

# Making a Difference: A guide to evaluating public participation in central government

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# **Making a Difference:** A guide to evaluating public participation in central government

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**Networking** — bringing people from the participation and empowerment field together

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# Introduction

Public engagement is now a central element in public policy-making. Activities range from major events such as the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say initiative for public involvement in the health and social care White Paper, which gained over 40,000 responses, to a citizens' jury on nanotechnology which involved just 12.

Whatever the scale of the engagement, effective planning requires thinking through the following:

Purpose + process + context = outcome

The success of the initiative will depend on these three elements:

- the **purpose** (what is it for? what do you want to achieve?)
- the **process** (how should it be done - scale, resources, timescales, who to involve, methods?)
- the **context** within which it is taking place (what else is going on? is there any history that needs to be taken into account?)

All leading to a successful **outcome**, if the whole initiative is planned well.

**Evaluation** can help in planning and managing a successful engagement initiative. There will be many other considerations in planning good public engagement, and there are many guides to help (see Annex 5). However, this document provides some specific ideas for using evaluation to:

- set objectives for engagement
- monitor progress and measure achievements
- identify lessons and help improve practice

Evaluation is a relatively new element of public engagement but is seen as increasingly vital as engagement becomes more widespread and larger in scale. Therefore the need to assess the effectiveness of different approaches, to increase accountability and to learn from experience becomes more important.

Evaluation does not have to involve a major research exercise (although this may sometimes be desirable or even necessary). At its most basic, an evaluation should help answer three simple questions:

- **has the initiative succeeded?** (e.g. met targets, met objectives, resulted in other achievements)
- **has the process worked?** (e.g. what happened, what worked well and less well, and lessons for future participatory activities)
- **what impact has the process had?** (e.g. on participants, on the quality of policy, on policy makers or on others involved)

# 1 How can evaluation help?

Evaluation can help work on public engagement in four main ways:

- clarifying the objectives of the exercise by finding practical ways to measure / assess success (e.g. by identifying clear criteria for success against the objectives)
- improving project and programme management and improvement by building in review and reflection as the work progresses, especially on progress towards the objectives of the exercise
- improving accountability (e.g. for public funds) by fully reporting what is done and what it achieves; possibly linking to performance management
- improving future practice and policy by developing hard evidence and knowledge about 'what works' and what impacts different approaches can have

## **Audit or learning?**

Evaluation can provide a simple audit, answering questions such as:

- have we done what we said we were going to do?
- have we met our targets?

It can also provide a much deeper examination that considers what happened and why, answering questions such as:

- were the objectives we set ourselves the right ones?
- what have the impacts been on the participants, the policy, our decision-making processes etc?
- what have we learnt for the future?

The purpose of the evaluation determines the evaluation design – in exactly the same way as the purpose of the engagement determines the engagement design and methods. For example:

- if the evaluation is designed for an audit, a range of statistical methods will be required and data collected to show whether specific targets have been met
- if the evaluation is designed for learning, among participants as well as policy-makers and government, more qualitative methods such as individual and group interviews, observation and story collection can be used to describe and illustrate why and how something worked or did not. Reporting methods need to be designed to appeal to those for whom the learning is intended.

## **Independent or in-house?**

Evaluation can be done by an independent evaluator, or by a member of the team running the engagement / policy process. It may be important for the evaluation to be independent to achieve external legitimacy but, if the main purpose of the evaluation is internal learning, it may be most appropriate for the whole process to be kept in-house. It will, however, always be important for an evaluation role to be identified and for responsibility for evaluation to be clearly designated.

# 2 Public engagement in public policy-making

Engaging the public in policy-making is an important step. If it is not done well, it can damage the reputation not only of the specific policy initiative but of the organisations developing the policy.

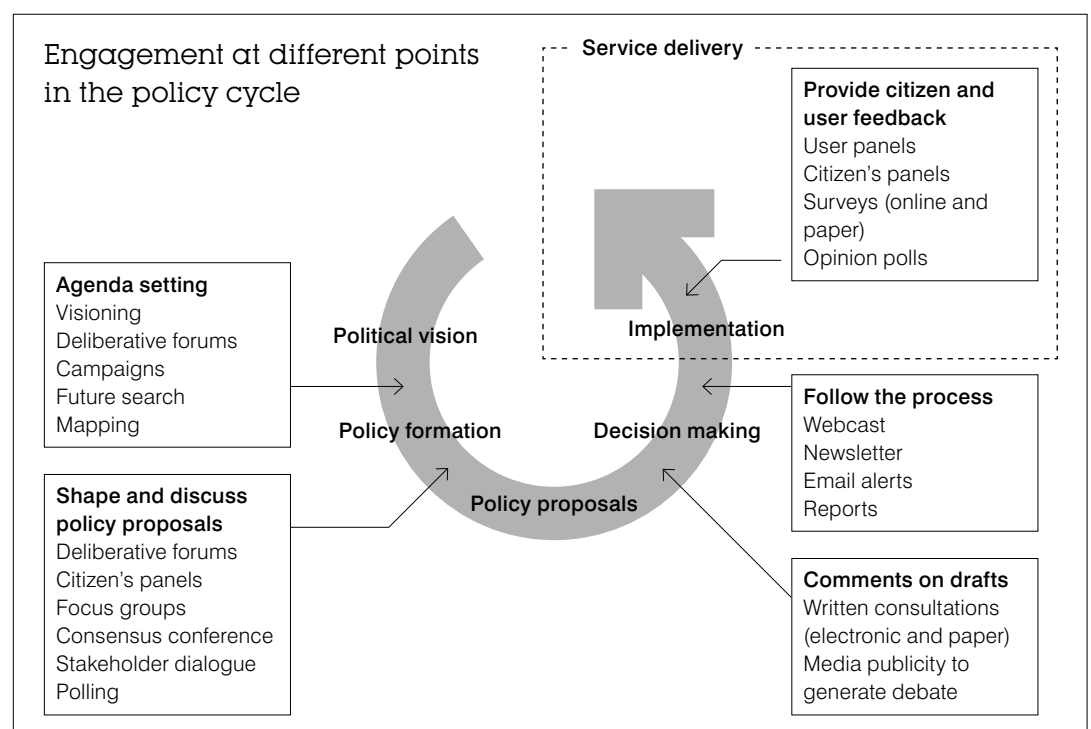
There are occasions when public engagement should not be undertaken. For example:

- if a decision has already effectively been made, and there is no room for change
- as a tick-box exercise, because it is required, and there is no intention of taking any notice of what comes out of the engagement process
- as a delaying tactic, because it is too difficult to make a decision immediately, but the engagement is not considered an important part of the decision-making process that will eventually take place

**As long as there is room for change in the policy and the results of the engagement will make a difference, it is worth considering public engagement.**

This might be at any stage of the policy process (see diagram below)

The stage of the policy process is one indication of the sorts of engagement methods that could be used (as shown in the diagram), as it is part of the *context* for the engagement. But the main factor is the *purpose* of the engagement, which means thinking about **specific** objectives.





# 3 Thinking about objectives

The overall objective of any public engagement exercise is to get effective public engagement that makes a difference to policy. You may want ideas, commitment, validation, legitimacy, enthusiasm ... but the crucial element is that these things can make a difference to the content of the policy.

It can be useful to involve the evaluator in formally defining the objectives of the public engagement exercise, for two reasons:

- to make sure the objectives are realistic, achievable and measurable, and that data can be collected so that success in achieving the objectives can be relatively easily measured and reported (internally and/or externally)
- to help ensure there are no hidden objectives / unstated hopes for the exercise that need to be made explicit to avoid them affecting the 'sense' of whether the exercise has been successful. It is part of the job of the evaluator to 'surface assumptions' about what it is expected that the exercise should or could achieve, and make sure these assumptions are taken into account in the detailed planning process by making them explicit in the stated objectives.

Generally speaking, there are four basic reasons why government might want to get the public engaged in a particular policy process<sup>1</sup>:

- improved governance: to do with democratic legitimacy, accountability, trust, citizens' rights, empowerment etc
- social capital and social justice: to do with tackling exclusion and increasing equity, and building relationships, networks and ownership
- improved quality of services, projects and programmes: more efficient and better services that meet needs and reflect broad social values
- capacity building and learning: to build confidence, skills, understanding, awareness, knowledge.

Any single engagement exercise can achieve more than one of these purposes, although it helps in measuring success to be as specific as possible about the exact objectives of the particular exercise. Two examples are summarised in the boxes below.

## Example 1

### Objectives of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say listening exercise

- For the public, providers of care and government to work in partnership to determine policy priorities and design new approaches to future care.
- To increase levels of public engagement in the policy decision making process.
- To produce a public debate visible at local and national levels around the future of personalised and community centred care.

