

Enfield College

Consultation and Representation Toolkit



EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund



Leading learning and skills

This Toolkit is one of a series produced for Third Sector organisations by the pan-London European Social Fund project 'The Capacity Building Toolbox' co-financed by the London LSCs. The series covers six topics.

- Consultation and Representation
- Events Management
- HR Policies and Procedures
- Developing and Running a Training Course
- Sustainability
- Work-Life Balance

Each Toolkit takes a practical, hands-on approach to the topic providing the user not only with information and guidance but also with a series of interactive activities key to the topic covered. The user will learn by doing.

Led by Enfield College, the Capacity Building Toolbox Project also produced management standards and training materials specific to the Third Sector. Further details of these can be found on Enfield College's website under the 'for employers'/'Capacity Building Toolbox' link or by email to toolbox@enfield.ac.uk.

Training materials for the three-day training courses - which cover topics different to the Toolkits - are available for use by Third Sector organisations. The slideshows in PDF format are freely available for download from the College website (see link above). Contact toolbox@enfield.ac.uk regarding use of the full material, including trainers' guides and handouts, in its original form or consultancy support developed by the Project.

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OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Capacity Building Toolbox 'Consultation & Representation' Toolkit.

This practical tool has been developed to help voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) meet the growing demands on them to ensure that they are efficient, effective organisations that meet the requirements of legislation and best practice.

Relationships are fundamental to business success. Without customers, funders, partners, providers, shareholders, staff or suppliers, your organisation cannot operate. It makes sense to talk regularly to those you do business with in order to develop the quality of your relationships by understanding them better (consultation) and by ensuring that they understand you better (representation).

This toolkit is about these two things - consultation and representation. It explains what they are and how to go about doing them well. It contains ideas of who to consult with and where to represent your organisation, as well as practical guidance on cultural practices to be aware of when you do consult with others or represent your organisation.

Think for a moment about the situation of a new business with only one client, that client would receive 100% of that business' time but as soon as another client was gained, the original client would see their time allocation halved. How would that client feel or respond?

As the number of relationships you engage in grows, you need to ensure that the building of quality relationships is also prioritised. In the end people buy 'you' not the slickness of your presentations.

INTRODUCTION



Create a mind map of your business relationships. A mind map starts with a central topic and then all the other factors linked to that topic branch out from the central point.

Take a blank piece of paper and write your name at the centre and then draw a circle around your name.

Next, around the central circle write all the different types of business relationships that you have, eg customer, provider, supplier, manager, community. Put a circle around each of these and draw a line connecting these new circles to the central circle.

For each new circle, write around it any sub-relationships involved in the main relationship, eg as manager with employees, unions, board members. Again draw circles around these and lines back to the main relationship.

Finally, for each sub-relationship, list some of the key people that you encounter in that role. Circle these and link them back to the relevant sub-relationship.

On one sheet of paper you have now mapped out your current key business relationships. Have a look at the map and ask yourself the following questions:

- Have I too few or too many business relationships?

- Are my business relationships the right ones for the business I do?

- Do I meet many people in more than one context?

- Where are there gaps in my current relationships that I need to fill?

- Do I spend too much time with one group and too little with another?

- Do I genuinely know what each group thinks about my business and our products/services?

BUILDING QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS

How can you prioritise the building of quality relationships? Considering the following five aspects of business relationships would be a good start.

- **Direct communication**
There is greater directness when you are told something face-to-face, than if you read the same thing in a memo or hear it through the grapevine.
- **Frequency and length of time**
How often and for how long are you with someone? For five minutes after a meeting once in a while, or for an hour at a weekly lunch date?
- **Different contexts or roles**
Spending time with someone from work in another context - a shopping trip, sharing a meal, voluntary work - helps relationships grow in closeness.
- **Mutual respect**
Is there a gap in 'importance' or 'power' between those in leadership positions and those with no formal role?
- **Shared goals and objectives**
If you focus on the range of things you share in common, both inside and outside work, your relationships will be stronger. (See <http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org/> for more information.)



List your community, customer, employee, supplier and stakeholder relationships and, using the table on the next page, for each relationship assess the level of the following relational measures: direct communication; frequency/length of time; different contexts/roles; mutual respect; and shared goals objectives.

Score each relationship against each relational measure on a score of 1 to 5 as follows:

- 1 = Excellent (ie face-to-face, frequent, lengthy, variety of different contexts/roles, high mutual respect, and many shared goals objectives)
- 2 = Good (ie 3-4 out of the five above)
- 3 = Average (ie 2-3 out of the five above)
- 4 = Poor (ie 1-2 out of the five above)
- 5 = Weak (ie indirect, infrequent, brief, one context/role, low mutual respect, lack of shared goals/objectives)

Use the results to identify relationships and aspects of relationships which could be improved and prioritise these for your consultation activities. Use consultation to identify how to improve these relationships.

Relationships	Directness of communication	Frequency & length of time	Different contexts or roles	Mutual respect	Shared goals or objectives	Comments
Community						
Customers						
Employee						
Supplier						
Stakeholder						

Success comes through the quality of your business relationships. Good working relationships are established and developed through empathy, understanding those you are in relationship with, and improving your listening skills. Consultation and representation are vital to this process.

As you consult and represent, you are likely to hear business needs which, while they could be outside your immediate remit, nevertheless represent new markets or services into which your organisation could move. In this way, consultation and representation can also play a significant role in the expansion and growth of your business.

For all these reasons, consultation and representation need to be at the heart of what your organisation is and does. This Toolkit can help ensure that becomes reality for your organisation.

CONSULTATION

DEFINITION

Consultation is talking with people about your organisation, its products or services in order to get information you can use to serve your customers better or to better represent the diversity of your community in your organisation.

WHY CONSULT?

You consult to:

- Get information and ideas for developing new markets, products and services
- Get feedback on current products and services
- Find out how the diversity of your local community/customer base can be better reflected in your organisation
- Find out how to make your organisation, its products and services accessible to your local community/customer base
- Target your products/services more closely on what people actually want and to avoid what people do not want
- Improve take-up of products/services and lower unit costs
- Monitor user satisfaction over time in order to make quality improvements and solve problems in advance
- Learn how and where to target social responsibility initiatives.

WHO TO CONSULT



Go to the Neighbourhood section of the National Statistics website and enter your postcode (<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>). You will be able to view a profile of the ward in which your organisation is located. Use this information to identify key communities or groups in your areas, eg think in terms of age, ethnicity, gender and religion.

