

Running events

A good practice guide - May 2013



A guide to help staff involve and consult with the public, service users and carers. It is aimed primarily at teams working within Kirklees Council Adult Services.

Keeping you active and involved

We welcome your feedback and comments on this handbook. You will find a form for this on the last page.

The Community Partnerships Team is part of Kirklees Council Children and Adults, Commissioning and Health Partnerships.

You can contact the Community Partnerships Team by phoning 01484 221000, by writing to Civic Centre 1, High Street, Huddersfield, HD1 2PW, or by emailing community.partnerships@kirklees.gov.uk.

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1 Introduction

1.1 About this handbook

Kirklees Council Children and Adults are committed to making sure that user and carer involvement leads to positive change. We want to improve services and make them more user, carer and patient-centred. We believe the best way to do this is to involve users and carers in planning, listen to what they tell us and try to act on it.



The Community Partnerships Team advises and supports others in our organisations to help increase the involvement of service users and carers.

This handbook helps you plan and run successful events.

If you have never run events before, we hope you will find everything you need here! If you have run events before you may still want to improve your practice. We hope you will use the contents list and section headings to find what you need easily.

We have included a lot of detail to try and answer all the questions people have. But running an involvement event is not difficult. As one manager once said: "Involvement is not rocket-science ... you just have to know a bit, then get on and do it!"

Use the Event Checklist (in [Appendix 2](#)) to help you remember what to do and to keep track of your actions once you start planning and arranging your event.

1.2 What is an involvement event?

An involvement event aims to get service users or carers more involved in planning and decision-making. Types **of event** include:

- Consultation exercises
- Reviews of your service by users and carers
- 'Visioning' (finding out what is needed) events.



You can also use this handbook for other events such as:

- Giving people the information they need before they get involved
- Feedback and celebration events to let people know what has happened at the end of the involvement process.

Some events have several purposes. For example, you might run a single event to ask for views on your current service (a review), ask for ideas about what is needed (visioning), and give information about new or related services – all on the same day.

1.3 Other ways to involve and consult users and carers

The events in this handbook are not always the best way of reaching users and carers. There are other ways of finding out views and getting people involved in planning - including focus groups¹, face-to-face interviews, written questionnaires, phone surveys, and setting up groups which meet regularly. More guidance on these is available on the Involve homepage Help section part under the calendar and framework at <http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/involve>

There is also some more advice on whether an involvement event is your best option in [Section 2.3](#).

1.4 What are the advantages of running an involvement event?

Involvement events have many advantages. They can:

- Help you to reach many people at once
- Allow you to involve people in several different ways at once (for instance in reviewing services and visioning - see [Section 1.2](#))
- Get a broad range of views
- Find out where there are disagreements about strengths and weaknesses in your service
- Publicise new initiatives and services - big events can have a high profile

¹ There is a separate Help section of the *Involve home page* on guides and methods to support running engagement activities e.g. focus groups, questionnaires, surveys, getting started and case studies at: <http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/involve> information to help you plan and carry out different types of activities, with a section on good practice help from outside Kirklees.

- Be a good way of getting other partners involved such as users, carers, other teams or services and the voluntary and community sectors (in running stalls, facilitating workshops and so on)
- Bring people together to develop a shared vision or plan, involving all stakeholders equally and making sure no perspective is missed
- Build goodwill if people feel the day has been useful
- Give users and carers a strong sense that their involvement is valued
- Help tell you about how well your service is doing - and what needs changing!

Involvement events may also have some disadvantages but most can be avoided if you make sure that running the event is the best way of reaching users and carers, and you plan carefully.

2. Event planning (1) – deciding what’s needed and making plans to get it

2.1 Before you start

Good planning is one of the keys to running a successful event. Try to answer these questions before you start:



- Why are we running this event? What will it achieve?
- What do we want to find out?
- What are the priorities of users and carers?
- Is service improvement and change a real possibility? (If your answer is no, we recommend you do NOT run an involvement event though you may still want to run an information or feedback event²)
- How can we involve users and carers in planning this event?
- Is running an involvement event my best option? (see [Section 2.3](#) for advice).

Talk to users, carers, staff, managers and partners to help you answer these questions.

² Kirklees Children and Adults are committed to ensuring that user and carer involvement has a real impact on service planning. We seek to avoid consultation which has no real purpose.

2.2 Other important things to think about

For best practice in your contact with users and carers please see the following 'key principles' (further advice will be produced on this).



- Service improvement is usually the main reason for involving and consulting people
- Avoid involvement and consultation if there is no possibility that change will follow
- Keep personal details confidential. Never use real names when you write up event reports
- Share findings to enable others to learn from your event and hear key findings (while still keeping confidentiality)
- Equality – in involvement and consultation work this doesn't usually mean 'reaching everyone'. Be clear about who you want to reach. Run an event appropriate for your target group. Don't assume that if something suits one group of people it will suit everyone. Try to remove barriers that prevent people from getting involved and provide the individual support some people might need. Don't miss people out
- Feedback – always let people know what happens after an event as a result of their involvement.

2.3 Is running an involvement event my best option?

Sometimes you will need to consider other ways of reaching users and carers. Here are a few examples where other options should be considered:

- Reaching very large numbers of people - a postal or telephone survey may be better
- Discussing personal or sensitive issues - face-to-face interviews or very small focus groups may be better
- Detailed discussions, and involving people in ongoing planning and service development - it may be more appropriate to set up a group which meets regularly.

Here is some advice to help you decide whether running an event is your best option.

Can you answer 'yes' to the following questions?

- Do I want to find out what users and carers think about my service?
- Is change a real possibility?
- Can I make the practical arrangements? (see [Section 2](#))
- Can I afford the event? (see [Section 2.9](#))
- Have I got the time, support and other resources needed? (see [Section 2.5](#)).

