**Clackmannanshire Council**
www.clacksweb.org.uk

# Getting it right
a guide to consulting

Consultation
Toolkit

# Contents

# Introduction

The way Clackmannanshire involves stakeholders in decision-making has been changing over the years. We are moving away from traditional methods of engaging with stakeholders to more innovative and creative ways of dialogue.

We have brought together the values of Community Engagement, principles of methodology of research and examples of good practice into this toolkit to assist services in engaging and consulting with our customers, stakeholders, partners and communities.

This guide aims to improve our understanding of why we consult and the various methods that we use to achieve successful consultation and engagement.

## Community Engagement

There is an increasing emphasis on the need for Council Services to consult communities on the matters which affect them.  To ensure that consultation is a productive exercise both for the Council and for the communities themselves, consultations which involve the community should adhere to the National Standards for Community Engagement.

**National Standards for Community Engagement**

There are ten national standards.  These are:

1.  **The Involvement Standard**

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

2.  **The Support Standard**

    We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.

3.  **The Planning Standard**

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

4.  **The Methods Standard**

    We will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.

5.  **The Working Together Standard**

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

6.  **The Sharing Information Standard**

    We will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants.

7.  **The Working With Others Standard**

    We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement.

8.  **The Improvement Standard**

    We will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants.

9.  **The Feedback Standard**

    We will feedback the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected.

10. **The Monitoring and Evaluation Standard**

    We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the National Standards.

To facilitate adherence to the national standards, the Council has subscribed to the VOiCE database. VOiCE provides a planning checklist against the ten national standards for community engagement, and consultations should be planned within the framework available through this database.

VOiCE also provides a recording system for the engagement which allows us to share and learn from the experience when planning future engagement exercises.

Consultation with communities should be undertaken in acknowledgement of the fact that there is diversity in our communities and that there may be real or perceived barriers which can prevent some sectors of our community from responding to consultations.  The VOiCE planning tool prompts us to ensure that all people and communities have equitable opportunity to participate in consultation exercises.  Services who have difficulty understanding this principle should also look to our third sector partners for advice and support in this respect.

## Consultation process

Consultation is a process of dialogue involving stakeholders in decision-making about plans and proposals affecting their interest. There are many ways that we consult; from feedback surveys to regular attendance and dialogue with community representative groups. Broadly speaking, a consultation can be divided into the following stages:

- identify what you want to find out
- do your homework and check whether others have already done some research on the topic you want to explore
- write down your objectives
- decide on the overall approach in your consultation exercise
- consider ways of including every stakeholder group
- define roles in approaching your stakeholders
- identify timescales and targets
- define who you will access these groups
- address ethical issues
- decide on consultation methods
- collect and record information
- analyse collected responses
- provide stakeholders with feedback
- present your findings
- reflect on the process and findings
- record and share the lessons you have learnt.

Asking yourself:
- what do you want to consult on
- who do you want to consult
- how you're going to approach them
- when are you going to consult
- where are you going to consult

At every stage of the consultation this guidance will help you create a tool which facilitates engagement with stakeholders. It will also help you stay sharp and focused on the consultation question.

# What makes a good consultation?

There are no set rules that make every consultation successful. However we have looked at how other organisations and councils work with stakeholders and there are a number of features that are identified which will help lead to successful consultations. These include:

- has the ability to make a change
- does not raise unrealistic expectations
- uses a wide variety of methods
- is informative
- is engaging
- is written in plain English and avoids jargon
- is fun and interactive
- provides feedback to all stakeholders in a timely fashion
- makes participants feel comfortable
- promotes equality
- all parts of the consultation fit nicely together
- is representative
- allows for both direction feedback
- allows for question time sessions
- listens to all 'voices'
- is well-thought through
- pilots the methods of data collection prior to the consultation

The list is by no means exhaustive. It is here to give you a flavour of what made other consultations successful and effective.

