

## **'DON'T TREAT US AS ALL THE SAME'**

### **Equalities and the National Standards for Community Engagement**

#### **Advice Note**

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#### **Appendix 1 The National Standards for Community Engagement**

#### **Acknowledgements**

The Scottish Community Development Centre and Communities Scotland would like to thank all of the organisations and individuals who gave their time and expertise to help develop this resource. 48 people attended four seminars towards the end of 2005 and many of them contributed further comments on a draft of this Advice Note. They confirmed and added to the knowledge of equalities and community engagement issues already reflected in the National Standards and support materials. This Advice Note is based upon their views and real life experiences of community engagement.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Advice Note has been produced to support people who want to ensure community engagement is inclusive and promotes equal opportunities. It is designed to be used with the National Standards for Community Engagement (the Standards) and alongside the other materials produced to support implementation of the Standards, all of which can be found on the website of Communities Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

Four seminars were held to support development of the Advice Note: on engaging young people, older people, minority ethnic communities and refugees and people with a disability or health condition. The advice largely comes, therefore, from people with substantial experience of engaging communities who face barriers to their involvement. It is not intended to be comprehensive but to get you thinking about equalities and community engagement and to provide practical tips on how to get started on making community engagement more inclusive.

Recommendations on how to engage with Religious, Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual and Transgender and Gender groups were developed by the organisations specifically representing these groups. The organisations involved were: Fitzgerald Associates, Maximise Consultancy, Communities Scotland and Scottish Interfaith Council.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk). A Standards Manual and a range of more detailed materials on equal opportunities approaches to community engagement can be found on this site. Information on the National Standards for Community Engagement, including how they were developed can be found in Appendix 1

## 2. EQUALITIES AND THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Although some progress is being made, our society is still a long way from being inclusive. People face physical, cultural, linguistic, attitudinal, financial and social barriers to their full participation in the community. The way in which community engagement is planned and carried out will determine whether such barriers are overcome and whether everyone in a community gets a fair chance to have their voice heard.

Most of the 500+ people involved in developing the Standards felt that equality should be a fundamental principle of community engagement and it is therefore reflected throughout the Standards as well as in this Advice Note. Public agencies also operate within a legal and policy framework which commits them to prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunities. Key pieces of legislation include:

- The Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 & 1986
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Disability Amendment Act 2005
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Scotland Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2006.

A number of individual policy initiatives also have equal opportunities requirements built into relevant legislation. The mainstreaming of equalities issues is built into two of the overarching policies for public services – community planning and best value – by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 S59(1). Community engagement is central to successful implementation of both of these policies and public bodies are required to report publicly on what action is being taken to fulfil their duties under the Act.

People who face recognised barriers to their participation<sup>2</sup> have very diverse needs and circumstances, although their experiences of being excluded from community engagement processes are often very similar.<sup>3</sup> A 'one size fits all' approach to engaging equalities groups will not work. It is important to think through the different characteristics of equalities groups and the specific implications for community engagement practice, particularly to include people with multiple interests, e.g. young people

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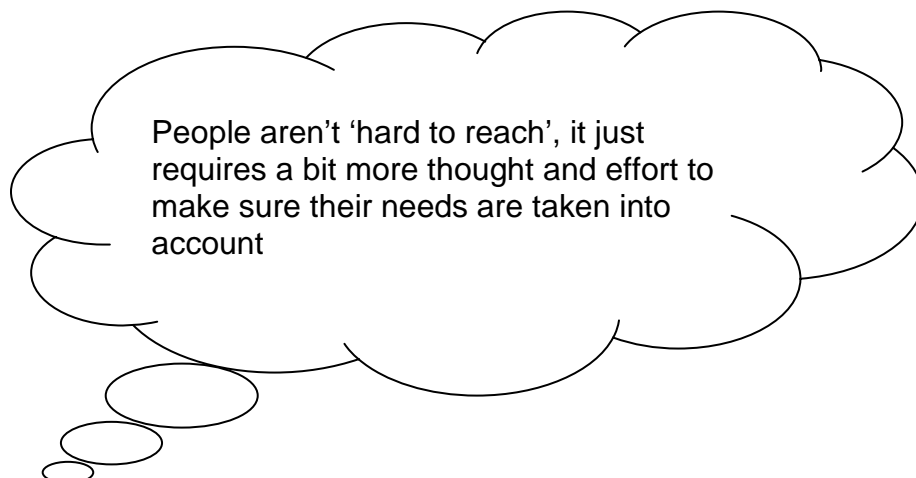
<sup>2</sup> Scottish Executive Good Practice Guidance: Consultation With Equalities Groups

<sup>3</sup> See Section 3 below

with a disability, older people who are gay or lesbian. Relevant characteristics of equalities groups include:

- **Negative stereotypes** leading to inappropriate behaviour and assumptions about capacity for community engagement
- **Portrayed as problems to be solved** in national media and policy debates with negative impact on confidence and self esteem
- **Vulnerability** e.g. due to age, infirmity or lack of citizenship status has implications for protection and support during engagement
- **'Hidden'** - if few in number and scattered across communities
- **Communication** needs, for information in a variety of formats, languages and styles
- **Dependency** upon public services and professionals in positions of power affects willingness to challenge authority
- **Discriminated against** in the community as well as by organisations – confidentiality may be very important
- **Less well organised** and more vulnerable to representation by a minority of vocal members – support for community led, representative organisations more important

Public agencies taking an equalities approach to community engagement will reap significant benefits. Their potential contribution to the community is often ignored. Making community engagement more inclusive will release the skills, talents and energies of many people to help improve public services and local communities. It will also mean that public money is invested more effectively as services are more likely to be relevant and useful to all sections of the community. People who face barriers to their participation in society are often doubly disadvantaged by poverty. Effective and equitable community engagement can be a good 'invest to save' policy on the part of public agencies, by building people's skills and knowledge and giving communities the means to regenerate their neighbourhoods.



