



Wakefield Together Partnership

Community Engagement Strategy

Introduction

Greater emphasis than ever before is being placed upon the importance of effective engagement of communities in key decision making processes by all organisations. The goal is to create an enabling society that maximises individual and community potential and ensures that social justice, health and sustainability are at the heart of policies and service planning. Effective local delivery requires effective participatory decision-making at a local level it is vital therefore to build social capital at neighbourhood level to ensure that policies are both owned by those most affected and are shaped by their experiences. The intention is that this engagement strategy will form an essential component of the District's Area Delivery Models. The strategy requires a new way of thinking to ensure that not only will services incorporate the needs as identified by local communities but will also support the building of capacity and infra-structures within neighbourhoods in order to harness community potential and to work towards delivering initiatives in co-production.

The community engagement strategy recognises the diversity of our communities, the importance of community and organisational capacity building and the need to provide appropriate opportunities for communities to participate at which ever level they wish in order to influence decision making and service development.

Strategic Vision – 'What Good Looks Like'

Wakefield Together is committed to ensuring that communities are fully engaged in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of services which impact on their quality of life and well being. We will ensure that:

- communities are involved in decisions that affect them
- active citizenship is promoted and people of all ages are encouraged and supported to get involved
- the diversity of the needs of citizens is taken into account in the design and delivery of services to ensure that these are appropriate and accessible by all
- action is taken by all partners to ensure that no one in Wakefield is disadvantaged because of their age, gender, race, sexuality or religion

Aim of Community Engagement Strategy

The aim in developing the Community Engagement Strategy is to work towards empowering communities by promoting greater involvement in decision making where appropriate, supporting independent community initiatives where possible and to demonstrate where engagement activities can make a genuine improvement to service provision resulting in improved well being, efficiency savings and reduced inequalities

Individual and Community Empowerment

There is no question that central, regional and local government all have crucial roles to play in setting policy direction and planning local delivery but increasingly, as is proposed in the 'Big Society', organisations are tasked with ensuring that local people are at the heart of developing locally appropriate plans. This strategy puts empowerment of individuals and communities at the centre of action to improve well-being and reduce inequalities. But achieving individual empowerment requires social action. Central to the vision of this strategy is creating conditions for individuals to take control of their own lives. For some communities this will mean removing structural barriers to participation, for others facilitating and developing capacity and capability through personal and community development.

National Standards for Community Engagement

By adopting National Standards, Wakefield Together expects to develop and build better working relationships between communities and the statutory, community and voluntary sectors. The standards set out the key principles, behaviours and practical measures that underpin effective community engagement. They are designed to help develop and support good practice and will underpin all our community engagement activity and will ensure that the way we work with communities is open, transparent and effective. This will be done by:

- Involving, supporting and ensuring that engagement activities provide opportunities for all sections of the community to participate, particularly people and groups that are often missed out of engagement activities.
- Supporting people by identifying and removing barriers to participation
- Planning, strengthening, developing and sustaining opportunities for local people and groups to influence what happens in their community.
- Using community engagement methods that provide variety, flexibility and are fit for purpose.
- Working together and sharing engagement skills, putting procedures in place to ensure that we are working well together, efficiently and effectively.
- Sharing information to ensure that all participants are operating with the same information.

Continuum of Community Engagement

Minimum Involvement

Maximum Involvement



Giving Information

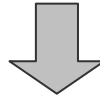
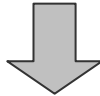
Getting Information

Forums for Debate

Participation

Partnership

Empowerment



- Exhibitions
- Leaflets & written documentation/publications
- The Media
- Web-based information
- SMS text
- Annual Report

- Citizens Panels
- Open Surgeries
- Radio or live phone-in
- Questionnaires
- 1:1 Interviews
- Surveys
- SMS text
- Market Research
- Audits
- Complaints and compliments

- Focus Groups
- Meetings with client groups
- Public meetings
- Seminars
- Stakeholder events
- Blogs

- Citizen juries
- Expert panels
- Client shadowing
- Mystery shopping
- Story telling
- E-panels
- Co-design/ co-production

- Strategic partnership groups
- Large group processes
- Local involvement networks
- Overview & scrutiny committees

- Community development
- Participatory Research
- Planning for Real
- Community Champions
- Participatory Budgeting