## Who to consult

In any research project exploring social impact and change, you will be working with individuals. Depending upon your consultation question and the audience you would like to reach, you will be consulting individuals of various backgrounds and diverse experiences. Therefore, it is important you consider all groups you would like to reach before designing a consultation tool. Interestingly, various groups will respond to your consultation yielding different response rates. You might receive responses that contradict each other, in which case, you will need to demonstrate how you dealt with them and explain the reasons for the final decision.

Your stakeholders may consist of:

- customers: internal and external
- funders
- participants
- partners
- non-users such as dissatisfied ex-customers
- special interest group
- businesses
- local counsellors
- agencies
- local people
- suppliers
- trade unions
- hard-to-reach groups

The following factors have been identified as affecting accessibility to individuals and groups:

- language
- age (younger and older people)
- household composition
- geographic location
- social class
- income
- ethnicity
- religion
- sexual orientation
- employment status
- health

It is not rare to ask the stakeholders you have already selected whether they think the consultation should include other groups. That is why piloting your consultation will be a great opportunity to test out your selection.

It is commonly known that there are segments of population in each society that are, and have been, underrepresented. Due to 'invisibility' or rather ineffective efforts to empower them, their voices do not tend to be heard and their views taken into account.

## Getting the right consultees - sampling and recruitment

When you carry out research, you hardly ever get the chance to speak to everyone you would like to, unless the group you want to study is relatively small and easily accessible. In most cases you end up with individuals who share certain characteristics of the group you would like to elicit information from.

It is expensive and in most situations impossible to consult everyone. Even such a comprehensive and expensive exercise as a census, which in theory, studies everyone, does not receive all responses back. Census 2011 had a response rate of 94-95% in England and Wales (ONS, 2012).

In most cases, social research utilises population samples.

A population sample is a group of cases that share characteristics of the population you study. Sampling has two functions:

- it allows you to feel confident about the representativeness of your sample
- and it allows to make broader inferences.

Albeit these functions apply to quantitative research, it is possible to generalise from qualitative research by comparing your case to other research. This highlights the importance of finding out what previous studies have been done on the subject matter you're interested in. (For further information on qualitative, quantitative and mixed research, please go to page 10).

We can distinguish between two types of sampling methods:

- probability (representative) sampling
- and non-probability sampling

While probability sampling is most commonly used in quantitative research, qualitative research, in particular study of hard-to-reach groups, favours non-probability sampling as it allows to access 'hidden' populations. However, non-probability sampling is not representative of the whole population.

**Probability sampling techniques:**

- simple random sampling, where each case has the same chances of being randomly selected.
- systematic sampling, electing the sample at a regular interval, i.e. every nth case from the population.
- stratified sampling, the population is first divided into stratas (groups) from which cases are selected at random.
- cluster sampling, a technique where the population is divided into clusters (groups) due to unfeasibility of random selection (e.g. geographical spread), which are then randomly chosen.

### Non-probability sampling

- criterion based sampling, where cases are selected because they share the same characteristics and meet the research criteria, e.g. experiences, attitudes. This allows for an in-depth exploration of the research topic.

- theoretical sampling, in which the researcher chooses cases on the basis of their potential contribution to the study. The process is repetitive: the researcher selects an initial sample, analyses results and repeats the process until data saturation is reached, that is when new samples do not generate new themes.

- opportunistic sampling or convenience sampling, although these two are often used interchangeably, Ritchie & Lewis (2010) draw a clear distinction between them. Opportunistic sampling involves the researcher taking advantage of accidental opportunities, whereas in convenience sampling the sample is selected according to ease of access (J. Ritchie & J. Lewis, 2010: 81).

- snowball sampling, this technique is used when access to the population is difficult. In snowball sampling, the researcher collects data from a few individuals who then nominate or locate another subjects who share the studied trait.

### Sample size

When you want to infer findings of your study, that is, generalise that the phenomenon discovered in your study applies to the whole population, you need to consider the size of your sample.

The larger your sample, the more confident you can be that the findings apply to the whole population. In general, the sample size depends on the following factors:

- estimated response rate, as not everyone in the sample study will take part in the consultation/research,

- margin of error, that is how accurate your estimates are. This typically is +/- 3.5%,

- confidence level, it is the likelihood that the results from your sample match the characteristics of the chosen population (most researchers use 95% or 99%),

- variability in the population, i.e. the range of values existing within the population. The greater variability, the less accurate findings and the larger the sample is required.