It may be that the engagement exercise runs for some time, or there are different elements to the whole policy process with different types of engagement exercise for each.

It may therefore make sense to identify different objectives for the different stages or parts of the process (see below).

### Example 2

#### Objectives for the National Waste Dialogue

Stage 1 – Building Effective Solutions for Sustainable Waste Management (1999-2001), expressed its aims and objectives in the form of two questions:

- What are the key issues affecting progress towards sustainable waste management?
- What can we do to address barriers to progress?

Stage 2 – Enabling Sustainable Waste Management (2001-2002), expressed its objectives in the following three point mission statement:

- To tackle the complex and contentious issues surrounding the planning and decision-making process for new waste facilities;
- To make recommendations on how these issues can be addressed;
- To build relationships and understanding among stakeholders engaged in and affected by waste related decision-making.

Stage 3 – Successful Waste Awareness Campaigns (Cultural Change toolkit) (2001-2003), had the following objectives:

- To produce a toolkit that will enable people to run successful waste awareness campaigns that lead to the reduction of waste and promotion of recycling;
- To evaluate previous campaigns and assess them against identified key success criteria;
- To enable more effective waste-awareness campaigns to be run in the future;
- To accelerate the change in culture as to how people deal with their waste.

As can be seen from Example 2, the National Waste Dialogue, there were different levels of activity and involvement implied in these objectives, from broad policy development at Stage 1 to detailed development and production of materials in Stage 3. In this case, the same method was used throughout the process: a formal stakeholder dialogue to build consensus among participants. This was supplemented by working groups that actually developed research and product outlines.

In setting objectives, it helps to establish the nature of the engagement very early on. The usual approach is to think about the **depth of influence** the public will have.

The International Association of Public Participation has developed a spectrum of levels of engagement, as below.



The level of influence will affect the way the objectives for the exercise are formulated, and thus the method used. For example:

- the Your Health Your Care Your Say exercise was aiming for ‘partnership’ (the ‘collaborate’ level), although the method chosen was an ‘involve’ method (a series of deliberative forums from which data was fed into the decision-making process).
- the National Waste Dialogue was a ‘collaborate’ model as policy decisions were made by the participants jointly and were taken forward on their behalf by members of the group. The consensus building method used was designed to achieve that level of influence.

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<sup>1</sup> Involve (2005) *People and Participation. How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making*. Involve and Together We Can, London.

# 4 When to start evaluation

It is often thought that evaluation comes at the end, to see what has been achieved. Evaluation at the end will be essential so that the complete process can be assessed. However, it is too late to start thinking about evaluation at the end; the evaluation process needs to start much earlier.

It is essential to **evaluate early**. Many of the important outcomes sought by participation are intangible (e.g. improved relationships, changed perspectives) and the evidence on which one can measure success is often highly contextual and subjective. Data therefore needs to be collected at the time of the engagement, as well as after the engagement has concluded and the impacts are known, to achieve sufficient richness to be meaningful.

A simple plan for designing a public engagement process might involve the following steps:

**Step 1 – Set up a planning / design group to scope the engagement.** It helps to have a small group that is concentrating on the engagement exercise specifically, although it will need to link in closely with the overall policy development planning groups. This group will agree the objectives of the exercise, the methods, the scale and scope (what can and what cannot be considered as part of the exercise) etc.

**Step 2 – Agree detailed project plan.** This will need to cover the scale, timescales, key dates and actions, resources available and needed, location(s), communications (see Step 4 below).

**Step 3 – Implementation.** From booking venues and preparing briefing materials, if appropriate, to inviting participants, planning catering, recording discussions and decisions, reporting back to the participants what they agreed / said and what was done with those agreements / comments.

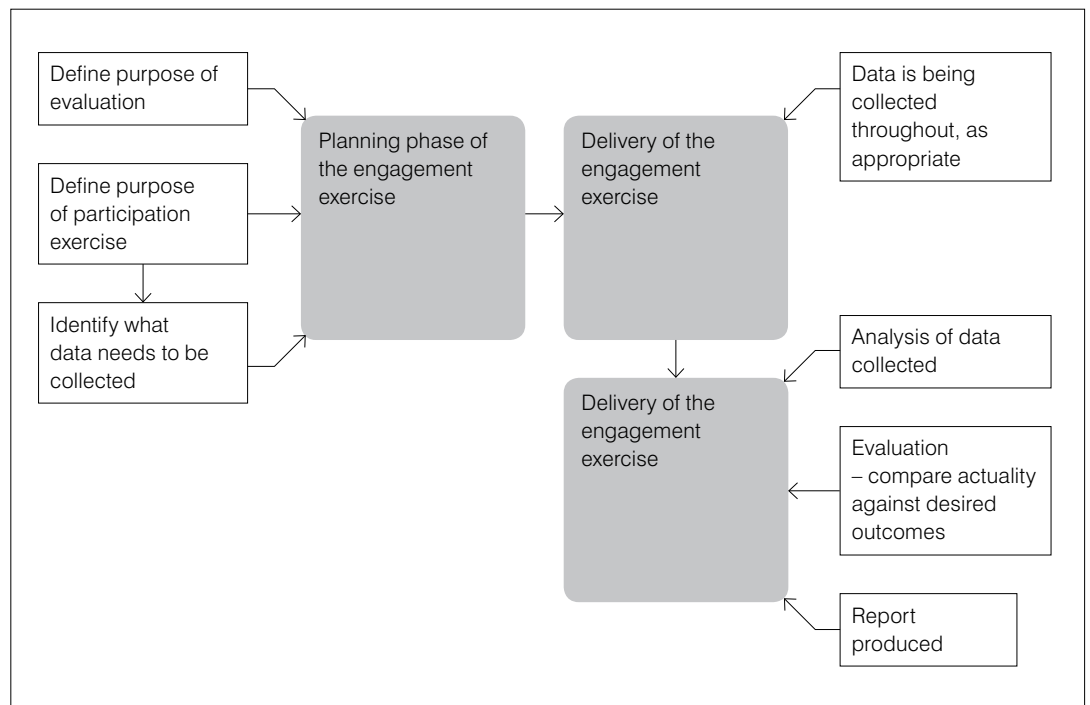
**Step 4 – Communications.** Essential for making participants feel they are taking part in something important (where media coverage can help), to ensuring that the wider community (interest group or geographical or the whole country) knows how they can get involved if they want to (again, if appropriate).

**Step 5 – Using the results of the engagement exercise.** Feeding the outputs of the engagement exercise into the rest of the policy-making process. How this is done will depend on the particular characteristics of the policy and process in question.

**Step 6 – Feedback.** If the participants were not directly involved in the decision-making, they should be told what has happened to their input, what difference it has made and, if specific points made in the engagement are not being taken forward, why not. Wider communications may also be appropriate at this stage.

**The plan for the evaluation should come in at the very earliest project planning stage – Step 1.**

Evaluation can help set objectives that can be measured – so that those running the exercise can see whether the whole process has been a success and in what ways. The evaluation then runs throughout the exercise, collecting data and reviewing progress as the project continues. The relationship between the evaluation process and the overall engagement planning process is shown in the following diagram.



# 5 Measuring success

The table below provides a simple framework for assessing the benefits of participation, based on the four generic reasons why engagement is carried out.

Assessing the benefits and achievements of engagement			
Goals / purpose	Possible indicators (examples)	How to get data (examples)	Important assumptions (examples)
Improved governance	Increased trust in government	Surveys before and after the engagement process	Trust may be affected by a wide range of influences; this process may only be one among many
Social capital and social justice	Increased equality of access to decision-making	Demographic analysis of participants + feedback from them on the difference made by the exercise	Social capital can be a difficult concept and is not always understood to operate beyond the local level but the importance of increasing access to different people and new networks does work at national level.
	Developed new contacts / given access to new networks	Questionnaires after engagement events; interviews later	
Improved quality of services / projects / programmes	Costs saved by people taking more responsibility for service outcomes and making less demand (e.g. healthy living)	Feedback from doctors and patients through surveys, polls etc.	It is difficult to separate the impacts of engagement from other elements of service improvement.  The costs of conflict are rarely recorded, so data would have to be collected from scratch
	Quicker decisions by avoiding conflict	Collecting costs of dealing with conflict (e.g. complaints, objections, campaigns etc)	
Capacity building and learning	Greater awareness and understanding of the issues	Questionnaires with participants after the process and follow-up interviews later	These are relatively straightforward issues to test with participants before, during and after the process
	More confidence and willingness to get involved in future	Questionnaires with participants before and after the process and follow-up interviews later	

A fuller version of this model, showing possible indicators for the benefits of engagement is given in Annex 2, along with a model showing possible costs.