If you can also answer 'no' to the following questions then running an event is probably a good idea:

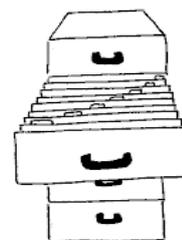
- Do I need to ask about personal or sensitive issues?
- Do I need to ask very large numbers of people the same questions?
- Do people need more time to think and discuss the issues than the event would allow?
- Can I think of a better way of reaching the target group?

If you have any doubts or questions, contact the Community Partnerships Team for advice.

2.4 Record-keeping

You will need to keep good records as you plan and arrange the event. Make sure you keep track of:

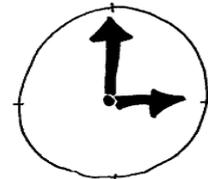
- Who is involved in planning the event
- Who is invited
- Who has booked a place
- What support each person needs (and who doesn't need it)
- When/what support you arrange
- Who is providing the support (support workers, agencies, taxi firms)
- Who attends on the day
- Who wants feedback or further information
- What change follows as a result of comments on the day
- Who you have reported back to.



Good records are important because people will want to know what you do and when, and because arrangements may change several times during planning! This is particularly true when you are arranging individual support for users and carers - both you and they need to be clear about arrangements that can sometimes be complicated.

2.5 Timescales – how long will it take?

Unless you can dedicate all your time to planning and running the event, you will need to begin about 12 weeks beforehand.



If you can devote all your time to it, and you can get your target group involved easily and quickly, you may be able to plan an event in four or five weeks.

Here are some of the things you will need to do to plan your event (in approximate order). Note the important key dates or ‘milestones’.

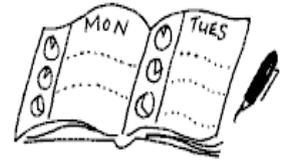
- **At the start.** Think about the questions raised in [Section 2](#)
- Contact key stakeholders to arrange a planning meeting.
- Begin to talk to other people about what you want your event to achieve
- Run the planning meeting and allocate tasks
- Set a date for the event
- Find and book an appropriate venue
- Find workshop facilitators and invite speakers
- Set up your systems for record-keeping
- Draft your invitation letter, booking form and other information for participants
- **Four weeks before.** Send out invitations. **Always** give people at least three to four weeks notice of an event
- **At least two weeks before.** Receive booking forms back
- Arrange practical support for those attending
- Confirm arrangements
- Run the event!

Think about the time after the event so that you can plan to write a report, implement change, and feed back to everyone.

2.6 Choosing a date and time

It is important that the date and time you choose suit the people who want to attend.

Do not guess – ask!



Be realistic. No date and time will suit everyone so pick ones that suit most people. Think of other ways to reach those who can't attend.

Take into consideration the following:

2.6.1 Religious holidays

Don't arrange an event during a religious holiday that may affect your target group. Check dates of holidays for all the major world religions.

2.6.2 Fridays

It is best to avoid running an event on a Friday unless you are sure no Muslims will want to attend. Many Muslims pray and attend mosque on Fridays.

2.6.3 Other events and meetings

Check your event does not clash with others that your target group may want to attend - these might include regular events such as groups which meet regularly, day centres, voluntary group meetings, or one-off events such as conferences. Also check that your event does not clash with another in the vicinity which may offend and discourage your target group from attending (see [Section 2.8.2](#)).



2.6.4 School hours

Will people attending need to drop children at school or other day care before they arrive, and leave in time to pick them up? Check dates of school holidays and try to arrange events during term times. This is important if your event is for those with children to look after.

2.6.5 Avoid starting early and finishing late

Many older and disabled people tell us they find it hard to get going quickly in the morning, and difficult to keep going late in the afternoon. If some of the people attending need wheelchair-accessible taxis, these are often already booked up during 'school run' times.

You should aim to run most daytime events between 10am and 2.30pm unless you are certain that people will not mind an earlier start or a later finish.

2.6.6 Evenings

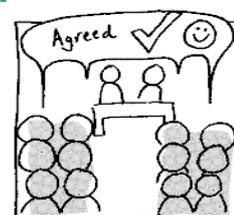
Sometimes users and carers need evening events, especially if they are in training or paid employment.

If some of the people attending are working, and some have childcare responsibilities, you may need to run two events at different times.

2.7 Agreeing the agenda, workshops and speakers

Talk to everyone involved about what they want.

If the main purpose of the event is to consult with people on a particular issue, then you will already know what must go on the agenda. You should also think about the following:



2.7.1 Discussion time

If you want to know what people think you need to allow time to talk! Providing time for small groups to discuss issues is important as some individuals may be intimidated by a large crowd.

2.7.2 Workshop facilitators and note-takers

You need to find people to lead each discussion group. They should be skilled at encouraging people to talk and also at keeping discussions relevant. They should know enough about the subject to answer questions - or at least note down questions and know who else can answer them! Each discussion group will also need a 'scribe' (someone to make flipchart notes of the issues raised and points made). Partner agencies are often happy to help by providing facilitators and scribes.

For more information on facilitating discussions and 'scribing', see [Sections 4.12](#) and [4.13](#).

2.7.3 Speakers

You may not need these! For example, you won't need speakers at 'visioning' or 'planning for real' events where people attend when it suits them (but you may need more facilitators for these).



For a more traditional event you will need to find someone to welcome people and introduce the subject. This person should know enough about the subject to talk sensibly and answer questions. For formal events, we recommend that you find the most senior manager you can to do this - users and carers need to know that their involvement is valued and that the event has the 'ear' of senior and executive managers. You may also want to invite other speakers, especially if you are discussing several subjects at the same event.

Speakers need to think about how they present their information. Make sure that they provide large, clear overheads or other written information in large fonts, and also talk through everything that is written down so that people with both visual and hearing impairments can follow the presentations.