# Ethics in consultation

Regardless of what groups you are consulting, let it be children or businesses, you should always ensure that those who take part in the exercise know exactly what their involvement will entail and what they can expect from the consultation. In other words, you need to ensure everyone understands what it is you are doing.

The following areas can be helpful when considering a consultation:

- harm to participants
- lack of informed consent
- invasion of privacy
- deception

### Harm to participants

Research that harms participants is widely condemned and unacceptable, however harm can be disguised and take the form of: loss of self-esteem, hindrance of development, stress or even trauma.

Designing consultations should ensure that involvement is not intrusive and people's well-being is not compromised in any way by engaging in the consultation exercise.

Similarly important, yet perhaps more controversial is the idea of confidentiality and anonymity. These two aspects of research are crucial to ensuring adherence to legal requirements (Data Protection Act 2002) and best practice (Statements of Ethical Practice).

Research, as well as reputation of the institution facilitating it, might be compromised or even fined, if you do not adequately protect information given by the participants.

Data Protection Act 1998 sets out how the information must be processed. This covers:

- collecting,
- recording,
- storing,
- analysing,
- and disseminating information.

Any personal and identifiable data gathered in a consultation exercise should be dealt with according to legal requirements. This means that any information that could lead to identifying the participant should be adequately protected (coding, storing, password-protection).
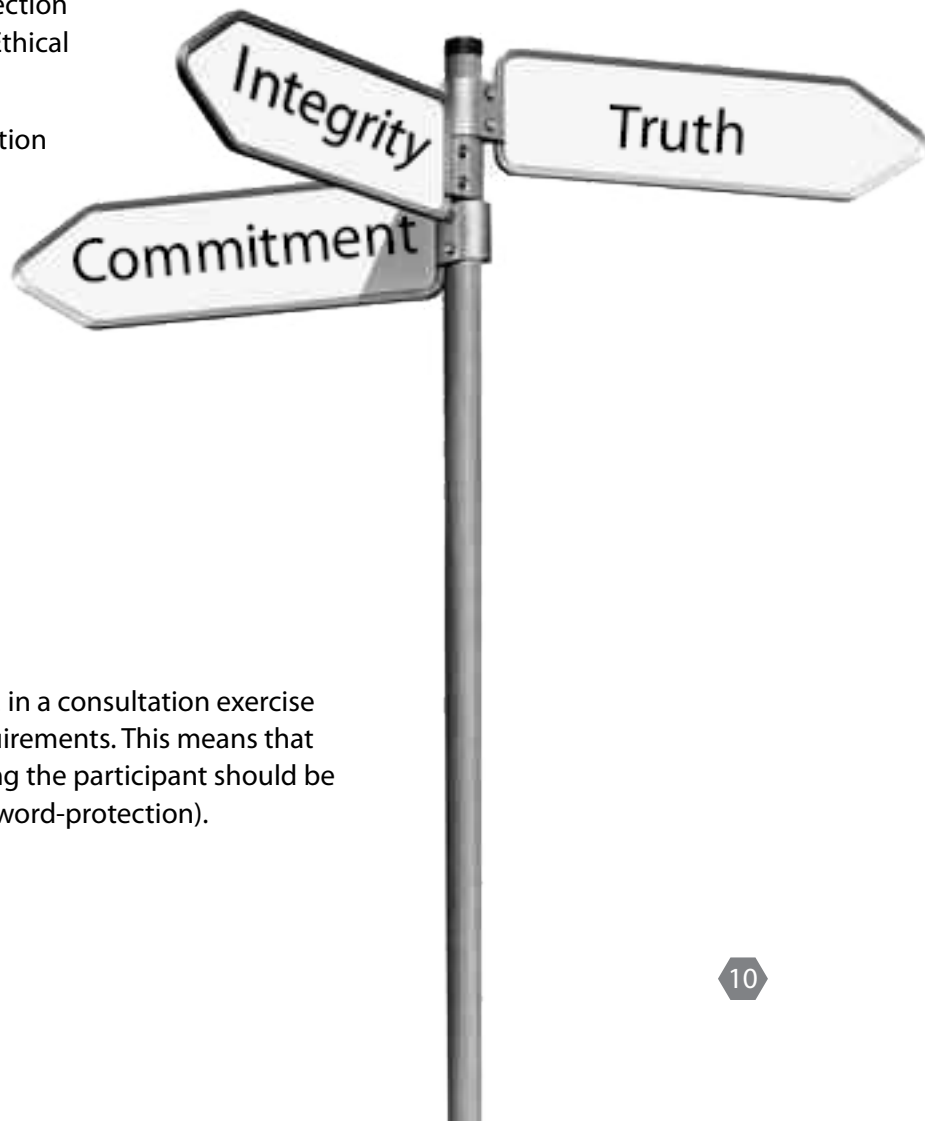
## Informed consent

