

# South Lanarkshire Community engagement Framework



# Contents

## **Mission Statement**

## **Introduction**

### **Context section**

What do we mean by community engagement

South Lanarkshire approach

Principles of community engagement

Benefits of community engagement

### **National Standards section**

National Standards

### **How to engage section**

Community engagement toolkit (VOiCE)

Engagement methods and techniques

## **Useful contacts**

## **Appendix**

1. Engaging seldom heard groups
2. Analysing and interpreting findings
3. VOiCE toolkit questions



# Mission Statement

“

*The Community Planning Partnership is wholly committed to the principles of community engagement, the involvement of local communities in the planning, development and management of services. Our aim is to continuously improve the quality and delivery of services and central to this is the involvement of local people.*

”

# Introduction

**Community Planning** involves a wide range of partners including South Lanarkshire Council, NHS Lanarkshire, Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Scottish Enterprise, Strathclyde Passenger Transport, the Voluntary Sector and the Private Sector. The **Community Planning Partnership** works together to provide quality services that meet the needs and aspirations of the communities and individual citizens. An essential element of this is listening to and working directly with the people who live and work in South Lanarkshire, in order to identify what needs to be done and how best to do it.

To help this take place the **Community Engagement Framework** has been developed to improve the ways in which public sector agencies consult with and involve communities on matters which affect them, and to provide a more co-ordinated and consistent approach to consulting and working in partnership with communities throughout South Lanarkshire.

Community engagement is about involving individuals, community organisations, service users and businesses in the decision making process which shape policies and

influence the way in which issues are addressed and services are delivered. Effective engagement is the key way of ensuring that the views, knowledge and expertise of local people can support the regeneration of local communities and an improved quality of life in South Lanarkshire.

The framework provides a practical resource to support the planning and carrying out of community engagement activities which will in turn provide communities with a range of opportunities and mechanisms to inform, influence and improve the way in which services in South Lanarkshire are planned and delivered.

**For further information** on Community Engagement and the South Lanarkshire Community Engagement Framework please go to the Community Engagement pages on the South Lanarkshire Council website at [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

**For additional information contact** Central Research Unit - Community Planning on **01698 454940** or email [contact@southlanarkshirecommunityplanning.org](mailto:contact@southlanarkshirecommunityplanning.org)



## What do we mean by community engagement?

Community engagement is about the whole range of activities that support the involvement of individuals and communities in how we plan and deliver services in South Lanarkshire.

It is recognised that many benefits can be gained by both Partner organisations and communities working together, and that true and effective community engagement can produce better results in terms of the delivery of services and improvement in the quality of life in local communities.

It is important to agree from the outset what we mean by certain terms as there are a variety of definitions in use. This will establish a common understanding and ensure that this is reflected in all levels of community engagement activity.

### The five levels of community engagement are:

#### ■ Information giving

The simplest level of engagement but one which underpins all other levels of engagement. It is essential that participants are provided with information in a format that suits their needs on the issues about which they are being engaged, so that they are able to make informed and considered choices.

#### ■ Consultation

Seek the views and opinions of the public in order to inform the decision making processes. Organisations embarking on this type of exercise must be prepared to take on the ideas of the community.

#### ■ Involvement

Where people are actively involved in decision making and deciding together on the future of their neighbourhoods/areas and other decisions that affect their lives. This can give people the power to choose, without fully sharing the responsibility for action.

“*Working together to improve the quality of life of everyone in South Lanarkshire*”

*Connect*

## ■ Acting together

Where both public sector agencies and communities are involved in deciding together, acting together and also sharing responsibility.

## ■ Supporting

Empowering communities to make decisions and take control of projects and service delivery.

It is important to recognise that there are many different methods of engaging with people. Communities may wish to be involved at different levels and the Framework will enable a flexible approach. Some sectors of the community may not be engaged and it is important to identify them and make efforts to involve them.

## What do we mean by community?

Communities can be defined in different ways. There can be 'communities of place' for example a neighbourhood, street or village as well as 'communities of interest' for example young people, ethnic minorities, people who consider themselves to be disabled, business etc.

Generally people do not relate to one community, but to several community groupings related to where they live, their job, interests etc. It is important to allow people to define for themselves which communities they wish to be identified with.

## Who is seldom heard?

This is a widely recognised term to describe those groups or communities who may experience social exclusion.

We need to consider how to engage socially excluded groups including: providing information in a variety of languages; formats and approaches; consideration of physical accessibility; timing of meetings; transport needs etc. (see appendix 1 for further details)



## What are the Community and the Voluntary Sectors?

The Community and Voluntary Sectors are often considered the same, however there are distinct differences which need to be considered in relation to engagement activity.

Community Organisations in the main are locally based groups sharing common interests (for example disability groups, youth groups etc) or a geographical similarity (for example tenants groups, community councils). Engagement activity is normally carried out on an individual basis or collectively where forums or umbrella organisations have been established.

The Voluntary Sector can be charities or professionally led non-profit organisations which compliment and support existing local authority or health services (for example Royal National Institute for the Deaf, Citizens Advice Bureau etc). As well as organising volunteers to provide services in the community, voluntary organisations are often employers in their own right.

## Aims and objectives

### Aim

- The overarching aim of the Community Engagement Framework is to provide communities and individuals with a range of opportunities and mechanisms which can inform, influence and improve the way in which services in South Lanarkshire are planned and delivered.

