



Orkney Community Planning Partnership  
*Working together for a better Orkney*

## Community Consultation & Engagement Guide



All our written information can be made available, on request, in a range of different formats and languages. If you would like this document in another format or language please let us know through contacting the Community Planning Officer at the Council or e-mailing [communityplanning@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@orkney.gov.uk)



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## **1. Introduction**

This guidance has been developed by the Orkney Community Planning Partnership following a Best Value review of Consultation which was undertaken in 2007/08. The guidance was endorsed by the Orkney Community Planning Partnership Steering Group on 27 March 2009 and endorsed by the Council to be used by staff undertaking consultations on 21 September 2010. The guidance takes on board the recommendations from the review and has been produced to ensure that:

- communities are placed at the heart of community planning
- there is a co-ordinated approach to community engagement across the partnership
- the methods of engagement are inclusive and appropriate for the purpose
- engagement activity follows best practice
- where possible, duplication and overlap are avoided

A significant amount of community consultation and engagement work is currently undertaken by partner agencies across Orkney. Much of the engagement activity already follows good practice therefore the purpose of this guidance is to put forward some alternative suggestions and promote options to better co-ordinate these activities thereby avoiding the potential for overlap and duplication. The guide focuses on building capacity to work with, listen and respond to people and communities across Orkney.

## **2. Background/Context**

The Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) places a statutory obligation on agencies and local strategic partners to engage with communities about issues that affect them.

National Standards for Community Engagement were published in May 2005 and were designed as a tool to help improve community consultation and engagement practices. Audit Scotland, in their initial review of Community Planning in 2006, recommended that Community Planning Partnerships should champion the National Standards as good practice. The National Standards are shown in section 11.

## **3. The Partners**

Orkney Community Planning Partnership (the Partnership) meets its Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement requirements through the Orkney Community Plan 2011-14<sup>1</sup>. This is a joint commitment to work towards defined 15 national outcomes. It also refers to the shared values of the Partnership:

- Promoting survival
- Promoting sustainability
- Promoting equality
- Working together
- Working with communities

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Council/O/OCPP-Single-Outcome-Agreement-2009-2011\\_2.htm](http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Council/O/OCPP-Single-Outcome-Agreement-2009-2011_2.htm)

- Working to provide better services

Community engagement is at the heart of community planning. The Orkney Community Plan puts on record the Partnership's commitment to the National Standards of Community Engagement (see section 11) and notes that these Guidelines will ensure that all engagement with stakeholders in the Plan adhere to best practice guidelines.

The Steering Group of the Partnership provides strategic guidance for the work of the Partnership. It consists of:

- Convener, Vice Convener and Chief Executive of Orkney Islands Council
- Chair and Chief Executive of NHS Orkney
- Orkney Area Manager of Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Orkney Area Commander, Northern Constabulary
- Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Orkney
- Chair of the Partnership Liaison Group
- Group Manager, Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service

The Steering Group is supported by the Partnership Liaison Group (PLG). The PLG's role is to provide co-ordinated information and advice to the Steering Group. Membership of the PLG comprises representatives of multi-agency thematic groups, such as the Community Safety Forum, the Healthy Communities Group or the Arts Forum, to name but three. The PLG also has representatives from cross-cutting groups like the Equalities Forum, Third Sector Forum, and Community Council Liaison Office. This structure is demonstrated on Appendix 1.

#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

In Orkney the main aim of community consultation & engagement is:

*to enable the planning and delivery of services, strategies and policies that reflect the needs of communities across Orkney*

The objectives of this guidance are to ensure that:

- there is a clear understanding of and commitment to community engagement across the partnership.
- a co-ordinated and consistent approach to community engagement is utilised
- community engagement is carried out in a way that is transparent, honest and accessible to all
- members of the Partnership provide sufficient information to members of the community to enable them to participate meaningfully in any community engagement activity
- community engagement is inclusive and provides opportunities for members of the community to express their views and to have their views listened to with respect
- communities of interest, place and identity are able to participate in decisions that affect or impact on them
- the outcomes of community engagement inform decision-making and service delivery
- timely feedback is provided to the community on how their participation shaped the decisions that were made.
- community planning partners use the National Standards for Community Consultation when undertaking community consultation and engagement activities
- guidelines are available to community planning partners to enable them to adopt good practice when planning and undertaking community consultation and engagement activities.

## **5. What is a Community?**

The term community can be defined in different ways. A simple and broadly accepted definition of a community is as follows:

*“Used in many ways. Usually refers to those living within a small, loosely defined geographical area. Yet any group of individuals who share interests may also be described as a community. Also sometimes used to describe a physical area rather than a group of people.”*

communityplanning.net

### **Communities of place**

A ‘community of place’ can be defined by an area with physical boundaries for example, an island, neighbourhood, parish, village or town. In Orkney, Community Councils can be a useful contact for communities of place.

### **Communities of interest**

A ‘community of interest’ can be defined by a shared interest, experience or demographic characteristic for example, young people, people with disabilities, working population, ethnic minorities or gay/lesbian/bisexual and transgender (LGBT). People can belong to more than one community. It is also worth noting that members of defined communities may not necessarily regard themselves as such and consideration must be given to this when approaching different ‘communities of interest’.

Some groups or communities are more challenging to reach or engage with. It is important to ensure barriers are tackled so that these groups are able to engage and express their views. This is further explored in section 10.

