



Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme	
Protective Marking	NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED
Publication Scheme Y/N	Y
Title	Effective Community Engagement
Version	1
Summary	A checklist to assist with the planning and implementation of any community engagement activity.
Branch / OCU	Citizen Focus – Directorate of Diversity and Citizen Focus
Date created	April 2007
Review date	April 2008

Metropolitan Police Service

Effective community engagement

A checklist for getting it right



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Working together for a safer London

Introduction

Actively engaged communities contribute significantly to the improvement of policing services, the reduction of antisocial behaviour and serious crimes at all levels. We must understand the diverse needs of the communities we serve, so we can respond to them effectively. We need to earn their trust, confidence and satisfaction through the way we engage with them.

What is community engagement?

'Community engagement' is what we call any activity where we try to get people – individuals or groups – involved in policy and service decisions that affect them.

'Community' is a group of people who all hold something in common. This can be either because they live in the same area, or they share an interest or identity, for example on the basis of ethnicity or faith - or share an experience, such as people who have experienced a particular type of crime.

'Engagement' might mean a **consultation**, where we discuss a specific issue for a set period (like focus groups, public meetings or traditional paper consultations). These usually involve people who represent **the demographic profile of a particular community or neighbourhood**.

Or it could also be **participation**, where we're working with a community on an ongoing basis (like Safer Neighbourhood panels or Community Forums). This tends to be about the community as a whole, rather than groups or individuals. This type of engagement, with police and community working together to set local priorities, is a requirement of the Safer Neighbourhood teams.

When to apply this checklist?

This checklist was developed from the MPA/MPS Community Engagement Strategy. It sets out good practice and applies to all

pre-planned MPS community engagement activities, like the examples just given.

If you decide that the engagement activity that best suits your aims is **collecting information** about public attitudes or opinions – a **survey**, for example – some of this checklist will not apply. However, you should still ensure your activity is inclusive, gives feedback and is evaluated (point 6, 24 and 25). For specialist help, advice or guidance on research and survey work, we recommend you contact the MPS Research and Survey Unit (MPS Performance Directorate). You can contact the Performance Directorate helpdesk on 783131.

You also need to consider carefully whether this checklist is suitable for your particular situation. When you're planning any individual engagement activity, you're expected to make a **reasoned assessment** first about whether the outcome you're expecting justifies the effort it'll take. The same goes for using this checklist: make sure at the planning stage that your efforts will be in proportion to the anticipated outcome.

Further Information

For more information on community engagement you can also consult the **MPS guidelines on 'Planning and Managing Community Engagement and Consultation'**. These guidelines are published on the Improving Engagement page of the Diversity & Citizen Focus Intranet site and have lots more practical advice on drawing up an engagement plan and carrying it through.

The Safer Neighbourhood site also has advice and information about carrying out engagement activity. Even if you are not part of a Safer Neighbourhood team, you may find some of their information useful. You can find this on the Safer Neighbourhoods Site, situated within the Safer Neighbourhoods Portal, in the Toolkits section, under the heading 'Engagement'.

Before you begin:



