young patients in health services development. **p5-7**

[Tools and techniques for involving patients, users and carers](#) – an overview of successful techniques. **p40**

**Say&Play** – examples of the engagement activities used in the Lambeth trial project. **p18/19**: [tinyurl.com/y8lv4w8](http://tinyurl.com/y8lv4w8)

[Community Power Pack](#) – an overview of drop-in and drop-out activities for informal engagement. **p21**

[PeopleandParticipation.net](#) – over 30 methods for engagement (**online tool**)

[Voluntary Action Westminster, Involving people: a practical guide](#) – advice on many varieties of engagement

[International Association of Facilitators](#) – this site is dedicated to online and face-to-face methods for creating, leading and following up group meetings (**online tool**)

**Appendix 3 covers a number of drop-in engagement methods in further detail.**

## Planning stalls and fun activities

Informal engagement includes both engagement activities and more fun-oriented activities. Community groups and your organisation's staff run entertainment stalls in order to encourage involvement in the event as a whole.

Ensure that you have budgeted for entertainment activities as well as refreshments for all participants.

This is because fun activities and food are often the main draw for many participants. What exactly is needed to make an event fun is something best left to the venue community to decide.

**Example:** A **parents' group** in **Lambeth** created a fashion show. Children's entertainment can also be used including face painting and bouncy castles.

**Example:** An informal **engagement event** that took place in **Lambeth** asked school pupils to choose the activities, and they decided on a series of sport challenges.

It is important to ensure that there are health promotion and information representatives at the event so that members of the public receive useful information.

It's a good opportunity to give information on services that the people who are attending could access. For example, give health promotion information, community health information, benefits advice, housing advice, or run a councillor surgery.

You could also use the event to encourage local communities to form a group of 'agents of change' to plan, design and deliver health promotion activities. The groups could include neighbourhood or community committees, community coalitions or school health promotion councils.

### **You should encourage an informal, interactive and 'fun' approach.**

Make sure all staff involved – whether council department, public service or community group members – understand the nature of the event and are briefed and supported to offer a fun and enjoyable time for all participants.

Making sure that all participants can have something to drink and eat is also a way of making them feel it was worthwhile attending.

### **Running stalls**

Those running stalls can be encouraged to:

- wear casual clothes
- stand in front of their stall not behind a table
- provide useful information
- have freebies to hand
- encourage participant to get involved.

### **Refreshments**

- community representatives may have ideas on what to serve
- remember to consider dietary requirements such as vegetarian, Halal, and Kosher
- a barbeque could be an opportunity to raise funds for associations
- a 'how to eat healthily' theme could be a part of the catering at the health improvement event.

### Example: Wansbeck Healthy Living Centre - Community MOT Checks

The team from the Healthy Living Centre visit community venues on a three-monthly rolling programme to offer health check drop-in sessions. The informal approach reaches those who would not necessarily visit the GP. Attendees can be measured for a number of health indicators, including blood pressure, height, weight, and body mass index (BMI).

The sessions also offer informal education and literature about healthy eating, exercise, and smoking cessation. This is important, as both the council and the citizen are learning and gaining from the experience.

**Staff are trained to be approachable**, with the time to talk and to encourage members of the community to raise any health concerns they may have. Staff can also signpost attendees to other services such as the smoking cessation team, therefore increasing the potential for health improvements in the area.

[Community MOT health check](#)

**Suggestion box:** enjoyable stalls and refreshments

#### Stalls

Jewellery-making / face painting / hand massages / Indian head massages / art and craft /dance classes

#### Refreshments

**GO FOR:** smoothie stalls / tea, coffee and fruit at the cafe consultation / barbeque / fruit and vegetable platters /low fat dips or hummus/ low fat frozen yoghurt

**AVOID:** fried foods / cake / pies / pastries or ice cream with high fat content

Example: Healthcare for London Community Group – Camden

- free health advice and information from health promotion specialists
- free BMI and carbon monoxide tests
- face painting
- free fruit and refreshments.

Information on the case study gained from a telephone interview with NHS Camden.

### Pre-event confirmation check list

At this point it is vital that you have covered all of the aspects listed below.

**This should have been completed at least two weeks before the event, and preferably closer to a month in advance.**

#### Pre-event confirmation checklist

- Venue: confirm final arrangements and preparation with the venue
- Staff: ensure staff are confident with process and set up a briefing

- Publicity: roll out publicity programme
- Activities: confirm that all stalls and fun activities are booked
- Methods: confirm the methods of engagement you will use
- Materials: check you have all materials ordered and organised
- Accessibility: ensure venue and activities are accessible to target audience

## 8. On the day

### Setting out the venue

Successful informal engagement events require careful planning to make the most of the space available.

#### Do...

**position consultation activities in areas where crowds form** – for example near food or close to popular activities such as face painting – to increase their visibility and convenience, and increase potential for participation.

#### Don't...

**group all engagement activities together** in one space. This separates your work from the rest of the event and makes it less likely that people will get involved.

It is also **important to think about how the venue will be used during the day**. For example, noisy musical performances taking place in the area of consultation can prevent participants from engaging in activities which require discussion.

If you are having an area where people are being filmed, for example, you must ensure that it is in quiet part to allow people to express themselves comfortably.