An alternative model, for use when there are clear targets, has been developed by Vivian Twyford in Australia for use with some of the International Association of Public Participation principles and values (see table on next page).

These two models provide a couple of examples of the types of indicators that can be used to measure the success of engagement exercises, depending on the objectives of the exercise.

It can be very useful to think about the indicators / success factors for engagement while refining the objectives of the engagement exercise overall. There is no point carefully deciding on objectives if there is no effective way of measuring whether they have been achieved.

- Success factors answer the question: how will we know if it is a success? It is a success if ... Success factors are usually quite broad statements (e.g. the engagement reached a 'broad range' of people; engagement was effective).
- Indicators do the same thing, but are usually more specific and are essentially 'headlines' that illustrate the point – they are not comprehensive evidence that something has been achieved, they simply spotlight a specific aspect (e.g. people understood what was going on; people felt they influenced the final policy; policy-makers felt the final policy was improved by the public input).

Indicators need to be **meaningful** (so those reading them will understand why they are important) and **measurable** (so data can be collected relatively easily). They may use qualitative data (e.g. from interviews with participants, decision-makers etc) and quantitative data (e.g. surveys, demographic analysis).

Vivian Twyford's model of analysis (see table on next page) separates success measures and indicators, as well as offering targets.

Further examples of criteria are given in Annex 3, which contains a summary of the evaluation of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say initiative.

## Alternative model for assessing benefits and achievements

Goal / objective	Success measures	Indicators	Targets	How to get data
The public contribution will influence the decision	Data is gathered from the public, summarised and circulated, processed into usefully formatted information and given to decision-makers in time for them to use for decision-making			Decision-maker discussion held and minutes taken
	Decision-makers genuinely consider information from the public	Decision-makers sign off minutes of discussions of input	65% of decision-makers sign off on discussion minutes	Each decision-maker requested to sign off minutes
	Public is provided with feedback on summarised input and how it has been used	% of participants who receive / understand / believe summaries of public input; % of participants who receive feedback on how input has been used	75% of participants receive / understand / believe summaries of public input; 75% of participants receive report on how input used	Telephone survey of random sample of participants
Provide timely, balanced and objective information on the problem, alternatives considered and solution	Improved public image of client organisation	Stakeholder satisfaction with organisation's performance in meeting its charter	At least 50% of stakeholders believe organisation's performance is satisfactory or better in the first year, and satisfaction trend rises over 3 years	Survey seeking levels of stakeholder satisfaction in meeting its charter; run every year for 3 years to randomly selected sample of known stakeholders; survey attracts a minimum of 25% response in first year



# 6 Doing the evaluation

## What should it cover?

The content of each evaluation will be different but the basic checklist below describes what needs to be covered in most cases. The evaluation report needs to provide a detailed picture of the whole engagement process and the policy process within which it fits (if it is related to a specific policy process), as well as to assess its success.

### **Objectives of the engagement process, e.g.**

- what were the original stated objectives
- are there any 'implicit' objectives that have not been fully articulated
- how were the objectives set, and by whom
- did they change; if so, why and how
- have the objectives been met.

### **Context, e.g.**

- is the process stand-alone or part of a wider programme
- what else relevant was going on at the same time; how did the process under evaluation relate to other relevant initiatives
- what historical, geographical, political, economic and social factors have affected the process.

### **Levels of involvement, e.g.**

- type of involvement sought (e.g. from inform to empower); why and how that level was chosen
- assessment of whether that level of involvement was achieved
- assessment of whether that level of involvement was appropriate in the circumstances.

### **Methods and techniques used, e.g.**

- what methods and techniques were used
- who decided on these
- were they appropriate to the objectives
- what worked well and what worked less well.

### **Who was involved, e.g.**

- review of any stakeholder analysis done (whose involvement sought; assessment of whether achieved; and whether appropriate)
- numbers of people involved
- analysis of type of people involved (e.g. by socio-economic group, educational qualifications, age).

**Inputs (costs), e.g.**

- monetary costs (e.g. staff time, expenses, event costs, publicity)
- non-monetary costs (e.g. time contributed by participants, unpaid staff time, training time)
- risks (e.g. to reputation, uncertainty, stress, conflict, loss of control).

**Outputs (products and activities), e.g.**

- participatory events such as workshops (e.g. numbers attending, feedback)
- information events such as exhibitions (e.g. numbers attending, feedback)
- questionnaires (e.g. numbers and results)
- newsletters and other printed materials (e.g. numbers circulated, feedback)
- interviews undertaken (and results).

**Outcomes (benefits / impacts), e.g.**

- changes in policy (e.g. different ideas incorporated)
- changes in people (e.g. new skills, greater confidence, increased networks, greater willingness to participate in future)
- changes to organisations (e.g. changed structures, different priorities)
- wider social changes, such as
  - new groups or organisations set up
  - greater public support for programme
  - better public services (e.g. because needs met more effectively)
  - greater social cohesion (e.g. because people get to know and trust each other)
  - better governance (e.g. greater accountability of government, better information flow, more engagement)
  - continued learning (e.g. learning from the process, people go on to do other qualifications).

As well as going through the full checklist of potential issues to cover, you may want to identify some more general points, such as:

- what are the main lessons learnt from the whole thing, and why?
- what should you never do again, and why?
- what was the best / most successful aspect of the whole thing, and why?
- what is the most significant change / biggest impact the process has had, and why?

When planning the data collection, it works best to explicitly ask these types of general questions rather than infer findings on these issues from more specific data.

# 7 Doing the evaluation

## How to do it

There are some basic steps that most evaluation processes will go through, as follows:

### Scoping the evaluation

- purpose / objectives of evaluation;
- limits / boundaries (e.g. timescale, budget, boundaries, subjects to be covered or not);
- approach (audit or learning approach);
- level of engagement in evaluation (e.g. getting data from participants, testing results, setting up an advisory group, involvement in deciding key themes for the evaluation, control over findings e.g. what said and how reported etc);
- confidentiality of results (e.g. is the process to be open to full public scrutiny?);
- main themes and questions to be covered by the evaluation (what will it look at: see 'what should it cover' section above).

#### Objectives of evaluations

##### Evaluation of the Your Health, Your Care Your Say for the Department of Health

###### **Primary objective:**

To determine the success of the listening exercise at meeting the objectives specified at its outset.

The evaluation was required not only to consider whether the specified criteria were met, but also:

- how success has been achieved (whether specific components were particularly important)
- whether any failures were intrinsic to the approach adopted or contingent on the manner of its implementation, and
- whether any opportunities were missed.

##### Evaluation of the National Waste Dialogue for The Environment Council (TEC)

###### **Aim:**

To assess whether the dialogue model, and the implementation of that model through the processes used in this programme, was effective in meeting the objectives of the programme overall. It also aimed to come to conclusions about the effectiveness of the dialogue model, in theory and practice (through this programme), in tackling the specific issues around sustainable waste management.

**Objectives:**

- Contribute to the development of sustainable waste management, by evaluating the role of the stakeholder engagement processes.
- Contribute to the body of knowledge about dialogue processes by producing a complete description of the dialogue processes used in this case, and the achievements and problems of those processes, and by conducting a rigorous and objective evaluation and disseminating the evidence gathered in appropriate forms and forums.
- Contribute to the development of the evaluation of participatory processes.
- Involve stakeholders, both in order to access their knowledge and understanding of how the processes worked and what they achieved, and to enable them to share in the benefits of the evaluation processes in terms of learning and development.
- Contribute to the development of TEC as a learning organisation, both in terms of internal practice (including through building research capacity in TEC, especially around evaluation), and of external reputation.
- Communicate the results and lessons effectively, bearing in mind the context at the time of publication.

**Collecting data**

Getting baseline, ongoing and/or data on completion of engagement process, through methods such as:

- desk research (e.g. reviewing all documentation produced by the programme);
- observation (e.g. attendance at workshops; listening in to online debates);
- interviews (e.g. with participants, consultant team, commissioners of the work);
- questionnaires to participants (e.g. by telephone or online);
- group working (e.g. group reflections on progress);
- online (e.g. feedback on progress through various online discussion groups).

You will need to work out when you should collect the data, for example:

- at the beginning of the process to benchmark
- at the end of each public event (if more than one)
- at the end of the whole process
- later ... depending on the long term objectives of the exercise.

You will also need to decide who you want to collect data from. In a public engagement exercise you will generally want to get data from the following:

- the public participants
- the policy-makers who are being influenced by the process
- whoever commissioned the process
- whoever designed and implemented the process (could be different)
- facilitators.