Once you have identified the communities or groups you need to consult with, you then need to identify key individuals or organisations within these communities who can provide you with contacts for consultation. Start by contacting your local authority or council for voluntary services to find out what directories of voluntary/community groups and/or businesses exist in your area.

Remember that the views of minority ethnic and faith communities are sometimes left out of consultations, either because they are not selected to participate in the first place or because sample numbers are too small for analysis. The ensuing lack of information can result in missed opportunities, so don't make this mistake.

COMMUNITY, ETHNIC MINORITY, FAITH AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS

Most public agencies concerned with renewal understand the need to engage with Third Sector organisations in their work. Equally, no agency would be likely to underestimate the importance of involving ethnic minority groups. But remember also that Britain is now home to a very rich and diverse range of faith communities representing almost all the world's religions.

The 2001 Census collected information about religious identity. Even though the question was a voluntary one, over 75% of the population reported belonging to a religion. Collectively, faith communities are the largest group within the Third Sector and generate significant amounts of social capital. Yet they are often overlooked and not recognised when dealing and working with the Sector. Public agencies are increasingly recognising the significant role that faith communities can play in tackling the government's neighbourhood renewal, social inclusion and welfare to work agendas.

Voluntary, community, ethnic minority and faith groups often have a number of significant resources at their disposal. They can be the most substantial local community-based organisations with a right to be involved in discussion on community issues. Many are good sources of contacts with members often living locally and with numerous links to surrounding communities. Memberships can be broad, embracing, for example, unemployed people, local business people, old and young.

Sometimes they may be able to offer organisations a gateway to other sectors of the community. Some will have their own premises - frequently centres for community activity and members' voluntary work. Some will have access to funds unavailable to other organisations, including special trusts and members' goodwill offerings. They generally operate within legal and constitutional frameworks, and can often draw on the resources of national networks or institutions.

Many public agencies are now consulting regularly with such groups and the results of some of these consultations are published. Depending on the issues about which you are concerned, it may be that some relevant consultation has already been undertaken. It is worth checking, possibly with an internet search, before beginning your own consultation.

HOW TO CONSULT

There are a variety of ways in which you can consult with others. These include:

- Consultation events
- Consultation visits
- Focus groups
- One-to-one interviews
- Mail shot questionnaires
- Telephone interviews
- Surveys.

Consultation events

These are events organised for the sole purpose of gathering information for use by your organisation.

The event is likely to involve a presentation about your plans for products/services and feedback from participants through discussion groups or questionnaires.

Advantages - you control the arrangements and the agenda.

Disadvantages - there may be insufficient incentives for people to come.

Consultation visits

These are visits to groups/organisations with which you wish to consult.

Advantages - people are more likely to respond when you go to them and at a time and date they choose.

Disadvantages - this approach is time consuming.

Focus groups

A representative group with which you consult on a regular basis.

Advantages - a regular forum for consultation.

Disadvantages - you are likely to need to give incentives to people in order that they take part. The group may not be very representative as a result.

One-to-one interviews

Advantages - these enable more in-depth exploration of issues because the questioner does not need to keep solely to set questions.

Disadvantages - It is time consuming.

Mail shot questionnaires

Set questions asked to all participants enabling statistical analysis of trends to be completed after the exercise.

Advantages - mailing questionnaires out for completion and return can reach large numbers.

Disadvantages - responses rates are often low, unless an incentive for completion is involved.

Telephone interviews

Set questions asked to all participants enabling statistical analysis of trends to be completed after the exercise.

Advantages - likely to produce more responses than mail shots.

Disadvantages - it may be difficult getting to the person who can answer your questions and people will often want to keep the call short.

Surveys

Set questions asked to all participants enabling statistical analysis of trends to be completed after the exercise.

Advantages - get to a random sample of people.

Disadvantages - people often do not want to stop to answer questions on the street.



Circle one constraint in each row of the following table and then circle each of the methods set alongside that constraint.

Which method is listed most frequently against the constraints you circled? This is likely to be the most appropriate consultation method for you.

Factors	Constraints	Methods
Budget available	Low	Consultation visits Mail shot questionnaires One-to-one interviews Telephone interviews
	High	Consultation events Focus groups Surveys
Depth of questioning required	Not requiring in-depth questioning	Mail shot questionnaires Telephone interviews
	In-depth questioning required	Consultation events Consultation visits Focus groups One-to-one interviews Surveys
Length of time available	Short	Consultation visits Mail shot questionnaires One-to-one interviews Telephone interviews
	Long	Consultation events Focus groups Surveys

Number of respondents required	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation visits Focus groups One-to-one interviews
	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation events Mail shot questionnaires Surveys Telephone interviews
Statistical analysis	Not necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation events Consultation visits Focus groups One-to-one interviews
	Necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mail shot questionnaires Surveys Telephone interviews

NETWORKING

An additional ongoing way of consulting with others is networking.

Networking is simply forming and maintaining relationships with stakeholders - customers, your local community, partners, providers, suppliers etc. As you talk with such people, make sure to listen out for their reflections on what you do and how you do it. Make mental or actual notes as you talk and review their feedback after your conversation.

GOOD CONSULTATION PRACTICES

It is important to involve as wide a range of people as possible and to hear new voices. Community or group representatives have a strong role to play, but may give 'fixed' views that do not alter over time. Make use of newspaper articles, advertisements and community radio to reach a wider group.

Take steps to counter scepticism that views will not be listened to by giving examples of ways in which your organisation has changed because of consultation.

A route into some minority ethnic and faith communities is via community leaders such as priests or local business representatives. Remember, however, that the best person to speak to may not be the formal religious leader. This may instead be the president of the mosque - or in other communities the treasurer or secretary. These people may be able to bring valuable skills to partnerships and projects, as well as extensive local contacts.

Attending minority ethnic and faith communities' existing cultural or religious events can be more effective than trying to set up a separate consultation. For example, setting up an outdoor market stall in streets with high proportions of minority ethnic residents could help achieve good participation rates.

Provide appropriate translators at local community meetings. In some communities, cultural beliefs make it important to consult with men and women separately. Ensure you meet up with individuals from minority ethnic and faith communities, including complainants.

When carrying out surveys, sample numbers from minority ethnic and faith communities can be 'boosted' to achieve sufficient responses to allow a robust analysis.