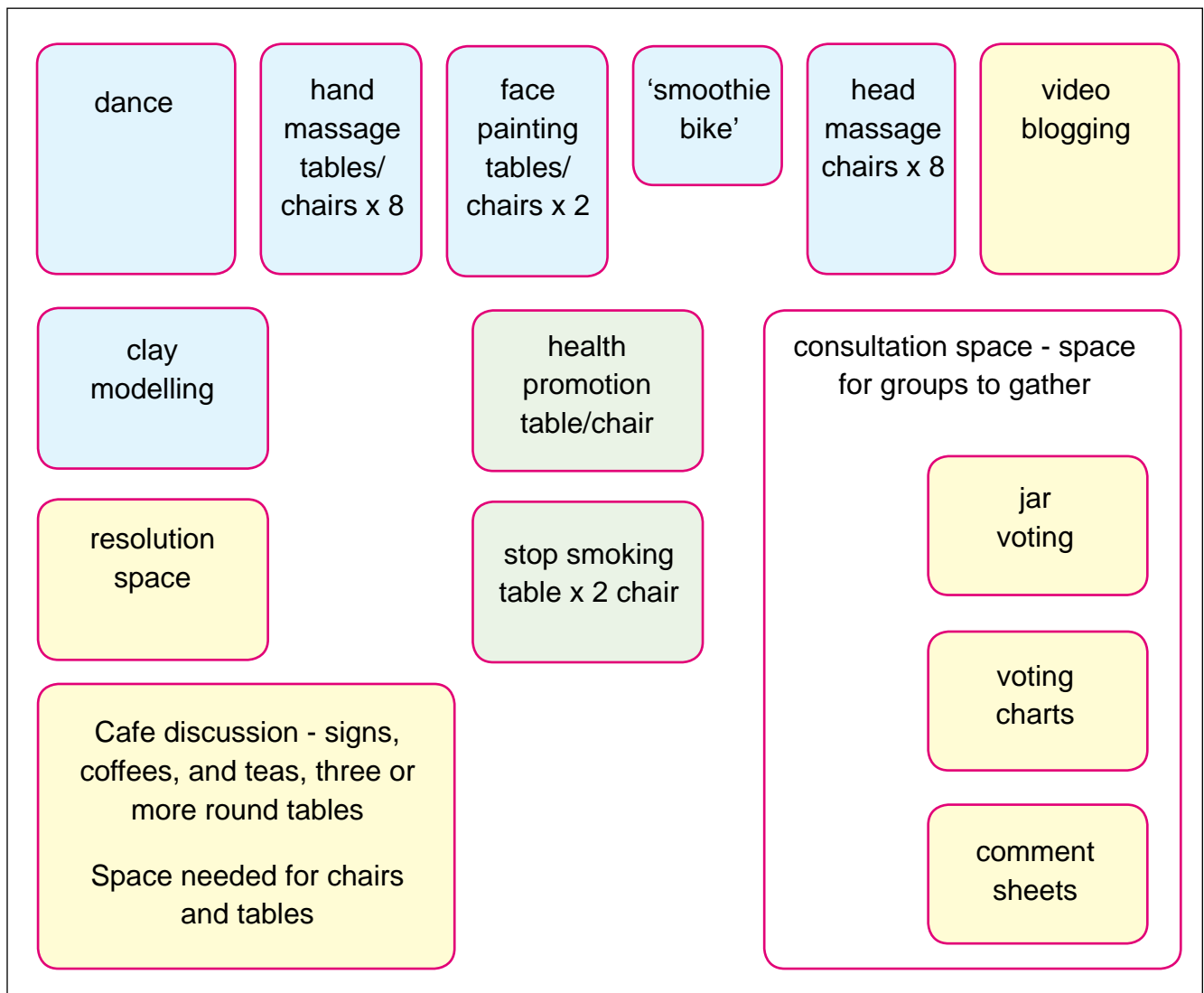
Running through the event beforehand will give you a clear understanding of what will and won't work with regards to the layout and set up on the day. It is useful to have a test run with some staff members playing the role of participants.

**Suggestion box:** The following questions should be considered when laying out the activities for engagement at an informal engagement fun day:

- Are engagement activities dispersed and mixed in with the other stalls and activities?
- Are activities positioned in spaces where people are likely to congregate?
- Be careful to not site activities in areas where nobody will naturally walk by and also to avoid creating areas that may become bottlenecks once the venue is full.
- Is accessibility of each consultation activity maximised? For example, is there access for disabled participants or those with pushchairs and prams?
- Are facilitators positioned to actively engage participants?
- Are there issues of confidentiality with regards to the subject, for example health issues?
- Is there a timetable for the day? For example, you would not want a band playing or music if it drowns out speakers or discussions.



## Example layout map with activities

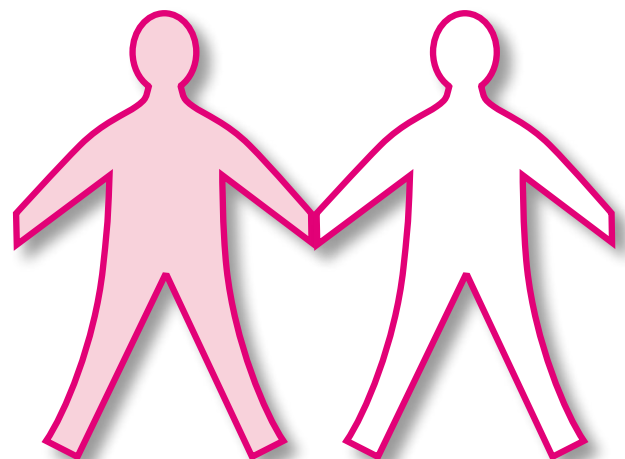


### Key

Engagement activities: yellow

Fun activities: blue

Health information stalls: green



## Tips for facilitation

You need to ensure that you have well-prepared facilitators. This will make all the difference to participants' willingness to get involved and to their experience of involvement.

Please note: In order to build capacity for future engagement events and activities, your organisation may want to think about getting internal staff trained in the skills of facilitation. This will build capacity and also reduce costs when planning future events.

These are some of the key skills that are important in the role of facilitator:

- **Listening:** show that you are interested, both in what they are saying and why they are saying it. This creates a trusting and supportive atmosphere.
- **Questioning:** ask the right questions, of the right people, at the right time, in the right way. This will keep the discussion moving forward.
- **Reframing:** manage tension and negativity, focusing on shared goals. This skill is particularly important when there is a lot of conflict or tension in the room.

### Suggestion box: facilitation

Involve recommends that a practice run and a briefing with facilitators take place before the event.

Facilitators should use the following principles to guide their role on the day:

- Provide unbiased and impartial advice to participants on how to participate.
- Actively invite people to participate in the engagement activity.
- Have a friendly and informal approach – in both dress and conversational style.
- Facilitators should come out from behind the table and actively engage with the public. This will make the public more responsive and relaxed.
- Be patient and explanatory. They should be fully prepared to repeatedly explain how the consultation methods work and how the information will be used to inform decision-making.

### Questioning

It is important that your facilitators understand how to question participants to get constructive results. The correct use of questioning will bring structure and clarity to the engagement. The facilitator's role is not to make content suggestions or to directly challenge factual errors. Ensuring that they can question appropriately is key to the overall process.

Engaging for health improvements can be particularly sensitive. Even if you are not directly talking about a health topic (for example nutrition or cancer screenings),

conversations regarding happiness and wellbeing can be equally personal. It is important that staff and facilitators on the day are fully aware of this and are careful in the way that they frame questions and approach individuals.