And, finally, consider what data you want, which is likely to include:

- quantitative data i.e. actual statistics, or data that can be converted to statistics
- qualitative data on specific questions that can be analysed according to views on specific issues
- quotes
- specific examples to back up general points
- personal / organisational stories
- photos, charts, etc.

### **Analysing data**

The data collected can be assessed against various analytical frameworks including testing the data:

- against the stated **aims and objectives** of the engagement process
- against agreed qualitative and quantitative **indicators**
- by surfacing, clarifying and articulating '**assumptions**' about aims and objectives among participants and commissioners (from baseline feedback, interviews etc), and testing achievements against these
- against agreed **principles of good practice** in participatory working (e.g. those promoted by The Environment Council on stakeholder dialogue, or bodies such as the International Association of Public Participation and Involve; see Annex 4).

### **Testing findings**

The initial findings from the data collection and analysis can be tested with various stakeholders in the evaluation process through, for example, setting up an advisory group (with experts / participants etc), workshops with participants, electronic consultation on draft reports etc.

### **Report writing**

This is a crucial step. It usually starts with producing a draft report for testing with those commissioning the evaluation and stakeholders, and then producing a final report for publication. Full evaluation reports can be very dense, and packed with statistics, so it is often necessary to produce a summary report for wider circulation, including to participants who will not necessarily want to read the full report. It is often useful to make the summary report relatively populist, appealing to a general audience, with illustrations, quotes, etc.

# 8 After the evaluation

There is almost always a need to go beyond simply producing a final report of an evaluation. Further dissemination may include:

- presentation of the findings to the body commissioning the evaluation
- articles on the findings for academic and professional journals, newsletters, conference papers etc
- input to training
- proposals for more detailed research work based on results.

The most important audience for evaluation findings is often the organisation or department that undertook the public engagement, to help them understand the lessons identified in the evaluation. These presentations may take the form of an internal workshop (e.g. as was done in the evaluation of the National Waste Dialogue), and possibly guidance notes on the lessons prepared for staff (as is planned for the lessons from the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say evaluation).

The products and outcomes of the evaluation should therefore include:

- A comprehensive report that captures the flavour of the exercise as well as giving an objective and rigorous assessment of the achievements, and that identifies lessons for future public engagement. This report should be publicly available.
- A summary report that can be made more widely available (e.g. to participants, interviewees for the research), that covers the main points and lessons from the evaluation.
- Greater understanding among those commissioning the evaluation, and those that read the reports, of what happened in the engagement exercise, how successful it was, and some insights into public engagement more generally.

It is here that evaluation can demonstrate its greatest value: increasing understanding of public engagement and the value it can offer if it is done well and makes a difference to policy and practice – and what lessons need to be taken into account in future public engagement exercises.

# Annex 1

## Glossary

This is not a comprehensive glossary, but covers most of the terms commonly used in public engagement. We have included terms related to community engagement here as it will often be necessary to differentiate public engagement in national policy from local engagement and a knowledge of the terms can help.

Most of these definitions are taken from *Firm Foundation. The Government's Framework for Community Capacity Building*, published by the Civil Renewal Unit at the Home Office, London 2004. Others show the appropriate reference.

### **Active citizenship**

Citizens taking opportunities to become actively involved in defining and tackling, with others, the problems of their communities and improving their quality of life. Active citizenship is one of the three key elements of civil renewal (see below).

### **Capacity building**

“Training and other methods to help people develop the confidence and skills necessary for them to achieve their purpose” (Wilcox 1994, 31). Community capacity building is defined as: Activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities.

### **Citizens**

The wider public / society who may have a right and interest in being involved. Citizenship is a political act, involving people taking responsibility on behalf of the wider society (e.g. citizens panels) (Involve 2005).

### **Citizenship education**

Citizenship education equips young people and adults with the knowledge, understanding and skills to play an active, effective part in society as informed, critical citizens who are socially and morally responsible. It aims to give them the confidence and conviction that they can act with others, have influence and make a difference in their communities (locally, nationally and globally).

### **Civic participation or engagement**

People engaging through democratic processes such as signing a petition or contacting their local councillor.

**Civil renewal**

The renewal of civil society through the development of strong, active and empowered communities, in which people are able to do things for themselves, define the problems they face, and tackle them in partnership with public bodies. Civil renewal involves three essential elements: active citizenship, strengthened communities and partnership in meeting public needs.

**Community**

A community is a specific group of people who all hold something in common. Community has tended to be associated with two key aspects: firstly people who share locality or geographical place; secondly people who are communities of interest. Communities of interest are groups of people who share an identity – for example people of African-Caribbean origin or lesbian and gay people, or those who share an experience or cause – for example the homeless or those campaigning on a health issue.

**Community cohesion**

Community cohesion incorporates and goes beyond the concept of race equality and social inclusion. It describes a situation where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

(Adapted from LGA Guidance Community Cohesion Unit)

**Community development**

The process of collective action to achieve social justice and change by working with communities to identify needs and taking action to meet them. It is based on an agreed set of values and has been shown to result in a range of broadly defined outcomes, helping to achieve specific objectives such as improved levels of basic skills and increased community cohesion.

**Community engagement**

Community engagement is the term for processes which help to build active and empowered communities. Its characteristics include enabling people to understand and exercise their powers and responsibilities as citizens, empowering them to organise through groups to work for their common good, and requiring public bodies to involve citizens in influencing and carrying out public services.

**Community participation or involvement**

This is the involvement of people from a given locality or a given section of the local population in public decision making.



### **Community organisation or group**

A community organisation or group differs from a voluntary organisation in that the control lies in the hands of the beneficiaries as individual users, members or residents. Community groups or organisations tend to be smaller organisations with limited funding and no or very few staff, however they cannot be defined in this way. There are some larger organisations that are community organisations such as some community centres, or residents' organisations by virtue of the fact they are for mutual benefit and are controlled by their members.

### **Consultation**

Have deliberations (with a person); seek information or advice from; take into consideration (Concise Oxford English Dictionary)

### **Consumers**

Users of products and services. Well-established in the private sector, and with an increasingly important role in public service delivery and design (Involve 2005).

### **Empower**

Authorise, license (person to do); give power to, make able (person to do) (Concise Oxford English Dictionary)

### **Indicators**

Indicators are 'headlines' that indicate progress or achievement within an assessment or evaluation framework. The New Economics Foundation has developed a method for choosing effective indicators - AIMS:

- **Action focused.** If there is no action that can be taken as a result of collecting data on a particular indicator, it is probably not worth using that indicator.
- **Important.** Indicators must be chosen to be meaningful and important to stakeholders as well as evaluators.
- **Measurable.** It must be possible to allocate data to the indicator.
- **Simple.** So that collecting the data is relatively easy and so that whatever data is collected can be widely understood.

### **Faith Communities**

A faith community is a community of people adhering to the same religion or belief system. They share a world-view or 'life stance' that involves a set of moral and spiritual values and beliefs about the nature of life and the world. They will usually, but not always, believe in a god or gods. People of many different cultures and ethnic groups may adhere to the same religion or belief.

### **Formative evaluation**

Evaluation undertaken from the beginning of the project under review, that feeds into the development of the project (see also Summative).

### **Participation**

Have share, take part; have something of (Concise Oxford English Dictionary).

**Partnership in meeting public needs**

Public bodies' involvement of citizens and communities, within the established democratic framework, in improving the planning and delivery of public services. One of the three key elements of civil renewal. (See also civil renewal, active citizenship).

**Public services**

Services that are wholly or partly funded through taxation. They include national, regional and local government and statutory agencies.

**Qualitative research**

Qualitative data is gathered from what people say and feel, and what is observed and deduced, and provides for description and interpretation.

**Quantitative research**

Quantitative data involves collecting numbers and statistical analysis and is about measurement and judgement.

**Social capital**

The UK Government has formally adopted the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's definition of social capital: "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups". In particular, social capital involves building 'bonds' and 'bridges' between people as a foundation for social support and relationships.

**Social exclusion**

This is what can happen when a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, unfair discrimination, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown lead to people or places being excluded from the outcomes and opportunities enjoyed by mainstream society.

**Stakeholders**

Those that feel they have a stake in the issue - either because they may be affected by any decision or be able to affect that decision. Stakeholders may be individuals or organisational representatives (Involve 2005).

**Summative evaluation**

Evaluation undertaken at the end of the project under review, providing an overview of the entire process (see also Formative).