## **6. What is community consultation and engagement?**

Community engagement covers a range of different activities designed to enable local communities to have a say in the design of services to make Orkney a better place.

The National Standards for Community Engagement use the following definition:-

*“Developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences.”*

The Best Value Review of Consultation Arrangements refers to the Community Planning: Statutory Guidance (Scottish Executive, 2004) which states that:

*“the effective and genuine engagement of communities is at the heart of Community Planning.....consultation alone is not sufficient to ensure effective community engagement. Community engagement in this context must involve consultation, co-operation and participation.”*

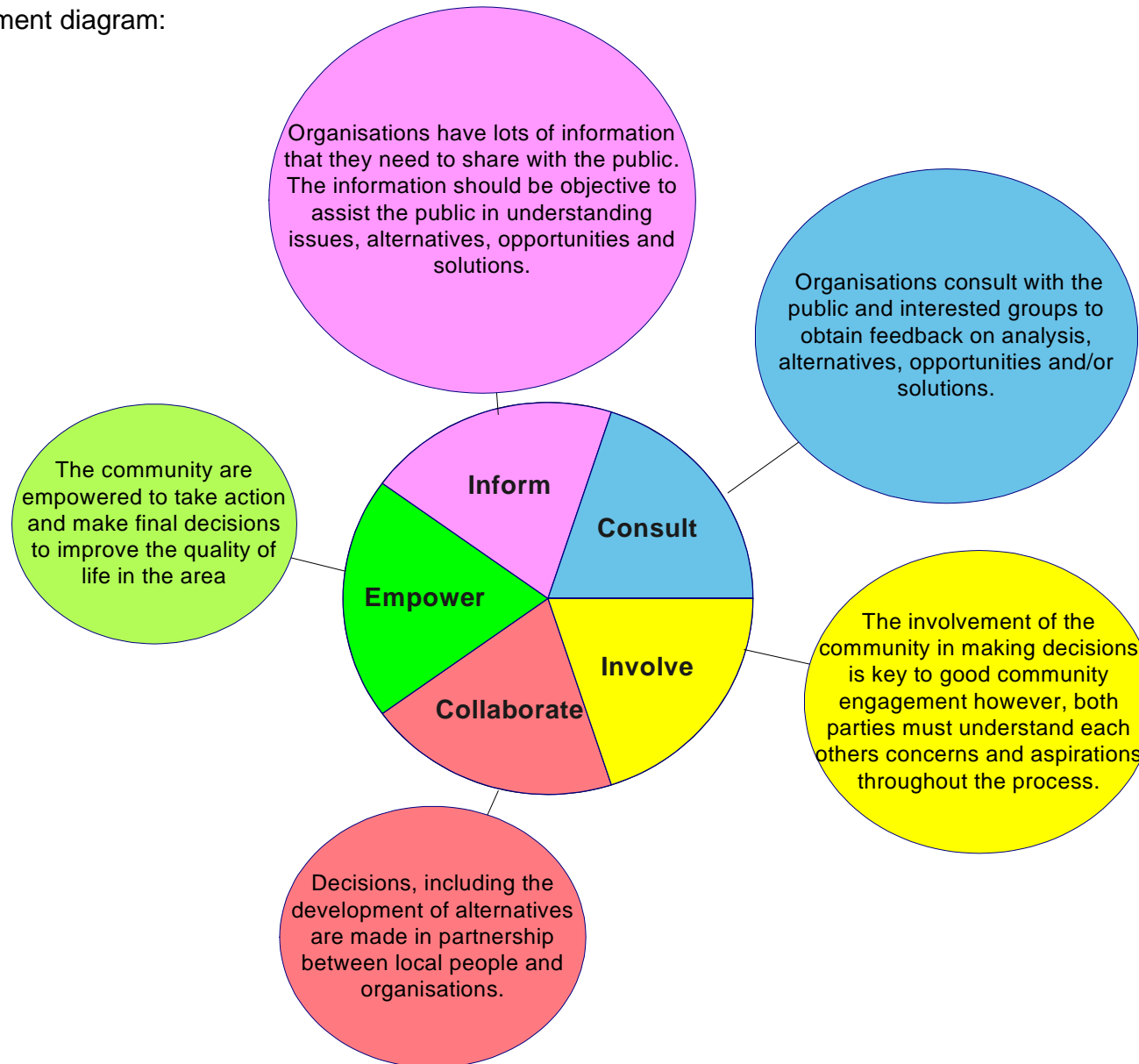
## **7. Levels of community engagement**

The diagram on page eight demonstrates the levels of engagement, from informing to empowering, and illustrates the importance of each level.

*Defining community engagement is challenging: it can mean different things in different circumstances ranging from simple provision of information and consultation through to delegated power and control to citizens (Amstein 1969). Without a clear and common understanding of what community engagement means in a given context, activities may be pitched at an inappropriate level of engagement and therefore be ineffective.*

Home Office Development – Practice Report 48 2007

Levels of engagement diagram:





The table below identifies some methods of consultation and engagement and their relationship to each of the levels of engagement. Many of these methods can be used for more than one level of consultation and engagement.