Further guidance on giving accessible presentations is currently available from Community Partnerships Team Tel. 01484 221000, or e-mail community.partnerships@kirklees.gov.uk

2.7.4 Activities to attract users and carers

If you are not paying people for their time, you may need to attract them in other ways such as arranging pleasant leisure activities (massage, relaxation, arts and craft activities, music and so on). Some people may be attracted by useful information, advice, or training (for example, benefits advice, computer training, confidence building, job-search skills, DIY). Build in enough time for these activities to take place.

2.7.5 Refreshments

Good catering is an attraction for many people! Allow enough time for everyone to eat and drink comfortably. See [Section 3.2](#) for more information.



2.7.6 Stalls and displays

These can provide useful extra information about services, community activities and groups. Ask other teams and agencies, including those in the voluntary sector, if they would like to set up a display or stall. Allow enough time for the stalls and displays to be visited, maybe by adding 20 minutes to the lunch break.

2.7.7 Breaks

Everyone needs regular breaks when they are thinking and working hard. If the people at your event need more or longer breaks you must plan to provide these. For example, deaf and hearing-impaired people may find lip-reading or watching a sign-language interpreter very tiring. Some Muslims may need time for prayer. Stick to planned break times unless everyone agrees to the change.

2.7.8 Women-only and men-only sessions

You may sometimes need to arrange workshops or whole events for women only, or where women and men are separated for all or part of the day. This is particularly important when the topic under discussion is 'personal' (such as sexual health, experience of rape or domestic violence, breast cancer care), when the separation of women and men is required for religious or cultural reasons (in many Muslim communities), or for some leisure and physical activities (such as massage and keep fit).

Separating women and men can be controversial, but **is** allowed by law under certain circumstances including those above. If you do **not** separate women and men in these cases, many people will not feel able to give their views, talk openly, or may not attend at all.

2.8 Choosing the venue

2.8.1 Think Local

Generally people prefer not to travel far. Find a venue close to where they live, or where they usually go during the day.

If people have to travel to the venue, be prepared to pay for taxis as many users and carers cannot use public transport.

It is a good idea to use a venue familiar to those attending the event such as a local day or community centre that people already go to. However it could be a good idea to 'get away' (where you are finding out views about services at a specific centre).

2.8.2 Venues you should not use

Some venues have unpleasant or unacceptable associations for some people - some ex-patients (especially mental health patients) will not want to return to hospitals. There may be complicated local politics linked to some community centres. Ask around and find out whether some people feel unwelcome or uncomfortable at a specific centre.

Check what other events are happening on the same day at that venue or nearby. If another event is happening that may offend or discourage people from attending yours (such as a far-right or racist group meeting or rally) you should find another date.

Only use religious or faith centres if you are specifically targeting people from that particular faith. Never arrange an event in a pub unless you know this is acceptable to everyone attending.

2.8.3 Using wheelchair-accessible venues

If your event is for disabled people or carers, or for the general public, always use venues that are accessible to wheelchairs. At the very least the venue should have the following:



- A ground level entrance with no steps outside
- No steps between the entrance and the rooms where the event is being held
- Doors throughout which are wide enough for an electric wheelchair to get through (government guidelines give a minimum clearance of 750mm)
- An emergency or fire exit that has a ramp and not steps. There must be clear evacuation arrangements for disabled people
- At least one accessible toilet.

Do not use a venue which cannot meet these minimum standards - and tell its managers why.

You should also consider the following:

- If some of the rooms being used are not on the ground floor will these cause problems?
- Are there slopes inside or outside the venue too steep for a wheelchair-user to use?
- Are there enough accessible toilets for the number of disabled people attending?
- Are there enough lifts to accommodate the number of disabled people attending?
- Can the lift buttons (and other switches) be reached from a wheelchair?

- What happens if the lift breaks down or there is a fire?
- Can wheelchair-users move easily around the furniture in the rooms?
- Are there enough disabled parking spaces or can some be reserved for this near the entrance?

Visit the venue if you do not know it. If you are not a wheelchair-user yourself, spot potential problems by taking along someone who is.

2.8.4 Other facilities at the venue

Ask about other facilities and resources at the venue and check if there are extra charges for these.

You may need:

- Electric sockets/power points
- An overhead projector (OHP)
- Flip-chart stands and paper
- TV and video
- Public address system
- An induction loop (for hearing-impaired people)
- Space for signers/interpreters to stand where they can be seen clearly
- Prayer rooms (separate for men and women)
- Car parking space – including disabled parking
- Use of a photocopier
- Use of a phone. Check whether people can phone if they have trouble getting to the venue - get the number.
- Catering (a few venues provide this).

2.8.5 North or South Kirklees?

If you want to reach people from all parts of Kirklees, you may need to run a number of events – one in the north and one in the south of the area. Many people will not, or cannot, travel from one area to another.

If you can only run one event, the decision on where is difficult. Consider the following:

- Where do most of the target group live?
- Where are the most appropriate venues?
- Are there any political or social sensitivity to consider?
- In our experience, people travel from Huddersfield to Dewsbury more readily than they travel from Dewsbury to Huddersfield.

If you are expecting people to travel, be prepared to pay travelling expenses for public transport or taxi journeys.

2.8.6 Booking the venue

Don't forget to book your chosen venue – and the other facilities you need!

If you have made provisional bookings with one or more venues, don't forget to confirm the booking with one and cancel the others.

Ask the venue to send a map which you can then send to people attending.

If your first choice venue isn't available on the day you want it, you will need to decide whether it is more important to hold the event at that place or on that day. Ask users, carers and partners for their views.

2.9 Setting a budget

2.9.1 How much will it cost

Events cost money! If you have no funds you should try to reach people in other ways. Other involvement activities can be arranged much more cheaply, particularly if you can find ways of actively involving people in their own homes or groups without asking them to come to you³.



