Guidance notes on consulting with seldom heard groups

It is important that services aim to gain a representative view from the community. To do this services will need to consider targeting and tailoring their consultations at specific groups which may be considered as seldom heard.

General Hints and Tips to Encourage Participation

- Take consultation to the communities. Use community venues and events and go to the communities rather than expecting them to come to us.
- Make sure information is clear and accessible eg plain English, consider making available in range of formats or suitable languages
- Try to use creative consultation methods
- Use a range of communication methods
- Consider providing incentives eg offering prizes or gifts
- Understand that we may need to work outside office hours to make consultations more accessible
- Provide benefits to taking part eg provide refreshments, crèche facilities, transport or reimburse expenses
- Set realistic timescales - make sure you give people enough time to respond
- Always give enough advance warning of consultation meetings – at least six weeks
- You may find you need to run a number of events to reach different groups of people.
- Provide copies of presentations, background information etc. in advance in the most appropriate format
- Central government recommend 12 weeks for consultations - if consultation periods are less than this, services need to be able to justify why (link to code of practice in ‘some useful websites’ section)

Please refer to the Plain English and Style Guide for improving accessibility to both internal and external literature and publicity.
Consulting with people with disabilities

Organisations may be able to consult people with disabilities on behalf of the council, or identify people who can participate. Refer the council’s consultee list for local groups.

Useful Hints and Tips

- Ensure that all venues for consultation events are fully accessible.
- Ensure that transport is provided where necessary.
- Ensure that all forms of communication meet the needs of the visually impaired, (ie: helpful font size and paper colour etc). The council’s Access Officer will be able to assist you.
- Ensure that timing of events is appropriate ie some people may need more time to get ready in the mornings
- Ensure enough time is given for people to consider issues
- Liaise with voluntary and community groups whose members have disabilities.
- Encourage the active participation of carers and advocates.
- Provide appropriate facilities for all meetings (ie Induction loops, sign language facilities etc.).
- Attend day centres; residential care homes and community venues and groups with a variety of consultation approaches.
- Always speak directly to the person with disabilities and not the person they are with (such as a carer or companion)
- Sit at the same level, ie eye to eye, when speaking to people

Visually Impaired

Audio
- Galloway’s Society for the Blind has the facilities to record you reading your plan/strategy/questionnaire then they will then distribute it to all the visually impaired people in the district. There is a reasonable charge for this service.
- Tape & CD Production – Galloways Society for the Blind (complete service or loan of recording equipment)
- Contact Tony Kimpton on 01524 414846
- Production Time – 3 days, (dependant on the size of the document.)

Braille
- The Galloways Society Head Quarters at Preston can provide this service.
- Production Time – Up to 5 working days
- Contact – Kevin Lonergan at the Galloway Society on 01772 753702

Large Print
- Text Only, minimum 16 point Production – in-house (if designed internally) or arrangement with designer to produce a large print of pdf (if designed externally)
Dyslexic Friendly Formats
- As requested by customer
- Production – In-house, if appropriate.
- Production time – dependent on request

Hard of Hearing
- Face to face interpretation service, (British Sign Language providers,)
- Deafway Interpretation Service 01772 796461 or the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, (RNID,) Manchester office -0161 276 2307, Merseyside Office - 0151 236 4497
- Availability – must be booked in advance, contact one of the above to arrange
- Hearing loops are available at most Council Reception points. (A loop system helps deaf people who use a hearing aid or loop listener hear sounds more clearly because it reduces or cuts out background noise.) A portable loop system is available.
- To use the portable loop system, contact Rob Bracewell, Access Officer on X2372
Consulting with children and young people

Children & Young People ‘have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously’ – Article 12 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.

What are the main issues regarding consultation as far as young people are concerned?

1. It can feel patronising
2. There is often no feedback
3. Young people able to choose method of consultation
4. Treat young people like adults
5. Young people want to have access to full documents where they are being asked to comment on policy etc
6. Young people are not able to access events etc because of times to suit adults -ie weekdays 9-5 when most young people are in school, college or at work
7. Stereotyping - adults not recognising that young people are individuals
8. Lack of respect from some adults
9. Many young people don’t feel listened to
10. Young people want to be involved at all levels/stages of the process, not just at the end
11. Do not use young people just to tick the box

(Young people’s comments taken from the Special Council Event October 2008)

If you are going to be working with children and young people under 18 years of age, you must familiarise yourself with the Council’s Child Protection Policy, (currently being revised as Safeguarding Policy) which is available on the Intranet. The Council has adopted the Lancashire Children and Young People’s Charter for Engagement which provides guidance on how Services should consult with and engage children and young people and make it possible for them to be involved in meaningful participation in decision making. A copy of the Charter can be obtained from: http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/education/every_child_matters/reports/pdf/child_and_young_peoples_charter_for_engagement.pdf or from the children and young people page on the intranet.

