Glasgow Disability Alliance

"Are We Being Served?"

Top Tips Guide to involving Disabled People

The GDA Toolkit to implement the National Standards for Community Engagement

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BIG LOTTERY FUND
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PROJECT PART-FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION
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Contents

Acknowledgements

Foreword

GDA is a membership led organisation which has grown with the support of disabled people, groups and communities across Glasgow and with generous funders in the UK and from Europe.

GDA has agreed its aims in response to unmet need but also the vision of our members who want to have their human rights respected and promises of equality to be delivered. GDA aims to:

- Engage disabled people in lifelong learning and work with learning providers and institutions towards becoming more flexible, accessible and disability equality focused.

- Represent views, wishes and opinions of grassroots disabled people and provide disability expertise.

- Increase opportunities for involvement and participation of disabled people e.g. policy making and service design and delivery.

- Provide support to member organisations and individuals so that they input effectively and have greater influence.

- Encourage and maximise networking between disabled people, their organisations and policy makers.

- Provide information in accessible formats e.g. Braille.

- Provide programmes of capacity building and support for individuals and disability-led groups and organisations within Glasgow.

Our members have a range of skills, hold opinions on a range of matters and seek to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live. Over the last two years there has been an increase in the opportunities to participate in consultations, serve on local committees and sit on Boards of local strategic partnerships. A constant concern is the culture of some organisations and attitudes of some staff in relation to engaging disabled people.

Thus, we have come up with Top Tips to help organisations and agencies to implement the Standards for Community Engagement: in this Practical Guide we will describe negative experiences, share good practice and suggest Top Tips to enable organisations to effectively engage their disabled service users and customers, in turn developing more responsive and better targeted services. This practical Toolkit is a positive contribution from GDA to drive up standards in community engagement and promote best practice for and with disabled people.

Angela Mullen   GDA Convenor

1. Introduction

Glasgow Disability Alliance is a membership-led organisation of disabled people and groups in Glasgow. Currently we have over 280 members including 24 groups and organisations led by disabled people. Established in 2001, its mission is to act as the collective, representative voice of disabled people, promoting equality, rights and social justice. Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA) promotes the involvement of disabled people as a right and believes their contribution improves public service planning, design, development and review. If engagement is meaningful, disabled people can:

- Help set realistic targets for services.

- Represent issues of disabled services users on key planning groups.

- Participate in training of staff.

GDA supports the adoption of the National Standards for Community Engagement (The Standards) but recognises that much needs to be done to explain how the Standards can be used to include disabled people.   Since 2006, GDA has been funded to deliver a Learning Project. This has engaged disabled people in learning, built the capacity of disabled people in Glasgow and worked with learning providers towards ensuring that learning is more disability equality focused. In recognition that disabled people require joined up access across a whole range of services in order to access learning, GDA has worked with many other agencies.

GDA has used the National Standards to plan a variety of methods and approaches to engage disabled people. This includes reaching over 500 people through roadshows, networks and events and engaging with 150 disabled learners from August 2006- December 2007. We are therefore able to draw on this experience to inform this Toolkit.

The Standards are complementary to the increasing importance of Human Rights compliance in Scotland. 2007 is a significant year with the establishment of the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Glasgow and the setting up of the Scottish Commission for Human Rights. Human rights are a powerful tool in tackling attitudes, culture, laws and practices which equally discriminate. The Human Rights Act 1998 was introduced as part of the Government's drive to improve the delivery of public services.GDA shares the Government's vision that the world which we live in should be a place where:

"there is respect for and protection of each individual's human rights, there is respect for the dignity and worth of each individual and there is mutual respect between groups based on understanding and valuing of diversity and on shared respect for equality and human rights," (Section 3 of the Equality Act 2006).

GDA appreciates that change does not happen overnight: however, the future is bright, partly because human rights and public sector responsibilities are now under the spotlight.   Change is inevitable but we need to learn how to change and agree what needs to be changed.   GDA has decided it can help by sharing what we know with organisations that want to involve disabled people and use the National Standards for Community Engagement to do this.

Drawing on both negative and positive experiences of disabled people across Glasgow, and some of the good practice which we know is out there, we have pulled together this Toolkit to encourage applying the Standards when engaging with disabled people and groups.

Read on to learn more and make a difference whether you are on the front line, a policy maker, manager or at Board level! We all have a responsibility to contribute to making society better and more inclusive for all.

Tressa Burke

Director of GDA

2.   What Are the National Standards?

The National Standards are described as a practical tool to help improve the experience of all participants involved in community engagement to achieve the highest quality of process and results,

"We all need to listen to communities and involve them in making a positive contribution to what really matters. These National Standards for Community Engagement are a good practice tool which will help to provide a framework to help people influence the planning and delivery of services in their local areas. We are committed to real and genuine engagement …and a means of bringing in the voice of those engaged in the most disadvantaged communities"(Ministerial Foreword to National Standards).

GDA is aware that the Standards have been used widely in the contexts of regeneration, local authority services, health services, education and learning and within a range of structures such as community planning partnerships. Increasingly the Standards are a tool to audit public authorities engagement with the public which GDA welcomes. Members of GDA believe that properly applied, the Standards are a significant tool for enabling all groups in society to work positively with a range of stakeholders.

However, it is felt by GDA members, that currently, the Standards are not fulfilling their potential in relation to disabled people and that needs to change. Neither are they known well by all sectors, although there are benefits in using these as a framework against which to plan and evaluate involvement. The Standards do not exist in a vacuum and are only as effective as those using them. Furthermore, the Standards are not responsible for institutional barriers which have built up over time but they can be used towards a process of dismantling these barriers for disabled people.

GDA feels strongly that further support and information is required to enable agencies, to genuinely engage disabled people so that services can be developed which meet their needs and aspirations.   This Toolkit gives our members a voice,

"We need GDA to keep the pressure on as the gap between policy and practice is wide: the policies are definitely better but the practice is too often poor." (GDA Member, Interim Evaluation 2007).

3. Why write Top Tips for involving disabled people?

GDA has developed the 'Top Tips' for involving disabled people in service planning, decision making and all areas of community engagement in Glasgow. It is both our experience and understanding from our members that agencies require additional support and resources to engage disabled people in service planning and development and this has been evidenced from various sources including:

- GDA's Interim Evaluation, "All participants had a range of experiences with other organisations which were overwhelmingly poor. A basic and constant obstacle is turning policy on equality into practice. Participants were clear that the high level of disability in Glasgow coupled with the hurdles still to be overcome, evidences the need for targeted support for disabled people to help them experience equality," (GDA Interim Evaluation, August 2007).

- Case Studies which have been collated, detailing personal journeys and existing barriers facing GDA Members and learners

- Consultation events and focus groups outlining the barriers to accessing services e.g. NHS Consultation, Glasgow City Council Consultation in relation to Disability Equality Scheme and barriers to services, Learners Consultation.

- Various pieces of external research e.g. the Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee "…the Committee is concerned about the evidence that it has heard that many disabled people are not aware of their rights and that many service providers are not aware of their responsibilities in making provision for disabled people." [1]

The Committee has also confirmed the problem of central policies not filtering down to the agencies dealing with ordinary people and "considers that the Scottish Executive equality strategy is a vital document. However, the Committee remains extremely concerned that not all departments or agencies pay due cognisance to it in the work that they do."[2] The Committee also highlighted the importance for all public sector staff, to promote equalities as part of their job descriptions and that this should form part of their performance competencies.