Organisational/Cultural Development

In order to be successful community engagement needs to be embedded within all aspects of commissioning and a culture created where community engagement is a priority objective for all staff. It will need to be incorporated into workforce development strategies in order to support staff to develop skills and confidence to implement appropriate methods of engagement, based on national guidelines and standards, to act upon findings and to encourage others to do so. To achieve this it is recommended that Wakefield Together partners:

- develop opportunities for staff training at all levels including elected members to support them in their community leadership role
- Build the capacity of leaders and management in embedding engagement skills, techniques and expertise across the partnership
- review the community engagement toolkit alongside the introduction of good practice standards leading to a quality mark for engagement
- include an introduction to community engagement in the staff induction programme and link to core competencies across all organisations

Linking Community Engagement to Commissioning of Services



Data Sharing and Confidentiality

In order to ensure that community engagement activity is coordinated across the district agreed principles need to be developed in relation to the sharing of data and local intelligence.

Key to its success is to ensure awareness of confidentiality issues in community engagement activities, with particular regard to the Freedom of Information Act (Confidentiality issues will be adhered to, within the constraints of legislation).

Integrity

Values and principles which embrace openness, honesty and transparency are crucial to the success of our approach to engagement. We will:

- ensure that community engagement activities are voluntary and that participants can withdraw at any time
- ensure that information obtained from community engagement activities is honestly interpreted
- ensure that the rights and dignity of all participants are respected at all times
- respect the rights of participants to reveal about themselves
- give careful consideration to activities, information and questions to ensure that they do not offend, cause distress or embarrassment

Indicators of Success

It is important for us to know whether we are achieving our vision in delivering the district wide partnership community engagement strategy. We will use an outcomes based model of accountability which focuses on developing common language, common sense and common ground. This approach will generate both quantitative and qualitative data which will provide information on what is working, changes to plans and implications for future budgeting.

Action Plan to Develop the Community Engagement Strategy

Delivering the strategy will depend upon a number of factors: securing investment, building organisational and community infra-structures, building organisational and community capacity, working in effective partnerships and ensuring the strategy becomes a key part of the Wakefield policy agenda. A multi agency community engagement coordinating group has been established in order to take this agenda forward and has identified a series of actions in order to move the strategy into action:

- develop and hold an overview of community engagement activity
- develop protocols and agreement on how information and issues identified as part of engagement activities are fed back to the statutory,

community and voluntary sectors and used to inform service development

- develop a performance management system – consideration will need to be given in relation to the staffing/resource implications
- develop a community engagement database – consideration will need to be given in relation to the staffing/resource implications to make it effective
- develop expertise in finding the views of people who are perceived to be hard to reach by utilising a raft of participatory approaches which acknowledge literacy levels, learning and sensory disabilities
- develop and enhance skills and expertise in engagement and participation to ensure that national standards are used and that staff skills are developed to undertake engagement activities
- develop a coordinated communications and information strategy to ensure that information is available at the correct time and place to ensure informed decisions are made
- ensure engagement plans link to Cohesion, Prevent, Shared Futures and Third Sector Strategy and action plans
- agree strategic priorities for community engagement activity
- use national community engagement standards when undertaking community engagement activity
- implement the use of VOICE Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement in order to develop a common, comprehensive database of community engagement activity
- be responsible for decisions in relation to the use of pooled community engagement budgets on behalf of all partners
- develop a strategy and performance management framework for community development and community engagement

What has been achieved so far?

