



The Community Power Pack



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Section A: Introduction and Instructions

A.1 Introduction

The government is committed to involving and empowering ordinary citizens. Now the government wants suggestions on how it can make this commitment a reality through the Empowerment White Paper, due to be published in Summer 2008.

- What kind of democracy do we want to live in?
- How much power should central government have and on what issues?
- How much power should local government have and on what issues?
- How much power should local communities have and on what issues?
- Which decisions should be made locally?

These are the types of questions we want answered through this pack. The Department for Communities and Local Government is keen to encourage local 'grassroots' groups to get involved in the debate about empowerment.

About this pack

Community-based events provide an excellent way to gather and discuss comments and suggestions on empowerment. This Power Pack contains information on how to run an event around the issue of empowerment, as well as background to the issues and how to feed back your views.

- Go to section A2 for detailed steps by step guidance on how to use this pack.
- Go to section B for the background on the White Paper and the consultation.
- Go to section C for the questions we would like answered through this consultation
- Go to section D for details on suggested activities that you could do as part of the consultation
- Go to section E for some suggested event agendas.
- Go to section F for checklists a glossary and other supporting information

This Power Pack is a collaboration between the Department for Communities and Local Government and the independent, not for profit organisation Involve, which can provide further advice on how to run your events.

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We will be updating this resource throughout the consultation to reflect comments and suggestions. Therefore, you may want to check the website from time to time to see how the Power Pack develops. If you have any suggestions on what you would like to see added to the Pack please contact Edward@involve.org.uk

Why should I get involved?

Individuals and local charities and organisations are already shaping communities, contributing to local decisions and equipping ordinary people with the skills and confidence to play a more active role in the community. By sharing your thoughts and experiences, you can contribute to the White Paper, and help us to better support these activities and provide the resources and structures that will ensure that citizens play an active role in the community. Now is a perfect time to let the government know how you feel.

This pack is designed to help you plan and run an event about empowerment today. We want ordinary people to be able to contribute to the White Paper. We also want to hear from youth workers, community development workers, charity workers and citizenship teachers to organise events for the people you work with.

Even if you are not active in an organisation you can still contribute through the online forums that the government is organising. Go to: <http://haveyoursay.communities.gov.uk/forums> for more information. You can also send in written suggestions based on the questions in the 'unlocking the talents' document. Please email your comments to: unlockingtalent@communities.gsi.gov.uk

A2. Step by step guide

This sheet gives you a step by step overview of how to use the consultation pack.

- If you are looking for more information about the consultation and how the guide works look in section A
- If you are looking for the background to empowerment and the empowerment White Paper please look in section B
- If you want to know what kinds of questions that we are looking for answers to through the consultation please see section C
- If you want to look at a variety of consultation activities that you could undertake to inform the empowerment White Paper please see section D
- If you are looking for detailed suggestions for consultation events that you could run see section E
- If you are looking for further support and advice, such as a glossary of terms and planning checklists please see section F

Steps to running an event:

1. **Choose event.** Start by looking through sheets A1 and A3 to get an understanding of what the White Paper consultation is about. Determine if you want to run an event, and if so for whom, how long it will run and what focus it will have.
2. **Choose questions.** Look at the suggested questions in section C. See if any of the questions are suitable for the participants and event you had envisaged.
3. **Choose agenda/activities.** Look at the suggested activities and agendas in sections D and E. If you don't want to plan an event from scratch you can choose to run an event based on the suggested agendas in section E. You can also choose to mix and match activities to create your own event.
4. **Check advice.** Section D and F contain practical advice on how to plan and facilitate consultation events. Once you have decided what your event will look like you can look over these for suggestions.
5. **Contact for support.** If anything is unclear at this stage you should contact Communities and Local Government or Involve. Please email: edward@involve.org.uk or unlockingtalent@communities.gsi.gov.uk Involve and Communities and Local Government cannot provide resources for events but we are able to help with advice.

- 6. Recruit, Plan and run your event.** After this you should set up your event and invite your participants.
- 7. Follow up.** Please send in your results to Communities and Local Government so that they can inform the White Paper development process.
unlockingtalent@communities.gsi.gov.uk

A3. Types of consultation events

This guide gives you some ideas how you could contribute to the White Paper. There isn't a right way to run an event. We have created some suggested event outlines to help you plan an event. We have also provided details of more creative suggestions if you would like more inspiration and ideas and are happy to plan on your own. Don't feel you have to limit yourselves to what is in this pack; the government is interested in all thoughts on power and involvement.

How you run your event is totally up to you. For example, you might want to run:

A small group discussion. This could be based in existing groups such as charities, group of friends, local clubs and organisations. (For example around 10 people for 90-120 minutes) – This could easily be delivered as part of an event that is already planned during the consultation period.

A public workshop. You could recruit outside an existing group through leaflets, posters and networks. Local organisations are often well placed to reach into their local communities. (This could be between 10 to 20 people for ½ or one day).

A large public forum. A larger event requires more time and effort, probably involving five to ten facilitators and reaching between 50 and 100 people.

Drop in events You might also choose to hold your event in public spaces where people gather anyway such as village halls, religious centres or supermarket parking lots. Events like this allow people to take part as and when they are able to.

Café conversation If you can get access to a local cafe or similar venue this is often a great venue for an informal conversation. This could also be held in a community venue such as a village hall or school.

More information

Section C. contains information about the various questions that we have suggested. You can choose which questions you want to look at. If you want to cover many questions you might want to consider a series of events.

Section D. gives you the details of various activities that you could run in your events.

Section E gives you three suggested workshops.

As far as possible, we would like you to use the feedback forms provided. This will help us gather everyone's views quickly and effectively.

The website **peopleandparticipation.net** (run by Involve and sponsored by Communities and Local Government) has many suggestions for ways of running events and if you want to be more creative you can look here for inspiration and advice.

Section B: Background

B.1 General background on the subject of empowerment/local voice

What does empowerment mean?

Empowerment means helping citizens and communities to get the confidence, skills and power that helps them to shape and influence decisions and services in their local area.

It is also necessary to help national and local government bodies to become better at engaging the people and communities they work for, and to offer more opportunities for people to get involved in decision making.

Why is empowerment important?

Community empowerment is central to giving people more power over their lives and can help us design and run public services that are better tailored to the people who use them. It can contribute to a number of outcomes including:

- improved quality of services, for example health services, schools and policing
- greater community cohesion and social inclusion (in other words, friendlier neighbourhoods)
- better overall conditions in the most deprived neighbourhoods
- a thriving democracy, where decisions by local and national government are connected more closely with communities and individuals
- help build a vibrant civic society, with greater community involvement.

What is already happening to promote empowerment?

Empowerment is an ongoing process and much has been done to begin promoting empowerment in central, regional and local government and our communities and neighbourhoods. See for example the Community Empowerment Action Plan, which contains information about the government's work in this area.

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communityempowermentactionplan

The Empowerment White Paper, due to be published in the summer 2008, will build upon the learning and success of the Local Government White Paper, the Local Government and Public Information in Health Act 2007 and the Community Empowerment Action Plan.

B.2. Background to the White Paper and the subsequent Bill

What is a White Paper?

White Papers are documents issued by the government, which lay out policy, or proposed actions, on a topic of current concern. A White Paper sometimes signifies a government's intention to propose, where appropriate, new laws to Parliament on that subject in the future. This means that submitting evidence to government at the White Paper stage gives you a better chance of influencing policy further on.

What does the Empowerment White Paper mean?

On 5 March 2008 Communities Secretary Hazel Blears announced plans for a new White Paper focused on empowering citizens. The White Paper will emphasise the government's commitment to giving local people more power over their lives and will unlock talent helping to improve public services and promote work.

Where has the idea come from?