GDA recognises that there are a number of national developments which seek to ensure that society no longer disables its citizens but remains concerned that, despite legislation and policies such as the Disability Discrimination Act and Disability Equality Duty and regardless of Guidance e.g. the National Standards for Community Engagement, disabled people and their communities are still removed from planning services and local decision making.

Due to negative experiences, and often just the lack of opportunities for involvement, members of GDA have called for a "reality update" to offer some 'Tips' to key decision makers in the private, voluntary and public sectors. Central to these 'Tips' is the fact that small adjustments as well as significant legislative and policy changes, can make a positive impact on the lives of disabled people. Overwhelmingly, it is felt that attitudes are at the heart of driving forward positive changes for disabled people.

What are the Top Tips?

The Top Tips are practical suggestions in the form of experiences, good practice examples and checklists to assist agencies to involve disabled people in service planning and decision making. This will share our experiences and understanding of what disabled people have told us. In turn it is hoped that this will inform more practical approaches to support the effective involvement of disabled people in services which ultimately respond to their needs.

GDA wants to help agencies to use the National Standards better with disabled people and promote the involvement of disabled people to have more control over their experience of services. If this is done in a meaningful way, disabled people can:

[1] Equal Opportunities Committee of the Scottish Parliament "Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities, Summary of Recommendations, Vol 2, (2006) para 2.

[2] Ibid, para 9.

- Provide information about services to new and potential service users.

- Set targets for services.

- Represent issues for themselves and other services users on key planning groups.

What are the Benefits of Involving Disabled People?

GDA acknowledges that there are competing reasons for involving disabled people in service planning and development and has found that key benefits include:

- Identifying barriers, enabling changes which promote inclusion.

- Targeting resources effectively (the responsibility of managers and planners).

- Improving confidence and satisfaction levels of disabled service users (responding to demands from disabled people embraces the rights and empowerment agendas).

- More inclusive approaches are likely to result in improvements in staff satisfaction and morale.

What is the Legislative Base for Engagement?

The following is a summary of key legislation. Further detail is provided at Appendix 2.

- Since 4th December 2006 the Disability Equality Duty (DED) has applied to the public sector. This legal duty means that public bodies need to actively look at ways of ensuring that disabled people are treated equally. At the heart of the Disability Equality Duty is the requirement to involve disabled people in producing the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

- Section 7 of the National Health Service Reform (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on bodies such as Health Boards to encourage public involvement and Section 9 places a duty to promote health improvement which can include consulting with the public.

- Section 15 (1) of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 requires local Authorities to engage with community bodies in the Community Planning Process.

- Section 7 (3) (b) of the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006 allows the Commission to consult on its draft strategic plan which covers a four year period.

- There is currently a Discrimination Law Review which is being undertaken by the UK Department for Communities and Local Government at a UK level. This aims to develop a simpler, fairer legal framework on antidiscrimination.

Who will benefit from the Top Tips Toolkit?

Ultimately disabled people will benefit by being more involved in service planning, development, implementation and reviews! In the immediate future, this Guide will help organisations in the public, voluntary and private sectors deliver the National Standards for Community Engagement.

By listening to the experiences and ideas of disabled people who live in Glasgow, GDA can offer solutions which will make a lasting impact on how, in turn, agencies listen to disabled citizens of Glasgow.

How will you benefit from this Toolkit?

This Toolkit will inform more practical approaches to support the effective involvement of disabled people in services which ultimately respond to their needs. It will serve as a resource to tap into and a checklist of good practice. You will also have access to and contact details of GDA.

Short term outcomes will include awareness being raised of the Standards e.g. on consulting with colleges during the process of developing this Toolkit, it became apparent that the Standards are not widely known at fairly senior levels, demonstrating that these have not been "rolled out" across all sectors.

We therefore hope that the Top Tips raise awareness, confidence, understanding, ability to use Standards and provide a checklist of good practice which can be used as a framework for planning and evaluating your work.

Longer term outcomes will hopefully include disabled people having more opportunities to be involved, being enabled to use the opportunities effectively and meaningfully through support and capacity building and ultimately benefiting from improved services which meet needs and enhance quality of life.

The Top Tips will help you to identify barriers to involvement in your own organisation and encourage disabled people and employees to use their expertise to dismantle barriers and set priorities to improve disability equality.

What Methods did we use to involve Disabled People in the Toolkit?

GDA involved disabled people in the planning and development of the Toolkit. The actual idea for the Top Tips came from disabled learners who participate in GDA's Learners Reference Group. Initial ideas were developed and then checked out with both the Group and GDA's Board.

Further involvement of GDA members was carried out with another 2 Focus Groups of disabled people. Comments from Evaluation Forms and Focus Groups were also used along with feedback from GDA's Learning Providers Reference Group which comprises a number of colleges and community based learning providers.

Findings of Consultations conducted by GDA have also been taken into account to broaden the range of experiences and views which have formed the Toolkit. These include 2 Learners Consultations (November 2005, September 2006), Consultation response to Glasgow City Council's Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan (2006 and 2007) and Consultation for Glasgow's Community Learning and Development Plan (August 2007).

Lunch was provided at all focus groups and working groups and sessions, lasted approximately three hours. All access needs were met including transport, personal assistance, information e.g. CDs and Braille.

4. How to Use this Toolkit to Help You

By using direct experiences of disabled people (in direct quotes) and good practice examples, it is hoped that people will enjoy reading the Top Tips as well as find the Toolkit informative and useful. Sections are laid as follows:

■ Stating the Standard.

■ Drawing on people's actual experiences of engagement.

■ Sharing Good Practice.

■ Top Tips Checklist with recommended actions for agencies to use when delivering each Standard.

Some of the tips will, in reality, apply to several of the Standards. The Toolkit can be used in its own right but would be enhanced if used alongside the Standards. It is intended to be used as a resource for developing good practice in relation to involving disabled people and can be used to "dip in and out" to focus on particular standards, depending on circumstances.

The Top Ten Tips are based on the recent practical experiences of our members and our analysis of what changes are needed. The Tips seek to add value to the range of guidance already available on the websites of the Scottish Community Development Centre and Communities Scotland. These also provide Support Programmes, Support Materials and additional resources at:

http://www.scdc.org.uk/national-standards-community-engagement /support-materials/

http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/

Alongside the Standards, the Top Tips can be combined with a human rights approach to improve the involvement of disabled people in service planning and development,

"Involvement has benefits in 2 ways. Disabled people can begin to understand some of the bureaucratic processes which are at play -not that these are an excuse but they are a fact! Also, workers gain valuable insights into the barriers which face disabled people and can start to address these more effectively and therefore promote better human rights," (Officer from Glasgow City Council).

5. Human Rights and Public Sector Responsibilities

Human Rights belong to us all, all of the time. Respecting human rights in the delivery of public services is not an optional extra but a set of core values and fundamental to public sector reform. Human rights extend to economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. In this way, there is a direct relationship with the Standards and the Top Tips since disabled people have rights to involvement.

Human Rights need to be respected when delivering the National Standards for Community Engagement. The principles which underline the Standards mirror core human rights principles: Equality, Fairness, Respect, Dignity and Autonomy. The culture and systems of your organisation to effectively deliver The Standards will equally apply to compliance with existing Human Rights legal obligations.

The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) provides domestic redress if the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) are breached. The ECHR contains the right to freedom of expression, to respect for your private and family life and to be protected from degrading treatment. The ECHR is underpinned by the belief in the inherent dignity of individuals and that rights should be treated with respect.