#### 4. CURRENT EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A number of common themes emerged from the seminars about people's current experiences of community engagement:<sup>4</sup>

- **disabling and inappropriate language:** the terms used to describe different equalities groups, their needs and characteristics is a sensitive issue and one where good practice changes over time. People are being put off by agencies' use of inappropriate language.
- **missed opportunities to create community solidarity:** Equalities groups also often find themselves competing for scarce resources within extremely disadvantaged communities. Opportunities are not being taken to strengthen equalities groups by generating understanding of different types of discrimination and creating common bonds
- **mixed messages discourage participation:** on the one hand public agencies say they want to engage with equalities groups. At the same time public policy debates on issues such as youth offending, 'bed blocking', immigration and gay rights all too often present people as a 'problem' to be solved.
- **engagement organised to suit agencies:** neither public facilities such as buildings and transport nor the way in which agencies organise their activities and time, were designed to meet the diverse needs of equalities groups. Despite some progress, timescales for consultation are often too short, jargon is commonplace and information is not supplied in different formats.
- **left out of important decisions:** equalities groups are often left out, particularly of the all important early stages of planning community engagement. Space at partnership tables is limited and usually taken by mainstream community organisations
- **pigeon-holed as service users:** equalities groups are regularly consulted on a fairly narrow range of issues defined by agencies as

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<sup>4</sup> People in equalities groups share many of the same needs as other participants in community engagement. Thus it is not surprising that some of the issues raised are applicable to all participants. Issues of particular relevance to equalities groups are noted first, followed by the more general issues. This also applies to the advice given in Section 4.

particularly relevant to their needs. People want to be seen as citizens as well as service users

- **‘all the same’:** assumptions are made that the needs of equalities groups are very similar, when in fact they are very diverse. A one size fits all approach to equalities doesn’t work.
- **mainstream organisations reinforce inequalities:** much community engagement activity is conducted or supported by mainstream organisations in the public and voluntary sectors. It is still unusual for such organisations to have good representation of equalities groups amongst their staff and governing bodies.
- **experience of personal services disempowering:** people take account of their personal experiences of health, housing and other services when considering whether community engagement will be worthwhile. Services are still often experienced as ‘top down’ and authoritarian.
- **consultation rather than dialogue:** Using methods that allow relationships to be established over time is particularly important for equalities groups, to build trust in service providers and change attitudes about their capabilities
- **too little change:** there was instant recognition of the term ‘consultation fatigue’. However not enough change of real consequence is happening given the amount of time and persistent effort it takes equalities groups to have their voice heard.
- **confusing and complex environment:** public sector policies and agencies are seen as confusing, complex and constantly changing. Equalities groups find it particularly difficult to keep abreast of relevant issues and identify who is responsible for what.
- **words mean different things to different people:** agencies use a number of different words – e.g. participation, consultation and involvement – when talking about community engagement. Often the meaning, in terms of the nature and extent of influence on offer isn’t shared, either amongst agencies or with equalities groups. This leads to confusion and unmet expectations. It can be difficult to get agencies and partnerships to devote time to issues like these that are seen as ‘process not product’.

“people use words describing consultation and participation but don't mean the same thing”

“see the person not the diagnosis”

“we' needs to be the whole partnership, moving from engagement to inclusion”

“we are consulted on unimportant issues such as logos”

“use of the term BME communities may make some people feel excluded or reluctant to engage”

“if you have dementia people talk over you, we can't communicate at broadband speed”

“we will meet people on their own terms in their own environment, this should be an additional standard”

“at the start of a community engagement process the 'we' of the Standards is likely to be a fairly narrow group. It needs to broaden to include all participants as the process develops”

## 5. HOW TO MAKE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INCLUSIVE – ADVICE FROM THE SEMINARS

A wide range of suggestions were made at the seminars for how public agencies can make community engagement more inclusive of equalities groups. These are brought together below under the most relevant of the Standards<sup>5</sup>. Three key messages emerged:

- Involve people from equalities groups as early as possible in any community engagement process.
- Whether you want to reach young people, people from minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, LGBT people or other equalities groups, *they* know what methods will engage people effectively.
- The diversity between and within equalities group is substantial and needs to be reflected in approaches to inclusive community engagement
- People may well belong to more than one equalities group, so consideration needs to be given to the cumulative negative effect on them if their different needs are not taken into account in community planning

### Involvement

***‘We will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement’***

- Work on the principle ‘nothing about me without me’. YP; HD; LGBT
- Know and understand the many different communities who use your services so that your approach to identifying relevant people and organisations is based on strong evidence. MA; LGBT
- Supplement published statistics and research with information from community based networks, organisations and community leaders, particularly those led by young people, faith groups, people with disabilities etc. MA; LGBT

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<sup>5</sup> Much of the advice from the seminars was similar, hence it has been brought together here. Insert boxes summarise the distinctive points from each seminar. Symbols identify at which seminars the various points were made, according to the following code: older people OP; young people YP; minority ethnic communities & asylum seekers MA; health & disability HD. The four seminars arguably involved some people from the LGBT communities, however no specific feedback from an LGBT viewpoint was sought as such. Most advice points are also relevant to the LGBT population, however, especially those indicated: lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people LGBT.