A more direct approach may be more appropriate for some groups, especially young people. Consultation by text messaging can bring a particularly good response among young people.

Think about the capacity of the organisations you approach. Many are voluntary organisations and will need at least a 12-week consultation period to respond effectively. Do not flood them with consultative material - send relevant papers with clear instructions and flag-up appropriate sections.

Case Study

The Women and Equality Unit in the Department for Trade and Industry takes the lead within Government on women's issues. Its aim is to reduce and remove barriers to opportunity for all. The nature of its work requires consultation with minority ethnic groups and faith communities throughout society. The Unit uses various methods of consultation such as consultation documents, roundtables, conferences, seminars and visits. It makes use of the Cabinet Office's consultation guidelines and of advice from the Home Office Faith Communities Unit on the right faith groups to contact during consultation exercises.

The efforts that the Unit has made to engage with women from faith communities in different policy areas demonstrate that there are a variety of ways in which this group can be reached.

- **Commission for Equality and Human Rights**

The Government announced in May 2002 that it was undertaking the most significant review of equality in over a quarter of a century. A conference was organised by the Women and Equality Unit in July 2002 which brought together stakeholders across the equality spectrum, and many faith groups were represented. Separately, the Minister for Women and other Ministers held seminars and conferences and visited groups around the country, including faith groups.

- **Muslim Women's Group**

The Minister for Women holds regular six-monthly meetings with an invited group of Muslim women, to discuss issues that particularly affect them and to gauge interest and allow for input into other areas of Government policy. The group includes academics, members of non-governmental organisations including charities working with the Muslim community, business women, other women who are active in public life and members of the broader Muslim community.

- **Women into public appointments**

During 2002, the Minister for Women led a national outreach campaign to encourage more women to take up public appointments. A national event was held in Leicester to target women from ethnic minorities. Over 200 mostly Muslim and Hindu women attended. Women were given

the opportunity to inform and influence Government policy by providing their written views on the barriers faced by ethnic minority women, and what the Government could do to help lift those barriers. Feedback indicated that this opportunity was much appreciated by the women.

- **Prime Minister and Minister for Women meeting with Asian Women**

This provided an opportunity for the women, who were predominantly of the Muslim and Hindu faiths, to question the Prime Minister and the Minister for Women about how Government policy affects their lives. Their views were fed into the minority ethnic work programme that the Women and Equality Unit has developed.

- **Joseph Rowntree Foundation research**

In October 2002 the Unit, in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, launched research on black women's organisations. The researchers visited a number of organisations within the African and South Asian communities and identified a need for culturally and religious sensitive childcare services for Asian mothers. A range of focus groups were held specifically targeting mothers from Asian, African, Caribbean, Middle Eastern, North African and Chinese backgrounds including Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Christian faiths.

Taken from the Home Office report *Working Together: Cooperation between Government and Faith Communities* which can be found at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/workingtog_faith040329.pdf.

ORGANISING CONSULTATION EVENTS WITH FAITH COMMUNITIES

- **The time**

Consult a diary of faith festivals. Avoid events at major festival times and the risk of excluding certain faiths. Remember regular days set aside by the faiths for worship: the Sabbath is sacred to Jews and begins at sundown on Friday. Juma Prayer, midday on Friday, is a special time for Muslims. Most Christians and some other faiths worship on Sunday. Some black majority churches worship on into the early afternoon; some keep Saturday as the Sabbath. Be attentive to the needs of Muslims during Ramadan.

- **The place**

Select a neutral venue. It will probably be acceptable to meet in a church building if you wish to involve different Christian denominations, but if you want to engage people of different faiths it may be better - depending on the circumstances - to avoid the place of worship of any one faith. Ask if people have special needs: some faith groups pray at regular times of day and will need a space set aside. The room should not contain unsuitable photos, pictures or ornaments. Bear in mind that some faiths require facilities for washing before prayer.

- **What to eat**

Vegetarian food is likely to be acceptable to people of most faiths and tastes. Many religious food regulations concern meat; going vegetarian should enable most people to share a meal. If you are expecting Hindus, remember to isolate and label fish and egg dishes. Jewish people may ask for kosher food. Don't be surprised if people enquire who has prepared the food, and where it has been prepared. Remember not everyone drinks tea or coffee. Don't forget to check that biscuits are vegetarian by examining the ingredients panel on the packet. Consider whether anyone will be fasting.

- **Inviting delegates**

Also remember that inviting just one delegate could pose problems. Invite two people so that the group does not have to choose between, for example, it's most senior representative and its best English speaker. If you want a group of men and women, explain carefully and ask tactfully. Clarify whether women wish to raise issues in mixed company or only among themselves. If you are a man, be willing to leave the room if appropriate. Seek advice, help and feedback from those you are inviting. Invite others to host the event with you, but don't necessarily expect them to be able to contribute to organisation costs.

A useful publication giving fuller information and advice is *Involving Faith Communities*, Neighbourhood Regeneration Unit, 2004

Case study

Faith Regen UK developed a Faith Communities Toolkit for use by Jobcentre Plus staff in working with customers from faith communities and in the forming of partnerships with faith-based projects. This Toolkit was developed over an 18-month period and consultation on the Toolkit occurred in a number of different ways.

The key factor in the consultation process was ensuring that the information and ideas in the Toolkit dealt with the actual issues faced by Jobcentre Plus staff when working with faith communities. The process therefore began with *Focus Groups* in which as many different scenarios

in which Jobcentre Plus staff might work with faith communities were discussed, issues identified and potential guidance for these issues suggested. The Focus Groups included a range of Jobcentre Plus staff from different roles and at different levels of seniority in the organisation.

The next stage was to produce a first draft of the Toolkit and to discuss this with the Project Advisory Group. The Advisory Group was made up of representatives from different faith communities and their role was to check the accuracy of the information about faith communities included in the Toolkit and to discuss how that information could be presented most effectively.

The draft version of the Toolkit was then piloted in two Jobcentre Plus districts. These pilots included training a range of staff in its use and then observing the kinds of uses that staff made of the resource. In this stage Faith Regen UK wanted to check the relevance of the material to the actual work that Jobcentre Plus staff did on the ground. During the training courses feedback from staff on their views on the Toolkit and its potential usefulness in their work was taken.