Section 6 of the HRA obliges all public authorities such as Health Boards, Local Authorities and organisations such as Communities Scotland to act in a way which is compatible with the ECHR. The Act was a positive attempt by the Government to make human rights more accessible to ordinary people. One driver for compliance is that domestic courts can make compensation awards. In Scotland, we have additional human rights protection because the Scotland Act, which set up our devolved government, specifically obliges Scottish Ministers[3] (section 57) and the Scottish Parliament (section 29) to comply with the ECHR. So, people can go to court about human rights under that Act too!

[3] Apart from certain actions of the Lord Advocate s 57 (3) Scotland Act 1998.
[4] Department of Constitutional Affairs, "Review of Implementation of the Human Rights Act" (2006) p 4.

The Government believes that Human Rights is another tool to deliver improved and more responsive public services and has established,

"a framework for policy formulation which leads to better outcomes, and ensures that the needs of all members of the UK's increasingly diverse population are appropriately considered both by those formulating the policy and by those putting it into effect."

The Government also asserts that human rights are powerful in establishing an agreed value base for society and setting standards in public services.[5] Private bodies can also be covered by the HRA if they are delivering certain types of public services or if they are contracted by a public authority to deliver services.

So what is our current level of understanding of human rights and Scotland and have we woken up to their potential?   A MORI Scotland poll for the Justice 1 Committee of the Scottish Parliament in 2005[6], revealed that when people were asked to give "some impression as to what "Human Rights in Scotland" means to them", the most common associations are with equality.

From 2007, Scotland benefits from two distinct independent human rights bodies:

1.   the Scottish Commission for Human Rights which will promote understanding of devolved human rights issues

2.   the Equality and Human Rights Commission which has broader powers on reserved human rights matters.

In deciding what action to take, the Scottish Commission must have regard to the "human rights of those groups in society whose human rights are not, in the Commission's opinion, otherwise being sufficiently promoted."

From an ethical point of view, human rights are fundamental to overcoming disabling barriers. From a pragmatic perspective, human rights are central to other policy drivers which ensure that society no longer disables its citizens. A human rights approach should ensure positive processes and outcomes for disabled people including treating people with dignity and respect.

6. Top Tips Guide

[5] Department of Constitutional Affairs, "General Information on the Human Rights Act 1998", p5 Website information http://www.dca.gov.uk/peoples-rights/human-rights/faqs.htm#1

[6] Justice 1 Committee, Scottish Parliament, "Scottish Commissioner for Human Rights Bill 1st report (session 2) Volume 2 J1/S2/06/R1 (February 2005) "Submission from MORI Scotland" p 9. The poll was conducted 27th October – 2nd November 2005.

Standard 1: Involvement

We will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement.

"I've found out about lots of things that are going on through my involvement with GDA - I wouldn't have known otherwise. I didn't know anything about Community Planning, the CHCPs or learning. Disabled people have the same rights to involvement as other citizens but we seem to be more cut off", (GDA Member).

GDA members report that often, they are siloed into the category of having a limited interest in issues which relate only to disabled people. It is stated overwhelmingly, that disabled people have a range of interests which are far broader than just health services although this obviously has a place. Disabled people are interested in what's going on in their communities including formal structures for involvement, community activity and organisations, access to learning, issues around justice and policing and even what is going on at the Scottish Parliament.

Sharing Good Practice: Glasgow City Council

Consultation for Disability Equality Scheme & Action Plan

In 2006, Glasgow City Council Corporate Equalities Department approached GDA and asked us to gather views of disabled people about council services. This was to influence the development of their Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan and make sure that these services meet the needs of disabled citizens.

GCC recognised the experience and expertise of a user led voice of disabled people and wanted to involve disabled people in the process from the start. Resources were made available to involve the broadest range of disabled people possible and to reduce barriers to participation.

This enabled disabled people the chance to have their say about services and to identify their priorities for improving these. GDA asked disabled people how they wanted to be involved in policymaking and planning for service delivery and fed back views and priorities to GCC. Focus Groups were convened with all access requirements met and GCC were also keen to ensure that their own Employees were involved. A minimal fee was paid in appreciation of the resources and expertise which people gave. One year on, GCC approached GDA again to review the ongoing Plan and discussions have taken place about ongoing involvement in the development of future schemes and plans.

TOP TIPS CHECKLIST FOR INVOLVEMENT

Principles

- Recognise the rights of disabled people to full citizenship with the same range of human rights, needs and aspirations as other people.

- Work on the principle "nothing about me without me".

- Remember that disabled people have busy lives and make your opportunities for involvement well-defined, focused and meaningful.

Practical steps for successful involvement

- Reach out to disabled people from a wide variety of sources including: disabled groups and organisations, unions, organisations providing services to disabled people, mainstream community groups e.g. tenants associations, community councils.

- Remember that there are also hard to reach disabled people who are isolated and unable to participate in activities due to barriers. Consider social care services, health services, libraries, post offices as a potential means of getting information to them.

- Consider the full diversity and different experiences of disabled people e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, Black and Minority Ethnic, Older People, Younger Disabled People. Acknowledge the negative effect of multiple barriers.

- Use organisations led by disabled people which have strong connections to the grassroots and understand the issues. Be confident that these are not "Gatekeepers" and that their approach is far reaching and inclusive.

- Keep a "contact book" of organisations, leaders, research and evidence to ensure that you have a wide range of information including published stats and research.

- Map levels of meaningful involvement by disabled people in your service. Consider opportunities for further involvement by those whose voice is not represented. Use networks and "expert" organisations led by disabled people.

- Remember that all organisations will have disabled employees whether disclosed or undisclosed. Identify barriers for disabled employees in your own organisation.

- Disability and Equality "Champions" are often key drivers in bringing about positive changes. Take a personal and direct approach to promoting the rights and encouraging involvement of disabled people.

Standard 2: Support

We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.

Why do we need Top Tips for Support?

"We arrived and they had a lip reader and a person doing sign language but what we really needed was help with transport and personal support so we could fully participate," (GDA Member's reflections of experience with other agencies).

GDA members have highlighted that there are often practical and financial barriers to their participation e.g. lack of transport, the need for personal assistance such as getting in and out of heavy doors to a venue, lack of accessible communication e.g. loop systems and timings of meetings. It has also been reported that workers and officers needs are met, e.g. access to information "Because I don't get it in advance or in an accessible format, I can't properly take part in discussions and decisions and I can't keep up."

Sharing Good Practice: Glasgow Learning Providers

Pacific Institute and Gorbals Community Forum – have facilitated 5 "STEPS to Excellence & Personal Success" courses. As a result of this partnership, course materials have become more accessible for disabled people and methods of delivery have been shaped to the needs of participants. 47 disabled people have completed these 4 day courses which have been instrumental in building confidence and goal setting.

Momentum Scotland – contacts every learner prior to start of the course to find out individual access needs. This enables preparation of resources and planning for methods to be used in advance. Assistive technology is used to ensure participation and all access needs are met.

Glasgow Metropolitan College – have delivered a Healthy Eating Course. Needs of learners were responded to and transport was provided. There was an uptake of Disability Equality Training from staff to improve policies and practice in relation to working with disabled learners.

Glasgow Nautical College & WEA – have delivered an 8 week Numeracy course. Again, needs of learners were taken on board and transport was provided. Adjustments have been made to the timings, methods and materials used for teaching to enable full inclusion.