### Listening

Listening in facilitation is not a passive activity; it is a crucial skill. You need to alert facilitators to the key distinctions between active and passive listening as the facilitator's job is to not only hear what people have said but to actively acknowledge and assure participants that they have been understood.

## Event checklist

The following points can be applied to all events. There may be some that are not relevant to your informal engagement event, but working through them and making sure they are addressed if necessary makes sure that all bases are covered.

[Appendix 5](#) gives a detailed outline of listening and questioning techniques

For guidance on facilitation skills, visit the [Multi Stakeholder Processes Resource Portal](#)



## You may want to run a dress rehearsal either on the morning or the day before

### Venue

- Accessibility: wheelchair accessibility, hearing loops, accessible toilets.
- Plan of the event: have a plan of the location and what is going on where.
- Make sure you have the correct level of insurance, for example public and employee liability.
- If you are expecting families with young children, provide crèche facilities.
- Catering: make sure you have planned for dietary requirements.
- Health and safety: be aware of emergency contacts and first aid considerations.
- Equipment: test the public address system if you have one.

### Delivery

- Ensure someone is on hand to make people feel welcome as they arrive.
- Have a floor plan of the venue.
- Have a preparatory meeting with all those involved to look at the plan for the day.
- Ensure people are setting up and adhering to the agreed plan.
- Do health and safety checks.
- Identify how you will deal with any problems, for example if there is an accident or illness.
- Make sure the event starts and finishes on time.
- Manage people's movements from place to place.
- Have a jacket, jumper, and umbrella supply if the event is outside.

### During

- Take a register of attendees so that you can stay in contact. You could tie this in with a raffle to encourage participation.
- Ensure there is someone responsible for each different area of work. For example, someone supervising setting up, ongoing cleaning, and taking photographs.
- Have a team available at the end of the day for cleaning up.
- Make sure the team is visible and identifiable throughout the day. Perhaps they can all wear branded t-shirts.

### Photography and video

- Get permission from attendees or their parents to take their photographs on the day.
- Sample consent forms can be viewed here: [Hampshire County Council - consent forms](#)

**HAVE FUN!** Remember, informal engagement events are meant to be fun.

**Time line** – This timeline will guide you through the timings needed for running an informal engagement event. The chart will signpost you to the section in this guidance where you will find in-depth information on that stage. **Simply click on the pink word.**





## 9. Feedback

In order to implement the learning from the engagement process, it is important that you feedback to a range of stakeholders.

### Suggestion box

#### Who to feedback to

You need to consider your different audiences for feedback. Is it limited to those who took part or do you want to spread the word to the wider community?

#### What to feedback

It is important that you communicate both **what** you found as a result of the engagement work you undertook, and **how those findings will influence** any decisions or future actions. It is ideal if you are actually able to tell people **what will happen as a result** of their engagement. Many practitioners have taken to using a 'you said, we did' format for these communications.

#### How to plan your feedback

The more controversial the area under debate, the more sensitive the feedback, and the greater the care with which it needs to be handled. To manage information circulation, you must plan what the sign-off process for the feedback will be.

#### What mechanisms to use

Given that almost every engagement activity has a range of stakeholders, both in terms of those who were involved and those who are interested in the findings, it is likely that you will need a range of feedback mechanisms.

Options include:

- a written report
- a summary poster
- a newsletter or short briefing
- presentations at the meetings of interested groups
- a press release.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Patient and Public Engagement Toolkit for World Class Commissioning (NHS Institute)

## Feedback to the community

You need to let participants know what will happen to their views if you want them to take part again.

You need to build into any event a process for feeding back. This should happen approximately one or two weeks after the event.

This includes responding to the views put forward, and details of how and when decisions are being made following the informal engagement event itself. This encourages the public to feel that the engagement process was genuine, and that their views have been taken into account.

Involve recommends publishing the event findings complete with data in a report, available to participants who contributed. This should be publicised through relevant channels with the specific sections highlighted for them.

Make sure that you keep comments clear and easy to understand when feeding back so that members of the public are being provided with transparent and accessible information.

Participants will sometimes bring up highly personal issues, for example their difficulty getting registered with a GP surgery. For the individual this is a vital issue but it can distract from the overall purpose of the engagement if individual matters dominate the activities. For this reason it is a good idea to provide a process whereby participants can raise other issues of concern and receive a response. This can help prevent such individual issues from dominating the engagement event and assist participants in understanding what is and is not up for discussion.

Make sure that staff from, for example, PALS, housing advice and social services are on hand to deal with individual matters. You might also invite ward councillors to hold informal constituency surgeries as part of the event.

It is best to identify a named individual to oversee the feedback process and handle other issues on the day.

### Example: The London Borough of Lambeth Council Say&Play Events

#### Feedback to participants

The results were fed into the council's Children and Young People Plan with the department committing to review the data and provide personalised feedback to participants who completed comment forms.

Results showed a widespread perception of high crime rates in the borough, confirming one of the key themes from Lambeth's communities strategy. Also highlighted was a perceived lack of leisure facilities in the borough, specifically the lack of a swimming pool.

A council officer said:

"The data [from the engagement process] has been very, very useful as far as looking at the priorities of the Children's and Young People Plan and how successful we have been in achieving those".

[Involve publications](#)

**Suggestion box:** Your organisation could commit to contacting each individual who completed a comment form which asked for a response on an issue and included their contact details.

## Feedback to the council and implementation of the learning

You need to ensure that the feedback and qualitative data obtained from engagement activities will be used to inform the development of proposals and influence decisions.

This is important in order to:

- build a true picture of what the public thinks and what their experiences are
- involve the public in the development of the aspects of health improvement that will be engaged on in the future
- develop an ongoing dialogue or relationship with the community
- build trust and confidence for future engagement processes.

It is useful to share the findings and the evaluation of the informal engagement event across all service providers within the council and associated health organisations. This will help streamline the engagement processes that are taking place within the organisation and will also build internal capacity and confidence in running this type of engagement.

This can be done through internal newsletters and updates, holding a lunchtime or evening feedback session in a central location, or at an appropriate organisational meeting, for example.

## Evaluating objectives

It is important that you monitor the impact of your informal engagement event according to your objectives.

This will allow you to analyse the relationship it created with the community in order to bring the council and other agencies closer to the community. It is important to report back progress and enhance dialogue with communities by showing robust actions, demonstrating that a way forward together is possible.

Engaging with a community on health improvements will have an impact on their standard of life and wellbeing. As such it is crucial that the effect of your informal engagement event is noted and the degree to which change has had an effect on your policy and practice and the general health of that community.