Finally, to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the material about faith communities consultation events were organised in both pilot areas to which representatives of faith-based and community organisations were invited. At these events delegates sat in small group which each had a facilitator and a flipchart for recording views. The event was led centrally with an introduction to the project and then the consultation followed the division of sections in the Toolkit. Each section was introduced centrally with discussion of that section happening and being recorded in the small groups. All the flipcharts were collated following the event and the feedback reviewed by the team producing the Toolkit.

REPRESENTATION

DEFINITION

Representation is talking with people about your organisation in order to encourage people to use your products and services or to create a more equal market place for those products and services.

WHERE TO REPRESENT YOUR ORGANISATION

There are many groups, forums and networks where it could be useful to represent your organisation. Which are relevant to your organisation will depend on the nature of your business or services. In addition, some groups or networks will change or come to an end depending on current Government policy. You will, therefore, need to remain aware of such developments.

Some key groups are described below for your consideration:

- **Chambers of Commerce**

These seek to represent the interests and support the competitiveness and growth of all businesses in their communities and regions. Chambers of Commerce are accredited by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and are local, independent, non-profit making and non party-political organisations, funded by membership subscriptions. Members of Chambers of Commerce have access to a range of benefits, geared to helping them succeed and grow. These can include: business training, information resources, networking and savings on essential overheads. A full list of accredited chambers can be found at: <http://www.chamberonline.co.uk/>

- **Community Empowerment Networks (CENs)**

These help to build the capacity of local communities to participate in the renewal of their neighbourhoods. CENs were established in 2001 to enable the community and voluntary sectors to participate in Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). The aim was to ensure that the activities of the LSP took account of the perspective of the community and voluntary sectors and was focused on the needs of local communities. CENs have been established in virtually all the 88 most deprived local authority areas and are working with LSPs and other partners to influence and contribute to neighbourhood renewal activities. Links to CEN websites can be found at: <http://www.quest-net.org/>

- **Council of Voluntary Services (CVS)**

A CVS is a voluntary organisation that is set up, owned and run by local groups to support, promote and develop local voluntary and community action. CVS and other local infrastructure organisations support their members by providing them with a range of services and by acting as a voice for the local voluntary and community sector.

Usually funded by the local authority and other local statutory agencies, there is a CVS working in almost every district and city in England. Individual CVS differ in character and size, although they usually work to the same geographical boundaries as the local authority. They also differ in name. Many are called CVS, while others might be called Voluntary Action or Voluntary Sector Council.

To find your local CVS go to: <http://www.nacvs.org.uk/cvsdir/>

- **Learning & Skills Councils (LSCs)**

LSCs exist to make England better skilled and more competitive. LSCs have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults. They are responsible for planning and funding vocational education and training. Their vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a fiercely competitive workforce.

LSCs view the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) as a key partner in achieving their objectives. They recognise that 'the knowledge, creativity and sensitivity it can bring to the widening participation agenda in particular is enormously valuable', while also understanding that VCS organisations are both employers, with a role to play in workforce development, and a potential source of vital information and expertise.

To find your local LSC go to: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/>

- **Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)**

These are single non-statutory, multi-agency bodies, which match local authority boundaries, and which aim to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. LSPs are key to tackling deep seated, multi-faceted problems, requiring a range of responses from different bodies.

Local partners working through a LSP will be expected to take many of the major decisions about priorities for their local area.

For details of LSPs see: <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/>

- **Professional bodies**

Professions are often controlled by a regulating body in charge of ensuring that laws, decrees, and professional standards are applied and observed by all members of the profession. Professional bodies may also be established for the advancement of the profession, for the promotion of knowledge, and to protect the public interest by ensuring that members perform to a known standard.

Online directories of professional bodies in the UK can be found at:

<http://www.paradigm-redshift.com/busprof.htm>

and

http://www.hero.ac.uk/uk/reference_and_subject_resources/groups_and_organisations/professional_bodies3790.cfm

- **Racial Equalities Councils (RECs) or Partnerships (REPs)**

These work in local areas, and among local communities, to promote racial equality and tackle racial discrimination.

RECs were set up through a partnership between local communities, local government, and the CRE, linked to s.71 of the Race Relations Act 1976. This imposes a duty on local authorities to carry out their various functions with 'due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity, and good relations, between persons of different racial groups.'

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 broadened the scope of the Race Relations Act 1976, extending it right across the public sector. The amended Act imposes a statutory general duty

on public authorities to promote racial equality by tackling unlawful racial discrimination and promoting equal opportunities and good race relations.

RECs and REPs often have funding from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) - contact details can be found at <http://www.cre.gov.uk/>

Case studies

- **Ethnic Minorities awareness**

Social Security offices in Doncaster were involved in an ethnic minorities awareness campaign run jointly with themselves, the local Racial Equality Council and other voluntary and statutory organisations. Each minority ethnic group in the area was given an awareness day with talks on various benefits and services available. Interpreters were provided at each venue. Funding came from Social Services.

- **Hindu Mandir Mailing**

Information about the Jobcentre Plus Faith Communities Toolkit project was provided to over 700 Hindus across Bedfordshire through an article in the mailing of the Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj - Luton Hindu Mandir/Community Centre.

- **Marketing at Melas**

Jobcentre Plus has marketed its services at Melas in Luton, Manchester and Newcastle. Mela means meeting people at a festival or celebration (the word Mela originates from the Urdu/Hindi word 'Milan' which means meeting).

Over 100,000 people attended the Manchester Mega Mela 2002, which was held at Platt Fields Park in the city during July. Among the musicians, dancers, stalls, fashion shows and fun fair, the Jobcentre Plus marquee presented a mini-jobsfair that was visited by more than 2,500 people. 'The Mela festival brings together many of the local residents and employers, both local and national,' explained Hazel Blackwood, Communications and Publicity Manager for Manchester District. 'It was an excellent event, one of the first we have attended as a new Department and District. Just some of the employers that attended under the Jobcentre Plus logo included BUPA, Greater Manchester Police and Greater Manchester Ambulance Service.'

- **Ways into Work**

Jobcentre Plus' City & East London District organised a 'Ways into Work' event at the East London Mosque at which jobsearch and training information was provided by the Action Team, Employment Zone, faith-based providers, Jobcentre, and training providers.

HOW TO REPRESENT YOUR ORGANISATION

Before beginning to represent your organisation and its interests, you need to decide on what issues and products/services you wish to be represented. So, the starting point for representation is the identification of your aims, objectives, priorities and values.

Once your objectives have been identified, you then need to consider how these equate to those of your partners, suppliers, customers and community. Consultation is invaluable in making these connections and thereby understanding your audience.