Community Learning & Development – have delivered a 3 week Confidence Building course. The Tutor described the process as an opportunity to think about different ways of doing things. CLD paid for transport for participants and have become aware of the benefits of having an Access Budget to enable full inclusion.

TOP TIPS CHECKLIST FOR SUPPORT

Principles

- Recognise the true costs of involving disabled people and acknowledge the time and expertise that disabled people and their organisations contribute.

- Recognise the value of involving independent support organisations of disabled people to provide community development support.

Practical steps for effective support

- Reduce barriers through provision of transport, loop system, personal assistants, accessible information including Braille, large print and plain language, British Sign Language interpretation, Lipspeakers, electronic typists, communication aids, advocacy.

- Maximise access by considering suitable toilets, parking, door width, room size, lifts, seating arrangements, etc.

- Find out access and support needs for each individual, develop systems to capture information to avoid repeatedly asking people the same questions.

- Make up a standard checklist of the support needs of people.

- Review support needs as part of monitoring and evaluation.

- Accessibility-proof all activities to be proactive and inclusive rather than reacting to people's support needs "on the day".

- Identify Disability Equality Champions who can develop specialist skills in working with different equalities groups of disabled people e.g. LGBT disabled people, those from BME communities etc.

- Make sure that expenses are paid quickly to demonstrate that you are serious about involvement and will keep your promise to provide support.

- Promote a positive culture change within your organisation by mainstreaming human rights across all services and activities. Recognise that dealing with any group of people requires attention to all of their particular needs and interests. Arranging for vegan food should be part of the same process as arranging for transport!

- Be more flexible with budgets and consider a "reasonable adjustment" budget or "access" budget which can cover the cost of essential supports such as personal assistants or taxis.

- Reimburse time and expense of disabled people and organisations providing expertise either through direct cash payment or gift vouchers.

Standard 3: Planning

We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken.

Why do we need Top Tips for Planning?

"I thought the point was that the public body decided if the engagement was OK as no one asked me. They seem to come up with these things from some policy…sometimes it turns out to be useful but sometimes it bears no relation to the experience of disabled people," (GDA Member).

GDA Members have reported that they are rarely ever asked about the purpose or need for the engagement. It is usually decided in advance and it has been stated that "Often it has been decided, then someone thinks "We better get the views of some disabled folk!" Usually this is near the end of the process and at a point where you can't really influence. If they like what you say, they tell everyone they consulted disabled people. If they don't, then they say it was only a few folk and not representative!"

Sharing Good Practice: Community Learning and Development, Culture & Sport Glasgow

CLD wanted to involve disabled people in planning for the Consultation about the Glasgow Community Learning and Development Strategy 2007-2010. GDA were invited to become involved at the planning stage of this consultation process and worked with partners to produce a statement on Community Capacity Building for the Consultation exercise. GDA were also encouraged to contribute to guidance about how to collect information about disabled people and other equalities groups. Ultimately, CLD enabled GDA to be involved in planning and developing wider participation in the consultation by disabled people, including GDA members and GDA itself.

Glasgow Equalities Partnership

GEP involved GDA in the planning and delivery of a consultation strategy to come up with a way forward for the new "Glasgow Equalities Hub". GEP and GDA agreed the purpose and scope of the involvement, the amount of time to be spent involving disabled people, set measurable targets for this process, committed resources to support involvement and participation e.g. transport, personal assistance, BSL interpreter etc, and agreed respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the engagement . Critically, GEP kept the promises made, "I was a bit nervous coming along to this event as you know what it's like...you tell them your needs and then when you get there, you're not catered for. But this was a great event and everything which I asked for was done. You felt like they were really taking you seriously and listening," (GDA Member).

TOP TIPS CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING

Principles

- Plan engagement to ensure objectives are met.
- Encourage open and honest expression of views.
- Recognise and acknowledge the skills and assets which disabled people bring to the planning process.

Practical steps for effective planning

- Ask disabled people and their organisations to help identify the issues that your agency should engage about, or at least "check-out" the value of the issues that you come up with.
- Ask disabled people to come up with the best kinds of methods for this engagement as they may know up to date methods and "what works".
- Gather evidence of needs and resources to plan activities.
- Ensure that disabled people are involved from the start of the engagement.
- Ensure that disabled people are involved in partnership working.
- Plan enough time to involve disabled people and groups.
- Be realistic about the resources needed to make involvement inclusive and plan ahead to ensure that additional resources are available for the engagement.
- Implement the agreed, published policy of your organisation from the outset – look at the Disability Equality Duty and its application to your organisation.
- Ensure that there is a common understanding about the extent and purpose of the engagement exercise.
- Be open about any limitations at the outset as this will affect the outcome of engagement including Feedback and Monitoring and Evaluation. A limited engagement which is inclusive and set with clear objectives is more credible in terms of process as well as outcomes. Make clear the limits of involvement.
- Set targets: small and attainable goals match initial expectations and disabled people will be more satisfied with a series of small, positive steps than overcoming large promises resulting in failures.
- Plan for and establish a continuing process of involvement- successful participation requires an ongoing dialogue.
- Keep your promises and deliver your undertakings.

Standard 4: Methods

We will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.

Why do we need Top Tips for Methods?

"You can be excluded simply because they choose methods which don't work for you e.g. they organised an event early in the morning and that is no good for me because it takes me a while to get up and out. Or they tell you to give your response online and then you find that the questionnaire isn't accessible or compatible with your software. They probably don't mean to leave you out but they just haven't thought of it!" (GDA Member, reflecting on experiences of agencies).

Sometimes, just a little more thought and small adjustments could result in more effective, meaningful involvement with better outcomes.

Sharing Good Practice: Equality Forward

"Exploring disability disclosure amongst college and university staff in Scotland," November 2007

Equality Forward has just completed a powerful piece of research which has explored the experiences and perceptions of staff in colleges and universities in Scotland about disability disclosure. This research is important as it is the first of its kind to focus on staff rather than disabled students and the study lets the voices of disabled staff in colleges and universities in Scotland be heard, alongside those of non-disabled staff.

The research method was significant in the success of the project. The method had to enable staff to talk about attitudinal, environmental and social barriers to disclosure, reach college and university staff in appropriate ways, and seek the trust of college and university hierarchies in the process. An online survey and personal interviews were considered to be most effective. The anonymised, accessible online survey for college and university staff was developed with support from staff at University of Glasgow. Overwhelmingly, 691 responses were made, which totals almost 1% of all college and university staff in Scotland. Just under 22% of responses were from disabled staff. This demonstrates a high level of confidence in the anonymity of the survey and suggests that this method was "fit for purpose".

It is hoped that findings will provide greater understanding of the processes for college and university staff when considering whether or not to disclose disability. It is also anticipated that this research will provide information for colleges and universities which may guide policies and procedures in respect of the recruitment and retention of disabled staff.

This example is directly drawn from the Summary Report named above and will be available on the website from 10th December 2007 at www.equalityforwardscotland.ac.uk.

TOP TIPS CHECKLIST FOR METHODS

Principles

■ Demonstrate that you are listening to and hearing people!

■ Value people's personal testimonies of their experiences of service delivery as qualitative evidence of what needs to change.

Practical steps for inclusive methods

■ Ask disabled people about the methods which work for them.

■ Use difference methods and approaches to gain a wide variety of views and involvement. Methods should offer a continuum of diverse and innovative activities from simply giving information, to consultation, to active and genuine involvement which empowers disabled people, helps them to create a vision for their future and be involved in the decision making to make this happen.

■ Always use more than one method so that people have a choice and make sure these are "fit for purpose".