Work out how much your event will cost and what you have to spend. Here are some things you may need to pay for:

- Venue hire
- Facilities such as OHP, induction loop, TV and video
- Catering (lunch and drinks)
- Activities to attract people (massage, relaxation, arts and craft activities, music, advice, training)
- Payment for people's time, and out-of-pocket expenses
- Individual support such as taxis, other transport, care cover, support workers, advocates, child-care, interpreters
- Expenses for speakers, workshop facilitators and people running leisure activities or information sessions
- Publicity, bookings and mail
- Report and feedback
- Officer time (usually part of your existing staff costs).

You may also want to attract people to your event by arranging pleasant activities, useful advice, and refreshments. If you need to consult about something that is not a 'hot topic' extra activities make the event more appealing but can add to your costs.

We recommend you plan your budget to include the costs of regular involvement events. You could plan to hold one or two small events each year and a bigger event only every two or three years.

2.9.2 Payments to users and carers

Events can be expensive because you need to make sure people are not out-of-pocket. Some people who use health and social care services may have higher-than-average expenses. For example, they may need a support worker to help them participate or care-cover for the person they look after at home.

It is hard to predict how much it will cost to provide support because individual needs vary. You could find out what support will be needed before planning your budget.

Paying users and carers for their time is a complex issue - a pay and reward guidance has been produced by the Department of Health. See the Payment for Involvement Policy developed by Kirklees Adult services for a consistency approach.



2.9.3 Can we cut costs?

We recommend you draw up a realistic budget and look for creative ways of finding the money.

If you cannot meet all the event costs yourself, try these:

- Ask partners for a contribution
- Combine efforts with another team or organisation to plan one event rather than two
- Ask partners to contribute their time or skills for free - people are sometimes happy to do this. Some organisations can contribute time, skills or resources, even when they cannot give funding
- Try to find a venue that you can use free of charge - this could be somewhere owned and run by a partner agency (community centres run by voluntary groups cannot afford to do this)
- Apply for a grant from an external source
- Avoid economising on support for users and carers as this should always be properly funded. It may be possible to reduce some costs by arranging for some people to share support such as sharing a taxi or a support worker. Always ask whether this is OK. There may be good reasons why it is not acceptable.

It is NOT acceptable to charge people to attend a planning or consultation event, even if they can afford it. They are giving us their time (usually for free) and we are benefiting from their involvement.

If you don't fund your event properly, you run some serious risks:

- Many people will not be able to attend if you don't pay for the support they need
- You can create bad feeling by making some feel excluded because they want to attend but cannot afford it. Some may feel you do not value their contributions, and some will just see your service as stingy
- You may end up consulting with the same people each time - mainly those who are able and willing to meet their own expenses. You can build good relationships with people who continue to give their valued opinions, but it is important to hear new voices as well
- Your event may not be a success.

2.10 Publicity: reaching the right people

Publicising an event can be straightforward, particularly if you only need to reach users of your own service. If you want to reach a wider group, you will need to do more.



Reaching the right people can seem a real challenge. People often have reservations about getting involved, particularly if they are not sure it will lead to real change. Once you have run an event or two and demonstrated that the people who attend are not wasting their time because you have improved services, you will find it much easier to attract them in future.

2.10.1 Deciding what publicity is needed

Be clear about the aims of the event. If you are running a consultation event, you will need to reach a target group. An information event may need to reach all users and potential users of your service.

If you are running a consultation event decide what questions you want to ask before you decide who to invite so you can invite people with the answers! This seems obvious but is easy to overlook. For example, if you want to consult about a particular service that only some of your client group use, reach those people rather than the whole group. This saves everyone a lot of time, money and frustration!

If you only need to reach a small number of people, you may not need to do much publicity. Ask staff who work directly with users and carers (if you don't) to help find people to answer your questions, and make sure they know about the event. Use face-to-face conversations, existing mailing lists, newsletters, networks and so on to reach them.

If your event is larger and you want to reach new people, you need more publicity. In addition to the other options, ask people at places where users and carers already go to help you publicise the event (day centres, community centres, support groups, GP practices).

Do you want to publicise your event more widely? In many cases you will not need to publicise the event in the press because you can target your publicity directly at those you want to reach.

2.10.2 Making publicity accessible and appealing

Make sure your publicity is easy to understand and relevant to your target group. Here is some general advice:

- If you need to reach particular people or ask specific questions, say so in your publicity. For example: “Have you used X service?” or “Can you tell us what you think about Y and Z?”
- Use phrases that make people feel the event is for them and that you value their participation. For example: “We are inviting YOU” or “We need your help!”
- Give people all the information they need as simply as possible to decide whether the event is right for them.
- Use words and sentences that are easy to understand
- Avoid jargon
- Use ‘Plainly Better’ or another service to check you have done this well
- Use a font that is easy to read (Arial or another ‘sans serif’ font). Use the biggest font size you can. Leaflets should be typed no smaller than 14 point. On posters or fliers for display, text should be no smaller than 18 point, and headings should be 30 point or larger.

14 point

18 point

30 point

- Translate the publicity into community languages if needed (Urdu, Gujarati, Bosnian for example)
- It may be appropriate to use symbols for some people (those with a learning disability - see Appendix 4 for advice)
- Tell people about added attractions such as support provided to attend, lunch, and enjoyable activities
- Make your publicity look good and consider getting advice from a designer. Don’t over-use pictures and colours. Try to make the text easy on the eye using plenty of empty space if you can
- Include the logos of those funding you and your partners.

If you are a Kirklees Council employee the following people can give more information and advice - see [Appendix 3](#) for contact details):

3. Event planning (2) – practical arrangements

3.1 Booking places and getting people there

When you have decided who to invite, you should:

- Send out invitations and booking forms
- Process bookings
- Arrange support for those who need it
- Confirm arrangements.



3.1.1 Sending out invitations and booking forms

Use the advice given earlier on publicity to design your invitations. You will need to give people a clear idea of the aims of your event, as well as practical information about the date, time and place.