On the table below, list aims, objectives, priorities and values for your organisation, your partners, suppliers, customers, and your local community. Look for areas of overlap and connection between those things that your organisation wants and those that your stakeholders want.

Stakeholders	Aims	Objectives	Priorities	Values
Own				
Partners				
Suppliers				
Customers				
Community				

Having considered the above, you are then able to draw up a strategy for representation. You have identified the areas in which you need representation, ie products/services or issues, and the areas where connections exist between what you wish to achieve and what those around you need or wish to see. These connections are what need to feature in your representation work. They give you the content of your representation.

Finally, decide on an appropriate method(s) of representation. Possible methods include written submissions, ie letters, reports etc., presentations, advertising, meetings, press/media articles or appearances. In deciding on appropriate methods take into account: the number of people in your audience; their values; and factors in the development of quality relationships.

PREPARING PRESENTATIONS

In preparing to make a presentation you need to consider objectives, audience and content. Prepare a simple, concise statement of what you intend to achieve through your presentation. It is better to have a few rather than many objectives. Then identify the aims and objectives of your audience and the links between your objective and their own. If you can convince them they are achieving their aims while at the same time achieving your own, you will find a helpful and receptive audience.

Identify the main points you want to make and then plan your presentation. The simplest and most direct format is a beginning-middle-end format in which the main content of the presentation is contained in the middle and is preceded by an introduction and followed by a summary and conclusion. In this way you tell the audience what you are going to tell them; then tell them; and at the end tell them what you have told them. The material of your presentation should be concise, to the point and tell an interesting story.



Choose a topic for a presentation.

- Write a concise statement of what you intend to achieve through your presentation. This should be no more than two sentences.
- Think about an audience for your presentation. Who are they and what are they interested in?
- Revise your statement to ensure that your presentation will connect with your audience.
- List the main points you wish to make in your presentation. Are these points clear and do they follow a logical progression?
- Prepare a beginning (introduction), middle (main content) and end (summary and conclusion). In your beginning have you told your audience what you are going to tell them? At the end have you reminded them of what it is that they have heard? Is your presentation concise and interesting?

PRESENTATION FORMATS

Confucius is reputed to have said, 'I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.' Research indicates that we retain only 10% of what we hear; 20% of what we see; 65% of what we hear and see; but 90% of what we hear, see, and do. Therefore, your presentation will have more impact if you use a format that enables your audience at least to hear and see and at best to hear, see and do.

Use of projected presentations enables people to hear and see but there are a number of factors to take into account when preparing an effective projected presentation. These include:

- Creating a consistent visual look and feel that adds to the content, not distracts from it
- Using images that genuinely illustrate your concepts and are appropriate to the point(s) you want to make. Remember that images can be irritating if they are overused or of poor quality. Watch size as well, images that are too small are not helpful. Finally, consider any copyright issues with the images you wish to use
- Aiming for a strong contrast between text and backgrounds. Patterned backgrounds and combinations like red text on a blue background can be very difficult to read when projected or if members of your audience have a visual impairment. If in doubt, stick with a solid background colour
- Using a maximum of six points per slide, six words per point, and three slides for minute
- Going for the right font size is vital so, print out a slide that has text on it, place it on the floor and see if you can read it from a standing position. If you can't, then your audience won't when it is projected, so increase your font size by simplifying the material on that slide (or making two slides from one)
- Avoid animated texts, sounds, and fancy transitions as these often distract your audience from the main points you are making.

Enabling audiences to hear, see and do is more difficult as interactive exercise can sometimes appear trite or embarrassing. However, presentations in a consultation context should never be solely about your representation of your business. Instead, you will want to give maximum time to consulting with your audience and this can be the doing part of the equation.



Take the presentation you created in the last activity and turn it into a projected presentation using the guidance given above.

MAKING PRESENTATIONS

Greet the audience and tell them who you are.

Keep to the time allowed and, if you can, keep the presentation short as it's better to under-run than over-run.

Take account of the following because your audience will subconsciously react to them:

- Your voice - how you say something is as important as what you say
- Body language - your body movements reveal what your attitudes and thoughts really are
- Appearance - first impressions influence attitudes towards you, so dress appropriately for the occasion.

All too often in a speech, the first few minutes are lost as people adjust their coats, drift in with coffee and finish the conversation they were having with the person next to them. So at the beginning it is vital to get the audience's attention by starting them thinking about the subject of your presentation. This is usually done by stating your main objective.

Set out briefly at the beginning of the talk how the presentation will proceed, then the audience know what to expect. If you can win the audience over in the first few minutes, you are likely to keep them for the remainder of your time.

Speak clearly but don't shout or whisper. Instead try to judge the acoustics of the room. Don't rush or talk deliberately slowly and try to be natural without being conversational. Deliberately pausing at key points has the effect of emphasising the importance of the particular point you are making.

Change the speed and pitch of your voice to make the presentation more interesting, but don't do this too obviously.

Use your hands to emphasise points but don't indulge in too much hand waving.

Look at the audience as much as possible but don't fix on an individual, as this can be intimidating.

Pitch your presentation towards the back of the audience, especially in larger rooms.

Don't move about a lot as pacing up and down can unnerve the audience.

Don't be completely passive though, some animation is needed.

Keep an eye on the audience's body language and gauge when to stop and also when to cut out a piece of the presentation.

Visual aids significantly improve the interest of a presentation but must be relevant to what you want to say. Make sure you know in advance how to operate the equipment and also when you want particular displays to appear. Slides should contain the minimum information necessary. To do otherwise risks making the slide unreadable or will divert your audience's attention so that they spend time reading the slide rather than listening to you.

As a rule of thumb, allow two minutes for each general slide you use. Give yourself longer for any that you want to use for developing specific points. Stick to the plan for the presentation, don't digress as you will eat up time and either over-run or fail to finish.

Unless explicitly told not to, leave time for discussion. Five minutes is usually sufficient to allow clarification of points. Ask if there are any questions and avoid being terse when you do this as the

audience may find it intimidating. If questions are slow in coming, you can start things off by asking a question of the audience (you will need to have one prepared).

The final impression you make on the audience is the one they will remember. Therefore it is worth planning your last few sentences with real care. As with the beginning, you must first get people's attention, as they may have wandered - a change of pace, a new visual aid or perhaps the introduction of one final culminating idea can help with this.