## Successful example: Luton – community festivals

These were free, informal drop-in events, designed to attract families from across a specific neighbourhood area. The festivals were organised as part of a council-led scheme to increase opportunities for local people to get involved in local decision-making. Each festival reached around 800 to 1200 people, and there were three festivals in total. To streamline the delivery of engagement in the area, the council, the police, the PCT, the fire service, safer neighbourhoods, voluntary and community groups and street services were all involved.

Entertainment activities	Engagement activities
Arena events	Informal drawing (10-13 year olds): young people were encouraged to draw pictures about what they perceived to be good and bad in their area.
Children's entertainers	Like/dislike (13-25 year olds): There was a simple question and answer session about what they perceived to be good about the area. A wide range of views were recorded including issues such as a lack of street lighting, which the council has subsequently addressed.
Fair rides – 14 to 19 year olds were given vouchers for attractions at the fair to encourage them to give their views	Mapping exercise (25 year olds and over): A map of the ward was displayed. Participants were encouraged to use sticky dots to mark and draw attention to particular issues within the area they had chosen. Responses ranged from lack of open space and park facilities, to highlighting areas which were dirty and untidy. At each of the festivals over 100 people took part in the mapping exercises.
Face painting	Video footage of young peoples' views was taken during this.
Gladiator duels – interactive activity on soft play equipment	'Keeping involved' sign up forms – disseminated around the festival these forms were a way that individuals could register their interest in continued involvement with the council. Forms were handed in to a central collection point.

Councillor Hazel Simmons, leader of the council, said: "The festivals were a great success with over 300 community priorities mapped across the three areas. We want residents to be more engaged in decision-making and one of the most encouraging aspects was that over 60 per cent of the people who participated in the consultations at the festivals had never participated in a council consultation prior to this".

Participants who signed up on the day have been kept informed of developments and told how their input has contributed to policies in the area. Luton Borough Council followed up the informal engagement event with a more conventional community planning event in order to focus further on the suggestions made by the public, demonstrating that their concerns were being taken seriously.

Information on the case study gained from a telephone interview with Luton Community Development Service.

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# Summing up

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This document is a practical guide to moving beyond traditional consultation approaches by building your understanding of how to deliver new informal ways of engaging with the public on health issues.

Informal engagement is a great way to encourage involvement across the community, and allows for a positive and enjoyable form of engagement that will change the way that the public thinks about engagement events. Bringing the community together in an informal setting where there is fun as well as informative activities enables a true form of dialogue where community engagement is a two-way street. By strengthening community relations in this way, you are able to centre your engagement activities based on the assets, strengths and enthusiasms of the community and develop forward-thinking, positive, community-focused actions to influence the decisions you are making on health improvements.

We hope you have found this guidance useful and it has helped you think about alternative ways to engage. If you would like to explore further public engagement processes that will move you away from 'typical' consultation exercises, there are a range of methods and case studies on Involve's website:

[www.peopleandparticipation.net](http://www.peopleandparticipation.net)

We would also love to hear from you. Did you find the guidance useful? Do you have innovative and exciting examples to share? The engagement field is constantly evolving and we look forward to hearing how you got on: [info@involve.org.uk](mailto:info@involve.org.uk)

For further information about the Healthy Communities Programme please visit [Local Government Improvement and Development](#) or join in the debate through the Healthy Communities [Community of Practice](#)



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[Part I - understanding engagement](#)

[Part II - planning the informal engagement event](#)

[Part III - checklist for engagement event](#)



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# Appendix 1

## Example of an evaluation and monitoring form\*

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Thank you for attending our informal engagement event. Please help us by taking a couple of minutes to complete this brief form. The information that you give us will only be used for monitoring purposes.

### About you

#### Are you

- A member of staff?       Service user?       A member of the public?

#### How would you describe your ethnic background?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> British                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irish                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any other white background  | <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White and black Caribbean   | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White and black African     | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian             | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any other mixed background  | <input type="checkbox"/> Black African              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic background | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other black background |

- Do you have a disability?       Yes       No

#### How old are you?

- Under 20     21 to 35     36 to 50     51 to 65     Over 65

#### What is your gender?

- Male       Female     Other

### Keeping in touch

If you would like to hear the outcome of the event you have been involved in today, or would like us to contact you about future work we are doing to involve people, please fill in your contact details below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**About the event**

To what extent do you feel you received the information that you needed?

- Completely       Very much       Slightly       Not at all

To what extent did you feel able to give your views?

- Completely       Very much       Slightly       Not at all

How useful did you find the event?

- Very useful       Quite useful       Slightly useful       Not useful

How enjoyable did you find the event?

- Very enjoyable       Quite enjoyable       Slightly enjoyable       Not enjoyable

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

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Thank you for completing this form. Please return it to the facilitator.

\* Adapted from the NHS Real Involvement guidance.

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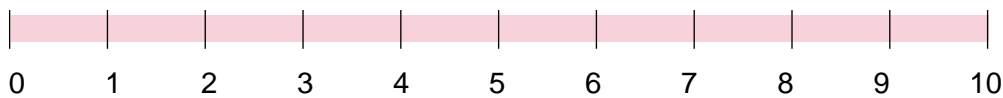
# Appendix 2

## Example of an 'on the day' monitoring form

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1. Draw these diagrams on a flip chart and display in the consultation area.
2. Give participants the same number of sticky dots as there are questions and ask them to stick one per chart.
3. This will give you an overview of how the day's event is going and will help with the post-event evaluation.

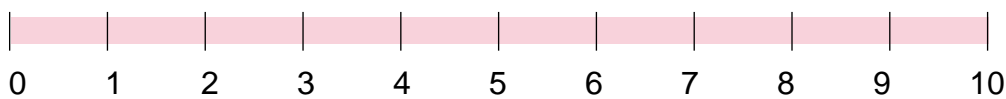
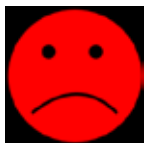
**How useful did you find the event?**



Not at all enjoyable

Very enjoyable

**How enjoyable did you find the event?**



Not at all enjoyable

Very enjoyable

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# Appendix 3

## Engagement methods and exercises

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### Informal engagement methods: in-depth

The focus of informal engagement events is community and family fun. Engagement activities available should allow participants to 'drop-in and drop-out' and should be structured in a clear and simple way. They should not require a great deal of reading and writing. They should be easy to participate in and not time-dependent. Individuals taking part can join in and leave as they please.

