

Section Four - The Consultation Process Stakeholders

4.1 - Ethnic Minority Communities

It is important to deliver services and build closer links with all parts of the local community. Ethnic minority groups are often marginalised or hard to reach. Therefore specific arrangements will be required to ensure that all ethnic and religious communities are fully included in the consultation process, whichever methods of consultation you are using.

- Language - use plain English and offer translations and interpreters. This applies to all written and spoken material used in the consultation exercise, as well as to publicity material and feedback. Some peoples literacy levels can be low and written information may not be appropriate at all.
- Make use of ethnic minority press for publicity material.
- Avoid using inappropriate language or terminology.
- Venues - be sure that the venues used are acceptable to ethnic groups. This applies to meetings and events but also to sites for publicity posters and displays, and for the circulation of written material.
- Timing - avoid religious and cultural days and festivals.
- Make sure that the time of day that you hold meetings and events is appropriate.
- Catering - if you provide refreshments at events make sure that they are acceptable to the religious, ethnic and cultural groups that you hope to attract.
- Consider all cultural needs, such as the possibility of holding separate meetings for men and for women
- Avoid ignoring or playing down cultural traditions or practices.
- Avoid patronising or tokenistic gestures or initiatives.
- Avoid stereotyping or making assumptions.
- Involving members of religious, cultural and ethnic groups directly in the planning of your consultation exercises will help to ensure that you get it right. This will be further helped by using existing networks and organisations which work with these groups.
- Don't rely solely on community leaders or spokespeople to represent religious, ethnic and cultural groups.

Translating Written Material

Bury Metro Translation Service will be able to advise you on recommended languages for groups in the Bury area, and give guidance on the cost of translation. Once you have decided what languages you need, BMTS will be able to get that work done for you.

Some useful tips when getting work translated;

- Use plain English and avoid ambiguous expressions/jargon
- Give details of all target groups, including age, gender, ethnicity, geographical location
- Include (in English) the title and language of each translation so that they can be identified by those who do not know the languages.

Using an Interpreter

Bury Metro Translation Service can arrange for interpreters in all languages. They will be able to advise you on the language you need, and give guidance on the cost. BMTS will be able to arrange interpretation as and when you require it. Remember to plan ahead for this as arranging interpretation obviously takes some time.

- Interviews or meetings using interpreters will take longer and allowance should be made for this.
- Use official interpreters only. A professional interpreter is neutral and not expected to take the part of the interviewer or interviewee. Talk as if you were conducting a conversation directly with the person concerned.
- Plan the interview for a room where it is possible for the interviewer to sit in a neutral position, to ensure a neutral approach
- Consider the sensitivities of the subject matter and consider whether the gender of the interpreter is important

Contact - M. Zaman, Bury Metro Translation Service 0161 253 5125
S. Rashid, Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion 0161 253 5192
M. Ayub, Race Equality Issues 0161 253 5193

4.2 - Parents and carers

Parents or carers are an important group in terms of consultation. They may have particular needs that you want to explore or have views to contribute on more general issues such as service provision. You may also want to consult parents and carers as proxies or advocates for children or dependants.

However, this group are traditionally excluded by their caring duties. Lack of time and lack of alternative care facilities being the biggest barriers to their participation.

It is important to pay particular attention to the things that will encourage parents or carers to participate in consultation activities, such as:

- Venue
- Timing of the consultation
- Care and support for dependants

➤ Venue

Parents and carers are unlikely to take part if they have to travel far to venues. Where a central venue is selected consider providing transport.

Venues must be accessible to wheelchairs, pushchairs and young children.

Ideally, consultation activities should be held in the places where parents and carers meet, e.g. play groups, parents associations, leisure centres, schools, nurseries, health centres, children's play areas or children's activities, social services day centres, and neighbourhood offices.

Advertising in places that parents and carers visit such as those listed above, as well as doctors' surgeries, post offices, health centres, and supermarkets is also useful

➤ Timing

Be aware of term times and school holidays. Avoid other times of the day or week that may be particularly inconvenient to those with caring duties.

➤ Childcare/ Support for Dependants

Providing care for children and dependants will encourage parents and carers. But be aware that:

- Children may not want to leave their parents and vice versa
- Children may prefer to be looked after by people they know
- Children and dependants may have diverse needs in terms of languages, special needs, diet, medical needs etc.

Consider organising a children's event or linked activities (e.g. play, circus acts, playbus etc) Parents and carers are much more likely to get involved if they are sure that their children and dependants are having a good time.