Design your booking form after studying the section on support needs ([Section 3.1.3](#)). Send the booking form out with the invitations and ask about other special needs including dietary requirements. Ask for contact details and say when you want booking forms returned. Use the section timescales ([Section 2.5](#)) to make sure everyone has enough time to make arrangements. Say whether bookings will be confirmed (see [Section 3.1.4](#)).

Use the booking form to ask people which workshops they would like to attend at your event. [Appendix 2](#) has a sample booking form you can use.

Give people the option to book by phone or email. If people book by phone, fill in a form for them so you have a record of their details and needs.

Check the weight of your envelopes before posting. Many mail-outs weigh more than the maximum allowed for first class post. If you haven't paid enough postage, people won't receive the letters unless they pay a surcharge – most of them won't bother and the ones that do will be very annoyed!

3.1.2 Processing bookings

Keep good, clear records of who is attending and what support they need. Keep personal information secure and do not pass on without permission.

Kirklees Council employees can seek advice on Data Protection from Lindsay Foody on 01484 221000.

You may find it useful to keep several different lists or ‘mini-databases.’ For example, list all the people attending, all those who need taxis, all those who need care cover and so on.

3.1.3 Arranging support for those who need it

This is one of the most important sections of the handbook. Support is essential for many people because without it, they cannot attend your event.

Think about the support different people might need to enable them to participate fully and equally in the event.

Support might include:

- Taxis to and from the event, especially for some older and disabled people
- Wheelchair-accessible taxis (there are not many of these in Kirklees)
- Care cover for those who look after someone at home
- Support workers for people with learning disabilities, and severe or multiple physical impairments
- Interpreters for those who do not speak and understand English. This includes people who speak another community language, and deaf and hearing-impaired people who use British Sign Language (Contact the Community Language Service on 01484 221000 to arrange interpretation or translation)
- Induction loop
- Childcare.



When you receive the booking forms, you will know what support each individual needs. In our experience, people do not ask for support unless they really need it.

If you have any questions or doubts at all about what support an individual needs, ask them!

Unless you already know the individual and their needs very well, you may need to phone to check some details. These could be what time the taxi needs to arrive to get them to the venue on time, how old their child is, and whether they are already registered with a care agency and so on.

You should then contact those who provide the support (such as taxi firms and care agencies). They will usually ask you for written confirmation of the booking, and a purchase order or cost-code.

Don't leave these details until the last minute!

3.1.4 Confirming arrangements

If you have arranged support for an individual, always confirm this with them. Give them details such as the names of firms or individuals who are providing the support.



Provide a contact phone number people can use on the day (the venue or your office) if they are delayed, their support does not arrive, or they need help with any other problem.

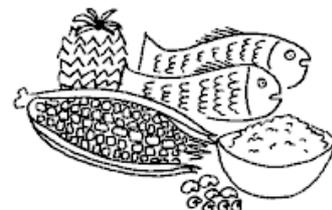
You may decide not to send confirmation letters to those attending who don't need support. If your invitation and booking form were clear, you may not need to confirm places with everyone.

3.1.5 Directions to the venue

Get a map from the venue, or make one yourself, and send it to participants. Show public transport routes, stations and bus-stops, as well as road access. Send your map with your invitation if you are not sending out confirmation.

3.2 Arranging catering

Book the catering as soon as you know how many people will be attending. Catering for dozens of people with different dietary requirements can be a real challenge so here is some advice:



- **Ask individuals to tell you** about any special food needs
- **Talk to the caterer** about what is needed (don't assume that caterers know what vegetarians, vegans, Muslims for example can and can't eat)

- Always cater for vegetarians as many do not expect to have to tell you specially. Vegetarians do not eat meat, fish, seafood, or animal products (be aware of animal fats in margarine, sauces, puddings)
- Vegans do not eat meat, fish, seafood, eggs, dairy products or other animal products (you could use nuts, beans, pulses and tofu instead). Vegan buffets can include hummus sandwiches, mushroom and nut pate, filou pastry filled with, vegetables or rice, vegetable spring rolls)
- Muslim food should be halal and contain no alcohol (some puddings such as trifle contain alcohol)
- Diabetics avoid sugar so you should be aware of 'hidden' sugar in food such as sauces
- Food allergies can be many and varied. Get details from the individual.

It is wise to cater for around 15% more people than have booked as extra people turn up very often!

3.3 Delegate / information packs

At big events people may find it very useful to have an information or 'delegate' pack containing the information they need and want about what is happening during the event.



Prepare this information before the event and produce enough copies for workshop leaders as well as participants. Give the packs out at the beginning of the event, possibly at registration.

Packs can contain the following:

- Agenda
- What the day aims to achieve and what will happen afterwards
- Name badge or sticker
- Details about workshops if they are attending any
- Some information about speakers and workshop leaders
- Evaluation form.

At smaller events, full packs may not be necessary. Participants will need an agenda and a handout covering other important information including the aims of the event.

3.4 Designing and using an evaluation form

This is a form asking participants to tell you what they thought of the event. It can help you improve the events you run in future. It can also help you get feedback about how involved people feel and whether they think their views are valued.



Ask some of the following questions:

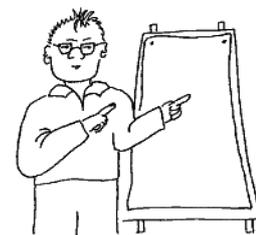
- Was the day useful and enjoyable?
- What did you think of the workshops, presentations, displays and food?
- Did you get the support you needed to participate?
- Would you attend a similar event in future?
- Were there any problems? How can events like this be improved?
- Do you feel we listened to you?
- How confident are you that we will improve our services?

If you ask people to complete the form on the day, remember to allow enough time to do this. If you ask them to post their comments back to you, remember to put a FREEPOST address on the form. Design the form so that it can be simply folded (along dotted lines for example) and be sent back without an envelope.

Analyse this feedback after the event (see [section 5.3](#)).