Sometimes the ending will be a summary of the main points of the talk. Don't tell the audience that you are going to give a summary though, because at that moment they will simply switch off. It is often best if the ending comes unexpectedly with that final vital phrase left hanging in the air and ringing round in people's memories. Alternatively, the ending can be a flourish.



Rehearse both your presentations from the previous two activities with someone or a small group that you trust to give you objective and constructive criticism. Perhaps ask them to read through this Toolkit before viewing your presentation.

Discuss their feedback with them to get behind their initial observations into the reasons why they reacted as they did.

Ask them about the differences that they noted in the two presentations and their formats?

Which worked better and why?

CULTURAL GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Britain is a multi-faith and multi-cultural society. As a result, it is important to understand and respect cultural and religious practices in all aspects of work, including consultation and representation.

It is important to be aware, however, that the cultural and religious diversity of the UK is not in any sense a new phenomenon; people have been migrating to the British Isles throughout history; 'Migration between countries and continents has been part of the world's development for centuries. People tend to migrate for a variety of economic, political or religious reasons but mainly in search of a better life.' (*Ethnic Minorities in Britain*, Council for Racial Equality). The idea of the United Kingdom is in itself an expression of the enduring identities of the people who have come to these islands over many thousand of years.

The 2001 Census showed that about 9% of the UK population belong to ethnic minorities as compared to 5.5% in the 1991 Census. This shows that Britain's ethnic minority population increased by about two thirds between 1991-2001. London has the highest proportion of ethnic minorities, just under 50%. The great majority of this increase was from births - over half the total ethnic minority population in 1991 was born in the UK. The great majority under 16 were born in the UK and increasingly children born into ethnic minority communities have parents who were themselves born in this country.

In terms of religions and cultures, we can obtain a reasonable picture by a process of extrapolation. For example, various studies have shown that almost 97-98% of Pakistanis, 90% of Bangladeshis (country statistics) and about 8-10% people of Indian origin are Muslim. Similarly, some of the Black African and a good proportion of 'Others' would also be of Muslim faith. For example, 'Others' quite often include people of Middle Eastern, Malaysian, Somali, Iranian, Turkish, Kurdish and Iraqi, Moroccan (North African) origin, all of whom are traditionally followers of the Muslim faith.

Indians are predominantly Hindus and Sikhs but there are Muslims, Buddhists and Christians among them. Afro-Caribbeans are primarily Christians but would also include a significant minority of Rastafarians. There are always exceptions to these trends.

The chief places of origin of Asian immigrants are Kashmir in Pakistan, Punjab in India and Pakistan, Gujarat in India and Sylhet in Bangladesh. Note that these are predominantly rural and agricultural areas and this aspect very much reflects in the outlook, aspirations and values of these communities.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Encourage people to define their own cultural and/or religious identity.
- Develop a general understanding of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and faith communities. Become aware of the issues that affect people from BAME communities. Understand their backgrounds, aspirations and cultural practices.
- Acknowledge and reduce your own personal prejudices.

- Some people perceive minority ethnic groups as 'the problem'. However, 'the problem' may lie in those people's perception of the culture and traditions of minority ethnic groups.
- Be colour conscious, not colour blind. Fair treatment involves taking account of differences.
- Treat all people with dignity and respect. Treat people as you would like to be treated.
- Treating everyone in the same way is not necessarily the same thing as treating everyone fairly. For example, holding a meeting at a particular time may cause difficulties for members of some faiths who may practise a ritual prayer at that time.
- Do not project cultural stereotypes. In some communities lack of eye contact is a sign of respect but do not assume, for example, that all young black people avoid eye contact for that reason. Many young black and Asian people are second and third generation British born citizens and may be no different from any other teenager when faced with authority figures.
- Ritual prayer is an essential part of the cultural and religious practices of some minority ethnic communities. Employers have the opportunity to motivate employees by meeting their needs, eg through the provision of a multi-faith prayer room.
- If in doubt, ask. A polite and well-intentioned inquiry a particular religious belief or a language requirement will not be offensive when prompted by a genuine desire to get it right.
- It is important that names are recorded correctly. Establish which name is personal and which is family.

CONTACT GUIDANCE

- Allow sufficient time for getting hold of your contact and arranging a time to speak or meet.
- Be prepared to persevere in making contact as contact people are often volunteers and may have very busy schedules.
- If phoning, be aware that the phone may be answered by someone who is not fluent in your first language and that you may need to phone back later or ask for an alternative contact number.
- Having made an appointment, check on the day before to confirm whether the person is still available.
- Avoid clashes with religious festivals. Check dates against an up-to-date calendar of Religious Festivals, eg by using the information which can be found at www.support4learning.org.uk/shap/index.htm
- If arranging a meeting involving representatives of several faith communities, look for a 'neutral' venue, ie do not use the premises of one faith community.
- If catering for a meeting involving representatives of several BAME and/or faith communities, the simplest approach is to make it vegetarian only and not to provide alcohol.
- If visiting a place of worship, ask the host if any particular requirement needs to be observed in terms of dress, conduct or timings. Generally, all places of worship are quite open, welcoming and available apart from certain times of daily and weekly worship.

LANGUAGE GUIDANCE

When communicating with members of BAME and/or faith communities, special care has to be taken with respect to the use of language. Even when using English language, as would be the case most often, these basic guidelines should be followed.

- Treat everyone as individuals. Always refer to people by their name and not by status, faith or ethnic group they belong to.
- Use plain and straightforward language. Consider the background and needs of a person or group and be ready to explain the terms specific to your area of work.
- Cut down the jargon - if possible avoid it completely. In workplaces we are used to a large amount of jargon in everyday work-related conversations. This jargon makes no sense to the outside world and when used it creates barriers and hinders trust and progress.

USEFUL PHRASES

Greetings

- Arabic - Assalamu alaikum (common for Muslims)
- Bahá'ís - Allah-u-Abha
- Bengali - Assalamu alaikum
- Chinese - Jo sun
- Hindi - Nameste
- Punjabi - Sat siri akal (Sikhs) and Assalamu alaikum (Muslims)
- Somali - Assalamu alaikum
- Urdu - Assalamu alaikum

Thank you

- Arabic - Shookran
- Bengali - Dhannvad
- Chinese - Door tse
- Hindi - Dhannyavad
- Punjabi - Dhannvad
- Somali - Mahadsanid
- Urdu - Shukrya

ETIQUETTE AND CUSTOMS GUIDANCE

Working with people across cultures can be a major source of misunderstanding and conflict. It is very easy to cause unnecessary offence or be offended due to not knowing people's etiquette, customs or codes of behaviour. Below are some general points with regards to cross-cultural communication.