- Identify who is currently involved in community engagement and whose voice is not represented. OP; LGBT
- Organisations working with equalities groups can be a useful means of contact for public agencies but problems can arise when organisations act as 'gatekeepers' to community engagement processes. Find ways to reach individual members of equalities groups as well as working with equalities organisations and umbrella groups. HD; MA
- Once you have identified different equalities groups, think about the various sub groups, people who may be 'hidden' from your organisation. Don't treat members of equalities groups as all having the same needs and preferences. HD;MA;YP;OP; LGBT
- Actively promote the National Standards to equalities groups who may not hear about them through the usual channels. MA; HD; YP; LGBT
- See people as citizens first and service users second. Target activities on particular groups where appropriate but also include equalities groups in mainstream community engagement activities and representative groups such as tenants associations, community councils, school boards etc. HD;OP;YP; LGBT
- Some people may not want to participate when you approach them. They may have more pressing concerns at that moment, be reluctant to talk about possible future needs or not want to be publicly identified as a member of an equalities group. HD;YP; LGBT

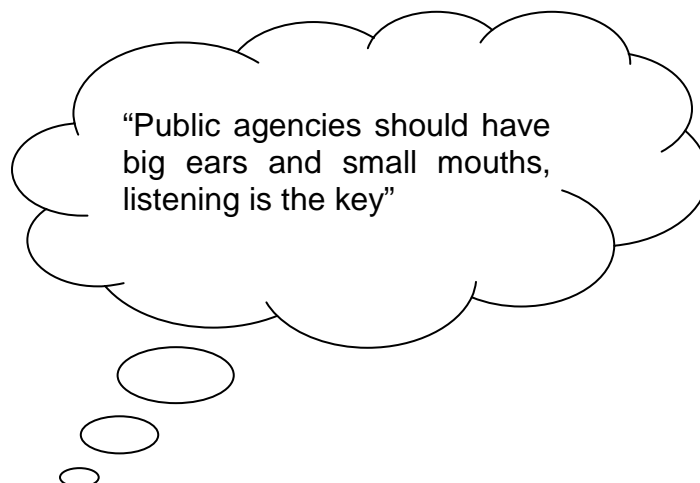
### **Engaging Young People**

- If you are scared of young people – learn to let go!
- It's not what adults can do for young people – it's how 'we' all get together
- Not everyone wants to be involved – don't make participation a condition of access to youth services or fun opportunities
- Give young people resources and enable them to shape their own engagement activities – it brings better results
- Link into local youth work structures such as Dialogue Youth
- It's not about dumbing down but doing it differently
- It doesn't always have to be fun – young people have rights and responsibilities
- Be clear about your values and respect those of young people
- Get young people to write their own 'top tips' for engagement and evaluate whether they are met in practice

## Support

### *“We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement”*

- People in equalities groups will have individual needs and preferences. Find out from them what their support needs are. HD; MA; YP
- Develop systems for recording people’s support needs so you don’t need to repeatedly ask people the same questions. HD;
- Needs change over time, remember to review support needs as part of monitoring and evaluation activities. HD; OP
- Accessibility proof all engagement activities – get the practicalities right. HD; OP
- Community learning and development staff are well placed to support community engagement with equalities groups. Identify ‘lead staff’ or set up a dedicated ‘engagement team’ who can develop specialist skills in working with different equalities groups. OP; MA; LGBT
- Expenses are a sensitive issue. Pay people in cash on the day of events if necessary, if not then reasonably quickly afterwards. Provide information about the impact on people’s benefits. HD
- Develop and fund an ‘infrastructure’ of organisations led by equalities groups, to support engagement and be a source of community representatives. You will find them an invaluable source of advice and they can help interpret and analyse policy documents for equalities groups. OP;MA;HD
- Expect and enable equalities organisations and networks to meet good standards of governance. But don’t attach conditions to funding which seek to direct their activities to support your agenda for community engagement. MA;YP



## Planning

***“We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken”***

- Talk to the people you want to involve from the beginning and seek advice from staff with specialist skills such as youth workers.  
HD; YP; LGBT
- Make space at partnership tables for equalities groups to be represented as well as community and voluntary sector organisations.  
MA; OP; LGBT
- Think about and plan to use the assets equalities groups will bring to community engagement before focusing on barriers to their participation.  
MA;HD; OP
- If you have ‘champions’ for different equalities groups make sure they have commitment, credibility and clout. But they shouldn’t allow others to avoid responsibility for engaging equalities groups. HD;YP
- Give yourself plenty of time and double it. If you don’t have enough time to engage equalities groups rethink your approach. Plan ahead so that lack of time can’t be used as an excuse. HD; OP
- Be realistic about the resources needed to make engagement inclusive. Plan ahead and get mainstream services to allocate resources for engagement with equalities groups. HD; YP
- Start where people are at. Work with equalities groups to find out what their agenda is before introducing your own. YP; MA; OP; LGBT
- Use systems such as consultation calendars to avoid consultation overload and share knowledge across departments and agencies. Use that knowledge to avoid asking people the same questions again and again.  
HD
- Build community engagement into your performance management systems. Identify the need for engagement activities when developing business and service plans. Cascade responsibilities down to personal development plans. Set indicators for engagement with equalities groups.  
HD