The engagement methods outlined below will provide you with:

- Data on participants' priorities for service provision.
- Data on where people feel that the council is doing well on health service provision and where they think improvements could be made.
- Video blogs of individuals talking about a particular question and giving open feedback to the council on health in their community.
- Lots of new ideas for improvements that could be made locally to help health improvements in the council, and contact details of people who'd like to get involved.
- Information on the age range and ethnicity of those who attended and if they found the day useful. You may find out what they would change and what they enjoyed about the informal engagement event.

#### Exercise one: People's priorities

**Purpose:** To find out more about public and patient priorities for improvement in health services in the area, and to find out which are most important to the community as a whole.

**Method:** Use sticky dots and flipcharts to vote on a number of priorities. Each person gets three sticky dots which they can use to vote on their top three priorities relating to health services in the area. They can use all of their dots on one priority if they feel really strongly about it, or spread them out more evenly. Adults and children can use different coloured dots.

A space for comments should be provided for those who would like to get more involved in a particular area and to leave contact information.

#### Checklist:

- flipcharts, sticky dots, accessible wall space, facilitator
- different coloured dots for the results of children/young people and adults
- instructions and questions/statements written
- translations
- ensure activities are visible
- ensure activities are accessible

## Exercise two: How are we doing?

**Purpose:** Find out how people think the council is performing on local health service provision and what could be improved, by agreeing or disagreeing with a number of questions.

**Method:** Peas in the pot

Each statement is written up on the wall and two jars are placed in front of the statements, labelled 'mostly agree' and 'mostly disagree'. Participants indicate their views by placing counters (beads, peas or whatever else seems suitable) in the relevant pot. Different groups, such as adults and children, can use different coloured beads so that you can distinguish how different communities view services.

Statements to use can be inspired by your health inequalities and improvement strategy. For example, more specific versions of the following:

1. My local health services are well-used.
2. My local health services are easy for me to access.
3. The staff at my local health services are friendly, helpful and approachable.
4. My local health services are clean and tidy.
5. My local health services provide me with the information I need to feel confident about my health needs.
6. My local health service provides an easy way to feed back on whether or not services are sufficient.
7. My local health service provides support to a range of different groups, for example children and young people.

**This would encourage people to make a broad-based assessment of whether or not the organisation is on track for meeting each criterion.** For those who are undecided, or who want to add more information, use comment slips which can also be dropped into a jar and which can be used to provide detailed feedback.

### Checklist:

- jars, beads, table space, sticky notes, written materials, facilitator
- different coloured dots for the results of children/young people and adults
- instructions and questions/statements written
- translations
- ensure activities are visible
- ensure activities are accessible



### Exercise three: Shout-outs

**Purpose:** This helps put faces to names and to hear real citizens' views. This method aims to appeal particularly to young people.

**Method:** Video blogging

A camera is used to interview children and parents and to ask them the question:

**'If the organisation could change one thing to improve the health service, what would you want them to do?'**

Participants will also be given the chance to tell the council about their own views on health care provision in the area.

Video diaries can either be done in a secluded private area, or a staff member can bring the camera to people in the main venue.

#### Checklist:

- camera, blank tape, microphone, facilitator
- Has the technology been tested both before and during the event?
- Is there a quiet space available?
- Is the lighting appropriate?
- Are there arrangements for video to be edited afterwards?
- Are activities accessible?

### Exercise four: My ideal healthy community

**Purpose:** To brainstorm both aspirational and locally-grounded ideas

**Method:** Set up two spaces where people can be creative with writing and drawing up ideas. One area should be a map of the local area and the other should be a blank sheet with the title 'my ideal healthy community'.

The reason for using both a map and a blank sheet is to try to leave room for all attending to be very creative and enjoy writing and drawing up ideas for how they would like their ideal health service to look and feel. But also it will encourage practical grounding of ideas by including the map of the area, which will also help people think about community needs.

Sticky notes and a graffiti table should be laid out so that people can draw and write up ideas about how specific things could be improved in the area.

#### Checklist:

- graffiti table: plain wallpaper, pens, pencils, other creative materials, facilitator
- map: sticky notes, pens, facilitator
- instructions and questions/statements written
- translations
- ensure activities are visible
- ensure activities are accessible
- ensure the activity is safe for young children (for example, use non-toxic pens, be careful with glue, and check for choking hazards)

### Exercise five: Quick questions

**Purpose:** To monitor who participated in the engagement exercises

**Method:** This is a more traditional monitoring form with very brief questions. Staff members move around the room and capture the views of people present.

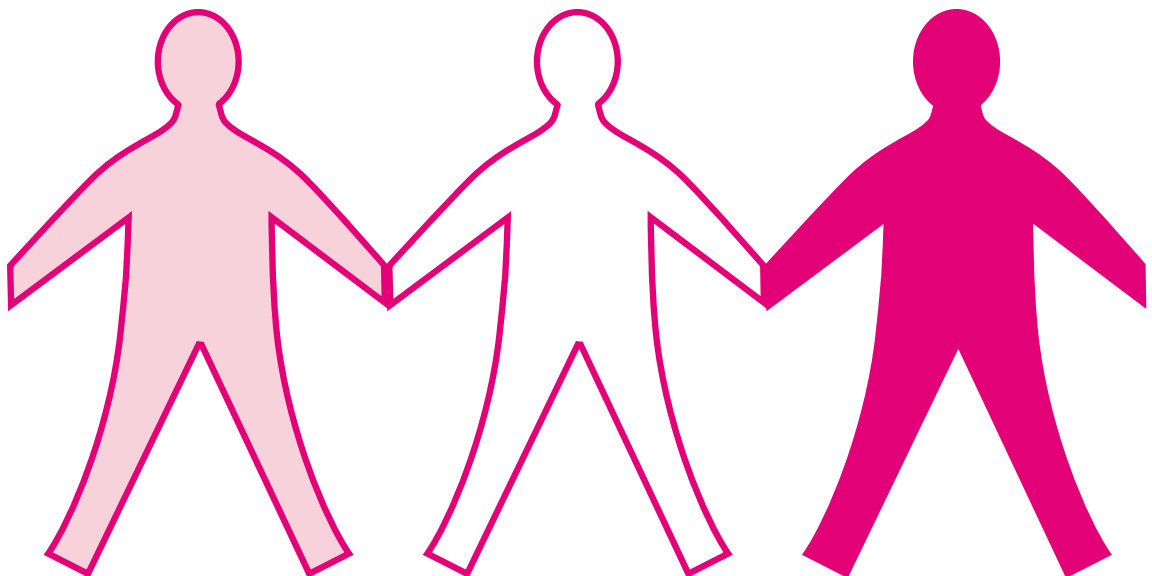
The questions should include:

1. Did you take part in the consultation activities today?
2. Have you ever taken part in a council consultation before?
3. What were the good and bad points about the consultation activities available today?
4. How old are you? (use age bandings)
5. Ethnicity? (use list of options and an open-ended option)
6. What is your gender?