The Empowerment White Paper will build on the previous work in Strong and prosperous communities – The Local Government White Paper and the Community Empowerment Action Plan in transferring power from Whitehall to town hall and from the town hall to the citizen. It will set out the story of empowerment and how it can encourage active citizenship, improve public services, promote work and strengthen local accountability.

What is the purpose? What will it achieve?

The White Paper will set out how the government will give people more power over their lives. It will set out ways in which we will empower citizens in areas that really matter to them such as housing, local public services and in promoting work, enterprise and active citizenship.

The White Paper will help us to unlock the talent in our communities giving people more power over their lives and enabling people to develop the skills and confidence to contribute to a strong economy and vibrant civic society. It will look at the ways that government, at every level can provide opportunities for people to influence the things that matter locally.

What happens next?

The government is engaging with stakeholders through regional events, expert panels, government offices, discussion forums and third sector organisations. The learning from these exercises will provide a key input into the White Paper, feeding into policy development and helping to shape future policy.

Please visit the empowerment web pages at www.communities.gov.uk/unlockingtalent for more information.

We hope that the Empowerment White Paper will be launched in summer 2008.

The White Paper discussion document contains four themes, which are presented on the following sheets.

B.3 White Paper Theme 1 – Encouraging active citizens/local democracy

This chapter seeks to encourage active citizenship and revive civic society.

Despite healthy levels of social capital and a thriving third sector in Britain, more needs to be done to improve the extent to which people feel they can influence local conditions and decision-making (perceptions of empowerment).

Perceptions of empowerment lie at the heart of addressing public unhappiness about the state of democracy and public institutions and low satisfaction with public services. They are also fundamental to people actually getting involved in local activity (objective empowerment – where people can actually participate and influence local conditions and decisions).

Neither perceptions of empowerment nor objective empowerment can be achieved purely by establishing mechanisms and requirements for people to engage and involve within public institutions. It is equally about people having the enthusiasm and confidence to act in their own right.

Active citizenship can be seen as a spectrum ranging from spontaneous individual action (doing a favour for a neighbour; donating to Oxfam), through to more representative roles (becoming a Councillor or a school governor). Right across the spectrum actions can range from the very local through to the global. Government has an interest in promoting active citizenship across the spectrum because:

- it will enable people and communities to find **common solutions to shared problems**;
- it can generate **'social capital'** – bonding, bridging and linking;
- it can stimulate **collective efficacy** – social pressure on groups of people to behave responsibly and to look out for each others' interest;
- it can achieve **'co-production'** – government working alongside the third sector to achieve shared outcomes in public services;
- there can be clear **progression routes** along the spectrum into forms of civic involvement which support democratic and public service infrastructure.

B4. White Paper Theme 2 – Improving local public services

Progress so far – more investment, improving performance

Since 1997, there have been substantial improvements in how we deliver public services. We have seen significant increases in investment as well as a strong focus on improving performance and the quality of services.

The challenge – rising expectations, continuous improvement

The public are increasingly expecting and demanding world class public services that better meet their rising aspirations and individual. We need to build on the investment and improvements made and ensure public services are more responsive to users and better meet the needs of individuals.

Service users today should rightly expect that providers will:

- listen to their views in designing and delivering services;
- be willing to learn from their experience;
- make available up-to-date information on performance so users can hold services to account and make informed decisions about service options;
- appropriately and in good time respond to their requests and grievances and learn from them; and
- offer a range of service options so that users can decide what products and providers best meet their needs.

Better public services

By ensuring citizens, users and professionals have a greater say and more control over how public services are designed and delivered we can drive the next stage of public sector reform.

Greater empowerment can come about from:

- **More Voice** – providing more and better opportunities for users to have their say and to make use of the knowledge of users themselves and those working in public services to help inform and shape delivery;

- **More Choice** – providing services that better meet individual needs and providing greater choice between services;
- **More Accountability and transparency** – more and better information to empower and inform users to challenge service delivery and drive up performance

Through these means, citizens and users will possess real power to speak up and make their case based on good quality, well targeted and well presented information. They will be able to have their problems addressed responsively when services are not satisfactory or to choose a new provider or product if they feel they can be better served elsewhere.

B.5 White Paper Theme 3: Work and Enterprise for all

Getting a job is the best way out of poverty and the most effective way to empower individuals to take control of their lives.

The Government has made great strides in conquering unemployment. But significant challenges remain and there is more to do to improve employment outcomes for those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

The situation is particularly challenging for those living in social housing in England, where over half of working age households are workless.

Why it matters

Worklessness and a weak neighbourhood economy is personally damaging for the individuals involved, undermining personal confidence and their power to contribute to society, not just economically, but through decision making and community activities. It is also economically inefficient for society as a whole, and high levels of worklessness can:

- undermine community cohesion;
- create the conditions for an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour, reducing the quality of life for all residents; and
- reduce the possibility of private sector investment making it difficult for a neighbourhood to break the cycle of decline

Getting a job can lift residents of the most deprived areas out of poverty, enabling them to feel valued by society; and empowering them to mix with people from different backgrounds; plan for themselves; and invest in their future and that of their families.

Promoting enterprise can bring social and economic benefits to more deprived parts of our country and the people that live there. Enterprise can help to build inward investment; employment and strong local economies in every neighbourhood; village; town; city; and region across the country.

B.6 White Paper Theme 4: Strengthening Local Leadership and Accountability

The Government believes that strong, effective and accountable leaders will be best placed to shape a local area in partnership with local citizens.

In order to do this the Government believes it needs to:

1. **Strengthen local leadership** – Leaders need to have a clear vision and their actions need to be highly visible to local citizens.
2. **Strengthen local accountability** – People need to be clear who is responsible for services and decisions in the local area as well as how and when to hold them to account.

Why is leadership important?

It is important for local leadership to be strong and visible so that the local community can know and understand the decisions their representatives are making on their behalf. It also leads to greater trust in elected representatives such as councillors because they are able to prove to the local community that they have stuck to and delivered what they promised in their election manifestos.

Why should we hold public officials to account?

Public officials and elected representatives act on citizens' behalf and represent their views. Therefore, it is important that people are able to question the decisions that their representatives are making for them and feel that they are listened to and that their views make a difference. In turn people can contribute information and feedback to their local leaders, which will help the local leaders in making decisions that have benefits for their local community.

Section C: Consultation Questions

We have developed a number of useful questions. You will not be able to cover all of these in an event. Please choose the ones that make sense to you and your audience. We have tried to include questions for people with different levels of education and knowledge. We hope you will find something for all groups.

General Questions

- Do you feel that you can shape and influence your area and public services?
- If not what is it that is stopping you? Is it to do with confidence, skills, actual power differences or something different?
- Are there certain areas where you feel that you are more able to influence than others? What is it in particular that makes you able to influence in this area?
- Are there certain areas where you feel that you are less able to influence than others? What is it in particular that stops you from you influencing in this area?
- Do you think that you are more or less able to influence decisions in your area and public services today compared to ten years ago? If there is a difference, what do you think has caused this?
- Is being able to influence your area and public services important to you?
- What would be the ideal amount of power for you to have in your area? Which decisions would you like to influence? How often would you like to get involved? Which decisions are you happy for elected representatives to take on your behalf?
- Is there a gap between your preferred reality and how things work now? What are those differences? How do you think this gap could be overcome?
- What would stop you from getting involved in your local area?
- What could government do to overcome these barriers?
- What should government start doing to empower local people? What should government stop doing to empower local people? What should government not do under any circumstances?
- What is local and national government currently doing that is undermining your sense of power?
- Are there any examples of local communities and people having power in their lives that you want to tell government about? Are there any local examples that you would like to see done elsewhere across the country?