## Methods

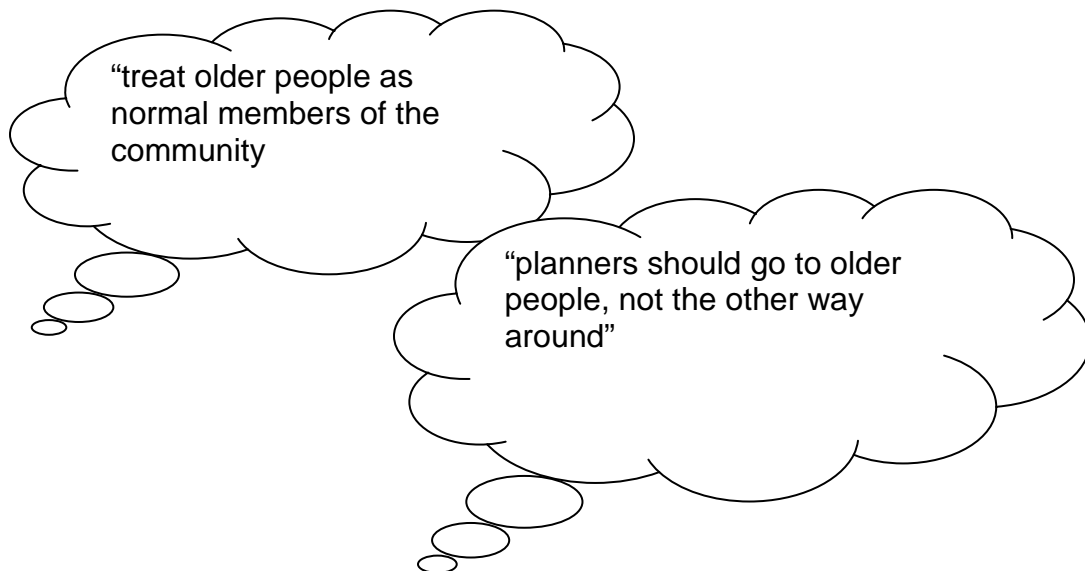
### *“We will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose”*

- The quality of the process is particularly important to gain the confidence and trust of equalities groups. Use different methods for different purposes and make sure they are ‘fit for purpose’. Always use more than one method so that people have a choice. MA;OP; YP; LGBT
- Use methods that will reach hidden ‘sub-groups’ of equalities groups, e.g. people who are housebound or in residential care. OP;YP;MA; LGBT
- Use methods that promote discussion and debate rather than opinion giving. Promote learning and awareness raising by bringing different groups together e.g. older and younger generations, different faith groups. OP;YP;MA
- Spend time building a relationship with equalities groups and responding to their agenda before asking them to participate in more formal community engagement activities. MA;HD; LGBT
- It takes a lot of thought and effort to make meetings work well for equalities groups. Meetings have to be appropriate in timing, location, content and style. People’s needs will vary considerably across and within equalities groups. HD;OP;YP; LGBT
- Provide support in advance and during meetings so that people can participate effectively. Agencies regularly have ‘pre-meetings’, why shouldn’t community representatives have them too? HD; OP
- People with communication support needs have very different concentration levels. Be flexible during meetings. Encourage people to ask for breaks and to make a point when they think of it rather than at the right moment on the agenda. HD
- Arrange meetings and events as locally as possible and be prepared to go where people normally meet instead of asking them to come to you. HD;OP
- Ask people what works for them and give them the opportunity to decide what methods to use. YP;
- Get to know people before asking them to join a group or participate in an event. Make sure new people are welcomed. HD

- Involve people in the design of tools and questionnaires. Use peer and participatory approaches to consultation. YP;HD
- Value people's personal testimonies of their experiences of service delivery as qualitative evidence of what needs to change HD;
- Use reception areas and front line staff to seek service users views.  
HD

### Engaging Older People

- Remember 50-90 is as big a change as 0-40.
- Involvement needs to be relevant to people's stage of life and associated needs
- Reflect on the fact you will be an older person one day – and what this could mean
- Venues should be as local as possible and comfortable
- Hold smaller, shorter meetings with opportunities to socialize
- The pace of involvement needs to be geared to the needs of older people
- Plan to give all older people opportunities to be involved e.g. people in residential care and those who are housebound, older travelling people, refugees



## **Working Together**

***“We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently”***

- Give people confidence that you will value their contribution by visibly demonstrating a positive attitude to equalities groups: improve employee diversity, use positive images of equalities groups in publications, advertise availability of translation and interpreting services in reception areas, make public buildings accessible. MA; HD; OP; LGBT
- Understand and adapt to the way different groups organise: e.g. different levels of formality, family and faith networks. MA; LGBT
- Equalities groups have particular experiences of broken promises, e.g. because of lack of resources. If a commitment is made, follow it through.  
HD
- Treat people as you would want to be treated yourself and make it comfortable for people to challenge stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour.  
OP;HD; LGBT
- Use language that equalities groups themselves are comfortable with, e.g. people with disabilities rather than ‘the disabled’; disabled rather than handicapped.  
MA; OP; LGBT
- When people participate they have rights and responsibilities. Set standards for behaviour by involving people in writing their own ‘ground rules’ for working together. Make any behaviour protocols ‘short and snappy’.  
YP;
- People’s willingness to engage will be affected by the quality of personal services they receive from public agencies. Personal services that empower people will encourage their wider engagement. HD; OP; LGBT

## **Working With Others**

***“We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement”***

- Expect organisations receiving funding for work with equalities groups to meet the National Standards in their own practice YP; MA
- Mainstream organisations supporting community engagement should be required to demonstrate they are working in partnership with equalities groups. MA