Monitoring should be carried out in a way that enables people to fill in their own details and have control over the process. However, help should be available if required.

#### Checklist

- forms, pens, clipboards
- translation
- have a scribe available
- ensure there is a safe place to store completed forms



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# Appendix 4

## More formal methods of engagement

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### Level of formality: World Cafés

World Café seeks to gather the views of participants in a setting in which most of us feel comfortable and free to talk, namely a café. This approach is very good at reaching groups who would not normally attend public meetings. Using a World Café setting is a good approach for relatively large groups, and allows for a very lively and creative atmosphere.

#### Directions

World Café events take place in an informal café or a room set up to look like a café, using small tables with paper tablecloths and suitable food for participants to share.

The facilitator introduces the session and asks the first question.

Discussions take place between those in the small table groups. The paper tablecloths are used to take notes and make comments on. At the end of the first question session people report back to the facilitator and wider group.

For each new discussion topic the participants should move to a different table to ensure that the whole group mixes well. One person remains behind at each table to explain what is written on the tablecloths.

People move about for several rounds, each time talking to new people. Sometimes new questions on the same theme are asked. With each round the areas of common agreement become clearer.

The choice of questions for the café conversation is very important for the success of your event. In general it is useful to phrase the questions in a positive and open-ended way to allow for a constructive discussion.

#### Benefits

- comfortable relaxed atmosphere
- flexible
- easier to get people to attend.

#### Downsides

- may be seen as frivolous
- may raise unrealistic expectations
- it supplies no quantitative data.

**People needed:** 10 to 100

**Time needed:** Anything from 90 minutes to a full day

**Materials needed:** café-style venue, music, paper tablecloths, refreshments and pens

More information [The world café](#)

## Agenda setting: open space events

Some meeting approaches, such as open space, give participants much more control over the agenda in comparison to most public meetings. This approach places the responsibility for the content and recording of the event squarely on the shoulders of the participants. This risk in the eyes of the organisers is offset by an increase in participant energy and ownership.

### Directions

Open space events have a central theme or question, but no fixed agenda. At the start participants stand or sit in a circle, the theme is introduced and participants are invited to identify issues that they are interested in, and asked to take responsibility for running a session on one of them. Once volunteers have stepped forward the sessions are allocated among available rooms and timeslots.

When no more discussion topics are suggested the participants sign up for the sessions they wish to take part in.

Participants do not have to stay for the whole session that they choose, and can wander around and dip in and out of sessions as they see fit. Open space creates very fluid and interesting conversations held together by mutual enthusiasm for the topic.

### Benefits

- creative and energising
- builds skills of participants
- gives sense of ownership.

### Downsides

- limited control
- may raise unrealistic expectations.

The fundamental principles of open space are:

- ‘whoever comes are the right people’ (the best participants are those who feel passionately about the issue and have freely chosen to get involved)
- ‘whenever it starts is the right time’ (open space encourages creativity during and between sessions)
- ‘whatever happens is the only thing that could happen’ (let go of your expectations and pay full attention to what is happening here and now)
- there is one ‘law’, the ‘law of two feet’ (if participants are not learning or contributing they have a responsibility to go to another session, or take a break for personal reflection).

It is important that there are good written reports from all discussions, complete with action points, available at the end of the day. You will need to encourage people to write their notes up.

Open space events are often very inspiring and energising, but they are impossible to control in detail so if you want to answer very specific questions you should probably use more structured approaches.

**People needed:** 10 to 100

**Time needed:** Half-day to three-day event

**Materials needed:** Venue with break-out rooms, pens, paper, and computers for typing up results (optional)

More information see [open space](#) - how to run a meeting

## Discussion structure: citizens' juries

A citizens' jury provides an independent setting for members of the public to examine and discuss an important issue of public policy and to deliver a 'verdict' on the issue.

It is deliberative in that the jury gets information about the issues it is set to discuss. This information includes a variety of opinions on what could be done about the issue and is presented by 'witnesses', followed by question and answer sessions.

Juries do not necessarily have to work towards agreement, but there is usually a movement towards some sort of shared opinion.

In a four-day process, day one is spent bringing jurors up to speed on the issue; days two and three concentrate on witness presentations on the different ways of dealing with the issue; and most of the fourth day is spent by the jury developing its recommendations.

Juries are decision-advising rather than decision-making tools. The result of a citizens' jury tends to be much more informed and meaningful than the results of an opinion poll.

**Cost:** The difference in the costing usually relates to how long the process is designed to last and the exact nature of the methodology

**People needed:** Most juries include a sample of 12 to 16 people

**Time needed:** The set-up time for a jury can be anywhere from two to four months

### Benefits

- gives an informed public opinion about how a difficult issue should be tackled
- enables decision-makers to understand what informed members of the public might think of as realistic solutions
- the results can also be used to generate wider public debate about the issues.

### Downsides

- only involves a very small number of people, which means that the wider public may still hold a less informed view
- a challenge for policy-makers is how to reconcile these two different public voices to create wider public ownership of the jurors' recommendations
- it can be difficult for policy-makers to decide how to proceed if they reject the jury's recommendations.

More information go to [The Jefferson Center](#) - originator of the citizens jury process



# Asset-based community development

## Community asset-mapping

This is a very practical way of finding out what assets already exist within a community. This activity gives participants the skills and interest to begin the process of identifying and understanding the potential of those assets.

Ultimately this will create awareness of local resources in the public and in the council, and will enable the resources identified to be used in health improvement activities.

## Process

### Step 1: Define your community

For example, choose a specific population, or base it around geographic boundaries.

### Step 2: Define what you want to do with the information collected

For example, create a community resource guide or a searchable database of community resources to tap into for a health initiative.

### Step 3: Select what assets you want to identify

Keep focused on what you do with the information.

### Step 4: Identify if an asset-mapping activity has been done previously in your community

Will it provide the information you are looking for? What did or did not work well?