### Objectives

- To develop a systematic, practical framework which ensures that we engage with groups and individuals in our communities in a way which is
  - co-ordinated, to make the best use of resources, avoid unnecessary duplication and share existing information, expertise and best practice.
  - consistent in the quality and effectiveness of what we do, and how we do it across the partner agencies.
- To ensure that throughout the Partnership there is a clear understanding of and commitment to engaging with communities about decisions that affect their lives.

- To develop the capacity of groups and individuals to participate in Community planning and decision making processes.
- It should be noted that some partners have specific engagement processes to follow if any significant changes to services are proposed - e.g. NHS Lanarkshire.

*“Public participation is regarded as one of the hallmarks of good government and the involvement of the public is now a standard feature of the work of councils”*

*COSLA*

## The South Lanarkshire approach

The South Lanarkshire approach to community engagement is to develop a broad range of opportunities which enable communities to be actively involved at all levels of the Community Planning process.

There is a wide diversity of communities throughout South Lanarkshire with varying levels of skills, resources and infrastructure. Consulting and engaging these communities can be a challenge, but it is one which the Partnership views as vital to successful communities. It recognises that the approach to community engagement must reflect a deeper concern to engage local people in decisions around service delivery, overcome exclusion and assist them in making the most of opportunities available in their local community.

## Currently activity takes place in the following areas:

- Community Planning Partnership;
- Engagement by Community Planning Themed Partnerships;
- Area wide engagement;
- Partnership with the community and with the voluntary sector (VASLAN);





- Regeneration and Inclusion Initiatives;
- Specific Initiatives and Projects;
- Links with Local Forums and Key Organisations; and
- Engagement by Individual Partner Organisations.

## The South Lanarkshire approach focuses on:

### ■ Building community capacity

While there is a broad range of engagement activity and good practice in place, there should be an ongoing commitment to supporting and developing the communities' capacity to be involved in the Community Planning process.

Many barriers to active involvement exist and some sections of the community need assistance to participate. Successful engagement requires the investment of time and resources to build the capacity of communities.

Recent examples of capacity building with communities are:

- Friends of Cambuslang Park group was developed out of community consultation work in support of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid. Through time and capacity building activity, this group has become an independent organisation with charitable status.

- Community engagement in the Burnhill area of Rutherglen took an asset based approach, which reflected a high level of partnership working, and the mobilisation of local people leading to community involvement, empowerment and collective action.

### ■ Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of engagement activity throughout the Community Partnership is essential in order to assess the quality of planning activity taking place, highlight key strengths and identify good practice.

Performance of engagement activity should be monitored against

- The purpose of engagement
- The principles for engagement as outlined in this framework

## Principles of community engagement

In order to ensure that community engagement is carried out consistently and to the highest possible standards in South Lanarkshire, it is essential that all parties share basic principles for working together.

### The following are key principles:

- **The method of engagement should be fit for purpose.**

Methods used must be right for the community being engaged. Appropriate methods should be used for meeting different objectives, at different stages, with different audiences and on different issues.

- **It must be recognised that communities may wish to engage in different ways.**

People may wish to be engaged in a variety of ways ranging from being provided with information and consulted on issues, through to active involvement and participation in decision making and implementation. The level of commitment that is being asked from the participants must be made clear at the outset, particularly in terms of time.

It should also be recognised that in some instances communities may not wish to become fully involved.

- **People should be involved at the earliest possible stage and given adequate time to make considered choices.**

Engaging with people to influence services and decision making means involving them at the beginning of the planning process. Sufficient time and information must be provided to allow people to explore ideas and think them through, especially if the issues are complex in order to receive an informed response.

- **The purpose of engaging must be made clear.**

It must be made clear from the start the purpose of the engagement, along with being open and honest about what can and cannot be influenced and how the results will be used.



- **There should be a commitment to better communication.**

Better communication should avoid duplication, engagement should be co-ordinated and the use of resources maximised. All written and verbal communication should be clear, using plain English with no jargon.

- **The views of the seldom heard should be actively sought.**

It should be recognised that certain groups and communities often experience social exclusion and disengagement. The views of seldom heard groups should be sought using appropriate means of communication.

- **Participants must receive feedback.**

Participants must receive feedback at appropriate times on how the views they express will be linked into the decision making processes, and what will happen after the engagement exercise is complete.

- **Capacity building support should be a key element of community engagement.**

Successful engagement requires investment in time and resources to build the capacity of both organisations and communities to ensure people have access to the right skills and training to assist them.

- **Ensure that participants are not out of pocket.**

Participants are giving their time therefore at a minimum, travel costs should be reimbursed and consideration should be given to other expenses that are likely to be incurred, for example caring costs.

## The benefits of community engagement

- Better decision making and performance;
- Improved information flow;
- Improved services;
- Better communication, understanding, trust and relationships between service providers and service users;
- Greater targeting of resources;
- Increased customer satisfaction and sense of ownership of service provision;
- More transparency and accountability;
- Stronger partnerships;
- Promotion of good practice;
- Policy and practice reflects the views of relevant sectors of the community;
- Promotion of community cohesion;
- Stronger communities;
- Equality of opportunity; and
- Promotion of positive community relations.

“We had a tremendous response from 5th and 6th year pupils in schools throughout South Lanarkshire to our ‘Cut it Out’ campaign questionnaire.”

*Strathclyde Fire  
and Rescue Services*



# National Standards

## National Standards

The **National Standards for Community Engagement** set out best practice guidance for engagement between communities and public agencies. The standards were developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre with extensive participation from over 500 community and agency representatives.