3.5 Decide who is doing what on the day

If you are planning a big event, you need lots of help. When you have found your helpers, allocate tasks and make a list of who is staffing the registration desk, running stalls, facilitating groups, taking photos, problem-solving, and so on.



Make sure everyone is clear about their duties. It helps if everyone has a meeting beforehand to be clear about what they are doing and ask questions. If this isn't possible, provide instructions or a briefing note ([Section 4.11](#)).

4. On the day

If you have planned the event well, most of the hard work is already done but there are still some important arrangements and details to remember. This section gives you some practical advice for the day itself.

4.1 Check access to the building

This is very important if you are running an event outside the venue's normal opening times. Check how you will get into the building and make arrangements to meet a caretaker, get keys and so on.

4.2 Take everything with you!

It is easy to forget things when you are under pressure. Make a list to remind you of what you need to take.

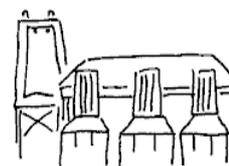


4.3 Allow plenty of time to set up.

Make sure you get to the venue at least 45 minutes before people are due to arrive. Some people coming by taxi may be early. Allow time to set up chairs, overhead projectors and so on. Consider setting up stalls and displays the day before. Make sure stall-holders know when they must arrive by and be ready.

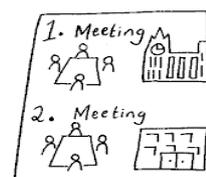
4.4 Arranging seating

Consider seating arrangements carefully – an involvement event would not normally seat participants in rows because people cannot see each other. This may discourage others from talking to you. Chairs around a big table can be too formal. Circles or semi-circles are better. Make sure everyone can see the speakers and any flip-charts or screens being used. People using an interpreter should be able to see them, and be seen by them. Make space for wheelchair users and ensure they can get in, out and around all rooms easily.



4.5 Use signs

Place signs inside and outside the venue so people know where they are going. Signpost each room clearly if they are to be used for workshops. Toilets, exits, crèche rooms, prayer rooms and so on should be clearly signed. If there are long or complicated corridors place arrows at useful points along the way!



Have a helper around to direct people as some will not be able to see the signs.

4.6 Set up a registration desk

You will need a table or desk near the entrance, where you can welcome people and they can sign in. It is important to make and keep a list of everyone who attends as you will need it to send out the event report, spot any late arrivals and identify any problems and tell others how many people attended. Name badges, registration packs and other information can be given out at this point and expenses paid to those who need them (see [Section 4.7](#)).

Someone should stay at the registration desk after the start to help people who arrive late. Leave clear information and directions if this isn't possible.

4.7 Take petty cash

Pay expenses on the day if possible as some people attending may be on low incomes or have other reasons for not wanting to wait for their money back. Use information from the booking forms to estimate how much petty cash you will need and take a bit more! Take expenses claim forms to give to people if you run out of petty cash.

4.8 Distribute handouts

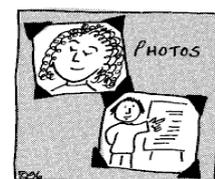
Give handouts to people when they are in their seats if these have not been distributed at the registration desk.

4.9 Housekeeping

This describes all the important information people need, especially about personal safety and comfort. Tell people about exits, fire procedures, where the toilets are, where coffee and lunch is to be served, where to find a phone, and what time the event will finish. Some venues will provide this information for you.

4.10 Taking photographs

You may want photos for your event report. Always ask permission before you take a photograph, and never take a photo of someone who is unwilling. Your organisation may have a standard consent form which you can ask people to sign if they are willing.



4.11 Make sure workshop facilitators know what to do

Many workshop or discussion facilitators will come from other organisations. Try to arrange a meeting beforehand to make sure they know what to do (see [Section 3.5](#)).

Produce a short briefing note for everyone leading or facilitating workshops so they are clear about what they need to do. This might include questions they must ask, notes about time available, when to break, and information to pass on to participants about the aims of the events and what will happen next.

4.12 Facilitating discussions

It takes practice and skill to help people discuss a topic openly and honestly and to answer questions that come up.

Here are some top tips for facilitators:

- **Know your subject.** Know enough about the topic to ask the right questions and probe further if you need to
- **Know your target group.** Find out something about the people who use your service and the people in the group. This may include general information about their cultural background or individual information which enables you to ask particular questions and build on someone's experiences)
- **Know what questions you want to ask** but use these to guide the discussion, not limit or restrict it
- **Introduce yourself and the topic.** Be clear about the purpose of the discussion. Tell people how you will use their views.
- Encourage people to introduce themselves (but acknowledge that some may not want to)
- **Make sure you get the answers you need** but recognise that people have their own agendas. Make time to discuss what is important to them
- **Listen well!** You may need to convince people that your organisation is really interested in their views!
- **Find a balance** between encouraging people to talk, and keeping discussions relevant
- **Have several prompts or extra questions ready** in case the discussion dries up
- **Encourage people who are not saying much**
- **Don't take anger personally, but take it seriously.** Some people may be angry with your organisation because they feel

let down and that anger may come out in discussions. Listen, and think about what action can be taken if there is a problem and be clear about what can and can't be done

- Don't let the discussion be taken over by one particular person or one particular issue. If someone needs a chance to talk or complain, offer them that chance but at a later time
- Answer any questions or note them down and put them in touch with someone who can answer. This recognises that consultation is a 'two-way street' and not just something that benefits us. Users and carers will have questions too!

4.13 Taking notes and 'scribing'

You will need someone to take notes in each workshop and discussion session. Use a flip chart so that participants can see what notes are being made and add or challenge the notes if they want to.



This is often called 'scribing'. Good scribing is quite a skill. Record the key points that people make without putting words into their mouths. Check back often by saying things like "I've written such-and-such - is that OK? Do you want me to add anything else?" It is **not** a good idea for the person facilitating or leading the discussion to do this – it's too hard to do both!