### Step 5: Develop a plan to collect the information

When do you need the data? What methods will you use to collect the information? What resources (people, copying, database work, facilitators) do you need to collect the information? Who is going to do what and by when?

### Step 6: Map the assets of your community

Use a town map and colour-coded push pins, or use GIS mapping software to create a map.

### Step 7: Evaluate your process and results benefits

- it shows achievements and talent available
- useful when people need to identify assets they can use
- it will empower groups
- it creates a change to a more positive focus.

### downsides

- not useful when there is no common focus for the group as a whole
- asset-mapping uncovers the often overlooked resources and assets that are present in every community.

**People needed:** 10 to 100

**Time needed:** Two hours to two days for the event

**Materials needed:** flip chart and pens, sticky notes, large-size asset map template

[Using the asset model for service planning](#)

## Appreciative inquiry

Appreciative inquiry (AI) builds a vision for the future using questions to focus people's attention on past and future success. These questions are then taken to the wider community. Issues addressed revolve around what people enjoy about an area, and their hopes for the future of their communities.

Questions should be designed to encourage people to tell stories from their own experience of what works, their aspirations for the future, and their feelings about their communities. This enables the participants to imagine and create a vision of what would make a successful future that has a firm grounding in the reality of past successes.

The process begins with a core group setting the focus of the inquiry, and developing and testing the appreciative questions. These are used by many people in the community to gather information through stories, as well as to set out their hopes and wishes for the future.

The interview questions can be developed, tested and analysed in a few hours or in a workshop. Data from the interviews can be looked at and turned into information by a few people or, preferably, by the whole community. AI works best when there is something that needs to be worked on in the whole community and where there is a long-term commitment to change.

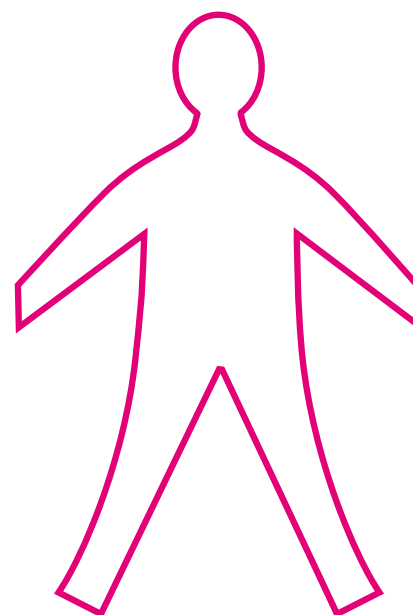
### Benefits

- it includes people who normally don't take part
- builds on what has worked in the past creates a strong vision
- partnership working
- can be applied to other decision-making methods.

### Weaknesses

- lack of direct attention to problems
- little attention to who should be involved.

More information: [www.aradford.co.uk](http://www.aradford.co.uk)



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# Appendix 5

## Facilitation skills

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### Questioning

Effective questioning will achieve the following:

- sort facts from feelings
- break down issues into manageable components
- identify personal interests/preferences/concerns.

Questions can be either open or closed:

#### Closed questions

These are based on a fixed number of options. They are often used to close down conversation, but can also be used to get affirmation or commitment. For example:  
'Does this make sense?'  
'Do you prefer option one or two?'

#### Open questions

These are designed to stimulate reflection, making yes/no responses impossible. For example:

'What are the issues as you see them?'  
'Why is that important to you?'

#### Tips

- Encourage people to elaborate (Ask why? How? What do you mean?).
- Ask open questions to encourage creativity and problem-solving.
- Use questions to seek clarification on what is being said.
- Give people time; do not rush to fill the silence. The silence is thinking time!

- Consider how you come across. Remember that people are as aware of your body language and tone of voice as of the actual words you use.

### Listening

#### Active listening means:

- not interrupting
- giving plenty of eye contact (but not continuous)
- using encouraging sounds and words
- relaxing, leaning forward, nodding
- using questions to show that you are following and to encourage the talker to expand
- showing empathy and respect to the speaker
- withholding judgement
- trying not to think about what you are going to say next; focus on what's being said
- acknowledge feelings.

#### Suggested listening interventions:

Encouraging/acknowledging: 'Tell us more...'  
'That sounds like it is important to you...'

Checking/clarification: 'Am I right in thinking that...?' 'I'm not sure I understand, did you say...?'

Affirmation/empathy: 'I understand why you are concerned about this...' 'Thanks for that information...'

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# Appendix 6

## Resources and references

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### Local Government Improvement and Development

Healthy communities resource – [www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=77225](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=77225)

Healthy Communities Programme – [www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=4820461](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=4820461)

Reaching Out: community engagement and health – [www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=8681055](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=8681055)

Valuing Health: developing a business case for health improvement – [www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=15246382](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=15246382)

Communities for Health Programme <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=14205840>

The social determinants of health and the role of local government – <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=17415112>

A glass half-full – How an asset approach can improve community health and wellbeing – <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=18364393>

Developing a business case for community empowerment – <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=17455595>

### Involve

Say&Play – [www.involve.org.uk/say\\_play](http://www.involve.org.uk/say_play)

Peopleandparticipation.net – [www.peopleandparticipation.net](http://www.peopleandparticipation.net)

People and Participation – [www.involve.org.uk/people\\_and\\_participation](http://www.involve.org.uk/people_and_participation)

Making a Difference: A guide to evaluating – [www.involve.org.uk/evaluation-guide](http://www.involve.org.uk/evaluation-guide)

Community Power Pack – [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/powerpack](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/powerpack)

Consumer Focus – Guidance on Making the case for public engagement - [www.involve.org.uk/making-the-case-for-public-engagement](http://www.involve.org.uk/making-the-case-for-public-engagement)

Councillor in the Community – [www.councillorinthecommunity.org/](http://www.councillorinthecommunity.org/)

Citizen power in recession? – [www.involve.org.uk/citizen-power-in-recession-the-case-for-public-engagement-in-local-government](http://www.involve.org.uk/citizen-power-in-recession-the-case-for-public-engagement-in-local-government)

### Engagement toolkits

Developing Your Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy - A practical guide for LSPs (Urban Forum) – [www.urbanforum.org.uk/handy-guides/a-practical-guide-to-developing-your-comprehensive-community-engagement-strategy](http://www.urbanforum.org.uk/handy-guides/a-practical-guide-to-developing-your-comprehensive-community-engagement-strategy)

Involving people: a practical guide (Voluntary Action Westminster) – [www.vawcvs.org/publications](http://www.vawcvs.org/publications)