Removing other barriers.

Make sure that the consultation is relevant to the target group. Use language which includes non-traditional families.

Include children, dependants, parents and carers in the planning of the consultation.

Check out likely demand. It may take time for them to build up confidence about using it.

Be aware that... Providing activities for dependants and children has serious legal and safety issues. Make sure you involve people with the appropriate professional expertise.

Who to Contact - Social Services have a great deal of experience in this field.

Please contact

Early Years Development Co-ordinator Tel: 0161 253 6977

Consultation and Involvement Officer Tel: 0161 253 7992

For advice on involving carers e.g. respite care/ vouchers etc.

Carer Liason Officer Tel: 0161 253 6074

Useful Literature

Consulting with parents: guidelines for good practice, Mog Ball, National Early Years Network. Improving Support for Black Carers , A source book of information, ideas and service initiatives Lydia Yee, King's Fund Publishing, 11-13 Cavendish Square, London W1M 0AN Tel: 0171 307 2400.

4.3 - Consulting Disabled People

Disabled people are often excluded from consultation programmes because the people who organise consultation may lack disability awareness or fail to take account of the diverse needs of disabled people.

At the same time, consultation with disabled people can often be seen as costly and difficult to undertake and different to mainstream consultation. This keeps disabled people on the margins of consultation activities.

Most disabled people and their organisations support the social model of disability. This defines disability as being caused not by people's impairments but by the failure of organisations to enable disabled people to participate on equal terms. This means ensuring that disabled people have access to support such as signers, loop systems, personal assistants, transport, IT software, etc. and that there is adequate physical access to encourage their participation.

There are different reasons why you have to or may wish to consult disabled people. It may be to meet legislation requirements. For example, The Disabled Persons' Services, Consultation and Representation Act 1986 sets out a requirement to consult disabled people. It may be that disabled people have particular needs that you want to explore. Disabled people must now be enabled to participate in general public consultation.

Whatever the reason, it is important to recognise that the term 'disabled people' can include people with a diverse range of impairments, such as:

- People with mental health problems
- People with physical and/or sensory impairments (e.g. people with visual impairments, hearing impairments, wheelchair users, etc.)
- People with learning difficulties

Key considerations when planning consultation with disabled people

- Plan communications (and budgets) from the start to include people with hearing, speech, visual or writing disabilities.
- Establish standard procedures for print (leaflets, advertisements, letters, reports etc) and spoken communications (meetings, interviews, telephones etc) so that all members of your target audience know how they can access communications within a reasonable timescale
- Remember that disabled people may not speak or read and write English as we know it. They may use another form such as Braille or Moon.
- If possible disability awareness training should be given to staff who deal directly with the consultees.

Resources

'Unlocking Potential' describes the new rights of disabled people as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and the actions a Council department may take to meet these new requirements this publication is available from Social Services Strategy & Planning Resource Library.

Communications Strategy Bury MBC contains standards and guidance for communicating with disabled people - available from the Assistant Chief Executive's Division.

The Disabled People's Movement: Putting the Power in Empowerment

by Ken Davis in Paths to Empowerment

The Policy Press, University of Bristol (1993).

This explains the difference between the medical and social models of disability and the development of the Disabled People's Movement.

Disability Net: Consultation enables government agencies, local authorities or service providers to incorporate disabled people's opinions in the shaping of services. Send information about your consultation to: consult@disabilitynet.co.uk

Ring and Ride (Provides transport for elderly and disabled people)

Tel: Enquiries 0161 764 1999, Bookings 0161 797 1477

Planning for good communications with disabled people

- The **RIGHT** to receive
- The **RIGHT** information
- At the **RIGHT** time

Visit the disabled Rights Commission on the following website: www.drc-gb.org

Who to Contact: - Safina Rashid, Corporate Policy and Research Unit,
Tel: 0161 253 5192

4.4 - Children and Young People

Children and young people are often left out of decision-making, based on the false assumption that they cannot balance complicated issues and make a helpful contribution. They can; but boring processes, baffling jargon, slow results and confusing decision-making structures will hinder this. At the same time, children and young people are often excluded from mainstream consultation because of adults' fear of dealing with the 'unknown'. Traditional and formal techniques of consultation that work so well with adults often fail to engage children and young people and therefore they are often excluded from many consultation programmes.

Children and young people have the right to express their views about decisions and services affecting them under Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1991. There is increasing pressure to show that children and young people are being consulted on decisions. Government programmes such as Quality Protects prioritise consulting young people.