The Standards were published in 2005 and endorsed by the then Scottish Executive, Audit Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, NHS Health Scotland, the Association of Chief Police Officers and many others.

The National Standards and key questions are listed in the following pages.

### The Involvement Standard

**We will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement.**

- What level of engagement do you want to achieve?
  - information giving, consulting over proposals or involving communities in decision making
- What do you want to achieve?
- What do you want to find out?
- Why do you need to engage?
- Who are you trying to engage with?
- Who is your target audience?
- Who needs encouragement to engage?
- How do you contact hard to reach groups? – people who because of some barrier such as poverty, language, disability, mental health issues, learning difficulties.
- Have you identified communities of interest and/or place?

## **The Support Standard**

**We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.**

- Are there constraints? - timescales, skills, costs, commitment, ability to respond, political sensitivities, can all be limiting factors.

## **The Planning Standard**

**We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken.**

- Do you want to improve service delivery, monitor levels of satisfaction, identify service gaps, establish needs, wants or attitudes or involve the community in decision making?
- Have similar activities already been carried out and can their results be used? Can you link to other projects to minimise or avoid duplication?
- Will the engagement be repeated and if so, when and how often?
- Is the information needed already available elsewhere? How have you engaged communities before? What were the methods and how effective were they? Should you build on this experience or do something new?
- How much is the engagement likely to cost? Is there a budget?

## **The Methods Standard**

**We will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.**

- What type of information is required – quantitative or qualitative or both?
- Consider the choice of methods according to the type of participants and the issues.
- Is engagement fit for purpose – a range of techniques may be needed in any one engagement activity – for example a citizens panel is appropriate for seeking views but not for involving people in decision making.



# National Standards

## **The Working Together Standard**

**We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another efficiently and effectively.**

- Identify what is currently happening or planned in other departments or partner organisations.
- Use existing local forums and mechanisms to enable access to a wide range of groups.

## **The Sharing Information Standard**

**We will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants.**

- Information should be in plain English, free from jargon and provided to participants in a timely and in an easily accessible method.
- Equality issues must be considered at all stages. You will need to determine how to make engagement activities as inclusive as possible in order to reach 'hard to reach groups'.

## **The Working With Others Standard**

**We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement.**

- Draw up an action plan detailing what will be done, who will do it, when it will be started and completed, how much it estimated to cost and what other resources may be needed.
- Be open and honest from the outset about what can or cannot be achieved or influenced, and the limitations and constraints within which you are operating and be aware of inadvertently raising expectations.
- You are far more likely to attract interest if you can devise innovative and even entertaining means of engaging, such as role plays, communicating via different mediums – internet, films etc.

## The Improvement Standard

We will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants.

- Is training and capacity building required - both within the community and with employees? Participants may require training and support to familiarise them with the issues, organisational structures and processes.
- Developing a range of support and training opportunities to equip people with new skills and competencies.
- Supporting people to gather information, analyse situations, prioritise and implement actions they wish to pursue.
- Supporting the development of new networks, initiatives or community led strategies.
- It is important that adequate time is given for capacity to be developed.

“We used ‘appreciative inquiry’ and workshops to obtain views on Equality Schemes. It is a different way of consulting as you look at the positives all the time and some of our participants found this a bit difficult to begin with! It provided very positive feedback which assisted in forming our equality schemes.”

*South Lanarkshire Council*





# National Standards

## The Feedback Standard

**We will feedback the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected.**

- How are you going to analyse the data? This is often not a simple task and may require relevant expertise.
- How will the results be used?
- How will you feedback to participants? Are participants aware of what is possible for example timescales are already fixed for statutory consultation? Asking participants how they would like feedback can be worthwhile.
- Providing feedback on the results of any engagement to those who have been involved is a vital stage of the engagement process. Telling people how the information/input they provided will be used shows people that their involvement was worthwhile and encourages future engagement.
- Ensure that the most appropriate mechanism to feedback is used.
- Communicating the results and outcomes of engagement to the wider public is important as it means the feedback is inclusive and can help inform others who may be interested in the outcomes.

## The Monitoring and Evaluation Standard

**We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the National Standards for Community Engagement.**

- Is engagement monitored and evaluated against agreed objectives?
- Are you reaching your target communities and meeting quotas?
- Is the project keeping to the given timescale?
- Are participants happy with the engagement process?
- What resources were used? – time and money.
- What activities were carried out? – target groups contacted and how, response rates.
- Did you obtain the range of views required?
- Did you meet the partnerships principles of engagement?
- Did participants feel that the engagement mattered?
- Were participants empowered?
- What methods worked or didn't work and what lessons have been learned?
- Will the service be improved as a result?
- Has policy been influenced?

(see appendix 2 for further details of analysing and interpreting the findings of engagement activity)



# How to engage

## How to engage

Just as the National Standards set criteria to support purposeful and meaningful engagement, there is also a broad range of recognised approaches and techniques that can be used to help facilitate engagement activity, enhance participation levels and maximise outcomes.

This section highlights the Community Engagement Toolkit (VOiCE) and provides an outline of some of the approaches and techniques to consider when planning outcome focussed engagement. It should be noted that more than one approach can be used as techniques should reflect the focus of the engagement and the needs of participants/stakeholders.