Informed consent provides an opportunity for both the consultant and participants to explore the consultation in detail: what it will entail and how its findings will be used. It is a unique occasion for the consultant and consultee to discuss the study before making a decision to take part in the exercise or not.

This stage gives participants an opportunity to ask any questions related to the consultation, ranging from its purpose, how long it will take to carry out through to reimbursement and incentives.

It is, therefore, crucial that you know exactly what is planned and you are prepared to answer any questions.

At this stage it is your role to ensure consultees are aware that they can withdraw from the study at any point without giving any reasons for doing so. You should also stress that that they can have the data they provided destroyed if they decide to withdraw.

## Invasion of privacy

The third principle of ethics in research relates to the degree of privacy involved in research and how much can and should be asked in the name of 'exploring the unknown'.

All of us are to some extent happy to share some information about our lives, but where does it end? Consenting to taking part in a consultation does not waive the right to privacy.

Evidencing consultation progress could also be seen intrusive, so if you think of taking photos of consultees, make sure you ask for a permission to use them. If you're consulting vulnerable groups and children under the age of 18, make sure you seek permission from their parents or legal guardians.

## Deception

Deception occurs when research explores something else than it is.

Although not often found in public consultations, deception in the public sector can take the form of post factum "consultations" when the public is being asked about decisions that have already been made. Not only does this practice undermine consultations in general, it also damages trust into the organisation.

Instead of running post factum consultations, resources should be directed into explaining the reasons for making the decision.

# The right angle - approaches to consultation

Traditionally, social research has been seen as either qualitative or quantitative with the former defined as "everything that is not the later". To put it simplistically, quantitative research has been associated with numbers, whereas qualitative research has been seen as value-based.

This division, however, is limiting and incorrect. It actually cultivates the common misconception about research in general.

Qualitative research has been deemed as soft, flexible, subjective, political and speculative. Quantitative research, on the other hand, tends to be seen as hard, fixed, objective, value-free and abstract.

All these adjectives separating qualitative from quantitative research are nothing but inaccurate. Although quantitative research can evidence correlations between variables A and B, it fails to provide a causal explanation. On the other hand, qualitative research might be seen as unreliable and invalid due to, sometimes, contradictory cases.

In fact, the choice of research depends solely on what you are trying to find out. You could try to find out political preferences using in-depth interviews, but would it be productive? Similarly, exploring one's experiences of being part of a commercial organisation using a survey could generate data, but would it be rich enough to answer the research problem?

Instead of being seen as contradictory, qualitative and quantitative research is actually complementary and, where possible, should be used together (triangulation) to gain an understanding of the studied phenomenon.

The following pages discuss the benefits and limitations of the most commonly used techniques in public consultations.

# Methods

## Citizens' Panels – Clacks 1000

Citizens' panels play a crucial role in the functioning of a council as they help improve effectiveness of council's work. They are an example of how the idea of a dialogue works in the public sphere.

Citizens' panels comprise of randomly selected representatives from all groups and backgrounds of the local society. The process of selecting and recruiting members of citizens' panels is rigorous and methodical to ensure that everyone's voices and opinions are heard and taken into account.