## **Sharing Information**

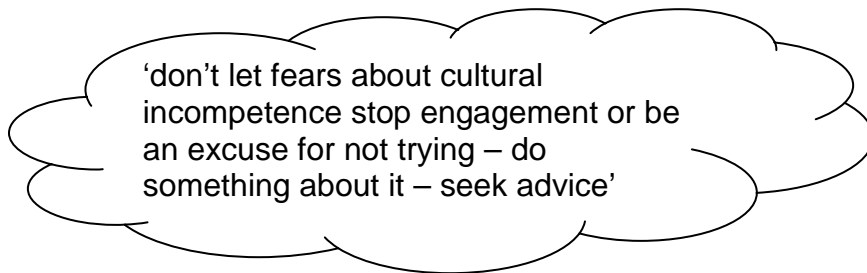
***“We will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants”***

- People have different information needs, e.g. some prefer written information because of memory problems, others find tapes and CDs more helpful because of literacy issues. Use the Scottish Accessible Information Forum standards and other resources and get expert advice in how to meet different types of need HD;
- Be proactive about providing information in different formats to relevant groups, particularly about opportunities to participate and feedback on community engagement activities. Use people’s preferred formats on an on-going basis so they don’t have to ask twice. HD; MA
- Complex information is more difficult to translate into different formats. Everyone benefits if information is simple, easy to understand and attractively presented. Cut out the jargon. HD; OP
- Time needs to be built in for organisations to translate, interpret and analyse it for their members. Information has to be distributed well in advance to be useful. Don’t distribute information at the last minute or during a meeting. Only send people information that’s appropriate and relevant to their needs. HD; OP
- Map existing resources on engagement of equalities groups and share with community representatives. YP; LGBT
- Prepare short and long minutes of meetings in an appropriate style. HD
- Communicate information face to face as well as on paper. HD

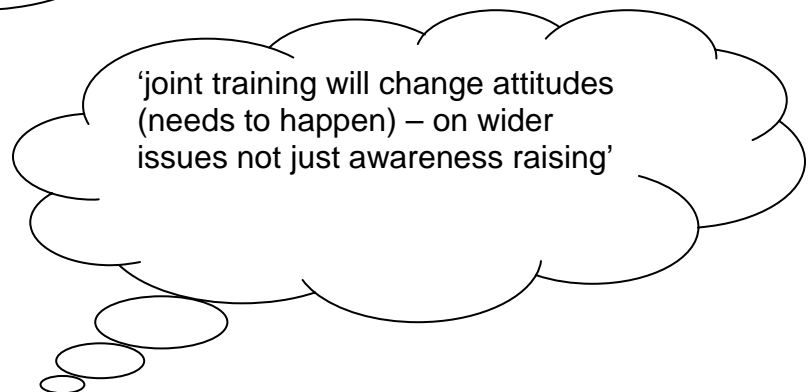
## Improvement

***“We will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants”***

- Provide awareness training on the needs of equalities groups to all public sector staff. HD; MA; LGBT
- Use qualified trainers who have personal experience of equalities issues and reflect the diversity of your community. HD; OP; LGBT
- Use the personal testimonies of older people, young people, people with disabilities etc. during training events. HD; OP; LGBT
- Provide training in facilitation skills for managers taking part in community engagement activities. HD; LGBT
- Organise joint training for staff and community representatives wherever possible. It brings people together, helps challenge stereotypes and builds relationships. HD; OP; LGBT
- Equality proof your training techniques – ensure they are appropriate to people’s needs and that people will feel comfortable. MA; LGBT



‘don’t let fears about cultural incompetence stop engagement or be an excuse for not trying – do something about it – seek advice’



‘joint training will change attitudes (needs to happen) – on wider issues not just awareness raising’

## Feedback

***“We will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected”***

- Provide feedback in different formats according to people’s needs  
HD
- Capture the experience of all participants in feedback, not just the views of those responsible for organising community engagement.  
HD
- Use feedback to show the Standards in use and how engagement has made a difference to equalities groups. HD; LGBT
- Use formal feedback to those who took part but informal methods as well, particularly ‘U Say/We Say’ type feedback in newsletters and on websites.  
HD; LGBT

### **Engaging Minority Ethnic Communities and Asylum Seekers**

- Find out from different communities you are in contact with what their needs are for translation and interpretation
- Be proactive about providing information about engagement opportunities in different languages
- Many people, particularly older generations, may not be able to understand written information, even if translated
- Implement your race equality scheme
- Hold partnership representatives to account for how well they reflect the views of minority ethnic communities
- Don’t exclude asylum seekers by using citizenship as a condition of entitlement to engagement.
- Don’t let fears about making a mistake stop engagement or be an excuse for not trying to involve people – get advice
- Make continuous efforts to understand the range of diversity within ethnic minority communities, e.g. religion, culture, country of origin, age, urban/rural etc.
- Provide training for relevant staff so that they have ‘cultural competence’

## Monitoring and Evaluation

***“We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement”***

- Follow the most important principle of community engagement, include equalities groups in the evaluation process, e.g. involve equalities groups in writing their own ‘top ten tips’ for community engagement and assessing performance against them. HD; YP; LGBT
- Results from community engagement may take even longer than usual. Do long as well as short term evaluations. HD;
- Build evaluation in from the start of a process of community engagement and keep reviewing practice. HD;
- Evaluation reports are useful for feedback purposes. HD
- Use existing tools for planning and evaluation such as LEAP and make links to auditing processes such as ‘How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development II’ and the Audit of Community Planning and Best Value. HD; YP;
- Make it easy for people to raise concerns they may have about the Standards not being met at any time, not just during an evaluation process, e.g. red card techniques. OP

