



### What is informing?

Informing people is probably the most common way in which people and communities are involved. Put simply, it means telling people something. Local public services are informing people all the time, through websites, leaflets, adverts and press releases. What can you do to improve how you keep people informed?

### Why is informing important?

Informing ensures that people are given the right messages at the right time. There is often a legal duty to tell people about what we do and what services we offer. It is important to get it right.

### How do I inform?

### Ten top tips for informing...

#### 1 - Be clear about who, what, why, when and how?

These simple questions need answers before you start informing the public. When you have answered them effectively you'll have great information!

#### 2 - Get professional help!

A quick chat with a communication or marketing colleagues in your organisation will help improve the information you are working on. They will help you to be clear about why you need to inform the public.

Similarly communication or marketing colleagues can help you get creative. There is a lot of information bombarding the public – how will yours stand out?

#### 3 - It's good to talk

Having a conversation with someone is the best way to convey information. You might want to consider face to face briefings to pass on your information. Or try something online like a Facebook group where you can 'chat' online. This method may be better than producing more leaflets and posters. Think – does the world need another leaflet?

#### 4 - Keep it simple

Writing in plain English is important. The average reading age for the public is 12 years old – so always keep it simple. Public sector information is often difficult to read and understand – yours can be better.

**i** - Plain English tips - <http://www.clearest.co.uk>

#### 5 - Tell a story

It's a lot easier to inform people if they can relate to a story. A story about a real person using a service is much more engaging than a list of instructions. Stories don't need to be long – just a few sentences about a real person can make your work come alive.

#### 6 - Paint a portrait

Pictures of people can make your information more warm and human. A picture does tell a thousand words – especially if someone is smiling. Make sure people's faces are clear and that pictures represent our diverse communities. But remember to get peoples consent for their photos to be used.

#### 7 - Keep it short

On Twitter you only have 140 characters to give your message and tell your story! An average page of a



magazine (such as a Sunday newspaper supplement) only has about 200 to 250 words on it. TV adverts are only 30 seconds long. Hold people's attention – keep it short.

### 8 - Provide clear contact details

Include correct phone numbers and email addresses – people may want to find out more and it's vital that they know who to contact. Double check contact details are reliable before you give them out.

Multiple logos and branding can be confusing so keep to a minimum. If you include too many logos on your communication people may be unsure who to get in touch with.

### 9 - Make it accessible

Think about who your information is intended for and if there's anything you need to do to make it accessible. For example, does it need to be in bigger print? Is it readable on a coloured background? Are there specific audiences for your information who would benefit from a different approach – maybe a face to face conversation?

### 10 - Team effort

Wherever possible work with others to develop your communications. Try out ideas, words and pictures. People interpret information in lots of ways, many images and words have different meanings to different people. For example is it a barbecue, a "Barbie" or a BBQ? Test out your information before you give it out.

If you need more help, please contact the Communication and Marketing Team:

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