Because citizens' panels reflect characteristics of the local population, they tend to comprise of several hundred members (usually more than 500). In short, citizens' panels are a snapshot of a population that allow to understand how the public feels about council's work.

Clacks 1000 – Clackmannanshire's citizens' panel, was set up in 2006 and has been invaluable in understanding how the people of Clackmannanshire feel about key issues, policies and decisions. The panel historically has had 1000 members (approximately 2% of the population of Clackmannanshire); however, it was refreshed in early 2013 to improve response rates, boost sample size ultimately making the citizens' panel more representative of the adult population of Clackmannanshire.

The process of refreshing the panel was carried out externally to remain impartiality. As a result, Clacks 1000 has now 1,258 members – including 754 newly recruited citizens.

Each member plays an important role in the way we shape and deliver our services and policies and is invited to take part in a consultation once or twice a year.

Since 2006 we have consulted Clacks 1000 members on an array of topics, such as attitudes to Clackmannanshire, health and well-being, family life, environmental and economic issues and physical activity.

### Advantages of Clacks 1000:

- representative sample of the population
- allow tracking change
- relatively quick and reliable information
- low response bias if members are consulted on a wide range of issues
- diverse research possibilities
- provides better access to hard-to-reach groups
- increases public engagement

### Disadvantages of Clacks 1000:

- requires an experienced researcher to randomly recruit members of the panels
- expensive
- time-consuming to organise
- resource-intensive

## Focus Groups

This method has found its place in market research. It utilises group dynamics to explore the subject in question. Focus groups are similar to interview and that is why some call them 'group interviews'.

A focus group usually consist of 6 to 8 participants, sometimes up to 12. It is thought that smaller focus groups are more effective as they allow everyone to 'bounce off' each other and explore ideas and concepts that might not otherwise be obtained. It's useful to run a focus group to test out a new proposal, change or idea.

A facilitator is the person responsible for running a focus group. Although it might be costly to deploy two facilitators, they tend to work more effectively together. While one facilitator focuses on the content of the focus group, the other one works as an observer making sure that nothing is missed during the exercise. Very often facilitators change roles, which allows groups to work with various personalities, which could make a difference as to the degree of what's covered during the exercise.

Decision regarding the composition of focus groups should be carefully thought through. If you work with hard to reach groups, it might be helpful to choose a homogenous group which consists of individuals sharing a certain characteristic (for instance, single parents, self-employed people). While it might encourage people to open up and share more with the group, it could also lead to excluding the group from participation with other respondents.

Heterogenous groups, on the other hand, consist of individuals with diverse traits and backgrounds. They allow for people to mix up and share, sometimes, very different opinions.

Typically focus groups consist of the following stages:

- scene setting and ground rules
- individual introductions
- the opening topic
- discussion
- ending the discussion

**Advantages:**

- provide an opportunity for all involved to share opinions in a interactive way
- engage individuals in group work
- involve a wide range of individuals
- allow to understand groups' attitudes
- provide in-depth information about common beliefs
- allow to uncover rich information in a quick manner
- may identify solutions
- is inclusive

**Disadvantages**

- requires competent facilitators
- requires knowledge of social facilitation techniques
- cost (venue, beverage, food, visual aids)
- time-consuming to organise
- can be difficult to record and analyse
- can be difficult to gather people together
- may be disempowering when a dominant participant is present

## Interviews

Purposeful conversations, as interviews tend to be called, are the most commonly used methods of data collection in social sciences. They are also both the most ordinary and extraordinary way of exploring one's experiences. No wonder they found their way into consultations.

Interviews, unlike any other research tool, allow the researcher to access the perspective of the person being interviewed. More so, they offer a rich way of uncovering the meanings of people's lives, values and feelings. Purposeful conversations combine structure with flexibility with probing and follow-up techniques.

Generally, interviews tend to fall under the three categories depending upon the purpose and degree of freedom:

### Structured interviews

Use a pre-determined array of questions allowing the researcher to collect data in a consistent and rigorous manner. They tend to focus on WHAT rather than WHY. Structured interviews are often conducted over the phone or face to face.