### **Engaging People With A Disability or Health Issue**

- Recognise the diversity of needs people will have in terms of accessibility – be flexible
- Be proactive about accessibility so that people don’t have to ask for support
- Get beyond meetings!
- The timing and pace of engagement activities is critical
- Recognise British Sign Language as a first language.
- Be careful when people have advocates or supporters that the views expressed are those of the participants
- Allow for the fact that people may need to drop in and out of processes if the effects of a disability or health issue are variable
- Produce the Standards in different formats, e.g. for people with learning disabilities
- Be creative about training techniques

## Engaging with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Communities

The four seminars did not focus specifically on LGBT perspectives on community engagement, so the following advice has been taken from the available recent research and resources listed in Section 7, FURTHER ADVICE AND RESOURCES.

### Engaging Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people

- Make the most of informal networks and local information as well as national organisations such as Stonewall Scotland, and the LGBT centres and switchboards in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Dundee and Aberdeen, to identify local groups
- Be sensitive to individuals' rights to remain unidentified as LGB or T to a wider group, as many live in fear of harassment and violent homophobic attack
- Explore all possible direct and indirect lines and methods of communication with the LGBT communities in your area, including internet message boards, email and the gay press
- Include positive messages about LGBT people in all communications with all community groups. Remember, LGBT people might be young, old, from the BME communities, have a disability or be a member of a faith group.
- Don't make assumptions about LGBT people's needs and barriers. Ask for information, from Stonewall Scotland, LGBT Youth or from individual LGBT people in your area who are willing to participate in community engagement.
- Acknowledge that many LGBT people are already participating in all the activities community engagement is offering – the vast majority of the LGBT community is still 'invisible' to the wider community, and sometimes to each other.
- Ensure all partners in community engagement can get access to training that will help overcome any negative attitudes to, or prejudices about, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people. This will highlight the many difficulties and prejudices they encounter every day.
- Make use of the resources created by Beyond Barriers, the NHS Scotland Inclusion Project Towards a healthier LGBT Scotland, the LGBT Youth website and the Stonewall Scotland website to access research findings, contact groups and statistics on the LGBT communities in Scotland.

## Engaging with Religious Communities

The four seminar did not focus specifically on Religious Groups, so the following advice has been taken from the available research.

- The timing, pace and venue of engagement activities is critical (avoid places of worship).
- It is always a good idea to plan a multi-faith event well in advance to ensure all the needs of the delegates are met on the day and time is given to prepare any special dietary requirements or clash with a religious holiday. (see link below)
- If any events are arranged during fasting, the event should be kept to a half day or should be in the morning to minimise delegates suffering from lack of concentration and fatigue.
- Dietary requirements of different religions and of the individual delegates should be checked at the first few stages of planning an event. As many different religions abstain from alcohol, socialising between the different groups should not be in a bar or where alcohol is being served. It is also important to ensure that alcohol is not used as an ingredient in cooking.
- Certain religions have restrictions in relation to contact between the sexes, you may want to consider hosting a separate women only event. Remember staff and facilitators at this event should also be female.
- Make the most of informal networks and local information as well as national organisations such the Scottish Interfaith Council based Glasgow (see below).
- Varied speakers at an event such as from different religious organisations will encourage more people to attend.
- Ensure all partners in community engagement have access to appropriate Religion/Belief training, as this will highlight for them the many barriers which people from various religious communities may encounter.

- When holding an event it is important to remember that some religious groups require their followers to pray at certain times throughout the day. Ensure that participants have the use of a prayer room which is clean and free from mirrors or pictures with only an appropriate sign indicating North. Two small rooms may be required as often men and women are not permitted to pray together. It is also important to have wash facilities nearby as some religions require their adherents to wash before praying
- Allow for the fact that people may need to take short breaks from the event for praying.

## **Community Engagement and Gender Equality**

The four seminar did not focus specifically on gender, the following advice has been taken from the available research.

### **Legislation**

#### **The Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 & 2003**

##### General points

As men and women have different responses to interventions, different patterns of participation and often, different needs in respect of services it is important to consider gender differences in all community engagement activities. For example: men are less likely to seek medical attention than women; many women, particularly older women and women from ethnic minority groups may be less experienced in consultation.

Engaging with different group such as young people, older people, people with disabilities or from different ethnic groups, provides an opportunity to build in gender equality considerations across the strands.

## Engaging Men and Women

- Be conscious that there may be different issues for men and women and this may be the case across the equalities strands.
- If you are not clear about how gender may be relevant in an area, seek advice, and don't be afraid to ask participants.
- Look at what you already know about women and men, for example, break down your satisfaction surveys into responses by men and women. This will help you identify if they are experiencing different issues or if they have similar concerns.
- Be aware that the timing of consultation events may affect whether it is easier for men or women to attend
- Remember to record who participates in such forums, in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and which issues are raised. (this is not a specifically gender issue) I think that we should leave this in.
- Make provision for gender sensitive awareness raising and training for staff.