### Community Engagement Toolkit

While the [National Standards](#) help to focus and facilitate Community Engagement, [VOiCE](#) (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement) provides the toolkit to assist in analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

### Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement (VOiCE)

[VOiCE](#) is a database planning and recording tool that is designed to assist individuals and organisations to design and deliver effective community engagement. Community participation and engagement is a central feature of public policy and reflects the desire of public sector reform to deliver outcomes that respond to the aspirations of service users and communities.

#### VOiCE helps users to:

- Plan community engagement and service user participation
- Conduct it effectively
- Monitor and record the process
- Evaluate the outcomes

The tool can be used to support a range of participation from whole area regeneration to specific concerns with individual services.

### VOiCE can be used by:

- Employees of front line service units in public, private or voluntary organisations, primarily as a tool to support direct engagement practice.
- Operational service managers to maintain a coherent view of what is being done by their staff and units and to plan conduct and evaluate engagement.
- Strategic planners and managers to ensure a coherent and properly planned approach to engagement. Providing a basis for quality assurance relating to the overall conduct of community engagement and to plan conduct and evaluate engagement.
- Community groups and organisations wishing to engage their own communities or initiate engagement between their community and relevant agencies.

VOiCE builds on two widely adopted tools: **National Standards for Community Engagement** and **Learning, Evaluation and Planning - LEAP**.

It is organised around the key planning and evaluation steps of **Analyse, Plan, Do and Review**.

Using this structure VOiCE asks key questions related to good community engagement that need to be addressed at each step, provides a recording system for the engagement as it develops and enables evaluation and learning from the experience.

VOiCE is available online [www.scdc.org.uk](http://www.scdc.org.uk). It has been developed using funding from the Scottish Government as part of the third year of support for the National Standards for Community Engagement.

### For further information on VOiCE contact

The Scottish Community Development Centre,  
305 Baltic Chambers,  
50 Wellington Street, Glasgow, G2 6HJ  
Phone: **0141 248 1924**

Email: [info@scdc.org.uk](mailto:info@scdc.org.uk)

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



# How to engage

## Engagement methods and techniques

Surveys	
Opinion surveys	<p>Identifies the opinion of people involved in a structured way that enables extensive analysis of gathered information/data.</p> <p>Benefit of Approach: The gathered information can act as a baseline for measuring changes in people's views. Feeding back to participants can prompt further involvement and information sharing.</p>
Participatory appraisal	<p>This is using a range of community engagement techniques to understand community views on a particular issue.</p> <p>The aim is to enable people to assess the issue and make their own plans to address it.</p> <p>Benefit of Approach: The process is designed and led by local people.</p>

Discussion groups	
Focus groups	<p>Small group discussions that give in-depth information and views on a specific topic.</p>
Appreciative inquiry	<p>A way of organising a group discussion that will focus on the positive aspects of the issue being discussed.</p> <p>Useful way of ensuring that consultation does not focus on negative experiences that may have happened in the past.</p>

## Discussion groups

<b>Scenario planning</b>	A planning technique to test out a number of 'future scenarios' for the development of a community or neighbourhood. Over a series of workshops participants are encouraged to envisage what things will take place in the future. The aim is to promote consensus and identify how best to deal with issues that pose a threat or opportunity.
<b>Conflict resolution</b>	Brings people with conflicting view points together. To use this method, identify someone outwith the stakeholder group to facilitate discussions. This approach can begin to develop consensus through presenting different views.

## Public events

- Conferences and Seminars
- Open Space Events
- Interactive Displays/Exhibitions
- Planning for Real
- Future Search
- Community Auditing/Profiling
- Public Scrutiny – bring communities and service providers together to review how services are provided. Can provide a framework for monitoring services and customer satisfaction.

## Regular involvement techniques

- Citizen's juries
- Citizen's panels



# How to engage

Capacity building and support	
<b>Community animators</b>	Recruited from local people, they help mobilise and involve people in making positive changes in their own community.
<b>Community visioning</b>	Involves bringing a group of local people together to develop ideas on what they would want their community to be ideally like. After the vision has been agreed participants identify what is required to make the vision a reality resulting in an action plan.
<b>Partnership</b>	This requires a long term commitment to engage with individuals, groups or communities. It involves participation and influence of the community within decision making structures e.g. development of community forums or representation on strategic partnerships.
<b>Action research</b>	Local people are supported to carry out their own research into the needs/experiences of their community.
<b>Participatory evaluation</b>	This process focuses on involving all stakeholders in assessing the performance and achievements of an organisation.
<b>Participatory budgeting</b>	Local people are invited to make decisions on priorities, services and budgets in their area e.g. involvement in committees responsible for projects and budget allocations.

## Using the arts

Graphic recording	Graphic Recording is a way of recording discussions at a meeting or events using symbols and pictures. This approach is extremely valuable for anyone who has literacy issues or learning disabilities.
Story dialogue	Story Dialogue involves sharing experiences of a particular issue. It can be used to raise awareness of an issue by exploring an issue from different perspectives.
Participatory drama	Local people are encouraged to develop a play around issues affecting their neighbourhood.