### Semi-structured interview

Unlike structured interviews, this type of interview allows respondents to answer pre-set questions, as well as gives them an opportunity to explore covered topics in detail, ultimately allowing probing and follow-up questions.

### In-depth interviews

Unlike the above mentioned types of purposeful conversations, in-depth interviews consist of intentionally vague topics allowing participants to lead the interview process. They tend to deploy open-ended questions leaving participants complete freedom to reply, not suggesting any answers or alternatives.

Because traditionally interviews are carried out in person, their value lays in the possibility to listen as well as observe the participant and modify the interview process depending on respondents' body language. It is particularly useful when conducting in-depth interviews where researcher-participant rapport is paramount.

**Advantages:**
- provide flexibility in the way interview is conducted
- provide an opportunity to actively engage with the participant
- allow to get to the bottom of the research question
- good method of exploring sensitive issues
- allow to listen to hard-to-reach groups, such as the elderly, LGBT, homeless, young people

**Disadvantages**
- time-consuming to conduct
- difficult to record and code due to rich data
- can increase response bias
- expensive to carry out and analyse

## Open days, exhibitions and road shows

These events provide an opportunity for members of the public to find out, in informal and relaxed settings, about latest policies, plans and changes.

The very nature of open days and exhibitions encourages discussion with staff, asking questions and clarifying issues. This method is a great way of taking services out to the communities. It is often used to:

- promote new policies and proposals
- elicit information on particular subject important to the community
- seek opinions and views on proposed changes looking for a mutually beneficial solution.

Because of the informal character of open days and road shows, they allow for using means of communication that have not been utilised to their full potential in official meetings, such as:

- videos
- maps
- stands
- slideshows
- architectural models

These events often use innovative techniques of obtaining local community's opinions such as branching out, spinning a web, a thousand words and so on.

**Advantages:**

- interactive
- informal setting
- within community
- assists in building relationships
- gives participants a sense of involvement
- allows for both qualitative and quantitative feedback
- breaks down barriers

**Disadvantages:**

- low attendance
- might not be representative
- requires good preparation (including marketing)
- resource intensive

## Public meetings

Public meetings provide an opportunity for people to engage in discussion and provide feedback on issues relevant to particular community. They give a chance to express views and opinions directly to policy-makers; as such they promote a two-way means of communication and involvement. Public meetings allow for a subject to be discussed using a variety of visual and audio aids.

Public meetings have moved away from traditional "us-them" settings to interactive and inclusive participation encouraging engagement and promoting an active role in the community.

**Advantages:**

- a visible and open form of council's interest in people's opinions
- transparent and clear process of two-way flow of information
- traditionally high profile
- familiar to people
- encourages culture of participation and involvement
- can lead to mutual understanding and learning

**Disadvantages:**

- can be confrontational if strong personalities are present
- low turn out
- often is not representative
- can be expensive
- requires good organisation along with effective marketing
- difficult to organise to suit everyone's availability

## Surveys

Questionnaires are one of the most commonly used methods of research in the public sphere. They provide a way of reaching large groups without stretching already heavily overloaded budgets. The famous (and very often infamous) questionnaires are administered by professionals, completed individually or as a group. Questionnaires are used to explore attitudes, preferences, priorities and behaviours.

Design of a questionnaire determines its success. Poorly designed questionnaires will not provide accurate answers to your topic and might discourage participants from further participation.

Surveys tend to suffer from a low response rate, so it's important you design the questionnaire as well as possible. Make sure that:

- format is easy to follow and user-friendly
- use plain English
- do not overcomplicate questions - be specific
- explain the purpose of your study and time it will take to complete
- provide contact details of a person who can answer any questions pertaining to your study
- ensure anonymity and confidentiality (if applicable)
- send reminders to increase response rate
- if possible, include an incentive, but remember that incentives will significantly increase costs and might skew your results
- pilot your questionnaire with a small number of participants. It will allow you to check if the questions are easily understood.

Consider which type of questionnaire will be the most appropriate to your study:
- online survey
- telephone survey
- face-to-face survey
- postal survey.