5 After the event

After an involvement event use what people have told you to plan service improvements.

This section gives details about other things you need to do after the event. Use existing guidance on service planning and improvements (such as the Team Plans for Kirklees Council staff).

5.1 Practical tasks after the event

There are some practical tasks left to do which are easy to overlook.

5.1.1 Thank you letters

Write and thank all the speakers, workshop facilitators and helpers for their support. This builds goodwill and makes it easier to find helpers for future events! You might want to write to participants to thank them for their contributions or include a thank you message in your event report.



5.1.2 Repaying outstanding expenses

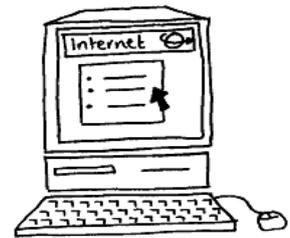
If you didn't pay all expenses out of your petty cash on the day, pay them as soon as possible.

5.1.3 Paying other bills and invoices

You may find that you get bills and invoices relating to the event some time afterwards. Taxi companies, care agencies and others will often wait until they know what services they actually provided on the day before they charge you.

5.1.4 Updating your database

Add people to your mailing lists if they attended without booking as you will need to monitor how many people were actually involved or consulted.



5.1.5 Using the evaluation form and other feedback

Look at what people have said about the event to help you improve events in the future. You need feedback about how involved people feel and whether they feel their views are valued. You can include this feedback in your event report.

Follow up some enquiries or comments. You could send people more information about your service or contact them to find out more about a complaint.

You could hold a meeting for everyone who was involved in running the event to reflect on how things went. This passes on experience and good practice and enables new people to learn how to run an event.

5.2 Planning service improvements

Kirklees Council Children and Adults are committed to making sure that user and carer involvement leads to positive change. It is easier to report back on what people have told us than to plan and take real action. Make sure their views lead to real service improvements, not just because we want to develop more user, carer and patient-centred services, but also because people will stop talking to us if they think we are not listening.



5.2.1 Summarising views and identifying key points

Read the notes you have from the discussion groups and identify the following:

- Key points
- Recurring themes which have been raised by several people or discussion groups
- Possible problems
- Individual experiences and cases which need urgent action
- Solutions or suggestions made by participants
- Examples of good practice, successes and compliments.

Discuss these with people who were at the event.

5.2.2 Comments about other services

You may find that comments have been made about other teams or services as well as your own. They may have done this if they are not clear about who does what, or if they haven't had a chance to talk directly to anyone else.

Sharing information is easier if the event was run in partnership with other teams!

Record comments and pass them on to the services concerned or to your senior managers if you are not sure about who should get the information.

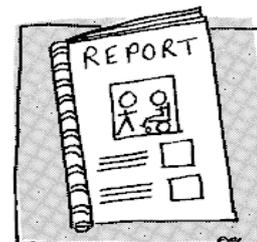
5.2.3 Turning views into action

Use your existing service planning arrangements to turn views into action. Try to make the actions specific and achievable.

If you cannot take action on an issue or problem you should explain why.

5.3 Reporting back about your event

You will need to report back to everyone who was involved in the event, everyone who is interested in what you have been told, and everyone who wants to know about your plans for change. You could make your report in two or three different ways - each one to suit a different audience or



purpose. Reports do not always need to be formal. Sometimes a presentation, newsletter article or leaflet may be better.

5.3.1 Reporting to participants

It is important to report back to your target group about what happened at the event – including to those who did not attend. You should detail what was said, what service improvements are planned, and what has actually changed. Use the advice given in [Section 2.10](#) on publicity to help you write and distribute your report.

People often complain that they don't find out about happens as a result of their involvement. This irritates and offends them and makes them less keen to talk to us in future. If service improvements take time, you may need to report to everyone more than once to tell them what action is planned and then what actually happens.

Tell them if you cannot take action on something that they raised. Explain why, and tell them about other things you are doing instead. Most people accept that you cannot do everything but they want to be kept fully informed.

5.3.2 Reporting to managers, planners and decision-makers

We are **not** recommending any kind of secret or dual reporting! Most of the information you report to managers and planners will be exactly the same as the information you give to users and carers. Managers and planners however, will want to know things that users and carers do not. For example, you may need to provide extra information about the following:

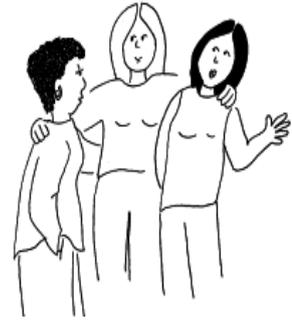
- Lessons for future events
- How you have linked people's views with existing service planning arrangements
- Details of how you plan to go about making specific improvements
- If there are resource implications
- Issues with implications for other services.

You may need to report in two or more stages on issues raised and pass on comments, to get plans approved, and to report on progress and achievement.

And finally ... change happens!

This, of course, is the main reason you set out to run your involvement event in the first place! You will now be at a point where you can see how user and carer involvement has led to positive change.

Don't forget to celebrate!