We need to make sure that young people aren’t ‘consulted out’ and that consultation is both meaningful and as wide as possible including ‘seldom heard’ groups, those who traditionally don’t get involved in consultation/participation. The are some organisations that could help with this: Lancashire Young People’s Service, Children’s Centres, YMCA and Lancashire County Council’s Traveller Education Service, Children Looked After (Children’s Social Care)
Groups to consider involving:
Sign Posts
Young Lancashire
Lancaster District Children and Young People Multi-Agency Forum membership
Lancaster District Children's Trust Partnership
District Youth Council (run by Lancashire Young People's Service)
Students Unions
School Councils
Local Libraries

(Please note that a Youth Engagement Strategy will be developed early 2009
taking account of the work done by the young people who participated in the
Special Council event in 2008.)

If you need any assistance please contact the Children & Young People Manager
in Corporate Strategy.

- Consider the right approach for different ages and if in fact it would be
  appropriate to consult young people on the particular issue at all eg sex
  education.
- Consider asking for parental permission
- Translate into real life, real words and make it relevant for them
Consulting with older people

Older people could be consulted through established groups such as:
- The Lancaster District Older People’s Partnership Board (a partner organisation on the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP) Valuing People Building Block, they will be able to help you through their network of contacts.
- The Lancaster District Older People’s Forum
- Both statutory and non-statutory organisations which offer services, advice and assistance to older people, including many voluntary, community and faith groups who work with the older people of our District (see council consultee list for details).

Useful hints and tips

- Look for where older people meet, although speak to lead contact and discuss with them ways to consult groups they are involved in – posters/leaflets
- Try to find out what activities going on when you are consulting
- Consider provision of hearing loops, visual aids etc.
- Always speak directly to the older person and not the person they are with (such as a carer or companion)
- Seek advice from older people on appropriate venues and how to advertise meetings to appeal to their peers: eg use large, clear lettering and signs; choose familiar settings (eg seniors’ clubs, local community centres, people’s homes), where they will feel more comfortable and confident.
- Make sure there is disabled access to venues and toilets, and that hearing loops and signers are made available
- Consider carefully the start and finish times of meetings – older people may not be able to get to meetings early in the day, or stay after 3pm, and some may prefer not to attend meetings in the evening
- Speak clearly, but don’t patronise by speaking slowly or shouting

Consulting with people from black and minority ethnic and faith backgrounds

Established groups such as Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP) Valuing People Thematic Group will be able to help you through their network of contacts.

Members of Community Leaders group have agreed to be contacted directly to discuss the best ways of consulting their communities and publicising consultations (for details refer to council consultee list). When you contact them try to find out more about their communities eg languages, culture and tradition so that you’re more aware of any particular needs they might have/face when using your service.

Useful Hints and Tips

- If necessary, build in time for translation/interpretation both of your own
- Don’t classify ethnic groups together – each group will have different needs and there may also be diversity within a group eg age, gender
- You could consider seconding a member of an ethnic minority community to help with the consultation exercise is a good way of gaining credibility and the trust of local communities.
- When deciding what refreshments to provide, take into account dietary or other needs of the religious communities you are inviting. If you’re not sure ask people for their preferences when sending out the invitation.
- Try to avoid your consultations conflicting with festivals or holy days

Religious Celebration Calendar

January
5 Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh - Nanakshani calendar (Sikh)
6 Epiphany (Christian)
7 Ashura (Muslim)
7 Christmas Day – Ethiopian (Rastafari)
18 World Religious Day (Baha’i)
26 Chinese New Year (Chinese)
27 Losar start (Baha’i)
27 National Holocaust Memorial Day (Jewish)

February
2 Candlemas (Christian)
14 St Valentine’s Day (Christian)
24 Shrove Tuesday (Christian)
25 Ash Wednesday (Christian)
8 Parinirvana – Nirvana day (Buddhist)
15 Nirvana day – alternative day (Buddhist)
March
9 Milad un Nabi - Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (Muslim)
11 Holi (Hindu)
14 Milad un Nabi – Shia (Muslim)
21 Naw-Ruz (Baha’i)
Mothering Sunday (Christian)