When choosing a questionnaire as a consultation tool, ensure it measures what it is suppose to measure (validity), gives the same results when reproduced in the same condition (reliability) and helps you answer the research question (appropriateness).

**Advantages:**
- easy to administer and collect data
- reduces response bias
- reaches large target groups
- easy to analyse and compare results
- ensures anonymity
- inexpensive in comparison to other research methods
- allows participants to complete the questionnaire in their own time and pace
- produces statistically reliable information

**Disadvantages:**
- inappropriate for hard to reach groups
- low response rate
- does not provide an opportunity to clarify and follow up questions
- ineffective to elicit WHY information
- inflexible
- cannot explore issues in depth
- no control over who completes the questionnaire

## Written documents

This method of consultation is considered formal as it invites people to express their views and opinions on matters often related to policies, procedures and proposals. It consists of open-ended questions which give target groups an opportunity to elaborate and comment on the consultation topic. When disseminated widely, it reassures people they are being listened and heard, ultimately improving communication and perception of the public sector. Further, it raises awareness of local and national issues, ultimately improving communication between the local authority and members of the public.

It is important written documents adhere to an easy to follow structure, consist of several questions and use plain English.

This ensures that respondents comment on relevant aspects of the research question, rather than elaborate extensively about one facet important to them. What's more, giving some structure to the consultation helps respondents focus on individual key issues, which otherwise might be overlooked.

It is often recommended to provide a feedback form and a pre-paid envelope (unless it is an on-line consultation) and allow a minimum of 12 weeks to respond.

**Advantages**

- can be seen as a starting point to a comprehensive consultation
- raises awareness of key issues/proposals
- provides an opportunity for a wide audience to express their views on the key issue
- relatively easy to design
- inclusive when disseminated amongst all target groups
- allows time for consultees to give thoughtful responses.

**Disadvantages**

- time-consuming to analyse
- low response rate
- can be seen as passive
- requires commitment to take time and respond to the consulted issues
- might be seen as a consultation on an issue with decision already having been made
- excludes people with limited literacy skills
- can be difficult to understand
- cost

# Analysis

Determining how you analyse collected data tends to be left to the very last moment. However, analysis of data is as crucial as the consultation itself. After all, it is the results that make the difference.

Identifying the consultation approach will determine methods of analysis. So if you're looking to gather opinions and views though a questionnaire, you'll be probably looking at quantitative data. However, opinions and views could be as well expressed in speech, visual art, and music. You need to make sure your approach is the most suitable to answer your consultation question.

Qualitative data will require identifying emerging themes, coding responses and writing up results. Quantitative data will need to be pre-coded before data collection in order to conduct statistical analysis, whether in statistical software (such as SPSS, SAS) or any other analytical suite (e.g. Excel).

When thinking about analysis:

- be realistic, different methods require different levels of analytical experience and timeframes
- consider mix methodologies: qualitative and quantitative methods
- analyse your results by looking at equalities profiles (did women respond differently from men? Did people from ethnic minority backgrounds respond in a different way from the ethnic majority?)
- ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants are not compromised,
- if findings differ from the consultation expected outcomes, explain why
- evaluate the consultation process, not only consultation findings. Share your results with others - we won't get better unless we are transparent and learn from our mistakes
- feedback results and findings as widely as possible ensuring your audience will understand your message

# Evaluation

Evaluation plays an important role in a consultation exercise as it allows you to identify areas of success and share them with others. Similarly, identifying and communicating limitations of your consultation allows you and others to learn from your experience and address the issues you have encountered.

Although evaluation can be seen as a daunting process, because of its apparently complex and time-consuming structure, it is part of researcher's reflective practice. The following questions might help you effectively evaluate your consultation exercise:

- was the consultation easy to understand?
- were any complaints made?
- did the chosen methods prove successful?
- did the chosen approaches provide the information you needed?
- was it representative?
- was everyone's voice heard?
- was it accessible to people with diverse needs?
- were the timescales met?
- was it on budget?
- was the consultation findings publicised properly and available to the participants?
- were there enough responses?
- what lessons have you learnt?
- what would you do differently?
- did it influence decisions?
- was the initial research question answered?