Theme 1: Encouraging active citizenship, and reviving civic society and local democracy

- What is the role of government in encouraging and supporting citizens to be active?
- What steps need to be taken to revive involvement in local civic and democratic roles?
- How could government support the third sector (for example community and voluntary groups) to increase active citizenship and revive local democracy?
- How could government support neighbourhood action to help increase active citizenship and revive local democracy?
- Are there any good examples of citizen decision making that we should know about?
- Do you think that deliberative decision making will help increase active citizenship and revive local democracy?
- How could government encourage ordinary people to take up civic roles, such as being a magistrate or local councillor?
- Do you think that integration and identity will help increase active citizenship and revive local democracy?
- Do you think new technologies, such as the Internet, could help increase active citizenship and revive local democracy? If so how?

Theme 2: Improving local public services by involving local users and consumers

- How can the power of consumers be better used to improve local services?
- How can social housing tenants be given more choice and voice in their housing situation?
- How can Government give service users greater choice of service providers and more options in how they use services?
- How can the Government make better use of the expertise and views of service users and workers when designing and delivering public services?
- How can service providers be held accountable for providing high-quality and personalised services?
- How can we give those working in public services and service users a greater degree of control over the services they provide/receive?
- Do you think there is interest and willingness from citizens, users and professionals in influencing the design and delivery of public services?

- What information do you want service providers to offer you about their performance and services?
- What do you feel are the key barriers holding back or preventing service users from being engaged in service design and delivery? How can we address these barriers?
- How can different services be better linked, co-ordinated and integrated to address the range of needs service users have?
- Are you aware of any good examples in the public services where service are offering opportunities for users to help to shape and improve service delivery? For example in the publication of accessible performance information, user stakeholder groups, market research or excellent complaints and redress systems.

Theme 3: Regeneration and worklessness

- What are the most effective ways the government could support communities to tackle worklessness? Are there any good examples of this that we should know about?
- What role should the private sector play in local regeneration and overcoming worklessness and unemployment?
- What are the best ways of co-ordinating social, economic and physical regeneration in your local area?

Theme 4: Strengthening local accountability

- What needs to be done to encourage consistently strong local leadership?
- How can we best increase opportunities for communities to hold local public officials and representatives to account?
- Do you agree that more is needed strengthen local leadership? What is the local accountability problem the White Paper should be trying to solve? What would make local people feel that they had a way of influencing local decisions?
- Do you agree that we need to increase opportunities for local communities to hold public officials and representatives to account? How do you think this could be done?

Section D: Suggested Consultation Activities

D1. Practical advice on running events

This section provides some practical advice on how to run an event. Section D1 contains advice on how to run events in general. Ideas for specific consultation activities are described in section D2. We have tried to write this guidance in a clear and simple way which gives you lots of space to develop your own approach based on your unique situation.

D1.1 Venue

Think carefully about the venue you choose, and try to find a space where people will feel comfortable. A 'neutral' space is often a good choice. When you set up the meeting try to avoid a traditional lecture or classroom style set up of tables and chairs with everyone facing the front. This layout often creates a division in the room between 'important voices' and 'audience'. Instead get participants to sit in a circle or around small tables.

If it is possible make the room as inviting as possible by providing teas and coffees, welcome signs, and any appropriate decorations. Many facilitators like to make the room look and feel like a café rather than a meeting room. This creates a less divisive, more relaxing atmosphere, and sets expectations of engaging in conversation rather than listening to speeches.

D1.2 Discussion style

We suggest that you try to *facilitate* the meeting rather than get someone to *chair* it. Simply put this means being less controlling and helping the group to take the centre stage.

Facilitation means supporting groups to work effectively together and to involve all participants in a meaningful way.

The role of the facilitators is to:

- Set discussion tasks;
- Keep people to task and time;

- Make sure everyone has their say;
- Writing up notes and feeding back views to Communities and Local Government.

Ideally you would have one facilitator per 10 people, but many of these activities are quite easy for groups to do without support so you can run them anyway.

D.1.3 Event planning tips

1. It is important to prepare an agenda for your event in advance. It should contain clear objectives (so everyone has shared expectations of the day) and a realistic time frame.
2. When you are planning your event try to keep it simple. Complicated processes are more likely to go wrong, especially if you don't have much experience.
3. If you will be asking your participants to work in small groups without a facilitator be sure to prepare clear written instructions for each breakout session.
4. You should prepare your questions in advance. Good questions are the foundation of a good consultation event. Try to ask open-ended questions that allow the discussion to keep flowing. For example questions beginning with 'How', 'Where', 'What' or 'In what ways'. Avoid asking closed or leading questions.
5. Plan in advance how you will record people's views and how and when you will feed back your results to Communities and Local Government.

D1.4 Facilitation tips

1. Early on the day, make sure to set clear ground rules. The ground rules will help you ensure that everyone has the chance to speak and that you keep to your timetable.
2. If the group hasn't worked together in the past you should run an icebreaker exercise to get discussion going and to encourage a safe atmosphere for discussion.
3. As a facilitator you should use probing questions to explore statements that participants make. For example you could ask: 'What experiences make you feel like that?' 'Can you give an example?' 'What do you mean by ...?' 'Do others agree with what was just said?'
4. Facilitators should not pick up on any side of the discussion or make judgements on what is a right or wrong view. They use questions rather than statements to take the discussion forward and try to avoid leading questions.

5. Actively encourage everyone to speak by asking those who haven't said anything if they would like to add anything.
6. Your role as a facilitator is to keep your participants to task and time. Don't be afraid to point out when participants are taking the discussion off track or when the group needs to move on to the next task.
7. It is also important to allow yourself to enjoy the experience. The best way to ensure that your participants enjoy the event is to make sure that you do as well. The best way to enjoy facilitating is to prepare your discussion in advance so that you feel confident of what you are going to achieve and how you are going to get there.

Questions are useful to clarify generalisations and assumptions that the participants may bring with them. It is useful to distinguish between 'closed' and 'open' questions.

Closed questions – these are designed to generate a yes/no response. They are often used to close down conversation, but can also be used to get affirmation or commitment. It is good to close down the session or focus on getting a final answer by using this type of question:

- 'Does this make sense?'
- 'Do you prefer option one or two?'
- 'Can you live with this proposal?'

Open questions – these questions are designed to stimulate reflection and discussion making yes/no responses impossible. It is good to begin with and to continue useful discussions using this type of question:

- 'What are the issues as you see them?'
- 'Why is that important to you?'
- 'When did you first encounter this problem?'

Try to avoid closed questions until the end of the discussions when you are trying to bring the conversation to an end. Up until this point try to use open questions that allow the participants to explore issues further.

Try to actively listen to conversations to find areas where people agree and disagree with each other. If people can't all agree after the discussion then show them you are going to record all varying views.

D.1.5 Inviting people

Recruiting a diverse group will help expose people to a range of opinions and can improve the quality of the results. Try to consider who might most benefit from joining in discussion and make inquiries as to how best to reach those people.

Always make it clear what the event is for and what those attending can expect from you, as well as what is expected from them. Try to make the event as fun and relevant as possible to the various groups you hope will attend. Ask the relevant people in your community where is best to advertise and promote your event in order to reach particular groups you would like to include.

We would like to know what kinds of people who took part in local listening exercises. It would be very helpful if you could get everyone to fill in this sheet at the start of your event.

D.1.6 How to record the conversations

We have created prepared online forms on which you can record your conversations. If you are carrying out activities that create pictures as well as words you can photograph these with a digital camera and send them in to Communities and Local Government.

While it is possible to send documents in to Communities and Local Government using the post it is quicker and cheaper for you to make use of email.

If you do not understand a question or feel that it is leading leave it blank or give us some comments about the question. We will be updating the sheets as the process develops so your comments will be very useful to us.

D.1.7 Costs

We have outlined proposed events that take from two hours to a full day. More information can be found in section E.