■ Use methods that will reach and respond to hard to reach groups, e.g. people unable to get out of their house or in residential care.

■ Use methods that promote discussion and reduce dominance of a few.

■ Promote learning and awareness raising by bringing different groups together e.g. older and younger generations. The dynamic created by the groups will generate broader discussion and the process should be more enjoyable for people too.

■ Arrange meetings in response to varied needs for: timing, location, content and style. One size does not fit all.

■ Be flexible in response to different needs and concentration levels e.g. allow for breaks, enable people to make a point when they think of it rather than at the right moment on the agenda e.g. "red card" systems.

■ Check out in advance what support people need. Provide support so that people can participate effectively, e.g. pre-meetings.

■ Arrange meetings and events as locally as possible and be prepared to go where people normally meet instead of asking them to come to you.

■ Remember new methods developed and used and store for the next project so that the methods are mainstreamed rather than treated as exceptional.

Standard 5: Working Together

We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently.

Why do we need Top Tips for Working Together?

"You turn up at meetings and it appears that the various organisations have made decisions in advance so the meeting acts as a rubber stamp. My presence appears to be required to give credibility to the process. I may eventually agree with some of the decisions but the process is unfair... the pace is often too fast with people using abbreviations which I do not understand and anticipating that I will have read all the materials they have, even though I am a volunteer," (GDA Member's reflections of experience with other agencies).

GDA Members report that "disability" has undergone a public relations makeover with actually little real change at the point of contact.

Sharing Good Practice: Leonard Cheshire Citizenship Academy

Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD) received a grant from the Electoral Commission to work with disabled people throughout Scotland on the Citizenship Academy Project. This aims to empower disabled people to be actively involved in their local communities, with an emphasis on learning about Scottish democratic processes. LCD sought to involve disabled people and their organisations in the planning, development and delivery of this course and established a Project Board. GDA have been involved in this process.

An open, honest and positive approach has been taken from the outset. Board members are encouraged to be involved, access needs are met and communication has been in plain language. Decisions have been shared and agreed and participants have learned from each other through a process of change and development i.e. course planning, development and implementation. This has involved ideas and decisions about resource allocation e.g. GDA and LCD have delivered a Citizenship Course to disabled people in Glasgow.

LCD has recognized and acknowledged the valuable time which Board members contribute and this respectful approach is transferred to the way the course is delivered. The course has been accessible through provision of transport, personal assistants, accessible training materials, plain language and symbols. There has been a genuine effort to strive for continuous improvement in the way the course is developed and delivered and this is influenced by both disabled people on the Board and the learners themselves e g. some aspects of the course for example timing, delivery and choice of topics have been in response to the students and have developed with their input and evaluation. As a result of the course in Glasgow, disabled participants have increased the confidence and skills needed to voice their opinions, reinforce their rights and influence decision making processes..

TOP TIPS CHECKLIST FOR WORKING TOGETHER

Principles

- All participants need to feel confident that their participation is valued.
- People often need support to work together efficiently.
- Recognise that disabled people's time is valuable.

Practical steps for working together

- Acknowledge hidden power and agendas. Be open and honest.
- Listen to each other and get to know each other.
- Build relationships but also welcome new members.
- Create confidence by visibly demonstrating a positive attitude to disabled people e.g. use language that disabled people and wider equalities groups are comfortable with.
- Treat disabled people with dignity and respect and create a culture where all participants can challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- Emphasise and build skills and knowledge around rights and responsibilities – this may involve information and training.
- Involve all participants in setting standards for behaviour e.g. writing "ground rules" for working together.
- Ensure that the procedures to be followed are clear and realistic.
- Adopt a positive approach: encourage views of all participants, remove barriers to participation, use approaches which identify opportunities for achieving change.
- Use plain language and symbols if necessary e.g. Bonnington symbols.
- Ensure that all participants understand and are involved in decisions.
- Recognise that disabled people and groups have particular experiences of broken promises, e.g. because of lack of resources. If a commitment is made, follow it through.
- Learn from one another and strive for continuous improvement of the process. This may require enhancing skills and knowledge.
- Encourage tolerance as every one of us is different.
- Ensure that views are recorded and influence the debate and/or decision. Demonstrate the benefit of working together. Be prepared to capture outcomes which were not anticipated e.g. the desire to meet again to discuss other issues.

Standard 6: Sharing Information

We will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants.

Why do we need Top Tips for Sharing Information?

"You can be sitting at a meeting with a pile of papers that have arrived the day before, despite what it says in the constitution, and you have not had time to prioritise or read them. Generally, it can be difficult to know what is going on locally in your area so you tend to speak to different people to get an idea of what is happening rather than knowing for sure what is planned", (GDA Member's reflections of experience with other agencies).

GDA Members have significant poor experiences in relation to information. If information increases knowledge and knowledge is power, then this only serves to further disempower those who are already marginalized in society. Without information we cannot make choices, give our consent, know how our services could be improved, know how agencies work or how we can have a say in them.

Sharing Good Practice: Inclusion Scotland

"Inclusion Scotland is an organisation OF disabled people, for disabled people across Scotland. It is extremely important that communications with our members are first class and fully accessible. Funded by the Scottish Executive's Equality Unit, our IT & Communication Project uses a number of approaches to share information i.e. Website, Newsletters and E-Bulletin.

Inclusion Scotland's website is updated daily with the latest news regarding disability, equalities and the voluntary sector. Newsletters are produced each month, Links to other relevant organisations are available, an "events" diary of conferences, training, and related meetings from all over Scotland is also available to disabled people. Members or visitors can input their views and give us feedback so that information flows 2 ways. Our website consists of features to make it accessible and we are currently exploring an 'Easy-Read' version of the website. We distribute an E-Bulletin reaching 1100 people weekly.

For those without access to the web, we have a printed newsletter, sent monthly to members. This contains much of the information which we share on the website. Supplements are produced and recent examples include 'Parliamentary Questions'

The newsletter is typed in Font Arial in 14 Point to add to the site's accessibility. We can also supply information in other formats on request and keep a note of access needs so that we can plan for future sharing of information. To visit the website log onto: www.inclusionscotland.org", (Thanks to Donna McSwiggan, Information Officer, IS for this excerpt).

TOP TIPS CHECKLIST FOR SHARING INFORMATION

Principles

- Information is a 2 way process: agencies should share accessible quality information about services and gather information from disabled people to inform service planning.

- People want to be and appear to be confident when participating in public engagement. Being able to access the relevant information is essential to build confidence and understanding of the issues.

Practical steps for sharing information

- Ask disabled people about their information and communication needs and provide for these.
- Produce and disseminate clear and accessible information which is relevant to the purpose.
- Use font 14 as a minimum size font.
- Use different formats e.g. provide written information to address memory problems; tapes, CDs and Braille are useful for those with visual impairments, learning difficulties, cognitive processing or literacy issues; other languages may be required.
- Uses the Scottish Accessible Information Forum to keep up with standards www.saifscotland.org.uk
- Record peoples' preferred formats and use these on an on-going basis so they don't have to ask twice.
- Use easy to understand, attractively presented, plain language
- Ensure enough time to translate, interpret, analyse and process information: distribute information well in advance so that people can read and understand the materials.
- Communicate information face to face as well as on paper. Remember that this may require sign language interpretation, lipspeaker and electronic typist.
- The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 sends out a clear message that unless information requires to be withheld for a particular purpose, then it should be disclosed. By making available as much information as possible, public authorities will enable people to be better informed. Ensuring a steady flow of information will enable broader engagement on a long term basis.
- Explain which information is restricted because of confidentiality. Being open about this will promote trust and good relations.
- Use a range of accessible communications methods e.g. newsletters, email briefings, websites, annual reports & meetings.