*“Strathclyde Police piloted a town centre safety initiative (Hamilton, Safer Streets) over the festive period. The face-to-face on street interviews and focus groups were essential in focussing the priorities of the initiative. The positive evaluation has contributed to the continuation of the initiative which has now been in place for 4 years. This has resulted in a year on year reduction in crime and disorder which has received UK wide recognition.”*

*South Lanarkshire Community Safety Partnership*



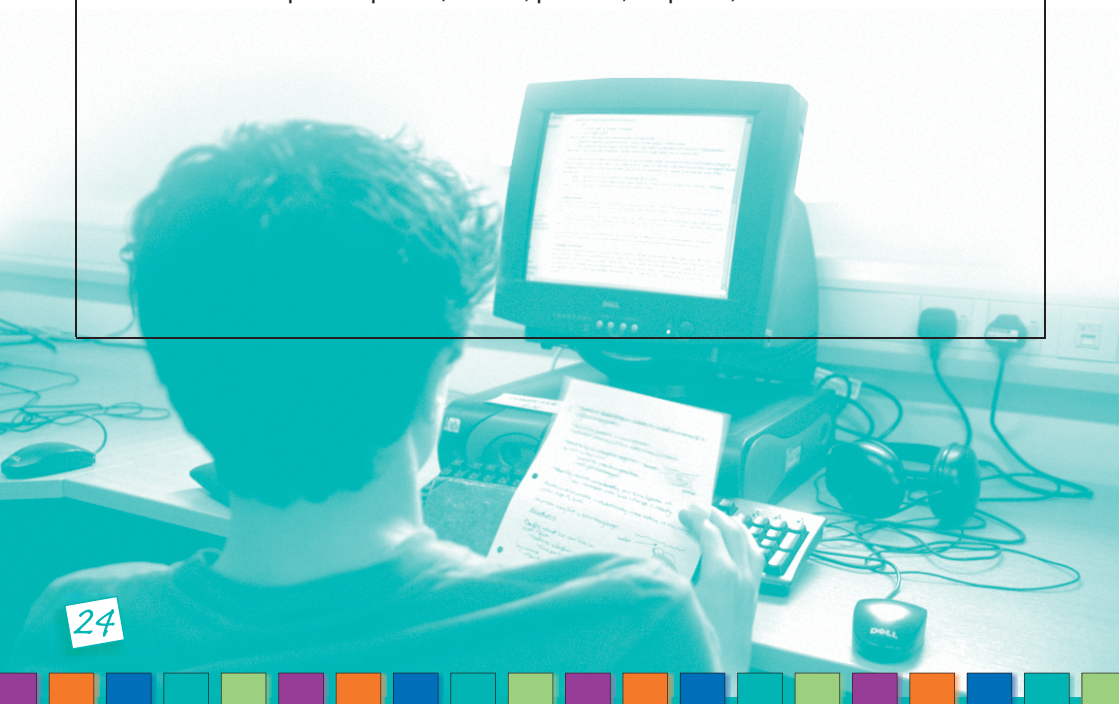


# How to engage

## Some methods appropriate for different levels of engagement

### Informing

- Advertising in local media – newspapers, local radio
- Advertising in community run media – community newspapers/newsletters, parish magazines, community web sites, community radio etc
- Posters/billboards
- Web and podcasting
- Text messaging
- Mail shots
- Email shots
- Local notice boards – shops/supermarkets, churches, mosques, libraries, clinics etc
- Exhibitions in public spaces (models, pictures, maps etc)



Consulting		Engaging in shared decision making or action
<p><b>a) Individual focus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Questionnaires <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self completion</li> <li>• administered</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Opinion polls</li> <li>■ Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• non-directive</li> <li>• semi-structured</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Suggestion boxes</li> <li>■ Interactive displays/ exhibitions</li> <li>■ On-line consultations</li> </ul>	<p><b>b) Group/ community focus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Buzz groups</li> <li>■ Speed dating</li> <li>■ Group interviews/ focus groups</li> <li>■ Nominal group process</li> <li>■ Group passing process</li> <li>■ Area forums</li> <li>■ Citizens panels</li> <li>■ Citizens juries</li> <li>■ Open meetings/ events including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Open space'</li> <li>• 'World café'</li> <li>• 'PP vote/ Option Finder'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Open meetings/ events including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Open house',</li> <li>• Open space</li> <li>• 'World café',</li> <li>• 'PP vote/ Option Finder' etc</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Stakeholder workshops</li> <li>■ Story dialogue</li> <li>■ Photovoice</li> <li>■ Deliberative mapping</li> <li>■ Planning for Real</li> <li>■ Design charrettes</li> <li>■ Participatory drama/ forum theatre</li> </ul>



# Useful contacts

## Useful contact details

### South Lanarkshire Council

**Corporate Community Engagement Working Group** – The group considers and shares good practice, new technologies, quality assurance, evaluation and co-ordinates high level council wide activity.

**Phone:** 01698 455741

### Consultation Database

**Website:** <http://tinyurl.com/5v9hs2g>

### Community Links South Lanarkshire

**Community Links** is a voluntary organisation who provides independent advice to voluntary and public sector bodies, concerning engagement activity. They offer tailor made consultancy and IT support services. Their principle aim is to engage and empower people living in South Lanarkshire to be positive contributors to local decision making.

**Phone:** 01698 827583

**Email:** [administrator@communitylinkssl.co.uk](mailto:administrator@communitylinkssl.co.uk)

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

### Scottish Community Development Centre

**SCDC** is a registered charity and their role is to support best practice in community development. They work closely with agencies and partnerships to achieve effective community engagement and community participation. They influence policy by researching issues and contributing to government working groups. SCDC were central to the development of VOiCE.