- Treat everyone as individuals. Always refer to people by their name and not by status, faith or ethnic group they belong to.
- Celebrate difference by recognising it as a strength and not a weakness or a problem.
- Not every member of a cultural group is an expert of their group. There are differences in all groups. Always take time to find out.
- If in doubt, ask. Do not assume anything, especially about body language or gestures. It is better to give benefit of doubt than assume wrongly. It is best to confirm the fact.
- Very different meanings can be attributed to people's behaviour in culturally diverse environments. Apart from the need to understand the cultural context in which the other person is operating, you need to be sensitive and give benefit of doubt.
- We are also products of our own particular cultures which have conditioned our attitudes and behaviour towards others. For example, in some cultures, it is seen as disrespectful to look directly at an elder person or someone in authority, whereas in western cultures not looking directly at someone can be interpreted as being shifty or untrustworthy.
- The best way to reduce the risk of misunderstandings is to talk to each other, genuinely explore and try to understand cultural contexts and preferences.

CHECKLISTS

BEFORE I BEGIN A CONSULTATION HAVE I ...

- Obtained community statistics
- Identified key communities or groups
- Identified gateway contacts in these communities/groups
- Obtained contact details
- Decided on an appropriate consultation method
- Prepared a data capture form
- Considered religious/cultural sensitivities

BEFORE GOING ON A CONSULTATION VISIT/ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEW HAVE I ...

- Researched the contact
- Identified why I am consulting with this contact
- Prepared a data capture form
- Booked an appointment

BEFORE A CONSULTATION EVENT/GROUP/MEETING HAVE I ...

- Booked the venue, equipment and catering arrangements
- Sent invitations with a clear incentive to attend
- Prepared an attendance list, agenda and data capture form
- Asked about and addressed participants' access and dietary requirements
- Decided how participants' views will be captured, eg scribe, flipchart, recording
- Prepared presentation(s)

BEFORE ISSUING A CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE/SURVEY HAVE I ...

- Quality assured the questions
- Considered how the data collected will be analysed
- Printed the questionnaire and its covering letter
- Given a clear incentive for completion
- Prepared a mailing list

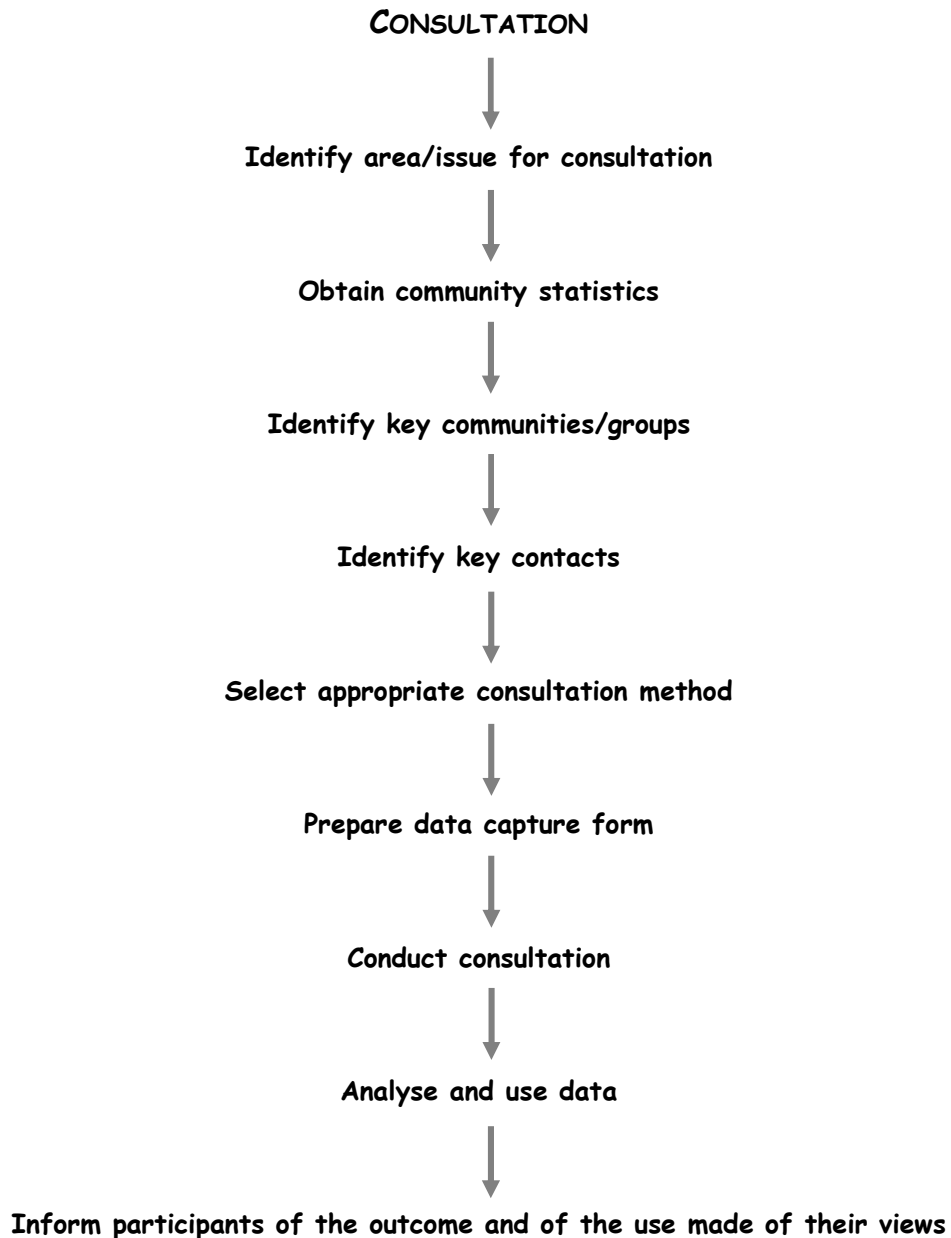
BEFORE GIVING A PRESENTATION HAVE I ...

