

## Consultation in Warwickshire County Council

# Reaching Everyone

April 2003

- Consider asking representatives from local community groups to speak
- Ensure that all speakers, Council employees and Councillors wear name badges

### Refreshments

- Make sure that you cater for all dietary requirements, in particular it is important to provide appropriate refreshments for ethnic minority groups
- If you are asking people to confirm their attendance you can ask them about their requirements
- Label all foods and separate the vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods

### Publicising the consultation

- This is the key to making sure that all sections of the community participate in consultation. Think about where different groups might find out about the consultation and what is the best way to communicate e.g. specialist newspapers, leaflets distributed door to door etc.
- Use existing consultation groups and networks to gain publicity

### Internal contacts

- Be aware of consultation fatigue with particular groups of people. To join in with existing consultation meetings

take a look at the calendar system on the Consultation Database

- If you are considering consultation with a particular group of people there are staff within the Council who have specialist knowledge, who will be able to give you advice – see below.

Group	Contact
Racial Equality	Arun Kang Ext 2378
Youth offending/ crime & disorder	Julie Sullivan Ext 8086
Older People	Elizabeth Ross Ext 8146
Young People	Susannah Jordan Ext 8090
Disability	Helen Flanagan Ext 8027
Health Inequalities	Carole Edkins Ext 6862
Families	Lisa Blunt Ext 2254
Community Planning	John Lyons Ext 2075
Schools	David MacNiven Ext. 8165

**This leaflet is part of a series of  
Consultation Leaflets produced by  
Warwickshire County Council  
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## Reaching Everyone

It is important to remember that consultation should be accessible to all sections of the community, the Council's Social Inclusion Statement of Intent states;

"We will involve and consult with all sectors of the community (communities of interest as well as location) to make sure that all people have an equal chance of having their voice and views heard and of influencing their futures".

Making consultation inclusive is important because;

- Consultation exercises often need to find out the views of an accurate cross-section of the population as a whole; and
- Different sections of the community, particularly minorities, may have needs or views that are different from those of the majority and, if they are not consulted effectively, these needs or views may remain invisible.

There are ways of reaching most groups in the community, but some of them demand considerable effort. Always do your research before consulting particular groups in the community e.g. Black & Minority Ethnic communities, have diverse cultural customs which you could offend. Advice is available from specialist officers within the council.

Whichever consultation method you chose i.e. Qualitative – e.g. focus groups,

public meetings, or Quantitative e.g. questionnaires, to meet the needs of those you are trying to reach, you may want to think about the following;

## Timing

- Do not only hold events during the day, the group you want to consult with may find it easier to attend meetings held in the evening or weekends
- Provide crèche facilities
- Make sure that your consultation does not conflict with other events such as religious festivals etc.
- If you are sending out a postal survey ensure that you give at least 2 weeks response time

## Venue

- Ensure venues are accessible by people with disabilities
- Is the venue easy to get to via public transport?
- Offer transport to people who have difficulty reaching the venue
- Will the venue provide the right atmosphere? Public buildings such as a town hall tend to give a sense of importance for an event, but they can also be off putting and more informal local venues might be more appropriate in some cases

- Do signs need to be in different languages
- Would it be appropriate to hold women only meetings?

## Removing language barriers

- Provide facilities such as induction loop systems for use with hearing aids and signers
- Ensure that the correct interpreters attend the event
- If you are undertaking telephone or face to face questionnaires ensure that the interviewers have the right language skills.
- Provide information and questionnaires in different versions, such as large print size, Braille or on tape

## Incentives and allowances

- For some consultation methods you will need to consider paying people a small incentive to attend

## Chair/speakers (for meetings/events)

- Ensure that you use a skilled chair, who is aware of the proper terminology relevant for that particular event
- If speakers are used consider the mix with regard to age, gender, race and disability