<p>1 Be clear about what your aims are – ask yourself: Why are we doing this? Then make sure the aims are linked to a clear issue (like the local policing plan, drugs strategy or a Safer Neighbourhood initiative). Make sure you state your aims clearly to everyone taking part, in writing or as an announcement at the beginning of your activity.</p>	
<p>2 Check whether there are any partner organisations you might carry out your activity with.</p>	
<p>3 Check that your activity is co-ordinated with any others that are being arranged locally.</p>	
<p>4 Try to identify and involve all the different sections of the community that might be affected. (Neighbourhood profiles are available for you to make sure you've invited the right people to take part.) Consider the demographics of your target group when you're putting together the profile of who's taking part.</p>	
<p>5 Choose a type of activity that reflects how comfortable people in the community feel about interacting with the police.</p>	
<p>6 Make sure your activity is inclusive of all members of society, if appropriate. If you're only involving certain groups, make sure you give a clear explanation why (if it's a specialist subject, for example). Being inclusive also means making sure everyone can take part. Have you made things accessible for disabled people, for example?</p>	
<p>7 Check corporate and local guidelines on carrying out engagement activity to see if you've chosen the best kind of activity (like the MPS guidelines on planning and managing community engagement and consultation, Safer Neighbourhood toolkits on engagement methods, and the ENGAGE! Consultation webtool). You can find these on the Safer Neighbourhoods Portal under Toolkits/Engagement and on the Diversity and Citizen Focus Programme/Improving Engagement web pages.</p>	
<p>8 Ensure proper Public Liability Insurance is in place. If you are carrying out your event in a non MPS venue, check the MPS guidelines. The latest guidelines are on the Safer Neighbourhoods Unit intranet site/Toolkits/Engagement/public Liability & Insurance section. http://intranet.aware.mps/TP/safer_neighbourhoods_Unit/Safer_Neighbourhoods/Toolkits.htm</p>	
<p>9 Are there any positive media opportunities, as well as MPS recruitment opportunities for volunteers, police officers and police staff? Contact your local media officer, volunteer co-ordinator, or other relevant staff such as central recruitment to seek advice.</p>	
<p>10 Judge whether the time and money needed to carry out the activity is in proportion to the expected results.</p>	
<p>11 Make use of internal diversity to break down cultural barriers at the event (using volunteers, police officers or police staff from within a certain community to make presentations, for example).</p>	
<p>12 Choose appropriate ways to get the message out about your event (internet, meetings, newspapers, press releases, Safer Neighbourhood activities, for example).</p>	
<p>13 Write an engagement activity plan. This should include an outline of how your results will be fed back into decision making, what analysis you'll be doing, and how you'll share the results with the people who took part.</p>	

While it's happening:

✓/x

<p>14 It is good practice to record the demographic details of everyone taking part (age, disability, gender, faith/belief, sexual orientation and race), to show which sections of the community you've managed to reach. But this must be done sensitively preferably at the end of the event and only if people are happy to give them.</p>	
<p>15 Make sure the event and any materials you use are as accessible as possible, to allow people to take part fully. For example, ensure appropriate language and physical access needs are met.</p>	
<p>16 Make sure you allow enough time for the people taking part to reflect and respond. (Home Office guidance says to allow 13 weeks for consulting on draft versions of documents – but the absolute minimum is four weeks for focused consultation events, and six for consulting on drafts.)</p>	
<p>17 Give people a named person at MPS they can contact, and clear details of how to get in touch.</p>	
<p>18 Make sure everyone understands what kind of influence they'll have on the issue by taking part. Put it in writing, or announce it at the start of your discussion.</p>	
<p>19 Don't forget to tell the people what you'll do with their input; how it will affect our decision making; what kind of analysis we will do; how we will share the results with them. Again, write it into your materials or say it clearly at the start.</p>	

After it's over:

✓/x

<p>20 Check whether there are any partner organisations you might work with to help implement your results. (This doesn't apply to policy work engagement.)</p>	
<p>21 Check whether it is possible to use volunteers from within the community to help implement your results. (This doesn't apply to policy work engagement.)</p>	
<p>22 Pass on any significant new community contacts you've made. For example, depending on the contact, this could be to the Diversity and Citizen Focus Directorate, your Borough Liaison Officer, or to the Local or Corporate Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs).</p>	
<p>23 Make sure all your output is scanned for community intelligence. This information must be fed into all the right places. Any community intelligence is recorded on CRIMINT using QQ codes.</p> <p>If you have any concerns about recording information, or who you should give it to, speak to your local intelligence manager.</p> <p>You might also find the CHIS/ RIPA awareness package on the SCD website useful: http://intranet.aware.mps/SC/SCD11_9_CSMU/index.htm</p>	
<p>24 Give feedback to the people who took part. Tell them how their input has affected the way we police. Choose a method of communicating that suits the scale and scope of your event, but reaches the widest possible audience – the MPS Internet 'Consulting London' feature or local newspapers, for example.</p>	
<p>25 Evaluate how effective your event has been, based on your own aims and expectations, as well as those who took part.</p>	