**Sustainable development**

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Volunteers**

May be formal or informal:

- informal volunteering: giving unpaid help to those who are not family members; and
- formal volunteering: giving unpaid help through groups etc. to benefit other people or the environment. (Munton T. and Zurawan A. 2004, *Active Communities: Headline Findings from the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey*, London: Home Office)

**Voluntary sector**

Groups whose activities are carried out other than for profit but which are not public or local authorities. These organisations would normally be formally constituted and employ paid professional and administrative staff. They may or may not use volunteer help.

# Annex 2

## Costs and benefits of public engagement

The following tables were devised as part of research work by Diane Warburton and Involve, funded by the Civil Renewal Unit, Home Office, and completed in 2006.

### Some of the benefits of participation

Goals / purpose	Possible indicators	How to get data	Important assumptions
<b>Governance:</b> Democratic legitimacy	Has this initiative encouraged more people to vote in local elections?	Voter turnout figures over several years	<i>All these impacts may be influenced by a wide range of factors, of which citizens' experience of a particular participation exercise is only one, but these indicators can give some clues.</i>
Reputation / trust / legitimacy	Has this initiative encouraged people to think the council is doing a good job?	Opinion polls, focus groups, interviews, questionnaires following events, etc	
	Has this initiative encouraged people to get involved again, because they think it worth while?	As above	
Active citizenship	Has this initiative encouraged people to engage in civic life (e.g. act as school governors etc)?	As above, plus feedback from schools etc	
Accountability	Has this initiative given people more information so they can hold the council accountable for decisions?	Interviews, questionnaires following events, etc	
<b>Social cohesion etc:</b> Social cohesion	Has this initiative helped people from different backgrounds in the area to get on better together?	Questionnaires following events; interviews later, etc	<i>Although these can be broad, long term changes in relations between government and citizens, there are indicators of change that can be used to provide useful feedback.</i>
	Has the initiative reached a cross-sector / representative sample of the local community?	Collecting data on the individuals involved, through questionnaires etc.	
Social capital	Has this enabled people to make new contacts / join new networks beyond their usual relationships?	As above	

Goals / purpose	Possible indicators	How to get data	Important assumptions
Social justice	Has this initiative helped increase equality of access to decision-making or services?	As above	
<b>Quality of services / projects:</b> Public service improvement	Has this initiative saved money by making public services more reflective of local needs, and not spending money on unwanted services?	Comparison of views expressed and changes made to policy and practice; via analysis of initiative reports and proposed changes.	<i>It should not be expected that all proposals made in public engagement exercises will be taken on; although explanations of 'why not?' will be needed if they are not taken on.</i>
Reduced management and maintenance costs	Can costs be saved by reducing vandalism because people feel protective / a sense of ownership and will look after things?	Collecting costs of maintenance of projects that used participatory methods, and comparing these with conventional project maintenance costs.	<i>Maintenance / costs of damage may not be collected in any detail currently; but these costs could be significantly reduced through good public participation.</i>
	Can the costs of damage to facilities be reduced because people use new facilities more effectively because they better understand what / who they are for as a result of involvement?	Collecting costs of damage to facilities caused by lack of knowledge / care.	<i>As above.</i>
Easier development of land and buildings, and other facilities	Has less time been taken up dealing with conflict over proposals for inappropriate development?	Collecting costs of dealing with conflict (e.g. time spent dealing with complaints, objections, campaigns etc).	<i>Most of these costs will be staff time, levels of stress and sick leave etc, which may not normally be collected in this way.</i>
	Has it been quicker to make decisions about development proposals?	As above	<i>As above</i>
Co-production of shared outcomes	Has this initiative saved costs by encouraging people to take more responsibility for their own good health / illness?	Examples of new community-led initiatives  Feedback from patients and doctors	<i>Cost savings will only ever be part of the real value of increased co-production; but it will be useful to start collective evidence on this.</i>
<b>Capacity building / learning</b> Increased participant skills, abilities, confidence	Has the initiative encouraged participants to go on to do other projects with more confidence?	Interviews with participants later on in the process.	<i>The growing confidence and skills of active citizens is understood to contribute to a stronger voluntary sector, and to stronger communities.</i>
	Has the initiative led to people going on to formal training / gaining qualifications?	As above.	

Goals / purpose	Possible indicators	How to get data	Important assumptions
Increased staff skills	Has the initiative enabled staff to run the next exercise without external consultants?	Collecting details of who is involved in running participatory exercises.	<i>Using external people may also be a benefit (e.g. to reassure participants of independence etc).</i>
Stronger communities	Has the initiative increased the strength of the voluntary and community sectors?	Interviews with people in the voluntary and community sectors after the event.	
Raised awareness	Do the participants have a better awareness / understanding of the issues involved as a result of the initiative?	Questionnaires and interviews with participants after the event.	<i>The importance of participation as a learning experience can often be underestimated</i>

### Some of the costs of participation

Costs	Possible indicators	How to get data	Important assumptions
<b>Monetary costs:</b> Staff time (paid)	Time spent (days / hours)	Time sheets linked to data on salaries, on- costs (NI, pension etc), etc	
	Recruitment (if appropriate)	Advertising, interviewing, induction etc.	<i>Some costs may be internal, and more difficult to identify.</i>
Staff expenses	Travel, overnight stays, child care etc	Costs of expenses claimed	
External staff / consultants	Fees charged	Invoices	
Fees to participants	Amounts paid	Record of expenditure, receipts etc	
Expenses to participants	Travel, overnight stays, child care etc	Costs of expenses claimed	
Training (staff)	Costs of training courses	Invoices	
	Days taken for training	Time sheets	
Training (participants)	Costs of external trainers provided	Invoices	
	Costs of places on training courses	Invoices	
Administration	Costs of telephone calls, copying, postage etc	Records of all expenditure related to the project	

Costs	Possible indicators	How to get data	Important assumptions
Venue hire	Costs of venue	Invoices	
Other event costs	Catering, recording equipment, AV equipment etc	Invoices	
Newsletters, leaflets etc	Time for writing, design, illustration Print costs Distribution costs	Time sheets / invoices for external support Invoices Time sheets / invoices	
Monitoring / evaluation	Time for designing and implementing the evaluation process Print costs for feedback sheets etc	Time sheets Invoices	
<b>Non-monetary costs:</b> Time contributed by participants	Days / hours spent in meetings, preparation, research, local consultations etc	Diaries kept by participants	<i>The time given by participants is often under-valued, and planning often fails to take this contribution into account</i>
Staff time (unpaid)	Unpaid overtime	Extended time sheets	
Skills needed for the new approach	Time taken to learn about participatory working, in addition to planning activities	Timesheets	<i>It may be difficult to isolate time learning about participation from general 'learning on the job', but worth keeping in mind</i>
<b>Risks:</b> Reputation	Could participatory working damage a reputation for leadership?  Could poor performance in participatory working affect other projects / programmes?  Could participatory working improve reputation for listening / responsiveness to local concerns?	Public opinion polls, feedback from participants, etc  Public opinion polls, feedback from participants, etc  As above	<i>All risks can be assessed in terms of likelihood (how likely they are to happen), and importance.  Both can be assessed in terms of high / medium / low risk.</i>
Uncertainty	What impacts could less management have on the quality of the project?	Feedback from staff	
Stress	Will participatory working increase / reduce stress?	Feedback from staff	
Conflict	Will participatory working increase / reduce conflict?	Review of impacts of participatory initiative; interviews etc.	

# Annex 3

## Your Health, Your Care, Your Say – a case example of evaluation

### **Introduction**

This annex provides a worked example, using the evaluation framework outlined in the main part of this document, covering the evaluation of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say (YHYCYS) initiative.

The BHYCYS initiative for the Department of Health was one of the largest and most ambitious public engagement exercises ever mounted in the UK. It was designed to ensure public engagement in the development of a government White Paper on health and social care services in the UK. Over 41,000 responses were received through various engagement methods over the three months that the main work took place (September to December 2005), with 1,240 people attending deliberative events in Gateshead, Plymouth, London, Leicester and Birmingham.

This annex describes the evaluation process – the full findings and results of the evaluation can be examined in the full and summary reports of the evaluation on the Department of Health website<sup>1</sup>, or the Shared Practice website<sup>2</sup>.

### **The policy cycle**

The BHYCYS engagement was designed to contribute to the agenda-setting and to shape and discuss policy proposals (see diagram on page 4, for the policy cycle).

### **Thinking about objectives**

The BHYCYS initiative had three explicit objectives that were agreed at the start:

- For the public, providers of care and government to work in partnership to determine policy priorities and design new approaches to future care.
- To increase levels of public engagement in the policy decision making process.
- To produce a public debate visible at local and national levels around the future of personalised and community centred care.