	Informing	Consult	Involve/collaborate/empower
Digital TV	✓		
Media Campaigns	✓	✓	
Exhibitions	✓	✓	
Local media	✓	✓	
Leaflets and newsletters	✓	✓	
Circulating documents	✓	✓	
Customer Comment or feedback cards		✓	
Surveys		✓	
Online consultation	✓	✓	
Public meetings	✓	✓	✓
Conferences	✓	✓	✓
People's panels	✓	✓	✓
Workshops		✓	✓
Focus groups	✓	✓	✓
User panels	✓	✓	✓
Participatory appraisal		✓	✓
Partnership approaches	✓	✓	✓
Orkney Communities website	✓	✓	✓

## **8. Methods of community consultation and engagement**

The method used to engage or consult will depend on the:

- groups level of communication
- type of group
- purpose of the consultation or engagement e.g. whether it is to provide information or to obtain views.

The following table lists some popular methods of consultation and engagement along with some advantages and disadvantages for each.

Method	When to use	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Survey/ questionnaire</b> face to face (e.g. door to door)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when statistics are required for trends and benchmarks</li> <li>when qualitative information is required to capture views</li> <li>when issues are already known but need to be quantified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ statistically sound – control of respondents means it will be representative of the “population” as a whole</li> <li>✓ results easy to report back</li> <li>✓ can compare with other surveys (both internal and external), previous findings and future benchmark.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ respondent cannot “interact” if questionnaire is too rigidly structured</li> <li>✗ little time for respondents to consider responses/deliberate or add their own thoughts.</li> </ul>
<b>Survey/ questionnaire</b> telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when quick consultation process needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ quick form of consultation</li> <li>✓ can target hard to reach groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ can seem distant from respondents</li> <li>✗ tightly structured questionnaires may constrain consultees responses</li> <li>✗ unsuitable for people with speech difficulties.</li> </ul>
<b>Survey/ questionnaire</b> electronic for example Survey Monkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when quantitative or qualitative information is required</li> <li>when little budget available</li> <li>for treatment of certain sensitive subjects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ quick form of consultation</li> <li>✓ can target hard to reach groups.</li> <li>✓ cost effective</li> <li>✓ good for certain groups who are interested enough to respond to a questionnaire; also for sensitive/confidential subjects</li> <li>✓ can be used to target hard to reach groups</li> <li>✓ able to consult with a large group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ can produce scant or token responses.</li> <li>✗ can seem distant from respondents</li> </ul>

<p><b>Survey/ questionnaire</b> postal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when little budget available</li> <li>• for treatment of certain sensitive subjects</li> <li>• where high level of interest required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ cost effective</li> <li>✓ good for certain groups who are interested enough to respond to a questionnaire; also for sensitive/confidential subjects</li> <li>✓ can be used to target hard to reach groups</li> <li>✓ able to consult with a large group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ can be unrepresentative depending on groups who respond</li> <li>✗ possible poor response rates</li> <li>✗ can produce scant or token responses.</li> </ul>
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Method	When to use	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Group discussions</b> (groups of 6-10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus groups</li> <li>• stakeholder meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for diagnostic research</li> <li>• when you need to understand (reasons for attitudes/behaviour) and generate new ideas</li> <li>• can be used before a quantitative survey, to identify the issues to quantify or;</li> <li>• after a quantitative survey, to investigate any results that are unclear.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ enables people to express the reasons for their views</li> <li>✓ in groups, respondents can use each other as springboards to generate new ideas</li> <li>✓ useful for evaluating communications materials</li> <li>✓ useful for in-depth analysis of how a service is perceived</li> <li>✓ can aid inclusion of hard to reach groups</li> <li>✓ may be useful for complex issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ because of the small numbers of people in the group, findings may not be representative of the population.</li> <li>✗ group may become dominated by a minority who are more confident than others in expressing their opinions.</li> </ul>
<b>In-depth interviews</b> (one to one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• getting a comprehensive understanding of the issues</li> <li>• initial research for sensitive subjects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ in-depth response</li> <li>✓ good for sensitive subjects where people may not respond to a structured questionnaire/group discussion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ one person's views may not be representative or typical of others.</li> </ul>
<b>Written word</b> – letter/leaflet/press release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to reach a wide audience whilst also ensuring that the information is clearly and consistently communicated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ cost effective</li> <li>✓ suitable for reaching a large number of people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ responses cannot be controlled or queried.</li> </ul>

Method	When to use	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Public meeting</b> (Orkney wide)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where the issue requires wide spread interest</li> <li>• to explain the issue and encourage debate</li> <li>• to provide residents with the opportunity to have a say.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ anyone can attend</li> <li>✓ forum for explanation and discussion</li> <li>✓ can attract publicity to the issue</li> <li>✓ can generate new ideas</li> <li>✓ provides opportunity for residents to have their say</li> <li>✓ provides opportunities for Councillors to publicly share their views.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ may mainly attract those affected by the issue or who have particularly strong views, therefore balanced opinions not achieved.</li> <li>✗ those used to public speaking may dominate discussion</li> <li>✗ requires skilled chairing.</li> </ul>
<b>Public meeting</b> (Community level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when the issue requires community involvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ involves, informs and empowers the local community</li> <li>✓ good indicator of local feeling</li> <li>✓ may provide new information and local knowledge concerning issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ may be dominated by the most vocal</li> <li>✗ contributions may stray onto other issues – facilitators need to be prepared for this.</li> </ul>
<b>Exhibition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when responses to visual display materials required</li> <li>• when there are specific options to present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ displays/options can be clearly presented</li> <li>✓ feedback forms/questionnaires can be completed quickly at the venue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ responses may be shaped by presentation of a limited range of options</li> <li>✗ people who are unable to attend (due to timing or inaccessibility of the venue) will be excluded.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning for real (this is where a 3 dimensional model is constructed and participants place cards on it indicating what they would like to</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when physical planning issues are to be explored</li> <li>• when the involvement of the whole community is needed</li> <li>• when the decision will be actioned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ encourages ownership to respondents</li> <li>✓ plans can be clearly presented</li> <li>✓ large numbers can take part</li> <li>✓ catches the interest of those involved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ requires careful planning, and can become expensive.</li> </ul>