Standard 7: Working With Others

We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement.

Why do we need Top Tips for Working With Others?

"I only found out about it because I'm pushy and pressed it. I talked to other disabled people-including GDA- and they hadn't heard about it. They've made no real attempt to involve disabled people or disabled-led organisations who have the expertise to be involved. They want to do it on the cheap - there are limits to how much you can contribute when you don't get the papers in an accessible format," (GDA Member talking about a local structure for involvement).

GDA Members have reported a lack of being involved in initiatives and developments which directly affect them and their communities. It is therefore important that organisations learn from disabled people and their groups and seek to ensure that engaging disabled people happens as a matter of course. This is essential if agencies are to learn about services and resources for disabled people and this enhanced understanding will improve practice.

Sharing Good Practice: Learning Providers Reference Group

When initially establishing its Learning Project, GDA were keen to reach out to other organisations with an interest in providing learning to disabled people. The Learning Providers Reference Group was set up and a number of organisations were enthusiastic about joining the Group and working with others. These included Glasgow College of Nautical Studies, Momentum Scotland, Wellbeing Initiative, Glasgow Metropolitan College, Equality Forward, Central College, Community Learning & Development, WEA, Cardonald College, John Wheatley College, Govanhill HA, Stow College, LGBT Centre and Langside College.

All members of the LPRG have committed time and resources to reach out and build knowledge of what else is happening. Good relationships have developed and this has resulted in informed responses and joint activities to engage disabled learners. This has also resulted in training for staff around disability equality.

The Group continues to meet, share best practice, develop opportunities for partnership and plan ways to involve disabled people in learning,

"Through the LPRG, we have seen the voluntary sector and colleges work together to develop ways to improve learning opportunities for the many disabled people who still remain distanced from mainstream learning," Development Officer, Equality Forward.

TOP TIPS CHECKLIST FOR WORKING WITH OTHERS

Principles

- Learn about organisations, activities and structures which are relevant to your engagement.
- Recognise that involvement of disabled people's organisations will be at a cost to them i.e. time and resource e.g. staffing.
- Ensure that you involve disabled people and not just the wider disability networks of organisations that provide services to disabled people. These are valid and should be included but not at the expense of disabled peoples" voices.

Practical steps for working with others

- Ask disabled people about their knowledge of others who should be involved.
- Investigate context of your work to identify other relevant work and who is doing it!
- There may be a gap between what you think and what individuals and members of the disabled people's communities think. A further challenge is then to build a collective voice and if that is not possible, to manage publicising the different views which have been articulated.
- Continue to develop effective partnerships which are relevant to delivering the work. Maintain these links.
- Encourage involvement and service provision to disabled people as routine practice and not something which is exceptional.
- Work with disabled people and their organisations to develop a stronger, collective voice for influencing changes.
- Compliment work of partner organisations and avoid duplication.
- The process is just as important as the outcome. You need to show some respect for the process and that means hearing and understanding different points of view.
- Language needs to be appropriate to the audience and people need to ensure there is time for effective discussion.
- Acknowledge vested interests up front don't assume that these solely apply to the voluntary sector!
- Maintain connections with intermediaries e.g. Scottish Centre for regeneration, GCVS, community planning officers.

Standard 8: Improvement

We will actively develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants.

Why do we need Top Tips for Improvement?

"Taking part in these things is not easy. The workers have all been doing it for years and make it look so easy. I need training in assertiveness and speaking out. I need to be confident to take part," (GDA Member).

"Don't assume it's only disabled people who need training and support. I've learned so much today about disabled peoples' rights and now see things in a completely different way. That's going to help me in my work with disabled people. We are all learning at the same time in different ways," (Participant in Disability Equality Training).

All participants have learning needs. Skills and expertise should be acknowledged and resources must be available to develop the abilities and capacity of all involved.

Sharing Good Practice: Coaching for Change

'Coaching for Change' was a GDA Pilot course which aimed to put disabled people at the heart of the decision making process on what, where and how they participate in lifelong learning. In this way learning is rights based, self determined and person centred, enabling the individual to develop skills knowledge and therefore motivation and confidence to get involved in solutions to barriers they face. This took account of ideas for dismantling barriers created by society and focused on the personal development of the individual as a learner, encouraging each participant to take action to effect change.

Ten disabled learners, with a wide range of impairments, attended a preliminary workshop run by Kate at GDA's Learning Festival in June 2007. Following this participants committed to a series of 6 sessions over 3 months (leading up to enrolment and start of autumn lifelong learning courses) on setting learning goals, which involved them committing to future actions for themselves, to use personal support networks in identifying barriers and coming up with solutions to access or sustain a learning activity.

Findings include: disabled people taking control of their lives, becoming more independent, being less isolated and progressing into voluntary work, training and paid work; reporting an increase in confidence, increase in participation in lifelong learning of their choice; stepping out of comfort zones into new and sometimes challenging situations; increase in assertiveness to tackle structural barriers as disabled learners; self advocacy skills such as speaking out; taking personal responsibility, making choices and decisions. Particular themes emerged around how to ask questions, where to find support organisations which are independent.

TOP TIPS CHECKLIST FOR IMPROVEMENT

Principles

- A culture of learning is beneficial to all involved and results in higher levels of performance.
- Agencies often need their learning and capacity to work with disabled people enhanced. It's not just disabled people who need help with skills and knowledge!
- Learning from practice is fundamental to improvement.

Practical steps for improvement

- Be proactive and offer people support to build their skills, knowledge and confidence. Evaluate this ongoing.
- Take responsibility for identifying your own learning needs to carry out your role and functions. Evaluate this ongoing.
- Make sure that there is enough time for the 2 Tips above!
- Make available or make arguments for resources to improve learning, skills and capacity.
- Continue to work with both disabled people and partner organisations to raise awareness of disability and related issues.
- Encourage sharing of skills and knowledge through capacity building for disabled people and agencies, actively developing the skills, knowledge and confidence of participation.
- Provide Disability Equality Training to all agency staff as this is at the heart of cultural and behavioural change.
- Use qualified trainers who have personal experience of disability issues, reflecting the diversity of disabled people.
- Take part in joint training for staff and disabled people bringing people together, challenging stereotypes and building relations.
- Be familiar with duties and responsibilities under the legislation, guidance and policy drivers e.g. the Disability Equality Duty, Human Rights Act, National Standards for Community Engagement.
- Suggest targeted outreach recruitment initiatives to encourage applications from talented disabled people to improve agency performance.
- Focus on what people can do rather than on what they cannot. Organise a series of engagements so that people can utilise their new skills and be more assured in using them.
- Discuss the need for both personal development for the engagement as well as longer term and collective learning to improve capacity overall.

Standard 9: Feedback

We will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected.

Why do we need Top Tips for Feedback?

"They promise to send you the Report in an accessible format but I don't know if it is because of the format I need or because they have not done the Report that nothing happens. So it is a one off event and you don't know if you are recorded accurately or what the outcome is," (GDA Member's reflections of experience with other agencies).

Amongst the disabled people who DO have involvement in consultation events and processes for involvement, there is a weariness and frustration about the fact that they often never hear anything about the impact or outcome of giving their time and views.