For each activity we have included time requirements, materials required and how complicated the activity is to run. Using this you can create your own event, composed of several activities. See section D.2

In general the materials you will need are not expensive. They include: felt tip pens, post it notes, A4 paper, flip chart paper.

If you are running a larger event or want to start the event off with a presentation you might want to have an AV projector and a computer – however this is not essential.

Communities and Local Government or Involve cannot pay for events that you run but we may be able to help with speakers and advice.

D2. Activities

This section outlines some proposed consultation activities. We don't believe that here is one correct way to run a consultation on empowerment. We have provided you with this menu of options so that you can choose according to the needs of your group.

For those who are new to consultations or who don't have time to plan ahead we have also created three suggested event structures. Feel free to use these. They can be found in section E.

A useful format for a discussion around which you can build an event might be the following: (examples of activities in parenthesis)

- What is the situation now? (*presentation, brainstorming and clustering*)
- What do we want to see in the future? (*small group discussions and clustering*)
- What steps need to be taken to get from our current situation to the future hoped for? (*small group discussions*)
- Which of the steps and suggestions are most important? (*prioritisation*)

Each suggested activity is summarised and includes information on the number of people required, how long it takes to run, how difficult it is and if any extra materials are needed.

We have divided the suggested activities into three categories depending on if they are best suited at the start, middle or end of an event.

D2.1 Starting out

Introductions

It is a good idea to make sure that all participants get the chance to be introduced to each other from the start. It is often helpful to give a reasonable amount of time at the beginning to help people begin informal conversations and to get more confident in speaking with the group. At this stage you should also introduce yourself and outline your neutral role as facilitator.

The easiest form of introduction is to simply go round the room or table (depending on the size of the group) and ask each participant to state their name, where they are from and what they expect to get out of the event. If the group hasn't worked together before it is often worth going beyond simple introductions and doing a full-fledged icebreaker.

People needed: 3-30

Time needed: 5-15 minutes

Difficulty: Easy

Materials needed: None

Follow this activity with: Icebreaker

Icebreakers

An icebreaker aims to get the group talking to one another and to help them find out a little more about each other. They are very useful when the group is new and where some participants may feel uneasy. There are numerous icebreaker activities with varying levels of formality and difficulty. Choose one that is appropriate for your participants and the time you have available. Some examples you might want to look at using include:

- **Interview and Introduce:** People are randomly paired with each other. They are given a set time to interview each other in turn (say 3 minutes each) and then afterwards have to introduce their partner to the wider group.
- **Bingo:** Everyone is given the same list of categories printed on a sheet e.g. 'owns walking boots', 'speaks more than two languages', 'has a pet dog', 'knows a recipe to make pancakes'. The group then have to speak with one another to try and fill in a name for each category. The winner is the first to complete their sheet.
- **All agreed:** The room is divided into teams of three or more and each group has to discuss a given topic – for example 'public transport' 'local shops' 'Saturday night TV' and come up with three statements on this that they all agree on. The teams then feed back their statements and how they decided on them to the wider group.
- **Group discussions:** You could also ask groups to discuss a simple question relating to empowerment as part of the icebreaker. For example 'what is important to you about your local community health and social care services'

People needed: 5-40

Time needed: 10-20 minutes

Difficulty: Easy

Materials needed: Varies, none for some, others require paper and pens.

Follow this activity with: Ground rules

Ground rules

Unless you are very comfortable with the group you are working with we suggest that you establish ground rules at the start of the event. You can let the group agree on the rules at

the beginning of the session (ask them to call out suggestions and note them down on a flipchart) or you can set them yourself to save time. Common rules for consultation events include shutting off mobile phones, one person speaking at a time and respecting other people's views. Ground rules will make your job as a facilitator easier and you can also call on the wider group to help make the event a success if everyone has signed up to them.

People needed: 5-100

Time needed: 5-15 minutes

Difficulty: Medium

Materials needed: Pens, flipchart paper, blu tac

Follow this activity with: Presentation

Presentations/Examples/Stories

If the group is not already familiar with the topic of your event it is often good to organise a presentation to get people thinking. The presentation shouldn't be overly long and should bring home to the participants why the topic for discussion is important. There are a number of ways that you could provide some background information:

Presentation: You can create a short presentation based on the background sheets in this pack (section B).

Examples: You could ask someone to present a local example of community empowerment in action to give real life illustration of what is being discussed.

Stories: You can also ask someone to share a relevant personal experience with the group. Try to make sure it will be relevant to the whole group and that it allows generalisations to be made from it as a starting point for discussion. An interesting version of the story option is to read up several contradictory examples or visions for the future and ask the participants to consider what they think the benefits and downsides are to the different ones. The Carnegie UK trust recently produced four scenarios for the future of civil society in the UK. You could use these as a starting point for such a set of contradictory stories. http://democracy.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/civil_society/publications/futures_for_civil_society_-_summary

Once the background information has been given it is important that the participants are able to engage with it. Allow questions if possible and try to find time for a discussion. You might want to consider questions such as 'How did the presentation relate to our personal experiences of empowerment?', 'Which of the stories/examples did you prefer and why?' and 'Does anyone know of other relevant examples that we should know about?'

People needed: 5-100

Time needed: 5-15 minutes

Difficulty: Medium

Materials needed: Varies, possibly AV projector and computer or handouts

Follow this activity with: Voting with your feet

Voting with your feet

Designate one wall of the room as 'agree' and the opposite side as 'disagree'. The centre of the room represents 'unsure'. Read out a statement and ask the participants to position themselves along a line between the two sides according to how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement.

Once people have chosen where they want to stand you can ask a few people to explain why they have chosen to stand where they are. When all sides have been heard you can ask the participants if anyone has changed their mind and wants to move based on the arguments put forward.

The activity is good for people who aren't comfortable speaking up in large groups as it allows them to express their views without having to talk. It can be good to start this activity with a test statement on an unrelated topic. Have a pen and paper handy to note down if your participants generally agreed, disagreed or were divided on each statement. Statements you might like to ask include

- Ordinary citizens need a bigger say on local decisions and services.
- The government is doing enough to support people to be active citizens.
- I would be willing to spend more time being active in my community.

People needed: 10-40

Time needed: 15 minutes

Difficulty: Easy

Materials needed: Pen and paper to record results

Follow this activity with: Plenary discussion of results

D2.2 The central discussion

The following approaches are useful for the main body of an event.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a way of generating lots of ideas from a group. The golden rules of any brainstorming exercise are that all contributions are welcome and that contributions should be short and fast paced. The purpose of the exercise is to generate a large number of undeveloped ideas and then to work as a group to find themes of thinking and to explore initial thoughts further.

When looking for new ideas it is useful to split the main group into pairs or small teams or even to ask them to think on their own as individuals; the ideas generated are then shared with the central group. A practical way of doing this is asking people to focus on an issue and write as many ideas down on post-it notes as possible in their small groups in a timed exercise and then stick all of the ideas up together on the wall. The next step is to looking through the post-it notes generated as a group with the facilitator leading, and to group similar thoughts into a few key ideas.

People needed: 5-30

Time needed: 10-20 minutes

Difficulty: Easy

Materials needed: post-it notes, pens, flip chart paper, blu tac

Follow this activity with: Clustering, prioritisation, group or plenary discussions

Clustering

When participation in small groups or plenary have developed a large list of ideas, issues or options it is often worthwhile clustering and grouping them. Ask participants to write up one post-it per issues using thick pens and large letters.

Take one post it at a time and put it on a sheet of flipchart paper. Ask for clarification if you don't understand any of the items. Once a few are on the sheet ask the participants if they can see any that are related. Move the post its that are related so they are next to each other. Soon groups of related items will form. Ask the participants to come up with a name for each group and draw a border around each group of post its.

