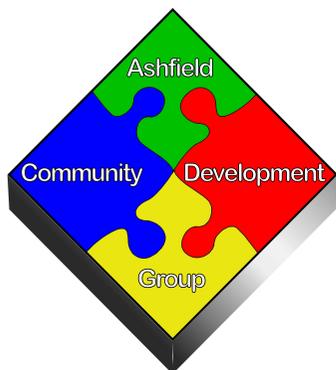


Community Consultation

- **Go to your community** – If you want to involve as many people as possible and get a good response rate, go to them rather than expecting them to come to you. This means going to homes, clubs, community centres, places of worship, schools, door-knocking, pubs, being on the streets etc.
- **Analyse consultation results** – It is important to analyse your results and keep a record of how many people you have consulted, their age and location. From this you can consider whether any sections of the community have not been heard from and take steps to consult with those groups.
- **Feed back consultation results to the community** – it is important to let people know what has happened as a result of the consultation exercise. Otherwise people feel that the help they gave was a waste of time and they will be less likely to participate in future consultation exercises. Feedback should be circulated as widely as possible in community centres, supermarkets, notice boards etc.
- **Be prepared for it to take longer than you think** - Set a realistic timescale - consultation when done correctly, can be very time consuming, make sure that you have put sufficient time aside to make sure that you are able to collect all the information you need.

This leaflet can also be downloaded from:

http://www.ashfield.gov.uk/media/1540/6-community-consultaton-rev-feb-2015_.pdf



This advice leaflet has been compiled by Ashfield Community Development Group (ACDG).

For details of ACDG members offering support, please refer to leaflet "i".



What is Community Consultation?

Community consultation is where everyone in the community is given the opportunity to have their say on a specific issue.

The results gathered from the consultation exercise should help those groups or organisations carrying out the consultation to make informed decisions based upon the results.

A range of techniques can be used to consult with the community, depending on the purpose of the consultation.

What are you planning to do and how will you do it?

- **What** are you trying to do, decide, explain?
- **When** must you start and finish?
- **Why** is it necessary?
- **Who** needs to be consulted, involved?
- **Where** is it happening?

If you have the answers to these questions before you begin you are more likely to get the information you need from the people you want.

Different Ways to Consult

- **Questionnaires** – the shorter the better, only asking the necessary questions. Trying it out on a few people beforehand to make sure it is clear is a good idea. If possible, carry out face to face.



- **Festivals/Fun Days** – a good way to reach people who are not interested in formal meetings and, if held at weekends, they will reach those who work during the week or have childcare responsibilities.
- **Suggestion Boxes** – should be kept in a visible position and placed in public places, if you are to receive feedback
- **Focus Groups and Workshops** – use facilitators to aid discussion. Smaller sized groups may encourage a wider range of views because people will feel more confident in a smaller group situation.
- **Public meetings** – not always the most effective way to involve a wider range of people. The ‘usual suspects’ can tend to dominate this type of consultation, leaving less confident people or groups unheard. Also people might not turn up.

Things to consider when preparing to consult with the community

- **Equal Opportunities** – Ensure that all people regardless of disabilities, culture, gender, ethnicity or learning difficulties are able to participate. For example, do you use large enough type faces for people with visual disabilities or do you provide a signer at public meetings?
- **Barriers to Participation** – If you aim to ensure that all sections of the community can be involved in the consultation process, certain issues will need to be addressed:
 - * **Timing** – Is this convenient? If it is held in the daytime, will it exclude working parents? Consider if large sporting events are taking place, e.g. Football/Olympic Games?
 - * **Place** – Do people feel comfortable about the venue?
 - * **Childcare responsibilities** – Should a crèche be arranged?
 - * **Age** – Find fun, visual ways to engage with young people. A ‘Save the Children Fund’ publication, ‘Participation – Spice It Up’, contains ideas for a wide variety of consultation methods that can be used and adapted. Also you may need to consider going to the homes or clubs of older people to find out their views.
 - * **Cultural/ Racial issues** – Should literature be translated into other languages? What cultural factors may you need to consider when providing refreshments? Consider the timing of religious festivals when planning a consultation event to ensure you are not excluding certain groups.
 - * **Disability** – Is the building accessible to people with disabilities?
- **Ethical Considerations** – some information collected may need to be treated as confidential or dealt with ethically i.e. contact details of participants / views and opinions of others treated with respect.
- **Funding requirements and additional support** – You may need funding or volunteers for:
 - * surveys / questionnaires / leaflets
 - * meetings and workshops, including facilitator costs
 - * refreshments for events or meetings
 - * crèche facilities
 - * volunteer expenses