There had also been an implicit objective, as the evaluation brief pointed out that the particular approach used (a version of the America Speaks method) was chosen “as it was felt that it would make some contribution to enhancing trust in government, by reinvigorating public debate, and lead to better public sector service provision, by addressing the needs and concerns of service users and providers”.

The brief recognised the difficulties of finding appropriate indicators for issues such as enhanced trust in government, especially in identifying clear cause and effect links between a particular exercise and such broad, complex and long term changes in relationships between government and citizens.



On the spectrum of public influence (see page 7 of the evaluation framework), the YHYCYS objectives suggest that it aimed for a 'collaborate' level of public influence. However, the methods chosen to provide the greatest depth of involvement (the deliberative research workshops), resulted in an 'involve' level.

In the past, there have been value judgements associated with 'higher' or 'lower' levels of public influence in engagement processes, but it is now widely recognised that the important assessment is whether the level of influence achieved is appropriate to the purpose. In this case, the evaluation concluded that, although the original objective of partnership had not been met, it was probably unrealistic in the circumstances to aim to achieve partnership (especially given the timescale and the scale of the exercise), and that the 'involve' level had been fully delivered, including to the satisfaction of participants.

### **When to start evaluation**

There were two main parts to the YHYCYS evaluation:

- criteria for success and basic data collection and analysis (e.g. participant questionnaires circulated at all deliberative events, computer analysis of findings from the questionnaires) were planned into the process from the start by the Central Office of Information (COI), who were part of the YHYCYS project team;
- an independent evaluation, commissioned by the Department of Health in November 2005 (carried out by Diane Warburton, Shared Practice), although the evaluator had already been invited to observe the main deliberative event (the Citizens Summit in October 2005).

Evaluators were not involved in helping to set the objectives for the YHYCYS initiative overall, although the need to collect feedback data from participants (and data from other sources, e.g. a public opinion poll to measure public awareness at the beginning and after the Summit) was recognised and put in place during Step 1 of planning the engagement process (see page 7), and the COI was involved in the core planning / design group that managed the initiative throughout.

### **Measuring success**

The brief for the evaluation spelled out the criteria for the stated objectives and were further developed by the independent evaluator to cover the implicit objectives. The criteria, how to interpret those, and the evaluation method for gaining the appropriate information, are given at the end of this annex.

The criteria and how they should be interpreted were fairly complex, with key issues to be investigated and various levels of detailed criteria below that (all of which were used to develop the questions for interview). The table below summarises these various levels of criteria.

Objective	Main criteria	Detailed criteria
<p><b>Objective 1:</b> For the public, providers of care and government to work in partnership to determine policy priorities and design new approaches to future care. This was to be assessed by considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— the range of people / organisations involved, and</li> <li>— the extent to which the process enabled those involved to work in partnership.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Range of people:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Reached the number of participants / organisations as specified [target numbers set]</li> <li>— Achieved a sample to provide findings representative of general public opinion (ethnicity, age, gender and socio-economic status)</li> <li>— Involved 'seldom heard groups' (e.g. BME, older and young people, people without qualifications, people on low incomes, people with disabilities)</li> <li>— Involved groups likely to be disproportionately affected by changes (e.g. those with poor health, less articulate, poor access to health services, heavy users of services, carers).</li> </ul> <p><b>Working in partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Transparency and lack of bias in methodology and the analysis process</li> <li>— Being viewed by the public as putting them at the centre of the policy-making process</li> <li>— Iteration to allow policy options to develop in response to public opinion</li> <li>— Integration of results from general public and stakeholder processes (including appropriate timing for assimilation of results).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Range of people:</b> The process was expected to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— inclusive</li> <li>— involve seldom heard groups</li> <li>— involve groups disproportionately affected</li> <li>— representative</li> <li>— participants not demographically / attitudinally biased.</li> </ul> <p><b>Working in partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— No indication of bias within the fieldwork process or analysis process (process to be open and transparent)</li> <li>— Participants' belief that the results of the exercise will be influential</li> <li>— Participants' belief that the results reflect the discussions held</li> <li>— Resulting White Paper reflects the priorities identified via the listening exercise (relationship between process results and final decisions)</li> <li>— Those involved have a shared understanding of the task they are engaged in</li> <li>— Those involved have a shared understanding of its objectives</li> <li>— Participants have an opportunity to influence the process itself</li> <li>— Participants have the opportunity to learn from each other</li> <li>— Participants have sufficient information or resources to enter into the partnership.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 2:</b> To increase levels of public engagement in the policy decision making process.</p>	<p>No specific criteria were identified, but data was collected on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— participants' initial motivations for taking part (and whether it</li> </ul>	<p>Data was collected from participants before the Citizens Summit, and afterwards, and compared with a separate public opinion survey which</p>

Objective	Main criteria	Detailed criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— met their expectations)</li> <li>— what they felt they had learned from taking part (and extent to which they changed their views and behaviour as a result; and any other benefits)</li> <li>— the extent to which participants currently felt involved in decisions about these issues</li> <li>— how important they felt it is for the public to be involved in these decisions</li> <li>— whether participants thought further events like this should be conducted in future (and whether they would be willing to take part)</li> </ul>	<p>showed general public views on the issues. In depth data was obtained through interviews.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3:</b> To produce a public debate visible at local and national levels around the future of personalised and community centred care.</p>	<p>No specific criteria were produced but two approaches of gaining data were originally proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— review of the media monitoring throughout, and comparison with coverage of previous consultation activities</li> <li>— a public opinion poll to test public awareness.</li> </ul>	<p>In practice, the communication activities focused less on gaining general press coverage but rather to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— increase the effectiveness of the consultation process by developing and disseminating consistent messages</li> <li>— widening the reach of the consultation by working with partners to reach 'seldom heard' groups.</li> </ul> <p>These therefore became the criteria against which activities and achievements were assessed.</p>
<p><b>Implicit objective:</b> Make some contribution to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— enhancing trust in government, by reinvigorating public debate, and</li> <li>— better public sector service provision, by addressing the needs and concerns of service users and providers.</li> </ul>	<p>No criteria were specified initially, but data was analysed and questions developed for interviews which explored these issues, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— initial trust in the process</li> <li>— increased trust in government as a result of involvement</li> <li>— analysis of respondents to different processes to ensure information on the needs and concerns of service users and providers had been obtained and incorporated.</li> </ul>	

The process of working out the criteria against which the engagement initiative will be assessed can be extremely helpful in clarifying the objectives at the earliest stages of planning. For example, thinking through the practical implications of *testing* the extent to which the process involved 'working in partnership' with the public, and how that could be measured, should affect the choice of methods (which methods will deliver those outcomes) and the overall design, timing and resourcing of the process. This will help ensure that the appropriate process is designed, and methods used, that will fully deliver on the stated objectives.

### **Doing the evaluation – what should it cover?**

The full report of the YHYCYS initiative covered all the elements outlined in the main framework (pages 12 - 13), except for Inputs (costs) as these were seen to be outside the scope of the evaluation (although interviewees were asked whether they thought the process represented money well spent).

The evaluation report covered:

- The methodology of the evaluation itself, with annexes providing detail on the brief, the interview process and the questions asked of interviewees;
- The objectives of the engagement process and summary of the main outputs / activities (which included descriptions of the different methods);
- The background and context for the engagement process (e.g. noting that local primary care trusts and strategic health authorities had been conducting major public consultations locally at the same time on restructuring - with implications for jobs and local services - which affected the willingness of these institutions to run local YHYCYS consultations);
- The extent to which each objective in turn was met (including the implicit objective), which included coverage of levels of involvement, who was involved in the different processes, methods used and outcomes;
- Lessons for the future including what worked well, what worked less well, and specific lessons on levels of engagement, representation, commitment and integrity, costs, timing, trust, policy iteration and integration of the results of the engagement.

### **Doing the evaluation - how to do it?**

- **Scoping the evaluation:**
- The overall purpose of the evaluation was "to determine the success of the listening exercise at meeting the objectives specified at its outset". In addition, the evaluation was to consider:
  - how success had been achieved (whether specific components were particularly important)
  - whether any failures were intrinsic to the approach adopted or contingent on the manner of its implementation, and
  - whether any opportunities were missed.

The evaluation research therefore needed to focus both on the outcomes of the exercise (what impacts?) and how it had worked in practice (what works?).