This activity can either be done led by a facilitator or you can let the participants cluster the post its themselves. Double check that everyone is happy with the groups of issues that are formed.

People needed: 5-50

Time needed: 15-20 minutes

Difficulty: Medium

Materials needed: post-it notes, pens, flip chart paper, blu tac

Follow this activity with: Prioritisation, group discussions

Group discussions

For in depth discussions it is usually best to work in groups of up to eight with a facilitator or up to five without. This allows the participants maximum speaking time and people are less likely to feel intimidated about speaking out in such small groups. If groups are running their discussions without a facilitator be sure to provide clear written instructions and to ask for a volunteer to take notes and report back from the session. It can be a good idea to mix groups up over the course of an event.

People needed: 3-9 per group

Time needed: 15-30 minutes

Difficulty: Easy

Materials needed: Pens and paper

Follow this activity with: Plenary discussions, brainstorming, clustering

Plenary discussions

While small group discussions are usually vital in consultation events there also needs to be sessions where everything is brought together as a whole group. Plenary discussions can become dominated by a few people who feel comfortable talking in front of larger groups so it is usually good to limit plenary discussions to short reporting back periods between group work where the bulk of the activity takes place.

People needed: 10-100

Time needed: 20 minutes

Difficulty: Medium

Materials needed: flipcharts, pens

Follow this activity with: clustering, small group discussions, prioritisation

World Café Event

This approach attempts to create the illusion of an informal café setting during a consultation event. The room should be set up to resemble a real café, using small tablecloths and providing suitable food for participants to share. Background music and room decorations could also be used to give your event a real café-theme. The best option is usually to hold it in a real café.

The facilitator introduces the session and asks the first question. Discussions take place in the small table groups. Paper tablecloths are used to scribble on. At the end of the first question session people report back to the facilitator and wider group.

Each new discussion topic will mean that the participants should stand up and move to a different table to ensure that the group mixes well. There should always be one person who remains behind at the table to explain what is written on the tablecloths.

As people move around and new questions are asked the areas of common agreement start to surface.

The World Café is a good approach for relatively large groups and allows for a very lively and creative atmosphere. The choice of question(s) for the café conversation is crucial for the success of your event. In general it is useful to phrase the questions in a positive format and in an open-ended format to allow a constructive discussion. If participants do not find the questions for discussion inspiring the event is unlikely to be successful. More information can be found at www.theworldcafe.com

People needed: 10-100

Time needed: 90 minutes-full day

Difficulty: Medium

Materials needed: café style venue, music, paper table cloths, refreshments, and pens

Follow this activity with: This is an event in itself. You may want to finish by clustering and prioritising the key points.

Open Space

Open Space is an event structure that is based on the participants taking responsibility for the agenda and content of the event. It requires break out rooms or spaces and at least half a day to run.

Open Space events have a central theme but not fixed agenda. At the start participants stand or sit in a circle, the theme is introduced and participants are invited to identify issues that they are interested in and are willing to take responsibility for running a session on.

Once a number of people have stepped forward with sessions the sessions are allocated amongst available rooms and timeslots.

When no more discussion topics are suggested the participants sign up for the ones they wish to take part in. Participants are then free to wander around and dip in and out of sessions as they see fit.

Open Space creates very fluid and dynamic conversations held together by mutual enthusiasm for interest in a topic.

The fundamental principles of Open Space are:

- 'Whoever comes are the right people' (the best participants are those who feel passionately about the issue and have freely chosen to get involved);
- 'Whenever it starts is the right time' (Open Space encourages creativity both during and between formal sessions);
- 'When it's over it's over' (getting the work done is more important than adhering to rigid schedules);
- 'Whatever happens is the only thing that could happen' (let go of your expectations and pay full attention to what is happening here and now).
- There is also one 'Law': The 'Law of two feet': (If participants find themselves in a situation where they are not learning or contributing they have a responsibility to go to another session, or take a break for personal reflection).

It is vital that there are good written reports from all discussions, complete with action points, available at the end of the day. The facilitator will need to encourage people to write their notes up. Open Space events are often very inspiring and energising, however they are by their nature impossible to control in detail so if you are looking to answer very specific questions you should probably look for more structured approaches.

More information can be found at: www.openspaceuk.com

People needed: 10-100

Time needed: half day event – three day event

Difficulty: Medium

Materials needed: venue with break out rooms, pens, paper, computers for typing up results (optional)

Follow this activity with: This is an event in itself. You may want to finish by clustering and prioritising the key points.

Drop in/drop out activities

Not everyone will be interested in taking part in a formal consultation event. Some people cannot give up several hours of their time but may still want to have a say.

Drop in approaches work well when the consultation is taking place as part of a larger community event. Drop in/drop out consultation methods are simple and quick activities such as voting on a personal priority using sticky dots on a wall chart, or dropping glass beads into a voting pot. A statement is written on a flipchart and the voting pots or wall charts are marked 'agree' and 'disagree'.

Other options include postcards or post-its for people to leave comments and ideas around a theme or short and simple questionnaires.

The idea is that these activities are very simple and speedy to participate in, and require few reading and writing skills. They are best combined with comments slips or video-diaries which will enable people who are interested to go on and have a more detailed say on the issues being discussed.

To make sure that the results of the voting and other drop in activities are as fair as possible it is best if someone is always available to explain the activity and make sure that everyone is given an equal vote. Someone also needs to count up the results and write it up.

People needed: 15-200

Time needed: Best if available at least half a day

Difficulty: Easy

Materials needed: Varies with activity: pens paper, jars, beads or other counters, flipcharts, post-its, sticky dots

Follow this activity with: This is a stand alone activity.

Graffiti wall

To set up a graffiti wall or table you will need some large sheets of paper and a variety of arts materials. The idea is that a key question is written up on the paper and then participants are invited to write and draw their own responses. This can lead to lots of creative input and the results are often best captured through photographing the sheets at the end of the day. This is a good way of getting young people to participate effectively and also can be helpful for those who prefer not to or are not able to write down comments on a formal feedback document.

People needed: 10-100

Time needed: Best if left to run for several hours

Difficulty: Easy

Materials needed: Large sheets/rolls of paper, pens, arts materials, masking tape, digital camera

Follow this activity with: Can be run on its own

Online discussions

Participants can be invited to take part in an online discussion using Internet forums such as google/yahoo groups or social networking sites like Facebook. These are free and easy to set up online, and can be a good complement to the face-to-face event, allowing participants to meet up beforehand or after the event to discuss their ideas. When using online methods you should be particularly wary of excluding certain people who may not be able to engage online, and of any child protection issues.

Also don't forget to make your participants aware of the Communities and Local Government forum that has been set up to discuss the Empowerment White Paper: <http://haveyoursay.communities.gov.uk/forums>

People needed: Unlimited

Time needed: Best if kept open for several weeks or months

Difficulty: Easy to set up, can be hard to attract participants.

Materials needed: Internet access, computer

Follow this activity with: Results from online discussions could be discussed at face to face events.

D2.3 Ending the event

The following activities are useful to end an event with. At the end of any consultation event you should always make it clear what will happen next and what the participants can expect.

Actions

After the group's ideas and themes of conversation have been gathered together, you can ask your participants for suggested actions that arise as a result of the discussion. Depending on the number of participants, this can be done as a group exercise or one where the participants work together in small teams to come up with ideas and feed back to the group. Actions should be written up on wall charts for everyone to see clearly. Actions should have named individuals or organisations next to them and time frames.

This kind of action list, outlining what government and other actors could do would be very useful evidence for Communities and Local Government in developing the White Paper.