**Phone:** 0141 248 1924

**Email:** [info@scdc.org.uk](mailto:info@scdc.org.uk)

## Community Planning Partnership

South Lanarkshire Council

Phone: 01698 454940

NHS Lanarkshire

Phone: 08453 130 130

Strathclyde Police

Phone: 01698 483339

Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

Phone: 01555 667000

Voluntary Sector (VASLAN)

Phone: 01698 201615

Private Sector

Phone: 01698 426 882

Strathclyde Passenger Transport

Phone: 0141 332 6811

*“ We used a whole range of techniques to get resident views on improvement to local parks. We obtained qualitative and quantitative information through the use of questionnaires, face to face interviews, ‘millionaire’ voting key pads, opinion meters, and mind maps. This information helped form and progress an action plan. ”*

*Greenspace,  
South Lanarkshire Council*



# Appendix 1

## Engaging with seldom heard groups

Accessing those groups and communities who may experience social exclusion and disempowerment is generally perceived as being a difficult process.

To help Partners achieve this, the following section provides an outline of how to engage with socially excluded/seldom heard groups.

### Accessing socially excluded groups can be difficult for reasons such as:

- Language (for example first generation immigrants to the UK)
- Physical inaccessibility (for example older people, disability)
- Cultural expectation and traditions (for example disadvantaged young people)
- Social expectations (people who are often not considered as appropriate to be engaged for example children)

### Groups could include:

- Homeless people
- Drug Users
- Asylum Seekers
- Children and Young People
- Minority Ethnic Communities
- Offenders/Ex Offenders

- People with disabilities
- People with Learning Difficulties
- Rural Communities
- People with Mental Health Problems
- Travellers
- Single Parents
- Young men of working age
- Victims of domestic abuse

It is important to realise that defining all sectors of these groups as 'seldom heard' can be misleading and consideration needs to be given to the particular characteristics of population sub groups.

### Identifying 'seldom heard' sectors

South Lanarkshire Council's Central Research Unit may be able to assist in providing demographic profiles of areas or communities.

### Characteristics of 'seldom heard' Groups

- Size and concentration - Groups who are small in number and spread over a wide area;
- Internal Organisation - Groups who are not well organised in terms of having an established network of community organisations or agencies who can be approached

to assist in engaging the target groups;

- Deprivation – Groups who are experiencing acute social and economic deprivation; for example disaffected young men living in highly deprived housing estates;
- Social Invisibility – Communities who are considered to be socially invisible for example men and women who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual but do not lead openly 'gay' lives;
- Cultural and Ideological barriers – Where cultural expectations or social restrictions may make engagement with organisations or individuals outside of the family unit difficult for example in some Muslim Asian groups there are social restrictions upon women;
- Distinctive Service Groups – Many seldom heard communities and groups have very specific issues and needs. These may include people with disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health problems.

## Accessing seldom heard groups

Once you have identified the groups, you need to identify ways off accessing them.

You should have already audited work that has already been undertaken in your area of interest and this may have highlighted any seldom heard groups that you will need to engage with as well as having paved the way to gaining access.

If an audit does not help, you may have to think logically and creatively of ways to access these groups. This could be via informal networks, social venues or local organisations who work with these groups.

## Enabling seldom heard groups to participate

Once you have identified and accessed your seldom heard groups, it is necessary to take measures that will overcome the barriers that prevented them from participating in the first place. This may involve using interpreters, using visual aids, adapting facilities for disabled people, providing care for dependants etc.

The same information should be provided to everyone in a way that can be understood by all.

You should be flexible over timing, location and transport issues and also endeavour to use neutral or safe buildings for engagement activity.



## Engaging with seldom heard groups

Examples of engaging with seldom heard groups:

- The criminal justice service engages with people across Hamilton asking them what they know about the service and the role of Social Work in it.
- Home care services engage with carers of people with dementia concerning the service they receive.
- Users of the Council's Older People Day Care Service are asked their opinion using specially designed questionnaires compiled by Boardmaker software. This uses picture communication symbols and graphics.
- Questionnaires issued by Social Work Resources' are formatted to ensure they can be completed by all service users.
- Through ongoing engagement with young people, Youth Learning Services are ensuring that young people develop their skills and knowledge to continue to influence the development and delivery of appropriate services, for the wider community of young people in South Lanarkshire.

# Appendix 2

## Analysing and interpreting the findings of engagement activity

The information and findings from engagement activity can broadly be split into two categories.

Qualitative information (resulting from exploring peoples views in depth for example via focus groups/in depth interviews etc) does not give factual information often resulting in peoples perceptions. Systems have been developed to assist in the identification of key issues or changes in people's attitudes.

Quantitative information (from surveys, numbers participating etc) is simpler to analyse as it provides 'facts' in the form of numbers which makes it easier to identify changes and/or comparisons. It should be possible to break down results by demographics such as age, gender, ethnicity etc which helps to identify significant patterns or trends. This can be crucial in ensuring that service delivery meets the needs of all of our communities.

Both forms of information are valuable in identifying trends and changing priorities.

Wherever possible you should try to place results into a context – comparing results to national, local trends or previous outcomes. It is also essential to remain objective as any analysis may come under the scrutiny of participants and other key stakeholders. You must be able to justify any conclusions reached.

### Reporting the results serves 3 main purposes:

- It informs decision makers of your findings, or the output of engagement, together with appropriate recommendations in terms of project, policy or strategy development.
- It is a mechanism to provide feedback to participants.
- It is a mechanism to share findings with other agencies and interested parties.