Method	When to use	Advantages	Disadvantages
see happen for example playground.			
<b>Recycling results from a previous consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when quick data is required</li> <li>when you want to base your research on others' approaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ can be quick and cost effective</li> <li>✓ if already used, data has 'credibility' attached to it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ the original questions asked may not be exactly the information you require.</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b> e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>press release</li> <li>radio interview</li> <li>internet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when publicity and promotion required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ quick and responsive</li> <li>✓ useful when need to 'broadcast' information and give a large number of people an opportunity to respond.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ only goes to established audience – not universal/representative</li> <li>✗ responses to this method are usually poor.</li> <li>✗ the reporter may edit your press release/interview without consulting you.</li> </ul>
<b>Conferences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when a specific defined audience is to be consulted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ reaches out to specific interest groups</li> <li>✓ captive audience</li> <li>✓ can get feedback through cost effective self completion questionnaire and/or work/discussion groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ responses to this method tend to be poor without incentives.</li> <li>✗ requires careful planning and expert facilitation.</li> </ul>
<b>Social media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when other methods are already being used and wish to publicise further.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ free</li> <li>✓ can reach a large audience quickly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ can require policing of comments</li> <li>✗ not everyone uses social media.</li> </ul>
<b>Voxur unit</b> (this is a 'diary room' style video in a box owned by NHS Orkney which allows the user to answer a set of questions at their own time and pace)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when a sensitive subject is being consulted upon and privacy may be required</li> <li>when people have communication difficulties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ from experience in Orkney, young people react positively to this tool.</li> <li>✓ If time is an issue, the Voxur unit can be left unmanned for example in a school or island.</li> <li>✓ designed to be accessible for people with communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ can be time consuming in gathering views as only one person at a time can use the facility therefore only practical to use with small groups</li> <li>✗ some people may not feel comfortable in being recorded (the camera can be tilted to the ceiling to anonymise the response).</li> </ul>

Method	When to use	Advantages	Disadvantages
		difficulties. Questions can be heard or read, and repeated as often as required.	

## **9. Barriers to effective consultation and engagement**

### **COMMUNITY BARRIERS**

Community barriers are often complex issues and their early identification will rely on the knowledge and empathy that your organisation has towards the community that it wishes to engage with. Listed below are some barriers to effective community engagement and some helpful ways to create a welcome, accessible environment:

**Mistrust and scepticism.** These barriers usually stem from the group feeling let down in the past and seeing this as yet another one-off initiative, with only lip-service and tokenism being paid by the public bodies concerned. To overcome these barriers it is important to consider what actions can be taken to build trust within the group.

**Relevance.** The group sees no relevance to being involved, or that the timescale is so long that the relevance is diluted or doubted. Effective communication will be needed to convince the group of the relevance, while the use of “quick-wins” can be one way of helping to overcome at least part of this.

**Access issues.** The group(s) are unable to engage fully in the process as they experience difficulty accessing the consultation material/events etc. To ensure that information is provided in different methods and are easily accessible full consideration should be given to the venue, timing of meetings, interpretation and translation, childcare provision, transport and expenses.

**Time and demands.** Groups and individuals may have significant pressures on their time. Recognising the pressures and accommodating them will be the key to securing their involvement. It may be necessary for example to consider outreach activities and visiting places used by group members.

**Confidence.** Some groups and individuals may not have the confidence to get involved and may feel intimidated by the process. Creating an informal environment, using appropriate language and ensuring that individuals do not feel patronised, put-down or confused will help to make people feel relaxed and able to contribute.

**Culture.** The cultural differences that can exist within communities can have a significant impact on the willingness or ability of individuals to engage. In some cases it may be necessary to take actions that not all members of the community agree with in order to fulfil an underlying commitment to equality of opportunity. For example, seeking to engage women even though this challenges traditional views about women’s position in the community within that ethnic group. A good



understanding of any cultural differences that may exist within different communities is needed, along with sensitivity to how these are best addressed.

**Social model of disability.** This model proposes that barriers and prejudice and exclusion by society (purposely or inadvertently) are the ultimate factors defining who is disabled and who is not in a particular society. The social model of disability often focuses on changes required in society. These might be in terms of attitudes, social support, information in suitable formats and physical access to building.

### **Barriers that agencies may face:**

These are barriers that might be found within your own structures and, as such, should be within the power of your agency to overcome.

**Organisational culture.** This materialises as a resistance to change where individuals or groups within an agency see no reason to do things differently from how they have always been done. This can stem from lack of imagination, lack of confidence and/or self-interest. Actions to mitigate this include awareness raising initiatives which include information on the consequences of failing to adapt and change.

**If it's Monday it must be another new initiative!** The number of new initiatives and policies that public sector agencies in particular are expected to develop is endless. This can lead to a sense that each new one is just “the flavour of the moment” can breed a scepticism as to their true value.