- there was a fixed budget for the evaluation and a timescale of ‘as soon as possible’
  - a learning approach was the key focus, although it proved equally important to test the extent to which various targets had been met (the audit approach), such as ensuring a representative cross-section of the public and inclusion of ‘seldom heard’ groups
  - a cross-government advisory group was established, chaired by the Department of Constitutional Affairs to reinforce the independence of the evaluation, which advised on the key issues to be addressed, the evaluation research process and provided feedback on findings as they emerged. It was agreed that participants should only be involved in providing information and views
  - it was agreed that a full report would be published, and quotes used from participants, but that interview transcripts and the identity of interviewees would remain confidential within the evaluation process.
- **Collecting data.** The main processes, which provided quantitative / statistical and qualitative data, and quotes from participants, were:
    - detailed analysis of the data that had been collected on questionnaires completed by participants at the events
    - structured interviews with participants from all the main deliberative events (national and regional), organisers of devolved events, facilitators and process designers, policy makers in the Department of Health, stakeholders (from the stakeholder task forces working alongside the public engagement) and internal Department of Health organisers of the process; interviews were undertaken at the end of the engagement process, after the publication of the White Paper and the reconvened event, to get feedback on perceptions of impacts on policy
    - observation at the main national deliberative events.
  - **Analysing data.** Data was analysed against the aims and objectives of the engagement process and against the agreed criteria for success on those objectives.
  - **Testing findings.** Findings were tested with the cross-government advisory group, and they also gave feedback on draft reports. In addition, a seminar on the YHYCYS initiative was set up by the Government Communications Unit at the Cabinet Office (who were represented on the advisory group). This gave valuable feedback on the findings at that stage and raised questions that could be addressed more fully in the design and research of the final stage of the evaluation.
  - **Report writing.** The main report provides a detailed description of the process, the evaluation and its findings. A summary report was also produced and sent to all interviewees for the evaluation research. Both these reports were published on the Department of Health website in August 2006.
  - **After the evaluation.** Articles and other written outputs are planned, including the possibility of wider guidance on deliberative public engagement by central government, drawing on the lessons of this evaluation.

### Criteria proposed originally

Objective 1 – public, providers and government working in partnership to determine policy priorities and design new approaches to future care

Criteria	Requirement	Evaluation method
Inclusive	Involvement of seldom heard groups	Process Review
	Involvement of groups disproportionately affected	Process Review
Representative	Participants not demographically/attitudinally biased	Process Review
Open / Transparent	Analysis process	Process Review
	Extent to which participation is open	Process Review / Stakeholder Interview
Influential	Timing – assimilation of results	Process Review
	Relationship between results and final decisions:	Process Review
	— Evidence of policy reflecting outputs from process	Review of White Paper in relation to process outcomes
	— Evidence of changes to the policy process because of process	Policy lead interviews
Dialogic	Shared understanding of processes and tasks	Participant Qre, Stakeholder Qre, Participant Interview, Policy lead interview, Stakeholder Interview, Observation
	Equality of voice (Frame setting – ability to raise issues, activity)	Participant Qre, Stakeholder Qre, Participant Interview, Policy lead interview, Stakeholder Interview, Observation, Process Review
	Shared understanding of objectives	Participant Qre, Stakeholder Qre, Participant Interview, Policy lead interview, Stakeholder Interview
	Opportunity to learn	Participant Qre, Stakeholder Qre, Participant Interview, Policy lead interview, Facilitator interview, Stakeholder Interview
	No bias in information	Participant Qre, Stakeholder Qre, Participant Interview, Facilitator interview, Stakeholder Interview, Observation, Process Review
	No bias in facilitation	Participant Qre, Stakeholder Qre, Participant Interview, Facilitator interview, Stakeholder Interview, Observation, Process Review

### Objective 2 – increasing levels of public engagement in the policy decision making process

Criteria	Requirement	Evaluation method
Interest	Public interest in outcome of listening exercise	Public Qre, Participant Interview
	Participant interest policy	Participant Qre, Stakeholder Qre, Participant Interview, Stakeholder Interview
Importance	Public attitude toward listening exercise	Public Qre
	Participant perception of importance	Participant Qre, Stakeholder Qre, Participant Interview, Stakeholder Interview
Understanding	Government view of relative importance of these results Public understanding of purpose of exercise	Policy lead interview Public Qre
	Participant understanding of trade-offs	Participant Interview, Stakeholder Interview
	Participant understanding of policy process	Participant Interview, Stakeholder Interview
Trust	Public trust in listening exercise	Public Qre
	Participant trust in listening exercise	Participant Qre, Stakeholder Qre, Participant Interview, Stakeholder Interview
	Participant trust in government and policy process	Participant interview

### Objective 3 – producing a public debate visible at local and national level

Criteria	Requirement	Evaluation method
Media coverage	Extent of coverage of the White Paper	Media Monitoring
	Extent of coverage of the Listening exercise	Media Monitoring
Public awareness	Awareness of the Listening exercise	Public Qre
Public participation	Number of people involved	Process Review

Process Review = Retrospective review of processes/outcomes, desk based  
Participant Qre = Questionnaire distributed to public participants at events  
Stakeholder Qre = Questionnaire distributed to 'devolved' event participants or organisers  
Stakeholder Interview = Depth interview with 'devolved' event participants or organisers  
Participant Interview = Depth interview with public participant  
Policy lead interview = Depth interview with policy and political leads  
Facilitator interview = Depth interview with facilitators at events and process designers  
Public Qre = Questionnaire with general public  
Observation = Attendance at event Media Monitoring

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1 [http://www.dh.gov.uk/NewsHome/YourHealthYourCareYourSay/YourSayArticle/fs/en?CONTENT\\_ID=4138539&chk=Voane/](http://www.dh.gov.uk/NewsHome/YourHealthYourCareYourSay/YourSayArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4138539&chk=Voane/)  
2 <http://www.sharedpractice.org.uk>



# Annex 4

## Principles of good practice

This Annex includes principles of good practice from three major national and international sources with extensive experience of public engagement: Involve, the International Association of Public Participation, and The Environment Council. Clearly, different principles will apply depending on the type of engagement exercise being planned, so the following provide a range of options.

### **Involve**

Involve's *People and Participation. How to put citizens at the centre of decision-making* (2005) proposes the following principles of good practice in public engagement:

- Makes a difference. The purpose of participation is to achieve change in relation to the purpose identified; it may also make a difference to all those involved in terms of learning, confidence and sense of active citizenship. This requires active commitment to change by all parties.
- Voluntary. People may be encouraged to be involved, and even paid for involvement, but effective participation requires them to choose to be involved. Participation cannot be compulsory.
- Transparency, honesty and clarity about the purpose, the limits (what can and cannot be changed), who can be involved and how, and what happens as a result (next steps).
- Adequate resources, to manage the process well, and to deliver on the results.
- Appropriate participants, representative and/or inclusive, depending on the purpose of the exercise, with traditionally excluded groups given special support and encouragement when their involvement is appropriate.
- Accessibility, so no participant is excluded because of lack of physical access to meeting places, timing, appropriate support (e.g. child care), etc.
- Accountability. Participatory processes need to be accountable to all those involved (including the organisation that may be running / commissioning the exercise, and to the wider 'community'). This requires good record-keeping and reporting of both processes and outcomes.
- Power. Participatory processes should have sufficient power to achieve the agreed objectives. This may require a change in the existing power sharing arrangements.
- Learning and development. Participatory processes should seek to support a climate of mutual learning and development among all those involved.

### **International Association Of Public Participation (IAP2)**

IAP2 promotes the Co-Intelligence Institute's principles that are designed to "Nurture Wise Democratic Process and Collective Intelligence in Public Participation" ([www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org)).

*Wise democratic processes are those which utilize a community's or society's diversity to deepen shared understanding and produce outcomes of long-term benefit to the whole community or society. Not all public participation serves this purpose. Public participation*

*can either enhance or degrade the collective intelligence and wisdom involved in democratic processes such as making collective decisions, solving social problems, and creating shared visions. The principles below offer some guidance for designing wise democratic processes.*

### **1 Include all relevant perspectives**

The diversity of perspectives engaged in a wise democratic process will approximate the diversity of the community of people affected by the outcome. In addition, community wisdom and buy-in come from the fair and creative inclusion of all relevant perspectives -- all related viewpoints, cultures, information, experiences, needs, interests, values, contributions and dreams. Furthermore, those who are centrally involved, peripherally involved or not involved in a situation each have -- by virtue of their unique perspectives -- uniquely valuable contributions to make toward the wise resolution of that situation. Creative inclusion of perspectives generates more wisdom than mechanical inclusion of people.

### **2 Empower the people's engagement**

To the extent people feel involved in the creation or ratification of democratic decisions -- either directly or by recognized representatives -- they will support the implementation of those decisions. This is especially true to the extent they feel their agency and power in the process -- i.e., that they clearly see the impact of their diverse contributions in the final outcome. Thus, it serves democracy and collective intelligence when expertise and leadership are on tap to -- and not on top of -- the decision-making processes of "We, the People" and anyone democratically mandated by the people to care for the common welfare.