Findings can be presented in a variety of ways:

Formal Report	including detailed analysis and statistics together with key recommendations.
Summary Report	which can be available to participants, the public and other organisations.
Presentations	a useful way of communicating findings which can reach wide sections of the community.
Community	details can be posted on the Website Planning section On SLC website.

## VOICE toolkit

### Analyse

**Q1 (Analyse) - Our purpose for engagement is....?**

#### Handy hints:

Think about your reason for engaging the community. For example are you doing it because you want to:

- Gain new understanding?
- Improve policy or practice?
- Plan or rationalise services?
- Involve the community in meeting need?

#### Think about:

- How you will explain your purpose?
- Why might the community want to engage with you?
- Are their interests the same as or different from yours?
- How might the community react to your motives?

**Q2 (Analyse) - Which is the right level of involvement for our purposes?**

#### Handy hints:

Are you seeking to:

- Inform: this means you are only going to tell people what you plan to do.
- Consult: This means you will offer people restricted options to choose between.
- Engage:
  - To take shared decisions - this means the community will influence choices and options for action.
  - To take shared action - this means the community will share in any actions taken.
  - To support community led action – this means the community will lead the action.



# Appendix 3

## Before we plan the engagement:

### Q3 (Analyse) - What do we know?

### Q4 (Analyse) - What do we need to know?

#### Handy hints:

- Clarify exactly what the issue is that you think community engagement could help you to address.
- Answer these questions:
  - Do you already have any information that is relevant to the focus of the engagement?
  - How useful, reliable and up to date is this information?
  - Can you use any of this information?
  - What do you need to know more about?
- Check:
  - Is this an issue that is recognised by the community?

### Q5 (Analyse) Who has an interest in our focus of engagement?

#### Handy hints:

- Who in the community has an interest in this?
- What agencies have an interest?

- How do we encourage those whose interests might be affected to become involved?

### Q6 (Analyse) Who needs encouragement?

### Q7 (Analyse) Are there any conflicts of interest that might emerge?

#### Handy hints:

Think about differences of view that stakeholders might have:

- Are some voices louder and better organised and could this disadvantage others?
- What can you do to enable all voices to be heard?

## Plan

### Q1 (Plan) What outcomes are stakeholders looking for?

#### Handy hints:

- Outcomes are the differences that result from an action. At the start, the lead person(s) should seek to establish what difference or differences key stakeholders want the engagement to make.

### Clarify:

- What is each stakeholder looking for from the engagement? That is individual participants » What is each stakeholder group looking for? That is interest groups (for example young people), organisations (for example the police)
- Are they looking for the same things?
- If not, can all their interests be accommodated?

### Q2 (Plan) - What will success look like?

#### Handy hints:

■ You should now know what outcomes you are looking for but how will you know they have been achieved? Think about:

- What types of evidence would be convincing to you and other stakeholders?
- How would you be able to collect evidence as the engagement develops?

■ With the other stakeholders, identify measures or indicators of performance for each outcome.

- For more information see Step 2 of the LEAP model

<http://leap.scdc.org.uk/10>

### Q3 (Plan) - What barriers might affect anyone who should be involved?

### Q4 (Plan) - What resources might be needed to overcome these barriers?

#### Handy hints:

Though we have identified who has an interest they can only exercise their interests if they can participate.

So,

■ What physical or financial barriers might affect anyone who should be able to be involved?

■ How can you develop your plans for engagement to minimise these barriers?

■ What resources might be needed to overcome barriers?



# Appendix 3

**Q5 (Plan) - Is there a need for independent community development support or specialist advice and, if so, where would it come from?**

## Handy hints:

Communities you want to involve may feel that they need help to represent themselves but feel this lacks objectivity or detachment if it comes from an agency that is engaging them.

So:

- Who can provide independent community development support or specialist advice?

**Q6 (Plan) - What resources are available to us: skills, experience, budgets, facilities, time etc?**

## Handy hints:

Identifying the resources available to you is a key part of developing an action plan for engagement. The resources available to you will influence your choice of methods. Think about the following:

- What skills are available to us?
- What experience can we draw on?
- What facilities can we access? (for example buildings, equipment, transport)

- What time is available?
- What is the budget?
- Who holds these skills and experience?

**Q7 (Plan) - What methods will we use?**

## Handy hints:

Be imaginative – think about having more than just meetings. Ask yourself:

- Who are we trying to involve?
- Where and when would they feel most comfortable?
- What styles/types of communication would most suit them?
- Can we use more than one method?

There are lots of options e.g. World Café, citizen's juries, citizen's panels, community forums, Planning for Real, Story Dialogue, interactive displays, participatory drama etc. (See [www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/built-environment/regeneration/engage/howtoguide/techniques](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/built-environment/regeneration/engage/howtoguide/techniques))

**Q8 (Plan) - What actions will be taken?****Handy hints:**

To conduct your community engagement methods effectively you need to be clear who will do what, when and how they will do it, and who will co-ordinate and monitor. To do this most efficiently you need to use those best equipped for the tasks. So, think about the methods you plan to use and the resources available to you and ask:

- What are the key tasks?
- Who is best equipped to do them?
- When do they need to be done?

**Do****Q1 (Do) - Are we doing what we said we would do when we said we would do it?****Handy hints**

A plan is only as good as the way in which it is implemented. So you need to be sure that what is agreed is done when it should be done. You should already have identified who will co-ordinate and monitor your action. So, ask yourself:

- Is the engagement being co-ordinated?