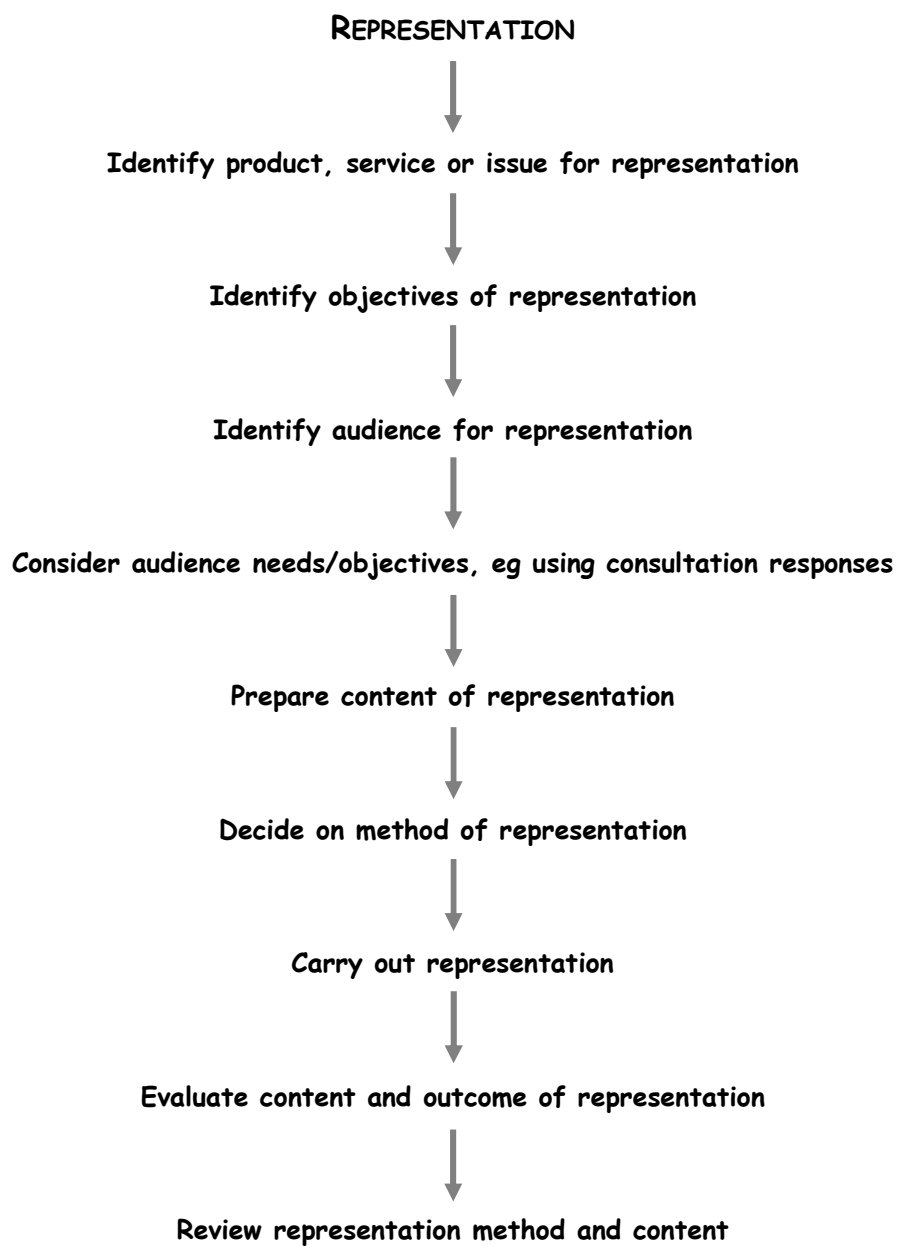
- Identified my objectives
- Identified the audience and their interests/needs
- Matched my objectives to those of the audience
- Considered religious/cultural sensitivities
- Identified my main points
- Prepared the presentation's format and style

BEFORE GIVING A PROJECTED PRESENTATION HAVE I ...

- Created a consistent visual look;
- Used images that genuinely illustrate my concepts and considered any copyright issues
- Achieved a strong contrast between text and backgrounds
- Used a maximum of six points per slide, six words per point, and three slides for minute
- Chosen a font size that my audience can read
- Avoided animated texts, sounds, and fancy transitions

FLOWCHARTS





SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION & USEFUL CONTACTS

- Business Link
<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/home?&domain=www.businesslink.gov.uk>
- Census 2001
www.statistics.gov.uk
- Chambers of Commerce
<http://www.chamberonline.co.uk/>
- Commission for Racial Equality
<http://www.cre.gov.uk/>
- Community Empowerment Networks
<http://www.quest-net.org/>
- Council of Voluntary Services
<http://www.nacvs.org.uk/>
- Compact - Government and Voluntary sector partnerships
<http://www.thecompact.org.uk/>
- Directories of professional bodies
<http://www.paradigm-redshift.com/busprof.htm>
http://www.hero.ac.uk/uk/reference_and_subject_resources/groups_and_organisations/professional_bodies3790.cfm
- Diversity and Neighbourhood Renewal
<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=1002>
- Enfield College
<http://www.enfield.ac.uk/new/default.asp>
- Examples of Good Practice guidance on consultation
http://www.thecompact.org.uk/C2B/document_tree/ViewACategory.asp?CategoryID=43
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/social/gpgc-00.asp>
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/compact/cx-pu-cpt-consulcode.htm>
- Faith Regen UK
www.faithregenuk.org
- Happy Computers
<http://www.happy.co.uk/>
- Inter Faith Network for the UK
<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/>

- Involving communities in urban and rural regeneration:
<http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1128638>
- Involving Faith Communities
<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=177>
- Learning & Skills Councils (LSCs)
<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/>
- Local Authority business & regeneration departments
<http://www.lga.gov.uk/home.asp>
- Local Strategic Partnerships
<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/>
- National Statistics
www.statistics.gov.uk
- The Relationships Foundation
<http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org/>
- Representation, Community Leadership and Participation: Citizen involvement in neighbourhood renewal and local governance
<http://www.ids.ac.uk/logolink/initiatives/info/NeighbourhoodRenewal.htm>
- Religious Festivals
www.support4learning.org.uk/shap/index.htm
- Size and Scope of the Voluntary Sector (Third Sector)
<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/asp/search/ncvo/main.aspx?siteID=1&siteID=8&subSID=73&documentID=1938>
- Working Together: Cooperation between Government and Faith Communities
http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/workingtog_faith040329.pdf