Sharing Good Practice: Service User & Carer Involvement Group

The Service User and Carer Involvement Group is a Glasgow wide group including wide representation from user and carer networks. It's initial purpose was to ensure that service users and carers are effectively involved in the planning and development of health and social care services across Glasgow. SUCIG now Works with CHCPs to assist them in implementing user and carer involvement in the planning and development of services.

Over the last 2 years, the Group has worked towards developing open processes with service users and carers and regular good practice includes: Arranging and paying for transport for group members with mobility difficulties to attend meetings and sub-group meetings; Funding service users and carers to attend conferences, seminars and other events relevant to the groups remit; Arranging for the availability of equipment/ technology to make meetings more accessible for service users and carers; Sharing information in accessible formats to participants; Following up the contribution made by participants i.e. sharing outcomes of input and related actions; Sharing communication with and between departments relating to issues raised within the groups and feeding back to the group about results.

This Group has provided Guidance on user and carer involvement and has also become involved in feeding into staff training. Planned work includes developing tools and methods for measuring service user and carer satisfaction with services to assist CHCPs in monitoring their performance. Chairing of the group rotates round senior level staff within the 5 Glasgow CHCPs.

TOP TIPS CHECKLIST FOR FEEDBACK

Principles

- If you neglect to feedback to participants, they will feel ignored and that their contribution is pointless. Feedback what has changed as a result of their input as this acknowledges expertise and validates the efforts of disabled people.

- People need to feel confident that their participation is valued and that they will receive feedback about the impact this had made.

Practical steps for feedback

- Agree with disabled people the timescales, methods, and source of feedback to be given.

- Feedback to wider communities of disabled people affected, not just participants .

- Feedback to disabled people over time - not just one-offs.

- Tell people both the positive and negative experiences. Share that information when you say you will and in a way which is accessible.

- Use plain language to feedback.

- Use a range of different methods to feedback.

- Feed back to all those who have participated in activities, informing people of decisions and reasons known.

- Provide feedback in different formats according to people's needs

- Capture the experience of all participants in feedback, not just the views of those responsible for organising involvement opportunities.

- Use feedback to show the Standards in use and how engagement has made a difference to disabled people and their groups.

- Use formal feedback to those who took part but informal methods as well, e.g. "U Say/We Say" type feedback in newsletters and on websites.

- Ensure feedback is provided quickly, in a format which is OK with the disabled person and allow the opportunity for any corrections to your record.

- Feedback explanations of why certain actions will happen and others cannot.

- Feedback plans for future actions.

Standard 10: Monitoring and Evaluation

We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national Standards for community engagement.

Why do we need Top Tips for Monitoring and Evaluation?

"I didn't know what was being evaluated until the end. I wish that we'd been involved in deciding what should be done since this is what they worked towards. This should have been looked at over the piece and not just at the end!" (GDA Member).

Disabled people should be involved in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of services. This should be from the start of the process. Disabled people should be involved in setting targets as a response to need. In relation to monitoring and evaluation, it would be crucial to set targets for involvement, outlining clear areas of work and ensuring mechanisms to review progress on a fairly regular basis.

Sharing Good Practice: Disabled people's Involvement in GDA

From the very start of the Learning Project, the voices of disabled people and learners or potential learners have been heard. This has included: involving disabled people in the planning of the Project, setting up a Learning Reference Group to advise on direction and activities and on our Board which is entirely led by disabled people. Disabled people have been clear about barriers, support needs and aspirations for learning including : Exclusion and discrimination e.g. bad attitudes, low expectations about potential;   Lack of access to transport, information, personal assistance or support.; Lack of flexibility in learning e.g. choice, support, accessible materials, equipment, teaching styles and assessment methods; Financial problems - lack of funding to meet learning support needs, costs of courses, benefits trap; Personal experiences leading to low confidence and self-esteem .

Activities and targets have been built around these issues leading to many achievements and successes over the past year and a half. Disabled people are involved in monitoring the outputs and wider outcomes of the Learning Project e.g. Evaluation Forms, Focus Groups and externally facilitated Evaluations.

"This truly is a project with disabled people at its heart. We have identified the need, purpose and funding, set the targets, agreed the monitoring information to be captured, monitored, reviewed, action planned and evaluated this ongoing. These things are all inextricably connected in a dynamic and ongoing process which forms part of daily activities. So much more has been achieved than was planned and this has also been captured to demonstrate our added value. One of the most important things is that this is presented in a very clear, accessible way to the Board," (GDA Convenor).

TOP TIPS CHECKLIST FOR MONITORING & EVALUATION

Principles

- Recognise that monitoring and evaluation are firmly connected to planning.
- Learn lessons from evaluations and integrate these into future planning.
- Evaluation is a continuous and dynamic process and is connected to all of the Standards for Community Engagement.

Practical steps for monitoring and evaluation

- Create a culture of feedback and communication from disabled people. Make it easy for disabled people to raise concerns they may have, not just during an evaluation process.
- Adopt a checklist approach so that your organisation follows a standard procedure which allows you to compare practice across the organisation.
- Ensure that the views of all participants are obtained, that lessons are learned and models of best practice promoted.
- Examine process as well as outcomes.
- Develop systems and processes to capture, monitor and analyse agreed information.
- Evaluate progress against targets set.
- Record good practice and share with others. This tactic is also used to continually improve practices and ensure that standards are maintained.
- Use the LEAP framework for planning and evaluation and capture and record information which is used for this purpose.
- Remember to use budget analysis to monitor, evaluate and evidence implementation of the Standards e.g. Access Costs.
- Recognise that results from community engagement and involvement in service planning and development may take even longer than usual. Undertake short-term as well as longer term evaluations.
- Build evaluation in from the start of a process of community engagement and involvement and keep reviewing practice.
- Use Evaluation Reports for feedback purposes.
- Make links to auditing processes such as "How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development II" and the Audit of Community Planning and Best Value.

7.   National Standards: Culture or Compliance?

GDA promotes awareness of the connection between human rights, equality and citizenship rights for disabled people and aims to work with providers to ensure that a holistic approach can be taken to service design and delivery. The Standards are not compulsory or prescriptive as they are a voluntary code. This has created delivery problems. For example in a report of the "Culture or Compliance" series of four regional conferences reviewing progress in implementing the National Standards for Community Engagement, it is stated that:

"…commentators also point to the wholesale adoption of the Standards, for example, by community planning partnerships in community engagement strategies, whose promise is not met in the realities of their practice."

GDA recognises and members support a firmer framework for auditing public compliance, or otherwise, with the Standards.

8.   How our members can engage with you.

"Some organisations will not make any progress until they come up with solutions rather than coming up with problems."

GDA Member

GDA is a membership led organisation. Our people and groups want the public and private sector to do better and are very happy to share their thoughts and expertise.

If you are developing a policy, designing a building, arranging lighting, scoping physical access arrangements, producing information and allocating a budget to promote equality and human rights, then why not consult those who have a wealth of experience in the field. Specific GDA member groups-such as Glasgow Access Panel, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, Possil and Milton Forum on Disability and over 20 other groups operate in the city. These, and individual members of GDA can, by prior arrangement, help you to deliver what you want.

GDA Members are happy to be cited by you as having been consulted but expect their recommendations to be heard and understood. To discuss your ideas in more detail or to set up an appointment, call GDA on, **0141 556 7103**.

