Principles of Community Engagement

*Developed and adopted for Kingston’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment*

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is the lens that the Health and Wellbeing Board is expected to look through to enable informed policy and commissioning decisions to be made that will ultimately improve health and wellbeing outcomes for people in Kingston.

An integral part of Kingston’s JSNA is ensuring that local communities and groups have a voice, in every chapter of the JSNA there is a dedicated section that includes any local work that has been done around community engagement and consultation that is relevant to the topic area.

The ‘Community Voice’ needs to sit alongside; local data, local intelligence, national evidence and research. In doing this, a rich picture of local people’s health and wellbeing needs will emerge. It is also important to highlight that the Kingston’s JSNA approach is not only to focus on the needs of the majority population but also to assess whether there are different needs in some minority populations.

**Principles:**

1. Collaborative Working
2. Methodologies – a menu of different approaches
3. Representation – reflecting all voices
4. Ethically sound
5. Validity, credibility, objectivity, robustness of evidence sources
6. Skilled labour force – The professionally skilled right people to do the job

JSNA Community Voice Subgroup 23/09/14
Collaborative Working

Making the most of our resources and ensuring we have key partners involved. Many different organisations conduct research with local people. Embracing new opportunities and working across organisational boundaries and with new partners will enable us to gain a breadth of insight into the health and wellbeing needs of our population.

Methodologies

A menu of different approaches that are relevant to the target audience will maximise engagement, ensuring more meaningful results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non interactive (Information)</th>
<th>Interactive (Engagement)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surveys, online mediums i.e. online video submissions &amp; postings</td>
<td>Neighbourhood panels, planning exercises such as ‘planning for real’, online forums</td>
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</tbody>
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Involving within decision making processes (Decision making) Involving with evaluation (Evaluation and reflection)

JSNA chapter authors would benefit from seeking to use the Council’s ‘Community Engagement Quick Method selector’ to ensure all methodologies available are considered for the appropriate level of engagement desired.

Different methodologies include: focus groups, interviews, citizen juries, conferences and vision setting, innovative approaches such as community designed/carried out research, involvement of research participants in photo diaries and interviews, prioritisation exercises, neighbourhood ‘Your Money Your Say’ events, voting exercises and events. Evaluations could include for example ‘quality interviewing’.

Representation

Steps to ensure as many of the local people’s voices are heard as possible.

1. Identify and recognise local diversity and local priorities (both within and between communities). Ensure diverse communities are represented (particularly those that tend to be under-represented or at risk of poor health). Clearly state the responsibilities of all parties involved and put in place mechanisms to track accountability.
2. Identify and change practices that can exclude or discriminate against certain sectors of the community (for example, short-term funding, organisational style and timing of meetings).

3. Let members of the local community decide how willing and able they are to contribute to decision-making, service provision and management (recognise that this may change over time). The allocation of responsibilities should match this. Training and support should be available to help all those involved meet their responsibilities.

4. Recognise that some groups and individuals (from the public, community and voluntary sectors) may have their own agendas and could monopolise groups (so inhibiting community engagement).

**Ethically sound**

Ensuring there are no conflicts of interest is imperative. This could be between the people carrying out the engagement/research and the organisations or communities involved. Being objective and removing the risk of bias where possible is critical. There are many aspects to consider to ensure an ethical approach is the basis of your research: consider using independent/external people to gather the data where possible, ensure that people/communities or their representative groups are not compromised in any way for information (i.e. not put under pressure) and adhere to data protection protocols and facilitate that they are understood by those carrying out research/using the information gathered.

**Validity, credibility, objectivity, robustness of evidence sources**

All data (both quantitative and qualitative) needs to be robust and be able to stand up to scrutiny. Ensuring that the chosen methodologies, representation, and objectivity of those who carried out the work can be justified and explained is a must. If robustness is in any way in doubt, recognise and highlight any limitations to the evidence given and possibly make recommendations for further research where necessary. It is good practice to highlight limitations as some research/engagement maybe useful local information about a small group of people but not necessarily transferable to the rest of the local population.

**Skilled labour force – The professionally skilled right people to do the job**

When looking at a menu of approaches, be clear about the purpose of the research/engagement. Sometimes limited resources, capacity within a team and historical methods and work patterns determine the approach used rather than using the right engagement methods for a specific target audience. Looking at the skill mix of individuals is essential, Training and Development within this area may need to be pursued.

JSNA Community Voice Subgroup 23/09/14
Please also see RBK’s Community Engagement – Quick Method Selector for full document.

Front page is as below:

**Levels of Community Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Engagement</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>To provide balanced and objective information that enables local people to understand issues, alternatives and/or solutions regarding services that affects them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult</td>
<td>To provide local people with opportunities to have a direct say about decisions and services that affect them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve</td>
<td>Work directly with the community in the process of making decisions regarding services that affect them, ensuring their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. For example, co-designing policies and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives, the identification of the preferred solution and its delivery. Partners may be capable of carrying out some aspects of service delivery for themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empower</td>
<td>To place final decision making in the hands of the community. This may happen as a result of increased engagement between communities and public bodies or as a result of communities taking action themselves.</td>
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