**Contradictory policies.** Difficulty can arise when staff are being asked to engage with a hard to reach group whilst at the same time other parts of the agency are pursuing policies and practices that the groups concerned would see as working against them.

**A lack of resources.** Staff may be asked to develop and implement a strategy with no additional resources. A detailed action plan may help convince those with responsibility for resources to allocate them, otherwise it may be better to consider whether it is appropriate to proceed as there may be negative consequences for all involved.

**Political pressure.** Short term political interest may result in a lack of consistency in the direction given by either national or local politicians. This may not be easy to address, but is important to highlight.

## **10. Specific groups**

The following groups may face additional challenges such as communication or being a hard to reach group. They require careful consideration to ensure they are represented.

- Children & Young People
- People with disabilities
- People with caring responsibilities
- Older People
- Black & Minority Ethnic Groups (BME)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT)
- People from a different religion or belief

It is important that these groups are represented as their views are valuable to the future of Orkney therefore, barriers to their engagement must be tackled. In research undertaken on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership by L. Littlejohn made the following recommendations:

- Consider carefully and set out a range of methods of consultation with regard to whether language could be a barrier, or the impossibility for some for example the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) to be able to be consulted at all in a public manner.
- If possible, set up arrangements for contacting a key person in each of the main minority groups of ethnicity, LGBT and autism. Once that contact has been established as a conduit, use it for all consultation purposes.
- Bearing in mind the above, make arrangements for contact with the Eastern European, Chinese and Asian groups in Orkney through the auspices of The Learning Link and Orkney College. However cognisance should be taken of the fact that Shetland Council tutors found that too much consultation ate into the actual lesson time for English speaking and they ended up by establishing a discussion group especially for consultation purposes.
- Consider arranging specific events such as “Meet Other Cultures’ Day” or similar, which would also encompass other faiths and all ages.
- Use the main contact in other areas such as Highland Council and Workers Educational Association, Inverness for shared discussions on strategic planning in Single Equalities.
- Specifically in relation to LGBT, make arrangements to seek advice on consultation matters from the Equality Network’s Community Engagement

Worker. Marketing ideas and materials could be usefully gained from this organisation which is working to help the LGBT community in rural areas far from the central belt.

- When consulting on the construction of public buildings, contact should be made with the Equality Network. They have good ideas for reaching the LGBT minority. For example, a carefully worded request for consultation, which may relate to transgender issues would make it clear that Orkney's Community Planning Partnership is considering, and is considerate of, anyone belonging to the LGBT community.
- Consider asking a representative of LGBT Youth Scotland along with a representative from ethnic minority groups and the embryonic Autism group to talk and take part in a Single Equality Workshop.
- Consider sending a representative to take part in the course about LGBT issues and barriers.
- Seek to establish contacts for young people with Autism and maintain contact with Orkney Young Scot (see note below) with regard to its establishing links with LGBT Youth in Scotland.

Note: **Orkney Young Scot.** Orkney Young Scot/Dialogue Youth came to an end in 2009, some of the functions previously managed by Orkney Young Scot have been transferred to the Council's Education and Leisure Service as part of the Council restructure.

Source – Towards a strategy for consulting with minority & equalities groups and individuals in Orkney.

L C Littlejohn, June 2008

It is important to ensure the involvement of those groups is appropriate for each consultation and it is essential, when formulating your engagement strategy, that particular consideration be given to engaging with locally appropriate hard-to-reach groups. A hard-to-reach group is any group or section of the community who it is difficult to access for any reason. This could be for a number of reasons, for example because of language barriers, physical inaccessibility or confidentiality issues.

It is more difficult to engage with groups who are relatively small in number and are widely dispersed. However, individual sectors of the community should not be neglected simply because they represent a small population of an area. Groups can also be hard-to-reach if they don't have an established network of community organisations or agencies that can be approached to assist in engaging with the target group. The Policy Officer (Equalities) at Orkney Islands

Council holds contact details for a number of local groups and would be happy to assist in preparing a consultation involving specific groups listed above.

### **11. Key principles and good practice**

The National Standards for Community Engagement set out below demonstrate best practice guidance for engagement between communities and public agencies. The standards were developed from experience of communities and agencies with extensive participation.

#### **National Standards for Community Engagement**

1. **INVOLVEMENT:** we will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement
2. **SUPPORT:** we will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement
3. **PLANNING:** we will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and actions to be taken
4. **METHODS:** we will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose
5. **WORKING TOGETHER:** we will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently
6. **SHARING INFORMATION:** we will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants
7. **WORKING WITH OTHERS:** we will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement
8. **IMPROVEMENT:** we will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants
9. **FEEDBACK:** we will feed back results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected
10. **MONITORING & EVALUATION:** we will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purpose and meets the national standards for community engagement

Source - Communities Scotland – National Standards for Community Engagement

The Scottish Government sets out guidance to assist NHS Boards with their engagement with patients, the public and stakeholders

[http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2010\\_04.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2010_04.pdf). The guidance:

- Sets out the relevant legislative and policy frameworks for involving the public in the delivery of services
- Provides a step-by-step guide through the process of informing, engaging and consulting the public in service change proposals
- Explains the decision making process with regard to major service change and the potential for independent scrutiny
- Clarifies the role of the Scottish Health Council.