Appendix 1: sample booking form

EVENTS BOOKING FORM

Event name Meeting to be held on *date*, At *venue*.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email or other contact:

Please let us know what support you may need to attend this event:

- I need transport providing
- I need a wheelchair-accessible taxi
- I need a signer
- I need an interpreter - (please specify language)

- I have special dietary needs (please state which)

- I require care cover (please contact us as soon as possible)

Please give details of other support you need:
--

***Insert information about choosing workshops*.**

PLEASE RETURN to the Freepost address, by *date*:

your address

your telephone number and email

Appendix 2: Event checklist

Event:	Date:	Time:		
Venue:	Lead officer:			
Action	Who by	When by	Date done	
Agree date with key stakeholders				
Agree agenda				
Agree and book speakers and facilitators				
Set budget				
Book venue				
Check venue for accessibility				
Book catering				
Book interpreter				
Arrange PA system				
Arrange induction loop				

Arrange for OHP, flipcharts, etc.			
Book care assistants			
Send briefing note to workshop facilitators			
Decide who to invite			
Decide where to publicise			
Invite people to put up display boards			
Mail out flyer <input type="checkbox"/> booking form <input type="checkbox"/>			
Set up transport booking list			
Set up list of people booked on to attend			
Produce an evaluation form			
Arrange delegates info packs			
Ensure all info is in an accessible format			
Take petty cash			
Produce name badges			

Signpost the venue			
Set up registration form and desk			
Arrange seating			
Photocopy and distribute handouts			
Take photographs			
Take notes during the event and collect notes from other speakers			
Write to thank speakers and assistants			
Analyse evaluation forms			
Write up and circulate event report			
Produce an action plan in partnership with stakeholders			
Follow up action plan			
Notes			

Appendix 3: Index of useful contacts for Kirklees Council staff

<p>Community Partnerships (for advice about involving people who use health and social care services and their carers) 2nd Floor Civic Centre 1 High Street Huddersfield HD1 2PW</p> <p>Tel: 01484 221000 email: community.partnerships@kirklees.gov.uk</p>	<p>Gateway to Care (Social Services Information) 30 Market Street Huddersfield HD1 2HG</p> <p>Tel: 01484 414933</p> <p>Email: gatewaytocare@kirklees.gov.uk</p>	<p>Gateway to Care (Social Services Information) Dewsbury Town Hall Town Hall Way Dewsbury WF12 8EE</p> <p>Tel: 01924 325070</p> <p>Email: gatewaytocare@kirklees.gov.uk</p>
<p>Care in Kirklees Website: The main source of support and information for social care providers in Kirklees is via the Care in Kirklees website: www.kirklees.gov.uk/careinkirklees</p>	<p>The Engagement Team NHS Greater Huddersfield CCG Broad Lea House Bradley Business Park Dyson Way Bradley Huddersfield HD2 1GZ</p> <p>Tel: 01484 464025 Email: ppi@kirklees.nhs.uk</p>	<p>Partnership Commissioning Team: Responsible for strategic planning for all adult care groups. Commissioning Managers for: mental health (and substance misuse); learning disabilities; physical / sensory impairment and long term conditions; and older people. Also includes a Carers Strategy Officer</p> <p>Tel: 01484 221000 Cameron.hooper@kirklees.gov.uk</p>

<p>Document Solutions 9 Colne Road Folly Hall Huddersfield HD1 3ER</p> <p>Tel: 01484 221000 Fax: 01484 226483 Email: document.solutions@kirklees.gov.uk</p>	<p>For interpreters, signers and translation: Kirklees Council Community Language Service 2nd Floor Civic Centre 3, Market Street Huddersfield HD1 2YZ</p> <p>Tel: 01484 221000 Fax: 01484 223329 email: languages@kirklees.gov.uk</p>	<p>For info and advice on data protection and freedom of information: Lindsay Foody Information & Access Officer</p> <p>Tel: 01484 221000 Email: data.protection@kirklees.gov.uk</p>
<p>For info and advice on producing public information, Karen Coleman Marketing and Communication manager:</p> <p>Tel: 01484 221000 Email: karen.coleman@kirklees.gov.uk</p>	<p>For advice on use of symbols for people with a learning disability: Mencap Through The Maze Alexandra House 2 Well Lane Chappel Allerton Leeds LS7 4PQ</p> <p>Tel: 0113 2691889 Email: throughthemaze@mencap.org.uk Web: www.through-the-maze.org.uk</p>	<p>For advice on use of symbols for people with a learning disability: CHANGE Unit 11 Shine Harehills Road Leeds LS8 5HS</p> <p>Tel: 0113 3880011 Fax: 0113 3880012 Email: info@change-people.co.uk</p>

The Events Handbook ~ Your feedback

Please let us know what you think about this handbook. Your comments will help improve our written advice in the future. Feel free to continue your comments on another sheet.

Name:	
Address:	
Phone: email and other contact information:	
Please tell us what you think about the Events Handbook:	
Please tell us about changes you think we should make if we re-publish this handbook:	
Have you already used the handbook to plan an event?	Yes/No
If no, do you intend to use it to plan a future event?	Yes/No
If your answer is still no, please tell us why you will not be using the handbook:	
What other advice would you like to have?	

Please return this form to Community Partnerships, Civic Centre 1, High Street, Huddersfield, HD1 2PW or email it to community.partnerships@kirklees.gov.uk

Thank you for your time.

Information in other formats

Kirklees Council is committed to making sure its communication is clear, plain and available for everyone. This handbook can be made available in languages other than English. It can also be made available in large print, Audio CD and Braille. Full details are available by telephoning 01484 414933.

یہ معلومات انگریزی کے علاوہ دوسری زبانوں میں، بڑی لکھائی میں، سی ڈی یا ٹیپ پر اور بریل میں بھی فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔ براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر فون کر لیں: 01484 414933 (Urdu)

આ માહિતી અંગ્રેજી સિવાયની બીજી ભાષાઓમાં, મોટી છપાઇમાં, ઓડિઓ સી.ડી., ઓડિઓ ટેપ અને બ્રેઇલમાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે. મહેરબાની કરી 01484 414933 નંબર પર ટેલિફોન કરો. (Gujarati)

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ, ਵੱਡੇ ਆਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਛਪਾਈ, ਆਡੀਓ ਸੀ ਡੀ, ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 01484 414933 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ। (Punjabi)

这些资料备有其它语文、大字体、语音光碟、录音带和凸字版本可供索取。请致电 01484 414933 查询详情。(Chinese)

Te informacje można nabyć w różnych językach, w powiększonym druku, na płycie kompaktowej lub na taśmie i Braille. Proszę telefonować na numer 01484 414933. (Polish)