People needed: 5-50

Time needed: 10-30 minutes

Difficulty: Easy

Materials needed: Pen, flip chart paper, blu tac

Follow this activity with: Prioritisation

Prioritisation (Sticky dots)

Voting on the most important themes or actions is a good way of finishing the meeting. This is a way of bringing the group together in consensus on the most and least important issues to come out of their discussions. Give the participants a number of sticky dots to vote with. Usually if you have between five and twenty participants, 3 dots per person is a good number.

Participants can use all dots on one item or spread them across two or three items. The voting creates a visual record of support. In order to make the voting as easy as possible please remember to leave space next to each option where people can place their votes.

People needed: 5-100

Time needed: 5-20 minutes

Difficulty: Easy

Materials needed: Flipchart paper, pens, sticky dots, blu tac

Follow this activity with: Small group discussion of the results.

The website **peopleandparticipation.net** (run by Involve and sponsored by Communities and Local Government) has many additional suggestions for ways of running events and if you want to be more creative you can look here for inspiration and advice.

www.peopleandparticipation.net

Section E: Suggested event agendas

We have prepared three detailed agendas so that you can run an event without having to pre-plan. You can change the details of these agendas in order to make it fit better with your participants. An easy way to do this would be to look at section C and identify the key questions that are likely to be most interesting to your participants and insert these into the programme where appropriate.

2 hours –This event is very short and focuses on gathering information about the participants’ general views without going into details.

½ day –This event is longer and allows more time to explore the details of what people want.

1 day –Values to action –This event allows a very detailed look at what people want from the government.

E1: Two Hour Event	
8.30 – 9.00	Final preparation and briefing for facilitators
09.00 – 09.15	Participants arrive and register
09.15 – 09.20	<p>Welcome (Plenary)</p> <p>Facilitator sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aims of the day • Explains what is going to happen and runs through the agenda in brief • Details for refreshments, toilets, health and safety regulations
09.20 – 09.30	<p>Icebreaker (Groups)</p> <p>Participants gather in groups of ten and pair up with someone they don’t know. They are given three minutes to interview each other and then introduce their partner to the wider group.</p>
09.30 – 09:35	<p>Ground Rules (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator presents some pre-prepared ground rules to the whole group in plenary and asks if the participants can agree to these and if anyone wants to add anything.</p>

09.35 – 09.50	<p>Presentation (Plenary)</p> <p>A ten minute presentation is given on the background to the White Paper, the definition of empowerment and what the consultation is looking at. Followed by five minutes of questions and comments</p> <p>Or</p> <p>A five minute presentation of the background to the White Paper and a brief local example of empowerment in action. Followed by five minutes of questions and comments</p>
09.50 – 10.05	<p>Voting with your feet (Plenary)</p> <p>Following the presentation the participants are asked to show if they agree or disagree with the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK’s democracy is in crisis • I feel I can shape and influence my area and public services • It is important that people have the opportunity to shape and influence my area and public services • There are already enough opportunities for people to influence local decisions • More citizen involvement will undermine the important role of elected representatives <p>Each vote is followed by the facilitator for volunteers to explain why they have chosen to stand where they have.</p>
10.05 – 10.25	<p>Small group discussion (Group work)</p> <p>Participants break into small groups of 4-6 people and look at the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there certain areas of your life or local area that you feel more able to influence than others? What is it in particular that makes you able to influence in this area? • Are there certain areas of your life or local area that you are less able to influence? What is it in particular that stops you from you influencing in this area? <p>A volunteer from each group should take notes of the key areas and supporting and blocking factors. Each supporting and hindering factor should be written on a post-it note. (One post-it note per factor) Someone from each group should also volunteer to present back to the whole group.</p>

10.25 – 10.35	<p>Reporting back (Plenary)</p> <p>The groups report back in turn and outline the key factors that support and hinder people from being empowered. The post its are put on two flip charts -one for supporting factors and one for hindering factors.</p>
10.35 – 10.45	<p>Clustering (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator asks the participants if there are post-its on either of the flipcharts that are related and that should be grouped together. As clusters of post-its emerge they should be named. Once the grouping of the hindering and supportive factors is completed the titles of the groups should be written on two new flipcharts (one for the positives an done for the negatives).</p>
10.45 – 10.50	<p>Prioritisation (Plenary)</p> <p>Each participant is given four sticky dots to mark the hindering or supportive factors that they think are most significant and that should be the government’s priority. All four dots can be used on one factor or they can be spread out.</p>
10.50 – 11.00	<p>Conclusions (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator summarises the key trends and results of the event and explains the next steps. Participants are asked to ‘vote with their feet’ to indicate if they enjoyed the event.</p>
11.00	<p>Close</p>

E2: Half Day Event (3.5 hours)	
8.30 – 9.00	Final preparation and briefing for facilitators
09.00 – 09.15	Participants arrive and register
09.15 – 09.20	<p>Welcome (Plenary)</p> <p>Facilitator sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aims of the day • Explains what is going to happen and runs through the agenda in brief • Details for refreshments, toilets, health and safety regulations
09.20 – 09.30	<p>Icebreaker (Groups)</p> <p>Participants gather in groups of ten and pair up with someone they don't know. They are given three minutes to interview each other and then introduce their partner to the wider group.</p>
09.30 – 09:35	<p>Ground Rules (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator presents some pre-prepared ground rules and asks if the participants can agree to these and if anyone wants to add anything.</p>
09.35 – 09.55	<p>Presentation (Plenary)</p> <p>A ten minute presentation is given on the background to the White Paper, the definition of empowerment and what the consultation is looking at. Followed by ten minutes of questions and comments</p> <p>Or</p> <p>A five minute presentation of the background to the White Paper and a ten minute local example of empowerment in action. Followed by five minutes of questions and comments</p>

09.55 – 10.10	<p>Voting with your feet (Plenary)</p> <p>Following the presentation the participants are asked to show if they agree or disagree with the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK’s democracy is in crisis • I feel I can shape and influence my area and public services • It is important that people have the opportunity to shape and influence my area and public services • There are already enough opportunities for people to influence local decisions • More citizen involvement will undermine the important role of elected representatives <p>Each vote is followed by the facilitator for volunteers to explain why they have chosen to stand where they have.</p>
10.05 – 10.25	<p>Small group discussion (Group work)</p> <p>Participants break into small groups of 4-6 people and look at one of the White Paper Themes in more detail. You can have four groups (one for each theme), or all groups can look at the same theme depending on the interests of your participants. You can also ask your participants to self organise and form groups around the theme that they are interested in.</p> <p>The different groups will look at the following questions:</p> <p>Theme 1: Regeneration and worklessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a role for the community in tackling worklessness? • If so how could government best support communities to tackle worklessness? • Are there any good examples of this that government should know about? <p>Theme 2: Encouraging active citizenship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is community empowerment important in order to encourage and support people to be active citizens? • If so how could government best encourage and support citizens to be active? • How could government best encourage ordinary people to take up civic roles, such as being a magistrate or local councillor? • Are there any good examples that government should know about?