## 6. 10 TOP TIPS FOR AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

- **Start Right:** involve people from your target group(s) *as soon as you* start planning or evaluating community engagement activities
- **Include Everyone:** Identify 'hidden' members of your target group, e.g. older people in residential homes, young people with disabilities, people who may be LGBT but are not 'out'. Be careful never to 'out' anyone to the group who is not comfortable with it. Check with the individual discreetly first. You can assume that around 6% of any group of people or population might be LGBT.
- **Get Good Advice:** If you don't have experience of working with your target group, get advice from someone who does
- **Peer and Joint Training:** Use trainers from your target group to provide training for all staff on equalities issues. Hold regular joint training events for staff and community representatives
- **Think Positive:** Start by thinking about the particular assets your target group will bring to community engagement before addressing the barriers
- **Think Diversity:** See the person not the label, remember people in your target group will have diverse needs and opinions and that their needs will change over time.
- **Accessible Meetings:** Make sure everyone present can participate effectively in meetings. The time, venue, length and style should meet the needs of your target group. Provide support for community representatives to prepare
- **Accessible Information:** Provide information about community engagement opportunities in a range of formats and languages. Ask people how they would like to receive information when they first get involved and make sure they don't need to ask again
- **Umbrella Organisations:** establish a regular dialogue with organisations set up by members of your target community to represent them
- **Mainstream:** make all your consultations inclusive, don't just consult equalities groups on issues of specific concern to them

## 7. FURTHER ADVICE AND RESOURCES

The National Standards for Community Engagement are accompanied by:

- **A Users Guide** – some helpful tips on getting started using the Standards
- **Illustrations from the Pilots** – case studies of people’s real experiences using the Standards
- **A Reference Manual** – an in depth look at the issues which may come up in applying each standard and its associated indicators
- **A Toolkit** – simple tools developed during the pilots that can be used to apply the Standards in practice

All of these documents and further advice and guidance on community engagement, including on equalities issues, is available on Communities Scotland’s website at [www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/)

If you want to explore the issues about community engagement and equal opportunities in more depth you may find the following resources helpful. Links to some of these resources can be found at the website address above.

### General

#### Useful Websites

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality)  
[www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk)  
[www.scdc.org.uk](http://www.scdc.org.uk)

#### Publications

Good Practice Consultation with Equalities Groups. Scottish Executive 2004  
[www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/social/gpgc-02.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/social/gpgc-02.asp)  
Effective and Accessible Events: A Guide for the Voluntary Sector SCVO 2003  
[www.scvo.org](http://www.scvo.org)  
Guidance on Equalities, Best Value, Community Planning and Power of Wellbeing. Sept 2003  
[www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/publications/bvequalitiesguidance.pdf](http://www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/publications/bvequalitiesguidance.pdf)

### Young People

#### Useful Websites

[www.childreninscotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk)  
[www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)  
[www.carnegie.org.uk](http://www.carnegie.org.uk)  
[www.youthlinkscotland.org.uk](http://www.youthlinkscotland.org.uk)  
[www.participationworks.org.uk](http://www.participationworks.org.uk)  
[www.helpyourselves.org.uk](http://www.helpyourselves.org.uk)  
[www.lgbtyouth.org.uk](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk)

## **Publications**

There is a wide range of material available on involving young people. A small selection is given below, check out the above websites for links to additional material

'Children are Service Users Too: A guide for consulting children and young people'. Save the Children 2004. ISBN 1 84187 086 2.

Re-action Consultation Toolkit. Save the Children, 2001. Practical guide about how to consult children and young people on policy related issues  
[www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk/jsp/resources/details.jsp?id=1460&group=resources&section=publication&subsection=details](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk/jsp/resources/details.jsp?id=1460&group=resources&section=publication&subsection=details)

'Safe and Sound' Youth Scotland. Child Protection Resource  
'Keep it Real – The Participation Pack for Youth Groups'. Youth Scotland  
[www.youthscotland.org.uk](http://www.youthscotland.org.uk); click on 'resources'

'Hear By Right' National Youth Agency  
[www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright](http://www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright)

Building a Culture of Participation  
[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/participation/buildingaculture](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/participation/buildingaculture)

'Learning to Listen' Core Principles for Involvement of Young People' Children and Young People's Unit, UK Social Inclusion Unit.  
[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/participation/buildingaculture](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/participation/buildingaculture)

'Engaging Children and Young People in Community Planning. 2005. Draft Guidance Note from Scottish Executive  
[www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/17164834/48351](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/17164834/48351)

## **Minority Ethnic Communities and Asylum Seekers**

### **Useful Websites**

[www.paih.org.uk](http://www.paih.org.uk)  
[www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)  
[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)  
[www.interfaithscotland.org](http://www.interfaithscotland.org)

### **Publications**

Community Engagement with Minority Ethnic Communities How To...Guide  
[www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/scrcs\\_011444.hcsp\(hash\)TopofPage](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/scrcs_011444.hcsp(hash)TopofPage)

'Promoting Inclusion of Minority Ethnic Communities: a best practice and training guide for Scottish tenants group'

[www.paih.org/pages/tenantsbestpracticeguide.htm](http://www.paih.org/pages/tenantsbestpracticeguide.htm)

Making Change Happen for Black and Minority Ethnic Disabled People. 2005

[www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/d61.asp](http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/d61.asp)

## **Health and Disability**

### **Useful websites**

[www.scottishhealthcouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishhealthcouncil.org.uk)

[www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)

### **Publications**

There is a very wide range of material on participation in the health and disability fields, although much of this is around involvement in health and community care services. A very small selection includes:

'Building Strong Foundations: Involving People in the NHS.' Scottish Executive 2002

User involvement and the seriously ill. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. 2001

[www.jrf.org](http://www.jrf.org)

'Making Consultation Work for People with Learning Disabilities and their Family Carers'. Enable Scotland

[www.enable.org.uk](http://www.enable.org.uk)

'Organising Accessible Events' DRC

[www.drc.org.uk](http://www.drc.org.uk)

[gb.org/publicationsandreports/publicationdetails.asp?id=3222&section=access](http://www.drc.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publicationdetails.asp?id=3222&section=access)

'User and Public Involvement in Health Services: a Literature Review. SHS Trust.