The 2008 report “towards a strategy for consulting with minority & equalities groups and individuals in Orkney” also identified a number of examples of good practice.

**The Learning Link.** The centre has well established contact with some of the Eastern European and Chinese communities. Groups meet at the centre and also in other locations, where there is a demand. The Manager of the Learning Link has indicated a willingness to take consultation questions to the groups. Care would be required to ensure that this practice does not impact adversely on class time. In order to resolve this issue in Shetland, a discussion group was set up that could be used for consultation rather than use class time for this purpose.

**Orkney College.** Orkney College continue to support a range of ethnic minority groups to undertake ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes. Courses ranging from beginners level to more advanced are delivered, with qualifications also available. Sessions are delivered during the day and in the evenings to be as flexible as possible for the students, who tend to have a variety of work patterns. Extra support is given if necessary to ethnic minority students undertaking SVQs. Some require assistance interpreting the language used in SVQs and in the reflective writing skills necessary for SVQs.

**Crossroads Orkney.** Crossroads provides support to unpaid carers within the community including parents of children with additional support needs. While this database could not be shared, it may be possible for Crossroads to ask whether Carers would be willing to have information on consultation passed to them – effectively enabling them to opt in.

## **12. Checklists**

### **Getting Started**

The preliminary stage of any consultation exercise is crucial to its success. It should be noted here that external and/or internal guidance need not be sought in every case, and any decisions to do so should continue to rest with the senior

manager with responsibility for the particular engagement/consultation. There are a number of issues which you need to consider and steps you need to take which will help ensure that your exercise is successful. Some plans, programmes or strategies may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken. This is a process in which several stages are required to assess the impact the plan would have on the environment. The SEA Gateway can be contacted through their website for more information on this.

### **Getting Started: Checklist**

1. Is the consultation or engagement really necessary?
2. Is there material available from other consultations?
3. Is a Strategic Environmental Assessment required?
4. Specify clear objectives for the exercise
5. Gather a team with the necessary skills to conduct the consultation
6. Define the stakeholders for your consultation and consider how to involve them
7. Review any previous consultation and research activity on this topic
8. Seek advice from internal and external experts at the earliest opportunity
9. Use external stakeholders to assist you at the earliest stage of your exercise in establishing the broader picture and in identifying the issues

### **Planning Your Consultation**

Planning your consultation involves a number of key steps, crucially relating to identification of your target audience and decisions about how best to consult this audience. The audience must be clear from the outset what their role is in the process, and how it fits in to broader plans. It is also important to manage expectations, ensure the scope and purpose of the consultation or engagement is explained at the start and to ensure the group understands the limits of expected outcomes. A written consultation plan can be developed at this stage which sets out purpose, activities, timelines and roles.

### **Planning Your Consultation or Engagement: Checklist**

1. Be clear about your target audience
2. Equality mainstreaming: Consider how you will encourage greater access to the policy and consultation or engagement process.
3. Identify groups at risk of exclusion from your consultation or engagement and take steps to remedy this
4. Identify any existing forums and representative groups that should be included in the consultation/engagement
5. Establish appropriate consultation or engagement method(s) based on your objectives and audience
6. Consider and budget for alternative formats and community languages
7. Consider the use of face-to-face or research methods of consultation or engagement as an additional or alternative way of capturing views

8. Identify the outputs you will need for policy development and feedback to your audiences
9. Ensure that you set realistic timescales for planning and conducting your consultation or engagement. Response timescales should be set proportionate to the scale or impact of the change. Consideration should be given to any statutory timescales (some of which are available at Appendix 2 to these Guidelines) and whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment has been undertaken, which would require a minimum of six weeks consultation.
10. Ensure that the resources your exercise will require are in place (both in terms of staff time and additional costs)
11. Plan the form that your feedback to consultees should take

### **Undertaking Written Consultation or Engagement**

Undertaking a written consultation paper and inviting response is one of the most commonly used consultation method. Careful use of this method will help ensure it is effective for your target audience.

### **Written Consultation: Checklist**

1. Be clear about your audience and objectives when writing a consultation paper
2. Ensure your paper is concise, clearly laid out and written in plain English
3. Use a clear and concise covering letter for consultations
4. Provide background information on the consultation/policy process
5. Ensure your paper/covering documentation includes: summary; discussion of the issues; outline of options; relevant views and information; assessment of impact on different groups; proposed timetable; statement regarding availability of paper in alternative formats; list of those being consulted; how responses will be used
6. Ask questions that will elicit the views and information you require
7. Test your consultation paper with appropriate colleagues and contacts
8. Ensure that your consultation is published on relevant websites
9. Consider the needs of equality groups and the need to produce the paper (or make it available on request) in alternative formats or community languages
10. Update and amend your distribution list for your specific exercise
11. Advertise your forthcoming consultation and alert key stakeholders
12. Consider publicising your consultation,
13. Ensure you are maximising ICT opportunities
14. Make arrangements to receive and process responses
15. Establish a system for dealing with complaints
16. Acknowledge all responses, organise responses and prepare what can be made available to the public

17. Screen responses for defamation and personal details should be removed prior to addition to any form of report
18. Make arrangements for analysing responses
19. Publish a summary and full report of the analysis in 'hard' copy and on the website
20. Provide feedback as soon as possible to all respondees and other stakeholders

### **Other Consultation Methods**

Other consultation methods listed at section 8 including non-written methods can be used to achieve effective consultation with your target audience. They can be used either on their own or in conjunction with a written consultation paper. They are especially useful for targeting groups less likely to respond to a written consultation paper.