10.05 – 10.25	<p>Theme 3: Improving local public services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a role for community members in improving local services? • If so how could government best support community members and consumers to improve local services? • How can government give social housing tenants more choice and voice in their housing situation? • Are there any good examples that we should know about? <p>Theme 4: Strengthening local accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a role for community members in holding local services and public bodies to account? • If so how could government best support community members to hold local services and public bodies to account? • Do you agree that more is needed strengthen local leadership? • Do you agree that we need to increase opportunities for local communities to hold public officials and representatives to account? How do you think this could be done? • Are there any good examples that we should know about? <p>A volunteer from each group should take notes. Someone from each group should also volunteer to present back to the whole group.</p>
10.25 – 10.35	<p>Reporting back (Plenary)</p> <p>The groups report back in turn and outline if they think there is a role for the community to play in the theme they discussed , what that role might look like and how government might best support that role. The findings are written on a flip chart.</p>
10.35 – 10.45	<p>Common themes (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator invites the participants to identify any common views across the different groups. If a comment or view point is shared across groups it should be noted as such.</p>
10.45 – 11.00	<p>Break</p>

11.00 – 11.20	<p>Small group discussion (Group work)</p> <p>Participants break into small groups of 4-6 people and look at the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there certain areas of your life or local area that you feel more able to influence than others? What is it in particular that makes you able to influence in this area? • Are there certain areas of your life or local area that you are less able to influence? What is it in particular that stops you from you influencing in this area? <p>A volunteer from each group should take notes of the key areas and supporting and blocking factors. Each supporting and hindering factor should be written on a post-it note. (One post-it note per factor) Someone from each group should also volunteer to present back to the whole group.</p>
11.20 – 11.30	<p>Reporting back (Plenary)</p> <p>The groups report back in turn and outline the key factors that support and hinder people from being empowered. The post its are put on two flip charts -one for supporting factors and one for hindering factors.</p>
11.30 – 11.40	<p>Clustering (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator asks the participants if there are post-its on either of the flipcharts that are related and that should be grouped together. As clusters of post-its emerge they should be named. Once the grouping of the hindering and supportive factors is completed the titles of the groups should be written on two new flipcharts (one for the positives and one for the negatives)</p>
11.40 – 11.50	<p>Prioritisation (Plenary)</p> <p>Each participant is given four sticky dots to mark the hindering or supportive factors that they think are most significant and that should be the government's priority. All four dots can be used on one factor or they can be spread out.</p>

11.50 – 12.10	<p>Small Group Brainstorm (Group)</p> <p>The facilitator identifies the top three ranked supportive and hindering factors. The participants split into three groups and each group will look at a set of one supporting and one hindering factor. The group will brainstorm for five minutes around the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could government do to overcome this barrier? • What could government do to spread this supportive factor more widely? <p>The goal is to identify what actions government should take.</p> <p>Once the groups have brainstormed they will agree amongst themselves which five actions they will present to the wider group. A volunteer from each group should take notes of the key actions. Someone from each group should also volunteer to present back to the whole group.</p>
12.00 – 12.20	<p>Reporting Back (Plenary)</p> <p>The groups report back in turn and outline the key five actions they think government should take based on their previous discussion. The actions are written up on a flip chart.</p>
12.20 – 12.30	<p>Actions Discussion (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator should check to ensure that everyone understands the actions as listed and should also check if there is significant overlap anywhere. If so these actions should be merged.</p>
12.30 – 12.35	<p>Prioritising Actions (Plenary)</p> <p>Each participant is given four sticky dots to mark the actions that they think would make the most difference and that should be the government's priority. All four dots can be used on one factor or they can be spread across several actions.</p>
12.35 – 12.45	<p>Conclusions (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator summarises the key trends and results of the event and explains the next steps. Participants are asked to 'vote with their feet' to indicate if they enjoyed the event.</p>
12.45	<p>Close</p>

E3: One Day Event	
8.30 – 9.00	Final preparation and briefing for facilitators
09.00 – 09.15	Participants arrive and register
09.15 – 09.20	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Facilitator sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aims of the day • Explains what is going to happen and runs through the agenda in brief • Details of refreshments, lunch toilets, health and safety regulations
9.20 – 9.30	<p>Ground Rules</p> <p>The facilitator asks for suggestions for ground rules from the participants and writes a list on a flipchart. The facilitator should have a list of minimal rules that he or she will suggest if the participants don't raise them.</p>
09.30 – 9.45	<p>Icebreaker</p> <p>Participants gather in groups of ten and pair up with someone they don't know. They are given three minutes to interview each other and then introduce their partner to the wider group.</p>
09.45 – 10.15	<p>Presentation (Plenary)</p> <p>A ten minute presentation is given on the background to the White Paper, the definition of empowerment and the four themes that the consultation is looking at. Followed by ten minutes of questions and comments</p> <p>Or</p> <p>A five minute presentation of the background to the White Paper and a ten minute local example of empowerment in action. Followed by five minutes of questions and comments</p>

10.15 – 10.30	<p>Voting with your feet (Plenary)</p> <p>Following the presentation the participants are asked to show if they agree or disagree with the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK's democracy is in crisis • I feel I can shape and influence my area and public services • It is important that people have the opportunity to shape and influence my area and public services • There are already enough opportunities for people to influence local decisions • More citizen involvement will undermine the important role of elected representatives <p>Each vote is followed by the facilitator for volunteers to explain why they have chosen to stand where they have.</p>
10.30 – 10.50	<p>Small group discussion (Group work)</p> <p>Participants break into small groups of 4-6 people and look at the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Based on your experience of the relationship between citizens and the state in the UK today, what currently works well? And why?' • 'Based on your experience of the relationship between citizens and the state in the UK today, what currently works less well? And why?' for ten minutes. <p>The group then agrees the top three things that work well and less well to feed back to the room. A volunteer from each group should take notes. Someone from each group should also volunteer to present back to the whole group.</p>
10.50 – 11.05	<p>Reporting back (Plenary)</p> <p>The groups report back in turn and outline the top three things that work well and less well. The findings are written on flip charts on the wall marked 'Today'.</p>
11.05 – 11.15	<p>Break</p> <p>Participants are encouraged to look at the results of the previous exercise. Graffiti wall in place over break.</p>
11.15 – 11.30	<p>Common themes (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator invites the participants to identify any common views across the different groups. If a comment or viewpoint is shared across groups it should be noted as such. The goal is to identify a shared understanding of the current situation.</p>

11.30 – 12.00	<p>Small group discussion (Group work)</p> <p>Participants break into small groups of 4-6 people and look at the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would be the ideal role you would like to play in your area? • Which decisions would you like to influence? • How often would you like to get involved? • Which decisions are you happy for elected representatives to take on your behalf? <p>The key thing is to encourage creative thinking in this session. Start by brainstorming rough ideas for ten minutes and spend the rest of the time fleshing out ideas and identifying which ideas have widespread support.</p> <p>A volunteer from each group should take notes of the areas of agreement around the desired future. The group should identify the top five principles that they want to share with the wider group. Someone from each group should also volunteer to present back to the whole group.</p>
12.00 – 12.20	<p>Reporting back (Plenary)</p> <p>The groups report back in turn and outline the key things they would like to see in the future in terms of power and decision making. The findings are written on flip charts on the wall marked 'The Ideal Future'. There needs to be a gap between these flipcharts and the 'Today' charts.</p>
12.20 – 12.50	<p>Identifying gaps (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator asks the participants to think individually for two minutes what they think the key gaps are between the desired future and the current reality. They should write up their thoughts on post-its (one thought per post-it).</p> <p>These post-its are gathered in by the facilitator and placed on flipcharts between the 'Today' and 'Desired Future' sheets. The post-its should be grouped as they are gathered in so the facilitator needs to ask the participants for advice where to place each post-it in relation to previous ones.</p> <p>As clusters of post-its emerge they should be named.</p>
12.50 – 13.00	<p>Prioritisation (Plenary)</p> <p>Each participant is given four sticky dots to mark the gaps between present and desired future that they think are most significant and that should be the government's priority. All four dots can be used on one gap or they can be spread out.</p>