# Appendix 1

**Example of Survey Consent Form**

The survey will take you approximately 10 minutes to complete.

All information you provide will be valuable as it will contribute to shaping our services. Your responses will be treated strictly confidentially and no one apart from the research team will have access to the information you provide.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from this study at any point. You are free to refuse to answer any question at any point without giving any reason for doing so.

We will not contact you again regarding this study, unless you have offered your help with this research.

If you would like to discuss or have any questions regarding this study, please get in touch via details below.

If you agree to participate in this study, please proceed with the survey.

## Appendix 2

**Recommended sample size**

| Population Size | Confidence Level - 95% | | | | Confidence Level - 99% | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Degree of Accuracy/Margin of Error | | | | Degree of Accuracy/Margin of Error | | | |
| | 0.05 | 0.035 | 0.025 | 0.01 | 0.05 | 0.035 | 0.025 | 0.01 |
| 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| 20 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| 30 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 30 |
| 50 | 44 | 47 | 48 | 50 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| 75 | 63 | 69 | 72 | 74 | 67 | 71 | 73 | 75 |
| 100 | 80 | 89 | 94 | 99 | 87 | 93 | 96 | 99 |
| 150 | 108 | 126 | 137 | 148 | 122 | 135 | 142 | 149 |
| 200 | 132 | 160 | 177 | 196 | 154 | 174 | 186 | 198 |
| 250 | 152 | 190 | 215 | 244 | 182 | 211 | 229 | 246 |
| 300 | 169 | 217 | 251 | 291 | 207 | 246 | 270 | 295 |
| 400 | 196 | 265 | 318 | 384 | 250 | 309 | 348 | 391 |
| 500 | 217 | 306 | 377 | 475 | 285 | 365 | 421 | 485 |
| 600 | 234 | 340 | 432 | 565 | 315 | 416 | 490 | 579 |
| 700 | 248 | 370 | 481 | 653 | 341 | 462 | 554 | 672 |
| 800 | 260 | 396 | 526 | 739 | 363 | 503 | 615 | 763 |
| 900 | 269 | 419 | 568 | 823 | 382 | 541 | 672 | 854 |
| 1,000 | 278 | 440 | 606 | 906 | 399 | 575 | 727 | 943 |
| 1,200 | 291 | 474 | 674 | 1,067 | 427 | 636 | 827 | 1,119 |
| 1,500 | 306 | 515 | 759 | 1,297 | 460 | 712 | 959 | 1,376 |
| 2,000 | 322 | 563 | 869 | 1,655 | 498 | 808 | 1,141 | 1,785 |
| 2,500 | 333 | 597 | 952 | 1,984 | 524 | 879 | 1,288 | 2,173 |
| 3,500 | 346 | 641 | 1,068 | 2,565 | 558 | 977 | 1,510 | 2,890 |
| 5,000 | 357 | 678 | 1,176 | 3,288 | 586 | 1,066 | 1,734 | 3,842 |
| 7,500 | 365 | 710 | 1,275 | 4,211 | 610 | 1,147 | 1,960 | 5,165 |
| 10,000 | 370 | 727 | 1,332 | 4,899 | 622 | 1,193 | 2,098 | 6,239 |
| 25,000 | 378 | 760 | 1,448 | 6,939 | 646 | 1,285 | 2,399 | 9,972 |
| 50,000 | 381 | 772 | 1,491 | 8,056 | 655 | 1,318 | 2,520 | 12,455 |
| 75,000 | 382 | 776 | 1,506 | 8,514 | 658 | 1,330 | 2,563 | 13,583 |
| 100,000 | 383 | 778 | 1,513 | 8,762 | 659 | 1,336 | 2,585 | 14,227 |

# Further information

This document should be read as guidance and an example of good practice in public consultation.

If you are thinking of undertaking a consultation, please contact Performance and Partnership Support Team for further advice.

Performance and Partnership Support

Clackmannanshire Council

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**Clackmannanshire Council**

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