April
3 Rama Navami (Hindu)
9 Hanuman Jayanti (Hindu)
9 Passover – 1st day (Jewish)
13 Vaisakhi (Sikh)
14 Birthday of Guru Nanak Hola Mohalla – Nanakshahi Calendar (Sikh)
Palm Sunday (Christian)
Good Friday (Christian)
Easter Sunday (Christian)
21 Ridvan – first day (Baha’i)
21 Anniversary of Haile Selassie’s visit to Jamaica (Rastafari)
29 Ridvan – ninth day (Baha’i)

May
2 Ridvan – twelfth day (Baha’i)
9 Wesak or Buddha day (Buddhist)
28 Dragon Boat Festival (Chinese)
29 Ascension of Baha’u’llah (Baha’i)
29 Shavuot – 1st day (Jewish)

June
16 Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev – Nanakshahi Calendar (Sikh)

July
7 Asala – Dharma Day (Buddhist)
23 Birthday of Haile Selassie I (Rastafari)

August
5 Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)
17 Birthday of Marcus Garvey (Rastafari)
22 Ramadan – start (Muslim)

September
19 Rosh Hashanah – 1st day (Jewish)
21 Eid-Ul-Fitr (Muslim)
28 Yom Kippur (Jewish)

October
3 Mid Autumn Festival (Chinese)  
17 Diwali (Hindu)  
17 Diwali (Sikh)  
20 Birth of Bab (Baha’i)

November  
2 Birthday of Guru Nanak – Lunar Calendar (Sikh)  
2 Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I (Rastafari)  
12 Birth of Baha’u’llah (Baha’i)  
26 Day of the Covenant (Baha’i)  
28 Ascension of Abdu’l Baha (Baha’i)  
28 Eid-Ul-Adha (Muslim)

December  
8 Bodhi Day (Buddhist)  
12 Al-Hijira (Muslim)  
25 Christmas Day (Christian)

Translations

Written
- Language Line – 0800 169 2879 for quotation  
- Production time – Depends upon size etc. of document – will be confirmed when ordered.

Face to Face
- Language Line -0845 310 9900  
- The Council’s ID code is C6894 L43655  
- Production time  
- Usually immediate

Telephone
A minicom/text phone facility is available at Lancaster and Morecambe town halls. The council’s minicom number is 01524 582175. (Unlike a standard telephone, a textphone has a keyboard and a display screen. Instead of speaking into a telephone mouthpiece, the customer will type what they want to say using the keyboard and their text appears on the display of the minicom/textphone system at Lancaster or Morecambe town hall.

Minutes of Community Leaders Group Meeting 8th December 2008

Lancaster City Council – future consultation with the Community Leaders Group

Jennifer Williams, the council’s Consultation Officer outlined that it was her job to co-ordinate all the Consultation that takes place across the council. She asked
the Group for advice on how the council can measure levels of satisfaction with its services and the group’s future involvement in decision making.

She asked the group if and how the Community Leaders Group would like to be consulted in the future, ie as a group or as separate ‘communities’.

Bhiku responded by stating that different groups respond differently and that it is better to consult different communities directly but that we must include the ‘hard to hear’ and ‘hard to reach’ groups and that we all must think the process through very carefully so that we can make sure we are helping communities to participate. He also stated that we need to recognise cultural differences and that the council will need to tailor its consultation around that.

James responded by stating that the Morecambe Bay Chinese community would prefer direct contact.

Usman also stated that the only way is to make direct contact and to use the contacts that we have in place already.

Shirley explained that prisoners can only really be consulted by going through the prison governor.

Fiona (Aitken) explained that students are quite difficult to engage with and there is a risk of ‘over consulting’ as they are asked to participate in lots of things.

Magdalena informed the group that the polish community is spilt into two groups; the ‘old community’ and the new migrants. Jennifer was advised to consult with both groups separately and was offered any contacts that the council may need.

Bikhu further explained that if there is going to be consultation through the Group, then we should put together a pack and make sure that we analyse the results. Where there are language barriers, then translators should be employed to ensure inclusion. Liz endorsed this point of view and stated that there should be adequate budgets in place for such services when consulting.

Fiona (Frank) asked if the group could have an input on what consultations the council needs to carry out.