Ridley J and Jones L 2002

'Involving patients and the public: how to do it better'. 2003 Ruth Chambers.

Radcliffe Medical Press.

## **Older People**

### **Useful websites**

[www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk)

[www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk)

Royal Bank of Scotland Centre for the Older People's Agenda

[www.gmuc.ac.uk/opa/Hm](http://www.gmuc.ac.uk/opa/Hm)

## **Publications**

'Setting the Direction' 2003 Help the Aged  
[www.helptheaged.org.uk/fournations/wa/CampaignNews/News/\\_items/Setting\\_direction.htm](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/fournations/wa/CampaignNews/News/_items/Setting_direction.htm)

'Better Government for Older People Report: All Our Futures in Scotland'  
Scottish Executive  
[www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/society/bgop-00asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/society/bgop-00asp)

'Involving Older People: lessons for community planning' 2004 Dewar, Jones and O'May. Scottish Executive  
[www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/society/ioplcp\\_00.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/society/ioplcp_00.asp)

Older People Speaking Out: Developing Opportunities for influence' 2000.  
Thornton P Joseph Rowntree Foundation

## **LGBT People**

### **Useful Websites**

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

[www.lgbtyouth.org.uk](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk)

[www.phacescotland.org](http://www.phacescotland.org)

[www.beyondbarriers.org.uk](http://www.beyondbarriers.org.uk) (project now at an end, but website useful to some extent, including summaries of the publications below.)

## **Publications**

'Towards a healthier LGBT Scotland', October 2003, Stonewall Scotland and NHS Scotland INCLUSION Project

[http://www.lgbthealthscotland.org.uk/documents/Good\\_LGBT\\_Practice\\_NHS.pdf](http://www.lgbthealthscotland.org.uk/documents/Good_LGBT_Practice_NHS.pdf)  
'first out: report of the findings of Beyond Barriers survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Scotland' - Lynsey Morgan, Nikki Bell - 2003

'Diverse Communities, Active Lives: a guide to community involvement for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people' - Lynsey Morgan - 2004

['Community Engagement with LGBT Mental Health Service Users in the South Side of Glasgow'](#) - Nick Laird - 2004

## **Religious Communities**

### **Useful Websites**

#### **Communities Scotland publications: Calendar of Religious Festivals**

[http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs\\_007388.hcsp#TopOfPage](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_007388.hcsp#TopOfPage)

#### **Scottish Interfaith Council link**

<http://www.interfaithscotland.org/>

## **Engaging with Men and Women**

### **Useful websites**

Equal Opportunities Commission – the statutory body in charge of gender equality. The website includes a number of publications with relevant information:

[www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk)

Engender: information organisation for women: [www.engender.org.uk](http://www.engender.org.uk)

Men's Health Forum Scotland [www.mhfs.org.uk](http://www.mhfs.org.uk)

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

#### **What Are The Standards?**

The National Standards for Community Engagement are 10 statements of commitment that can be used to develop and support better working relationships between communities and agencies delivering public services. They are a practical tool to help improve the experience of everyone involved in community engagement, ensuring it is:

- Effective in achieving the shared purposes of the participants
- Efficient by being well informed, rational, considered and focused, and
- Equitable by giving a fair voice to all communities and tackling any barriers that may exclude them.

The Standards identify the main qualities that should be found in effective, efficient and equitable community engagement. Each of the ten commitments has a set of 'indicators' that can be measured by participants to see whether the Standards are being met. Principles of equality and fairness underpin the Standards and issues about community engagement and equal opportunities are developed in the on-line Manual accompanying the Standards.

#### **What Is Community Engagement?**

During the Standards project, community engagement was defined as:

“developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences”

Community engagement has been increasing as organisations have recognised the benefits of working with communities and the Scottish Executive has made it a central plank of a wide range of policies. Public participation in multi-agency partnerships to take forward community planning, community safety, community regeneration and other policy initiatives is often common place. Community engagement can happen in lots of ways, using different methods. It ranges from formal, representative, meetings based structures to more informal ways to engage much larger numbers of people including one-off consultation meetings, Citizens Panels, opinion surveys, focus groups and Future Search conferences. The Standards can be used to improve all types of community engagement but not all aspects of the Standards may be as relevant in different situations.

## **Why Were The Standards Created?**

Community engagement has become a central part of the way in which public agencies design and deliver services and make decisions about many national and local policies. Several pieces of legislation place duties on public agencies to undertake and support participation in decisions about key services, including housing, education and community care.

However practice has not lived up to people's expectations and research has highlighted a number of problems which consistently crop up, including short time scales, poor access to relevant information and limited influence on decisions. The National Standards for Community Engagement are designed to tackle these kinds of concerns.

## **How Were The Standards Created?**

The Standards and accompanying indicators were developed as part of a partnership project between Communities Scotland and the Scottish Community Development Centre, which reflected best practice in community engagement. Over 500 representatives of communities and agencies actively participated in a two stage process which included focus groups, working groups, national conferences and six pilot projects. Many of these people are now actively involved in implementing the Standards within community planning and community learning and development partnerships. The knowledge and experience of equalities issues gained during the extensive consultation with agencies and communities across Scotland, to develop the Standards, has informed this Advice Note.