Action and Lead Agencies	Progress	Risks	Next Steps and timescales
<p>Development of multi-agency steering group</p> <p>WMDC NHSWD WDH VAWD VOX WY Police</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group developed 2010 Bi Monthly meetings held Task and finish group on Corporate Engagement planning established and first joint event being planned. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of further specific task and finish groups Ongoing process
<p>Develop a community engagement data base</p> <p>WMDC NHSWD</p>	<p>Agreement across partners to Adopt VOICE standards and data base model.</p> <p>Agreement to fund dedicated member of staff to populate and coordinate data base systems secured via PH dept.</p>	<p>IT problems identified re multi-agency input and access to joint data base.</p>	<p>Negotiations commenced with IT</p>
<p>Develop and enhance skills and expertise in engagement and participation to ensure that national standards are used and that a wide range of staff are developed to undertake engagement activity</p> <p>WMDC NHSWD</p>	<p>Funding has been secured via TSF to deliver VOICE training across partners.</p> <p>2 sessions have already been held a third is planned for September</p>		<p>Continue to roll out the programme utilising and cascading the skills throughout organisations</p>
<p>Develop expertise in finding the views of people who are perceived to be hard to reach by utilising a raft of participatory approaches which acknowledge literacy levels, learning and sensory disabilities.</p>	<p>'Smarter Lifestyle' semi –structured interviewing process being rolled out across priority neighbourhoods. This is a partnership project between WDH, NHSWD and WMDC.</p> <p>Community Development staff undertaken the Train the Trainers programme in Participatory Research Methods.</p> <p>Funding secured via PH dept to undertake PRA in priority areas.</p>	<p>Confirmation of funding required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out 'Smarter Lifestyle' programme across priority areas. Roll out PRA process across priority areas. Roll out training in PRA across agencies.
<p>Develop opportunities for leaders and management to support the development of local leadership</p> <p>WMDC NHSWD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit planned to successful Manton Neighbourhood Management scheme in October 2010 		<p>Plans to develop peer support networks between neighbouring districts.</p> <p>November 2010 onwards</p>
<p>Develop protocols and agreement on how information and issues identified as part of engagement activities are fed back to statutory, community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiations undertaken with chair of PIIG in order to ensure that qualitative data generated from engagement activity is thematically 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning group meeting September 2010 Partnership

<p>and voluntary sectors and used to inform service development</p> <p>WMDC NHSWD WY Police</p>	<p>analysed and utilised to inform service planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting planned for early September to develop protocols for data sharing. 		<p>protocols shared</p> <p>Ongoing process</p>
<p>Develop opportunities for pooling budgets around engagement activity</p> <p>WMDC NHSWD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans being developed to hold joint corporate engagement events in 7 Area Forums in October – working group tasked to deliver on this. Joint plans being developed to engage communities on future developments in the library service. 	Funding	
<p>Develop shared outcome based model of measuring success</p> <p>NHSWD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement secured from partners to adopt this model 		
<p>Develop a strategic approach to community development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement secured from Public Health Directorate to focus Community development activity in the 12 priority neighbourhoods. Project Initiation Document prepared for submission focussing on delivering co-production models in priority neighbourhoods. Task and Finish multi-agency steering group developed in order to monitor progress of co-production model. £30k secured from DH to develop Asset Based Community Development pilots in 2 priority areas – Eastmoor and Warwick 		
<p>Develop community skills in active citizenship</p> <p>NHSWD WMDC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiations taking place with WEA to roll out 'Taking Part' and 'Making the Change' programmes. 	Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible funding stream identified – further negotiation required with partners to secure 'sign up'
<p>Develop community capacity to support local infra-structures and volunteering initiatives</p> <p>NHSWD JPHU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding secured to develop 'Community Champions' in priority neighbourhoods 		
<p>Audit of engagement activity in twelve priority neighbourhoods</p>	<p>Audit undertaken and information used to update calendar of</p>	<p>Duplication and inefficiency.</p>	<p>Contributions from partners for calendar</p>

WMDC	engagement activity on Wakefield Together website.		of engagement ongoing.
<p>Community Engagement Coordination Group (Sub Group) established to streamline approaches to engagement.</p> <p>WMDC NHSWD</p>	Meeting held between lead officers on engagement and consultation for Greenspace Strategy and Libraries Review – identification of joint opportunities for engagement activity during October/November	Risk – duplication and inefficiencies.	<p>Projects used as an exemplar of good practice and used as a pilot for first use of VOICE standards.</p> <p>Identification of detailed programmes and sharing of resources at focus groups and across teams.</p> <p>Further discussions to establish programme of engagement involving children and young people across the district.</p> <p>Reviewing approach to elected member engagement and considering the establishment of joint workshop to introduce quality standards for engagement – and engagement programmes.</p>
<p>Training of community researchers to be agreed across Partnership.</p> <p>WMDC NHSWD</p>	Pilot approach to be developed for partnership to train people as community researchers.		
<p>Development of programme of partnership roadshows.</p> <p>WMDC NHSWD</p>	CECG to drive programme of engagement		Work with partnerships communications group to utilise fully the potential of the joint programme of engagement and communication.