### **3 Invoke multiple forms of knowing**

Community wisdom arises from the interplay of stories (with their full emotional content), facts, principles, reason, intuition and compassion. To the extent any one of these dominates or is missing, the outcome will be less wise.

### **4 Ensure high quality dialogue**

The supreme test of dialogue is its ability to use commonality and diversity (including conflict) creatively. There are three tests for the quality of dialogue towards desirable outcomes: Is it deepening understanding? Is it building relationships? Is it expanding possibilities? Most public forums need good facilitation to ensure high quality dialogue.

### **5 Establish ongoing participatory processes**

Since intelligence is the capacity to learn, and learning is an ongoing process, collective intelligence can manifest most powerfully in democratic processes that are ongoing, iterative, and officially recognized by the whole community or society. One-time events (such as public hearings and conferences that are not part of a larger ongoing democratic process) are limited in their capacity to generate collective intelligence for a whole community or society. The institutionalisation of official periodic citizen deliberations according to these principles, maximizes collective intelligence.

### **6 Use positions and proposals as grist**

Early focus on positions and proposals can prevent the emergence of the best possible outcomes. In general, collective intelligence is supported by beginning with an exploratory

approach which notes existing positions, proposals and solutions as grist for exploring the situations they were created to handle. Exploring the assumptions, interests, needs, values, visions, experiences, etc., that gave birth to these particular proposals tends to deepen understanding and relationship so that new and better solutions can emerge.

#### 7 Help people feel fully heard

To the extent people feel fully heard, they will be able to hear others and, ultimately, join in collaborative deliberation and co-creative problem-solving.

### **The Environment Council**

The Environment Council (TEC) has developed a model of stakeholder dialogue over the past decade, both through practice (of designing and running stakeholder dialogue processes for public, private and voluntary sector sponsors) and through the development of a successful facilitation training course. TEC's training manual for stakeholder dialogue outlines 12 principles for good practice for stakeholder dialogue as outlined below:

- **Stakeholder Dialogue is an inclusive process, involving all interest groups that have a concern about the outcome.** This includes the decision-makers, those directly affected by the decision and those who could support or obstruct its implementation. Dialogue will often include those who are usually excluded.
- **Dialogue meetings are designed and facilitated by independent professional facilitators who have no vested interest in the final outcome.** The facilitator will not take a position on the substantive issues. Their role is to ensure that the process is even handed and that meetings are as productive as possible – for example, avoiding domination by particular individuals or interest groups. The facilitator will also control the destructive behaviour that often undermines the value of typical 'town hall' meetings on difficult issues.
- **Responsibility for the agenda and the process is shared among all stakeholders.** Many processes fail from the outset because the agenda does not meet the needs of participants. In a dialogue process, the facilitator will help the participants to develop an agenda and work programme that addresses the issues of real concern.
- **Dialogue delivers practical solutions to real problems** – and solutions that often stick, since the process maximises stakeholder buy-in. It is particularly appropriate for high-conflict or complex issues.
- **People attend as equals.** Stakeholder dialogue aims to create a level playing field for participation.
- **Dialogue is a two-way process.** Traditional, pre-prepared presentations will be kept to an absolute minimum in the interest of allowing more time for two-way communication.
- **The process allows for interests, values, feelings, needs and fears.** Unlike some consultation processes, stakeholder dialogue values everything that is said without pre-judging what is 'real', or 'important', or 'rational'.
- **The process seeks to encourage new understanding and improved relationships.** These 'invisible products' are often crucial in enabling participants to move forward together or to implement the outcome of the process.

- **Stakeholder dialogue processes are recorded visibly and transparently, with stakeholders having control over the content and accuracy of the recording.** Facilitators normally record meetings on large sheets of paper, and produce a record in the form of photographs or an exact transcription of what has been publicly recorded.
- **Dialogue processes seek to identify and build on common ground.** Traditional processes, by contrast, tend to focus on (and therefore magnify) disagreement, to the extent that participants frequently do not realise there are significant areas on which they may already agree.
- **The process will seek to move the focus from the past to the future.** This helps to avoid unproductive blaming and creates a shared responsibility for the way forward. (However, there will often be a need for an initial period in which past grievances, real or imagined, can be aired.)
- **Dialogue processes are iterative in their approach.** The same issues may need to be addressed more than once to allow for the development of shared solutions. Traditional methods, on the other hand, tend to rely on ‘snapshot’ consultations or set-piece events that do not encourage participants to move away from the initial negotiating positions.

# Annex 5

## Other guides to engagement

There are now many guides to public engagement, including on specific subjects or for specific agencies. The list below covers some of the best known and useful guides. Some of those mentioned below relate to public participation at local level, and have been included here because the principles and good practice they outline are equally relevant to participation in central government initiatives.

Involve is currently reviewing resources on public engagement for the Civil Renewal Unit, to support the Together We Can network, covering publications, training, funding, advice and support. Guidance will be available from January 2007.

### **Government**

Audit Commission (1999) *Listen Up: Effective Community Consultation*. Audit Commission, Abingdon. Available at: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/AC-REPORT.asp?CatID=&ProdID=EA01768C-AA8E-4a2f-99DB-83BB58790E34>

Cabinet Office (2002) *Viewfinder: A Policy Makers Guide to Public Involvement*. Cabinet Office, London. Available at: <http://www.policyhub.gov.uk/docs/Viewfinder.pdf>

Cabinet Office (2003) *Guidance on the Code of Practice on Consultation*. Cabinet Office, London. Available at: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance>

DETR (1998) *Guidance on Enhancing Public Participation in Local Government*. DETR, London. Summary available at: [http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_localgov/documents/page/odpm\\_locgov\\_023831.hcsp](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_locgov_023831.hcsp)

Home Office (2004) *What works in community involvement in area-based initiatives?* Home Office RDS OLS (on line report) 53/04. Available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/onlinepubs1.html>

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2002) *Public Participation in Local Government: A Survey of Local Authorities*. ODPM, London. Available at: <http://www.interactweb.org.uk/papers/ODPMPublicParticipationinLG.pdf>

The Scottish Office (2000) *Involving Civil Society in the Work of Parliaments*. The Scottish Office, Edinburgh. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/government/devolution/cpsp-00.asp>

Scottish Parliament (2004) *Participation Handbook*. Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh. Available at: [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/participationHandbook/Participation\\_Handbook\\_6th\\_August\\_2004.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/participationHandbook/Participation_Handbook_6th_August_2004.pdf)

**Other**

Involve (2005) *People and Participation. How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making*. Involve and Together We Can, London. Available at: <http://www.involving.org>

New Economics Foundation (1998) *Participation Works!: 21 techniques of community participation for the 21st century*. New Economics Foundation, London. Available at: <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/84709>

POWER Inquiry (2005) *Beyond the Ballot - 57 democratic innovations from around the world*. POWER Inquiry, London. Available at: [http://www.powerinquiry.org/publications/documents/BeyondtheBallot\\_000.pdf](http://www.powerinquiry.org/publications/documents/BeyondtheBallot_000.pdf)

Research Councils UK (2002) *Dialogue with the public: Practical Guidelines*. Research Councils UK, London. Available at: [www.rcuk.ac.uk/guidelines/dialogue/guide.pdf](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/guidelines/dialogue/guide.pdf)

Warburton, D. (2001) *Evaluating Participatory, Deliberative and Co-operative Ways of Working*. A working paper by InterAct, London. Available at: <http://www.sharedpractice.org.uk>

Wates, N. (2000) *The Community Planning Handbook: How People can Shape their Cities, Towns and Villages*. Earthscan, London. See also related website at: <http://www.communityplanning.net/>

Wilcox, D. (1994) *The Guide to Effective Participation*. Partnership Books, Brighton. Available at: <http://www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/>

## **Making a Difference:**

### A guide to evaluating public participation in central government

Public participation has become a central plank of public policy-making. Increasingly, decision-makers at all levels of government build citizen and stakeholder engagement into their policy-making processes. Activities range from large-scale consultations that involve tens of thousands of people, to focus group research, on-line discussion forums and small, deliberative citizens' juries.

This guide to evaluating public participation is intended to help those involved in planning, organising or funding these activities to understand the different factors involved in creating effective public participation.

It helps planners set and measure attainable objectives, evaluate impact, and identify lessons for future practice. Using clear language, simple instructions, illustrative case studies and a glossary, this guide is a valuable tool for anyone involved in running or commissioning public participation in central government and beyond.

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