Patient and Public Engagement Resources [http://www.institute.nhs.uk/world\\_class\\_commissioning/pct\\_portal/pct\\_to\\_pct.html](http://www.institute.nhs.uk/world_class_commissioning/pct_portal/pct_to_pct.html)

Real Involvement: Working with people to improve health services (Department of Health) – [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_089787](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_089787)

Open Minds: a guide to Engaging Communities (Newcastle City Council) – [www.newcastle.gov.uk/wwwfileroot/cxo/consultation/Engagementtoolkit.pdf](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/wwwfileroot/cxo/consultation/Engagementtoolkit.pdf)

Getting on Brilliantly (Annette Zera) – [www.gettingonbrilliantly.co.uk](http://www.gettingonbrilliantly.co.uk)

## Health

NHS Evidence: Patient and Public Involvement Specialist Library – [www.library.nhs.uk/ppi](http://www.library.nhs.uk/ppi)

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment guidance from the Department of Health – [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_081097](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_081097)

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence: Patient and Public Involvement – [www.nice.org.uk/getinvolved/patientandpublicinvolvement/patient\\_and\\_public\\_involvement.jsp](http://www.nice.org.uk/getinvolved/patientandpublicinvolvement/patient_and_public_involvement.jsp)

NHS Centre for Involvement – [www.nhscentreforinvolvement.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscentreforinvolvement.nhs.uk)

[NHS Institute: Real Involvement Power Point Presentation](#)

Involve: Promoting public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research – [www.invo.org.uk](http://www.invo.org.uk)

Patient and Public Involvement in the NHS Networks register – <http://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/community-health-involvement-empowerment-forum/?searchterm=involvement>

Department of Health: Patient and Public Experience and Engagement – <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/PatientandPublicinvolvement/index.htm>

'Having a Say in the NHS' A toolkit and a variety of facilitated workshops to increase knowledge, skill and confidence to engage – [www.havingasayinthenhs.co.uk](http://www.havingasayinthenhs.co.uk)

Department of Health website, Health Inequalities page – <http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20100509080731/http://dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/Healthinequalities/index.htm>

Department of Health 'Strengthening Accountability' – Engagement continuum – [www.dh.gov.uk/dr\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_4084213.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/dr_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4084213.pdf)

NHS NICE public health guidance (2008) Community engagement to improve health. (NICE) – <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/PH009Guidancev2.pdf>

The Engagement Cycle – (InHealth Associates for the Department of Health) – [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_098658](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_098658)



## Practical guidance

Stakeholder Analysis Guidelines (Kammi Schmeer) – [www.lachsr.org/documents/policytoolkitforstrengtheninghealthsectorreformpartii-EN.pdf](http://www.lachsr.org/documents/policytoolkitforstrengtheninghealthsectorreformpartii-EN.pdf)

Mapping Patient and Public Involvement (NHS Centre for Involvement) – [www.nhscentreforinvolvement.nhs.uk/index.cfm?Content=257](http://www.nhscentreforinvolvement.nhs.uk/index.cfm?Content=257)

Valuing Health: developing a business case for health improvement – [www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=15246382](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=15246382)

Stakeholder Mapping: Overseas Development Institute – [tinyurl.com/ygvl9rw](http://tinyurl.com/ygvl9rw)

A Framework for Evaluation and Feedback for Patient and Public Involvement (NHS Centre for Involvement) – [www.nhscentreforinvolvement.nhs.uk/index.cfm?Content=257](http://www.nhscentreforinvolvement.nhs.uk/index.cfm?Content=257)

National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement – <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/our-projects/evaluation>

Hampshire County Council sample photography consent forms – [tinyurl.com/ygw9yuc](http://tinyurl.com/ygw9yuc)

## Inclusion

Accessibility and Diversity checklist – Community Power Pack (Involve) – [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/powerpack](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/powerpack)

Seldom heard - Developing inclusive participation in social care (Social Care Institute for Excellence) – [www.scie.org.uk/publications/positionpapers/pp10.asp](http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/positionpapers/pp10.asp)

Consider using government statistics – [www.neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk)

NHS Identity: Toolkit for producing patient information – [www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/patientinformationtoolkit/patientinfotoolkit.pdf](http://www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk/patientinformationtoolkit/patientinfotoolkit.pdf)

Plain English Campaign – [www.plainenglish.co.uk](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk)

How to Use Easy Words and Pictures (The Disability Rights Commission) – <http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/ViewResource.aspx?resID=187517>

## Methods of engagement

Having a say in health (The University of York) – [www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/pubs/pdf/havsayhe.pdf](http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/pubs/pdf/havsayhe.pdf)

Tools and techniques for involving Patients, Users and Carers (NHS Modernisation Agency) – [www.clinicalgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/documents/1.4PC.pdf](http://www.clinicalgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/documents/1.4PC.pdf)

Say&Play (Involve) – [www.involve.org.uk/assets/Publications/SayPlaySchools-report.pdf](http://www.involve.org.uk/assets/Publications/SayPlaySchools-report.pdf)

Community Power Pack (Involve) – [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/powerpack](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/powerpack)

PeopleandParticipation.net – [www.peopleandparticipation.net](http://www.peopleandparticipation.net)

Involving People: a practical guide (Voluntary Action Westminster) – [www.vawcvs.org/publications](http://www.vawcvs.org/publications)

## Statutory guidance

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 – [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga\\_20070028\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070028_en_1)

Section 242 of the consolidated NHS Act 2006 is supported by guidance (Real Involvement) – Real Involvement – [tinyurl.com/yesj9q8](http://tinyurl.com/yesj9q8)

Statutory Guidance on the Duty to Involve – <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongsafeproperous>

Comprehensive Area Assessments (includes guidance on how the duty will be regulated) – <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/caa/Pages/default.aspx>

NHS England: The Operating Framework for 2008/2009. P.19 – [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_081094](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_081094)

## Central government

Secretary of State for Health (2010) Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS – White Paper (DoH) – [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/MediaCentre/Speeches/DH\\_117366](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/MediaCentre/Speeches/DH_117366)

Secretary of State for Health (2010) Liberating the NHS: Local democratic legitimacy in health- consultation document (DoH) – [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH\\_117586](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_117586)

The Community Development Foundation – [www.cdf.org.uk](http://www.cdf.org.uk)

The Department for Communities and Local Government – [www.communities.gov.uk/corporate](http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate)

The Department of Health – [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)



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