Appendix 1: Organisational Checklist

Question	Answer	Actions
How does your organisation engage with disabled people to find out their views?		
How does your organisation reduce barriers to participation/services for disabled people e.g. physical access, transport, etc?		
Does your organisation involve disabled people in planning services?		
Do you think that your organisation uses accessible methods to engage with disabled people e.g. to get opinions about services?		
Does your organisation "work together" with disabled service users? Who has the power?		
Does your organisation provide information to disabled service users in accessible formats? Is all information shared equally?		
Do you know if your organisation engages with groups or networks of disabled people who have an interest in its work?		
Has your organisation ever given you access to Disability Equality Training?		
If you are responsible for engaging disabled people in your job, have they had access to support and training?		
Again, if you engage disabled people as part of your job, do you give them feedback about the impact of their contributions?		
Do disabled people have any role in planning, monitoring or evaluation of your organisation?		

Appendix 1: Organisational Checklist (continued)

Question	Answer	Actions
Do you know how many disabled employees your organisation employs?		
Are you familiar with your Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan?		
Did you know about the Disability Equality Duty?		
Is your organisation supportive of disabled employees i.e. do you think people would feel safe to disclose disability?		
Were you aware of the National Standards for Community Engagement within your organisation?		
Do you think these have been used to engage disabled people in your organisation?		
Do you think that your organisation has a human rights culture i.e. is everyone treated with dignity and respect?		
Does your organisation have data on the experience of disabled people in relation to key servicesas well as employment? For example, satisfaction rates of disabled customers or disabled employees?		
Can you think of ways that disabled people (both service users and disabled employees) could be involved more meaningfully at any level e.g. service delivery, strategic planning and development etc		
What systems do you have in place to enable continuous improvement of services and your direct practice?		

Appendix 2: Legislative and Policy Framework – what you need to know

There is an abundance of legislation which sets out a framework for delivering equality, community empowerment, improving access to learning and services and promoting health and well-being. Understanding existing legal duties and peoples' rights, can encourage best practice. Here are just some of the laws which are relevant to the delivery of The Standards. This is not an exhaustive list.

■ **Public Sector Disability Equality Duty**
The DDA 2005 introduced the public sector Disability Equality Duty from December 2006. Under the Duty, public bodies are required to carry out their functions with "due regard" to the need to: eliminate discrimination against and harassment of disabled people; promote greater equality for disabled people; promote positive attitudes to disabled people; and encourage disabled people to participate in public life.

■ **Scotland Act 1998**
Legislation at the Scottish Parliament is only competent if it complies with a range of conditions including meeting the terms of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). "Equal Opportunities" is a reserved matter, although the exception includes "the encouragement (other than by prohibition or regulation) of equal opportunities, and in particular of the observance of the equal opportunity requirements" which is defined as "the requirements of the law for the time being relating to equal opportunities" - Schedule 5 Part 11. Hence the Equal Opportunities Committee of the Scottish Parliament is a mandatory Committee.

■ **Equality Act 2006**
The Act establishes a single equality authority, the GB Equality and Human Rights Commission, operational from October 2007. It assumed the responsibilities of the existing statutory Equal Opportunities Commission, the Disability Rights Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality. The Commission also has a wider brief for other strands of diversity and equalities such as promoting human rights in relation to reserved human rights issues.

■ **The Human Rights Act 1998**
This Act provides rights to disabled people, though in fairly limited circumstances. Perhaps some of the more important are the following:

- The right to life
- The right to private and family life
- The prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment
- The right to non-discrimination (though this is only triggered where another right exists).

■ **Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006**
The SCHR has a general duty to promote human rights and, in particular, to encourage best practice in relation to devolved human rights issues. Human Rights include the ECHR and "other human rights contained in any international convention, treaty or other international instrument ratified by the United Kingdom." The Duty means "promote awareness and understanding of, and respect for, those rights." In deciding what action to take the Commission must have regard to the "human rights of those groups in society whose human rights are not, in the Commission's opinion, otherwise being sufficiently promoted."

■ **Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002**
Gives any person the right to make a request for information to a public authority (section 1) such as a local authority, the NHS, educational institutions including universities and colleges and Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority. You can appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner if the request is ignored or the information refused e.g. because the public authority claims they have the right to withhold the information.

■ **Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 & related Guidance**
Puts Community Planning on a statutory basis and requires the participation of key agencies such as health, local authorities and Scottish Enterprise. Places a duty of local authorities to promote well-being within their communities.

■ **Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2004**
Includes local authority function to deliver services designed to promote well-being and social development and that travel assistance is provided to ensure participation in services, (section 3).

■ **Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005**
Sets up the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council which is obliged to exercise its functions in a manner which encourages equal opportunities.

Appendix 3: Useful Contacts

Commission for Equality and Human Rights www.cehr.org.uk

Communities Scotland www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk

COSLA: Convention of Scottish Local Authorities http://www.cosla.gov.uk/

Glasgow Association for Mental Health http://www.gamh.org.uk/

Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector http://www.gcvs.org.uk/

Glasgow Community Planning Partnership
http://www.glasgowcommunityplanningpartnership.org.uk/

Scottish Executive http://www.scotland.gov.uk

Scottish Executive equalities mainstreaming website
www.scotland.gov.uk/mainstreaming/?pageid=403

Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) www.samh.org.uk

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations www.scvo.org.uk

Scottish Council on Deafness www.scod.org.uk

Scottish Disability Equality Forum www.sdef.org.uk

Scottish Trade Unions Congress www.stuc.org.uk

Scottish Accessible Information Forum www.saifscotland.org.uk

Other organisations OF and FOR disabled people include:

Glasgow Access Panel http://www.glasgowaccesspanel.org.uk/
Led by disabled people, the aim is to improve the accessibility of services, facilities and buildings across Glasgow for all disabled people.

GCIL http://www.gcil.org.uk/
Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL) is a user-controlled organisation providing a wide range of services for disabled people including: information, advice and assistance for people managing their own support arrangements using direct payments; training for personal assistants, accessible housing advice, employment opportunities.

Glasgow Disability Alliance   http://www.gdaonline.co.uk/

GDA is a membership-led organisation of disabled people and groups in Glasgow. Its mission is to act as a collective, representative voice of disabled people, promoting equality, rights and social justice. GDA uses community development methods and approaches to carry out its work.

Inclusion Scotland   www.inclusionscotland.org

Inclusion Scotland (IS) is a Scotland wide consortium of organisations of disabled people and groups. Through a process of structured development the aims are to draw attention to the physical, social, economic, cultural and attitudinal barriers that affect everyday lives of disabled people.

Job Centre Plus   www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/
cms.asp?Page=/Home/Customers/HelpForDisabledPeople

Information about the Job Centre's services for disabled people, including the Access to Work Scheme, Introduction to Work and the two ticks scheme.

Lead Scotland   http://www.lead.org.uk/

Lead Scotland, Linking Education and Disability, is a voluntary organisation set up to support disabled young people and adults and carers to access post-school education.

Momentum   http://www.momentumscotland.org/web/Home

Momentum works in partnership to enable disabled people to achieve their goals.

SKILL: National Bureau for disabled students   www.skill.org.uk

Information, advice and resources for disabled students in post-16 education.

Wellbeing Initiative
http://www.volunteerglasgow.org/pop_files/03/wellbeing.htm

Training organisation specialising in the delivery of Administration SVQ's at level 1 and 2 to disabled people.

Update   http://www.update.org.uk/

UPDATE is Scotland's National Disability Information Service, providing a comprehensive membership package of disability information, resources and other supporting services to enable any type of organisation to provide reliable, relevant and up-to-date disability information to their clients.