13.00 – 13.45	<p>Lunch</p> <p>Graffiti wall in place over lunch.</p>
13.45 – 14.10	<p>Small Group Brainstorm (Group)</p> <p>The facilitator identifies the top five gaps. The participants split into five groups and each group will look at one gap and how it might be overcome. The group will brainstorm for five minutes around the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could government do to overcome this gap? • What could other groups do to overcome this gap? <p>The goal is to identify what actions government should take.</p> <p>Once the groups have brainstormed they will agree amongst themselves which five actions they will present to the wider group. A volunteer from each group should take notes of the key actions. Someone from each group should also volunteer to present back to the whole group.</p>
14.10 – 14.30	<p>Reporting Back (Plenary)</p> <p>The groups report back in turn and outline the key five actions they think government should take based on their previous discussion. The actions are written up on a flip chart.</p>
14.30 – 14.40	<p>Actions Discussion (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator should check to ensure that everyone understands the actions as listed and should also check if there is significant overlap anywhere. If so these actions should be merged.</p>
14.40 – 14.50	<p>Prioritising Actions (Plenary)</p> <p>Each participant is given four sticky dots to mark the actions that they think would make the most difference and that should be the government's priority. All four dots can be used on one factor or they can be spread across several actions.</p>
14.50 – 15.05	<p>Break</p> <p>Participants are encouraged to look at the results of the previous exercise. Graffiti wall in place over break.</p>

15.05 – 15.25	<p>Small group discussion (Group work)</p> <p>Participants break into small groups of 4-6 people and look at one of the White Paper Themes in more detail. You can have four groups (one for each theme), or all groups can look at the same theme depending on the interests of your participants. You can also ask your participants to self organise and form groups around the theme that they are interested in.</p> <p>The different groups will look at the following questions:</p> <p>Theme 1: Regeneration and worklessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a role for the community in tackling worklessness? • If so how could government best support communities to tackle worklessness? • Are there any good examples of this that government should know about? <p>Theme 2: Encouraging active citizenship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is community empowerment important in order to encourage and support people to be active citizens? • If so how could government best encourage and support citizens to be active? • How could government best encourage ordinary people to take up civic roles, such as being a magistrate or local councillor? • Are there any good examples that government should know about? <p>Theme 3: Improving local public services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a role for community members in improving local services? • If so how could government best support community members and consumers to improve local services? • How can government give social housing tenants more choice and voice in their housing situation? • Are there any good examples that we should know about?
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15.05 – 15.25	<p>Theme 4: Strengthening local accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a role for community members in holding local services and public bodies to account? • If so how could government best support community members to hold local services and public bodies to account? • Do you agree that more is needed strengthen local leadership? • Do you agree that we need to increase opportunities for local communities to hold public officials and representatives to account? How do you think this could be done? • Are there any good examples that we should know about? <p>A volunteer from each group should take notes. Someone from each group should also volunteer to present back to the whole group.</p>
15.25 – 15.35	<p>Reporting back (Plenary)</p> <p>The groups report back in turn and outline if they think there is a role for the community to play in the theme they discussed , what that role might look like and how government might best support that role. The findings are written on a flip chart.</p>
15.35 – 15.45	<p>Common themes (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator invites the participants to identify any common views across the different groups. If a comment or view point is shared across groups it should be noted as such.</p>
15.45 – 16.00	<p>Bringing it all together (Group)</p> <p>The facilitator should remind participants of the results of their activities over the day. Participants should then split into groups of between four and eight people.</p> <p>The groups should discuss and agree the top finding of the day.</p> <p>The groups should consider the question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you were in charge and could make a decision to prioritise just one of the options discussed today, which would it be and why? <p>The recorder should report the majority view but also note the minority views. These notes will be gathered up and fed back to Communities and Local Government.</p>
16.00 – 16.15	<p>Conclusions (Plenary)</p> <p>The facilitator summarises the key trends and results of the event and explains the next steps. Participants are asked to 'vote with their feet' to indicate if they enjoyed the event.</p>
16.15	<p>Close</p>

Section F: Venue checklist

Before the event:

- Make sure the venue is appropriate for your participants. Avoid venues where participants may feel uncomfortable or defensive.
- Confirm venue booking well in advance.
- Check whether venue allows rearrangement of room to suit your event. For example are you allowed to stick flipchart paper to the walls if your activities require this?
- Confirm any speakers, facilitators and workshop leaders well in advance.
- Write up invitees list, try to be as inclusive as possible.
- Send invitations out by email, post or consider if it is more effective to phone or to speak in person.
- Confirm places with respondents to invitations.
- Ensure that any presentation or multimedia elements are arranged well in advance and that the venue knows about your needs.

Day before event

- Send a reminder email or make a phone call to confirmed attendees the day before.
- Print up all background sheets and other resources requires.
- Ensure that everyone involved in organisation of the process has a clear idea of the roles they will be asked to perform on the day and when.
- Give someone the role of making participants feel welcome at the start and to answer any questions people may have.
- Check technical equipment including recording and sound equipment.
- Ensure that all facilitation materials you may provide are transported to the venue.
- Ensure that the room is set up appropriately for the event.

After the event

- Write thank you letters and emails to all who have helped with the process
- Once information has been gathered and analysed, inform those who took part what happened after the event
- Met with your team to discuss openly what went well and what could have been improved

Materials checklist

Check the suggested activities that you want to do and see if they require:

- Felt tip pens
- Post it notes
- Biro pens
- Flip chart paper
- Large rolls of paper
- Sticky dots
- Blu tack

Accessibility and Diversity Checklist

It is important to ensure that no-one is left out of your event because they are disabled or have specific needs. Try to think carefully about who may find it difficult to participate and how you might be able to help them join in. The following considerations may be useful:

General Considerations

- Ask potential participants if they require any particular assistance to enable them to take part fully.
- Try to understand the participants' cultural and religious situation take make sure they feel comfortable and safe when participating – ask for advice if you are unsure.
- Consider the time of any meetings in consultation with the group you hope to engage.
- Check if it is appropriate to have mixed gender or mixed age groups at meetings – this may hinder participants from putting their views across freely.
- Brief all presenters or facilitators to ensure information is delivered clearly and at a steady pace so that everyone is able to take that information in fully.
- Set up a group of participants to guide the process as it develops and to give you advice.
- Ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for questions to be asked.
- Ensure that all those running the process are fully briefed on the group's needs.
- Welcome participants when they arrive and thank them when they leave.

Specific Practical Considerations

- Ensure any venue is easy to access affordably by public transport – this is particularly important when engaging young people or those with lower incomes.
- Consider whether parking is possible at the venue if required.
- Consider whether a hearing loop will be needed to help those with hearing aids to take part in conversations.
- Consider whether expenses should be paid, and make it clear to participants whether expenses are being offered. Will there be any effects upon state benefit?
- Check whether guide dogs will be accompanying any participants – if so, ensure that they are catered for with water and an exercise area if possible.

- Ensure that venues used are well lit and that any writing on flipcharts is clear and in bold contrasting colours.
- Ensure that not only the rooms and building used are accessible but that toilets and communal areas are also accessible for all.
- Consider recording meetings and processes so that participants with communication needs can use audio visual records as a form of documentation.
- Check whether a space for prayer should be provided at any events.
- Check whether those attending any events have specialist dietary requirements such as vegetarian, vegan, kosher and halal foods.
- Check if interpreters need to be used.

Glossary of key terms

Accountable – When a representative is elected they are held responsible for the decisions they take. Therefore they have to provide to provide answers to those they make decisions for. This is being accountable.

Active Citizenship – Active citizenship is primarily about individuals participating in the decisions that shape their lives and the well-being of the communities they belong to.

Civil participation – relates to participation in community activities and in less formal types of association. It includes participation in residents associations, sports clubs, faith groups etc.

Civic participation – relates to participation in state affairs. It includes participation in political processes and participation in governance.

Deliberative decision making – ways in which citizens can become involved in decision-making processes

Manifesto – A public declaration of principles, policies, or intentions, which all candidates issue before an election. This gives citizens information on what the candidate will do if elected.

Social capital – bonding, bridging and linking – which is fundamental to the quality of life in communities.

Worklessness – Worklessness is used to describe all those who are out of work but who would like a job.

More terms can be found at <http://groups.involving.org/display/glos/Home>

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