At a basic level, consulting with children and young people can mean asking a child or young person for their opinion about a particular issue with limited further contact. Some effective consultation methods for use with children are listed below;

Principles for Effective Consultation

- Be committed to listening to children and young people, and hearing and accepting what they say.
- Believe that children and young people are active contributors rather than passive recipients.
- Keep an open mind - explore ideas freely with no pre-conceived right or wrong answers.
- Develop an ability to empathise and put yourself in place of the children and young people who receive services.

- Questionnaires and Feedback Forms
- Specialist Participation or Empowerment Projects
- Using Arts and Theatre
- One to One Interviews
- Focus Groups and Group Interviews
- Effective Complaints Procedures
- Conferences and Fun-days
- Young People Joint Council Sub-Committees and Working Groups
- Citizens Panels
- Independent Children's Rights or Advocacy Services
- Interactive Website and use of Internet and Intranet

Consultation Skills:

- Prepare well; if you are serious about working in partnership with children and young people and allow plenty of planning time and space.
- Listen and expect to hear something important.
- Act on what you find.
- Perspectives are different for adults and children: respond as quickly as possible.
- Stay in touch with the people who have helped you - let them know what is being achieved.
- Try to make the consultation more interesting and interactive for the group using terminology and concepts familiar to them.

4.5 - Area Boards

There are six Area Boards, covering the following parts of the Bury Metro area:

- Bury East
- Prestwich
- Ramsbottom & Tottington
- Bury West
- Racliffe
- Whitefield & Unsworth

The Area Boards are part of Bury council's democratic renewal initiative and have been in existence since September 1999. They are a key element in the Council's developing role as a community leader. They exist to provide a link between local people and council services and strategies as well as the services and strategies of other partners. They are a focus for co-ordinating the work of all agencies in the area and therefore have co-opted places reserved for key partners.

Meetings are held at least seven times a year and there is a 45 minute Open Forum at every meeting where members of the public may ask questions about any issue that is of concern, or put forward ideas for improving the area. Each Area Board consists of the Ward Councillors along with representatives of partner organisations such as the Police, Business Community, Voluntary Sector and Health Services together with more localised community groups in each area.

The Area Boards have each built up a core group of participants, with average attendances of approximately 50, with much larger and wider representation when particular issues are being discussed such as major planning applications. It is accepted that certain sectors of the community, such as young people are under-represented at Area Board meetings at the current time, but efforts are being made to address this issue.

Groups wishing to conduct consultations or information sharing with local communities can tie into the Area Boards on a number of levels including:

- Articles in Newsletters - these are produced in each area every couple of months or so and have an average circulation of 1500 - targetting community groups and activists, public information points, libraries etc.
- Exhibitions or information stands at Area offices and / or Area Boards - requests to attend all Area Boards should be directed through the Area Co-ordinators Team Manager.

Area Co-ordinator contact details

Mike Riley (Team Manager)

e-mail m.riley@bury.gov.uk
Based at Acorn House
Also in Room 3b, Bury Town Hall
Mobile Number

Acting Area Initiative's Team Manager / Bury East Area Board

0161-253-6349
0161-253-5128
07733-125436

Kim Griffiths

e-mail k.griffiths@bury.gov.uk
Based at Tottington Library
Also in Room 3b, Bury Town Hall
Mobile Number

Ramsbottom and Tottington Area Board

01204-880457
0161-253-6373
07733-125437

Sofina Duloth-Joy

e-mail s.duloth@bury.gov.uk
Based at School Street, Radcliffe
Also in room 3b, Bury Town Hall
Mobile Number

Radcliffe Area Board

0161-253-7455
0161-253-6372
07974-723592

Rose De

e-mail r.h.de@bury.gov.uk
Based at Unsworth Library
Also in Room 3b, Bury Town Hall
Mobile Number

Whitefield & Unsworth Area Board

0161-253-7344
0161-253-6372
07733-125438

John Slater

e-mail j.slater@bury.gov.uk
Based at Elton Community Centre
Also in Room 3b, Bury Town Hall
Mobile Number

Bury West Area Board

0161-253-6845
0161-253-6373
07733-125439

Carran O'Grady

e-mail c.o'grady@bury.gov.uk
Based at Prestwich Library
Also in Room 3b, Bury Town Hall
Mobile Number

Prestwich Area Board

0161-253-7245
0161-253-6373
07733-125441

Christine Ticehurst

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Communications & Partnership Assistant

0161-253-5107