You need to consider carefully which methods will best widen the access to your consultation exercise and the practicalities of carrying out the associated work.

### **Other Consultation Methods: Checklist**

1. Consider how to widen access to your consultation by using different methods. Consider its purpose, the needs of your target audience and your resources
2. Use more than one method to reach and engage different audiences
3. Consider using face-to-face methods (eg, meetings and workshops)
4. Consider individual and group needs to ensure face-to-face events are inclusive
5. In face-to-face events, use techniques which encourage interaction and participation
6. Write up and publish a report of any events and provide feedback to participants where practicable
7. Consider using research methods to supplement your open consultation
8. Consider the use of deliberative research methods for complex issues or for issues where informed opinions from the general public would be of value to your exercise
9. Consider using a contractor to carry out your research
10. Publish your research findings and provide feedback for participants

### **Concluding a Consultation**

Concluding your consultation is an important stage in any exercise. A number of important activities will help ensure the success of your exercise and contribute to effective ongoing engagement with your stakeholder community.



## **Concluding a Consultation: Checklist**

1. Produce a consultation report
2. Publish and disseminate the report
3. Publish the report on the appropriate website(s)
4. Plan your evaluation
5. Update your stakeholder information for future use

## **Evaluating Consultation**

Evaluation of your consultation exercise allows good practice to be demonstrated and lessons to be learned. Sharing the results of your evaluation can help improve consultation and ongoing engagement activity within your immediate policy area and more widely.

## **Evaluation: Checklist**

1. Spend time and resources on the evaluation commensurate with the scale of the consultation
2. Determine how you will evaluate the effectiveness of your exercise during the planning stages
3. Carry out evaluation following each stage of consultation or at the end of the exercise
4. Ensure that your evaluation is inclusive and evaluate experiences of all stakeholders
5. Use existing information as well as research methods to answer evaluation questions
6. Share the findings and lessons learned, via a report and possibly a meeting
7. Publish your evaluation report, particularly if external stakeholders have been involved

### **13. Consultation and engagement aide memoire**

<b>Why am I doing this?</b>
What is the main reason for wanting to consult or engage? The “inputs” received from the exercise must be used to improve the “outputs” (for example, improve the service or policy)
<b>What am I trying to achieve?</b>
Is the exercise statutory/non statutory? Why has this particular piece of work been chosen?
<b>Have I included everyone?</b>
Consider the members of the group and who they are representing, ensure that hard to reach groups are represented if it is appropriate to do so.
<b>Are there views that will be hard to get?</b>
Consideration should be given to people in the group who are less able to communicate their views.
<b>Who needs to be involved in the exercise?</b>
Check the list stakeholders and ensure that all people who have an interest in the service are given an opportunity to participate in the consultation exercise.
<b>When should the exercise be carried out?</b>
Will it be beneficial to consult or engage at a very early stage (i.e. the design/implementation of a service or policy)? If consultation or engagement is carried out at a later stage, what factors were considered when this decision was made?
<b>How long will the consultation take?</b>
Ample time needs to be given to ensure that the consultation and engagement process is not rushed. If changes to the service or policy need to be implemented by a certain date, the exercise needs to be prepared well in advance.
<b>What will happen to the responses?</b>
Whatever the results of the consultation exercise they must be taken into account. A decision by the policy makers not to go with the wishes of the consultees must be justified.
<b>Are members clear of their role and the process?</b>
It’s important to manage expectations and explain what the process is beyond the consultation. If this is clear at the start the discussions are likely to be more focussed and beneficial.
<b>What methods will be used?</b>
The methods adopted should be suitable to meet the needs of the consultation exercise. The cost element should also be considered, together with any training required. Using more than one method increases the chances of a better response, in terms of quality and quantity. Be prepared though for what you will do if different methods have different results.

### **How will the results be reported back to the participants?**

The success of any consultation or engagement can be measured by several factors:

- All groups involved in an issue should believe that they were properly consulted.

The consulter should be able to demonstrate that they have listened to the views of consultees, even when the decision has been taken to pursue an alternative option.

The reason for the decision should be made clear.

### **How and when will the evaluation be undertaken?**

Evaluating the effectiveness of consultation or engagement is vital and should not be left to the end of the process.

It will be much easier to do if it has been included in the initial planning.

If planning has been done correctly, and success and failure criteria identified and how they will be measured, then the evaluation process should be straightforward.

## **14. Local resources**

Below are some examples of local consultation and engagement resources:

### **The Community Engagement & Consultation Diary**

This site has been developed by the Orkney Community Planning Partnership and is designed to reduce the potential for overlap and duplication in planning and undertaking community consultation by creating a 'central store' for consultations. This site will list current and planned consultation activity and will also provide information on recently completed consultation exercises. The site will also have links to Orkneyinfo.co.uk (see below).

**[orkneycommunities.co.uk/CONSULTATIONDIARY/](http://orkneycommunities.co.uk/CONSULTATIONDIARY/)**

**[www.orkneycommunities.co.uk](http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk)**

The Orkneycommunities portal is a key feature of community life in Orkney. Many community groups have their website hosted on the portal and use this as a method to communicate with their membership and the wider Orkney public. Some sites feature a feedback form or a blog which enables those visiting the site opportunities to share their opinions and views on relevant subjects.