- Is the information needed for monitoring being recorded and shared?
- Are we doing what we said we would do when we said we would do it?
- Is progress being chased when it needs to be?
- Keep records of progress.

**Q2 (Do) - Are we getting the stakeholders involved and contributing appropriately?****Handy hints:**

- Involving all the stakeholders and reviewing whether they are contributing appropriately improves the prospect of successful outcomes. Look back at who you thought had an interest and ask:
  - Are the stakeholders participating and if not why is this?
  - Are we communicating with them effectively?
  - Are there barriers that we should address?
  - Are the methods proving appropriate for the participants?
  - Is the focus of the engagement really relevant to them?



# Appendix 3

- It is not just whether stakeholders are there that matters but whether they can contribute positively and play the roles that are required of them. Observe and talk to agency and community participants, do they feel:

- Confident?
- Well informed
- Committed?
- Able to take part consistently?
- Able to act as genuine representatives of others?
- Able to use their authority?

- What can you do to address any barriers to effective participation?

## Q3 (Do) - Are we all working well together?

### Handy hints:

For community engagement to be effective the participants have to be able to work effectively and positively with one another. Look at the quality of the working relationships and their impact on the overall performance of the engagement system. Ask yourself question like:

- Have we established openness, mutual trust and confidence?

- Do we behave with respect for one another?
- Do we address conflicts?
- Do we take decisions in a clear way?

## Q4 (Do) - Are we keeping everyone informed?

### Handy hints:

Community engagement requires good communication between the participants, between them and the communities and agencies that they represent, and with others who might be affected.

Check:

- Are the participants satisfied that they are getting the information they need in suitable form?
- Are those they represent getting the information they need in suitable form?
- Is there effective communication with others that might be affected?
- If not what action is needed by whom?

**Q5 (Do) - What are we learning?****Handy hints:**

Monitoring of progress should lead to adjustment of practice. Waiting to the end to identify lessons may be too late. So share monitoring information and discuss progress with the participants. If anything is not working do something about it!

- Keep asking yourself:
  - What is going well and do we need to consolidate it?
  - What is going wrong and how do we change it?
- If change is needed be specific about who needs to take action about what and when.

**Q6 (Do) - Do we need to revise our analysis, methods or action plan?****Handy hints:**

- You may discover that things are not going quite as planned. There can be different reasons for this;
  - Those responsible may not be doing what they said they would do.
  - They may not be doing it well enough.

- However the problems could lie deeper:

- The methods you have chosen may not be right for your purposes.
- You may have discovered flaws in your analysis of the need for engagement.

- If any of these things have happened go back to the Analyse and Plan sections of VOICE and reconsider why you are doing this and how you are going about it.

**Review****Q1 (Review) How have stakeholders been involved in collecting evidence and judging performance?****Handy hints:**

Everyone who committed themselves to being involved will want to know whether the outcomes that were agreed at the start have been achieved. They should all be party to reaching judgments of the quality of the engagement. Ask yourself:

- Who are the stakeholders who should be involved? (see Analyse section)
- Have we involved them effectively and to their satisfaction:





# Appendix 3

- In gathering relevant evidence?
- In judging performance?

■ Have they been enabled to participate in evaluating both the process and results of the engagement?

## Q2 (Review) How well did we meet the National Standards for Community Engagement?

### Handy hints:

The focus here is on the way that the engagement was conducted. Things rarely go exactly as planned. So, before you conduct your review look back at the records you have kept and ask yourself:

- Did we implement the plan?
- Were there any aspects that we did differently?
- Were there any things that we did not actually do?
- In the light of this real picture of what happened, with the stakeholders, review the evidence and ask yourselves:
  - Which standards indicators are most relevant to us in judging performance against this standard?

- To what degree has each standard been met?
- Is there consensus about these answers or do different stakeholders have different views that need to be recorded?

## Q3 (Review) Reviewing the outcomes from your plan, how successful have you been?

### Handy hints:

The quality of the process of engagement does not necessarily determine its outcome. It is essential to ask the direct question: to what extent have the purposes set in the plan actually been achieved? Everyone who committed themselves to being involved will want to know the answer to this question.

In relation to each outcome that was set in your action plan, ask yourself:

- To what degree has the engagement addressed the needs we identified?
- To what degree has the engagement achieved the outcome that we sought in relation to these needs?

- Is there consensus about these answers or do different stakeholders have different views that should be recorded?

#### **Q4 (Review) Have there been any unanticipated outcomes?**

##### **Handy hints:**

Only knowing whether you achieved what you set out to do is not enough. What you do will commonly have other results than those that you were looking for. These can be good or bad. If you are going to learn from what you have done you need to know what else happened.

With the stakeholders, review the evidence and ask yourselves:

- Did any outcomes result other than those we planned for?
- Are there any significant implications of these outcomes?

#### **Q5 (Review) What key lessons have been learned as a result of the engagement?**

##### **Handy hints:**

There is no point in evaluating your performance if you don't reflect on how it may help you in the future. So, with the stakeholders, ask yourself:

- What have we learned from the experience of this engagement? In particular:
  - How could the process have been improved?
  - What should we be doing now and in the future to address the needs and achieve the outcomes we identified?
  - What new issues have we identified and what should we be doing about them?





If you need this information in another language or format , please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

Phone: 0303 123 1015

Email: [equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

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