A number of agencies also have sites on Orkneycommunities.co.uk which they use in order to inform and alert interested parties of their plans and activities.

Orkneycommunities.co.uk has in the past conducted online surveys in order to obtain feedback on specific subjects. The portal management committee, for example, used this method to consult its members about new features they were

considering making available to users. As a result of the survey the committee were able to assess the level of interest in each feature and were able to add the ones which they knew would meet the needs of the member sites.

### **Community Directory** (compiled by Voluntary Action Orkney)

Voluntary Action Orkney has published, for the past 20 years, an Orkney Community Directory that contains contact details for all known voluntary and community related organisations in Orkney. VAO volunteers and staff research and update the information and the final printed publication is sponsored by local businesses and community councils. The directory can be accessed via the [orkneycommunities.co.uk](http://orkneycommunities.co.uk) website or is available to purchase in hard copy from VAO.

### **NHS Open**

NHS Open is NHS Orkney's Public Engagement Network. NHS Orkney is committed to working with you to make Orkney a healthy place to live, to improve the health and healthcare services, and to build a modern local health system fit for a 21st century population.

This means the Board, managers and staff working together and working with patients, partner organisations and communities, on the issues that affect their health. This is not just on major service change but also on the day to day work of NHS Orkney and its services.

[www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/NHSOPEN/](http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/NHSOPEN/)

## **15. National resources/useful links**

### ***Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement*** (VOiCE)

VOiCE is a database planning and recording tool designed to assist individuals and organisations to design and deliver effective community engagement. VOiCE has been developed using funding from the Scottish Government as part of the third year of support for the National Standards for Community Engagement.

[www.scdc.org.uk/voice](http://www.scdc.org.uk/voice)

### ***Scottish Accessible Information Forum.***

SAIF acts as an advisory body to the Scottish Government on issues relating to people with disabilities and their carers and their right to accessible information.

[www.saifscotland.org.uk](http://www.saifscotland.org.uk)

### ***The Improvement Service***

The Improvement Service is focussed on improving the efficiency, quality and accountability of public services in Scotland through learning, sharing knowledge and delivering improvement solutions.

<http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/>

### ***The Consultation Institute***

The Institute is designed to help all those engaged in public or stakeholder consultation absorb Best Practice, encourage innovation and improve its value to decision-makers whilst providing a much needed opportunity for professional networking.

[www.consultationinstitute.org](http://www.consultationinstitute.org)

### ***Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA)***

The IDeA works for local government improvement so councils can serve people and places better. They enable councils to share good practice through the national Beacon Scheme and regional local government network, and have examples of this on their website.

[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

### ***HM Government – Code of Practice on Consultation***

This Code sets out the approach the Government will take when it has decided to run a formal, written, public consultation exercise.

[www.berr.gov.uk/files/file47158.pdf](http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file47158.pdf)

### ***Shetland Council Consultation and Engagement Guidelines***

A useful guide produced by Shetland:

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/consultation/guidelines/>

### ***Scottish Community Development Centre***

This registered charity is recognised by the Scottish Government as the national lead body for community development.

<http://www.scdc.org.uk>

### ***Religion and Cultures in Grampian (NHS Grampian)***

A practical guide for health and social care staff to the diversity of beliefs, customs and cultures of the people of Grampian.

[http://www.nhsgrampian.org/nhsgrampian/files/religionsandcultures\\_aug2010.pdf](http://www.nhsgrampian.org/nhsgrampian/files/religionsandcultures_aug2010.pdf)

**Scottish LGBT Forum**

[http://www.scottishlgbt.org/Organisations/Equality\\_Network.aspx](http://www.scottishlgbt.org/Organisations/Equality_Network.aspx)

**LGBT Youth Scotland** <http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/>

**Equality Network for LGBT equality and human rights in Scotland**

<http://www.equality-network.org/Equality/website.nsf/home?OpenForm>

**Scottish Transgender Alliance**

[http://www.scottishtrans.org/Page/Gender\\_Variance.aspx](http://www.scottishtrans.org/Page/Gender_Variance.aspx)

**Age Scotland (previously Age Concern Scotland and Help the Aged)**

<http://www.ageconcernandhelptheagedscotland.org.uk/>

**Age Positive, Department of Work and Pensions**

[http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.l1=1073858787&topicId=1082249786&r.lc=en&r.l2=1079568262&furlname=agepositive&furlparam=agepositive&ref=http%3A//www.direct.gov.uk/en/D11/Directories/DG\\_10011325&domain=www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.l1=1073858787&topicId=1082249786&r.lc=en&r.l2=1079568262&furlname=agepositive&furlparam=agepositive&ref=http%3A//www.direct.gov.uk/en/D11/Directories/DG_10011325&domain=www.businesslink.gov.uk)

**Pensions and Retirement Planning, DirectGov**

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/index.htm>

**One Scotland: Scotland against Racism**

<http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/onescotland/2.1.1.html>

**Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights** <http://www.crer.org.uk/>

**Capability Scotland** <http://www.capability-scotland.org.uk/>

**Enable Scotland** <http://www.enable.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx>

**Royal National Institute for Blind People**

<http://www.rnib.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

**Action on Hearing Loss** <http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/>

**Scottish Accessible Information Forum** <http://www.saifscotland.org.uk/>

Appendix 1

