

GMOPN Recommendations for Good Participation

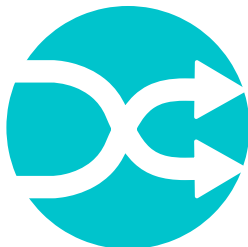
Attitudes



Do it wholeheartedly or not at all. Make sure that there really is an opportunity to influence and make changes and be prepared to take people's ideas and input on board. Be open to questions, criticism and new approaches.



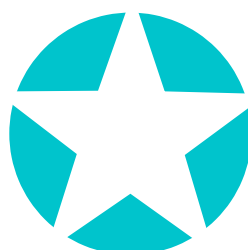
Acknowledge that people may be sceptical about participation and you may need to win their trust.



Be transparent about what input is being sought and what influence it can potentially have. Set realistic expectations about how participation can make changes.

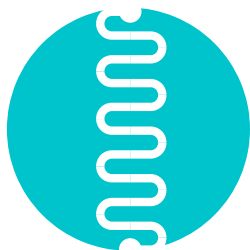


Create an environment of equals, where professionals or experts and older participants are all valued for the input that they bring.

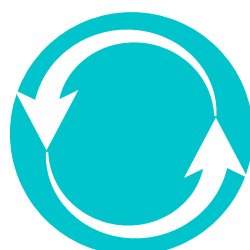


Acknowledge people's contributions – ensure that people are thanked for their input and acknowledge ideas that are going to be taken forward. Give credit where it is due.

Process



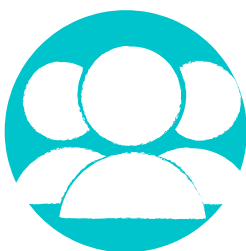
Be clear about the process and the project timeline and include people at every stage. Provide opportunities to participate and consult as early as possible so that people's contributions can have maximum influence.



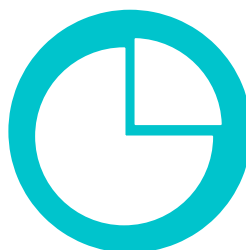
View participation as a process and an ongoing conversation rather than an isolated event. Involve people in a variety of ways and at various stages: in planning, at specific participation events and through follow up and action planning. Use both written and spoken methods and don't rely solely on digital approaches.



Make sure that you include different geographical areas where relevant. If the issue affects people across Greater Manchester, include all areas by going out to communities.



Always focus on inclusion and involving those who do not usually participate - look for who isn't involved and make attempts to address the gaps. Approach a variety of groups and individuals to participate. Approaching the same limited groups has the potential to exacerbate existing inequalities.



Report on events and consultations in a transparent and clear way that is accessible to those that participated.

Practicalities



Prioritise people's comfort. Make sure the venue is suitable, accessible and with good facilities and sufficient refreshments. Make adjustments for people with specific needs and provide transport or expenses where needed.



Provide clear accessible information before, during and after the event, both in summary and more detailed forms. Make sure that people are clear about what is expected from them. Don't use jargon - it makes people feel excluded and limits their ability to comment, contribute and question.



Allow people to participate on their own terms as much or as little as they wish, offering a variety of methods to suit individual preferences.



Use well-trained facilitators to ensure that everyone can contribute if they wish. Don't allow a few voices to dominate and be prepared to ask people to allow others an opportunity.



During events, make sure that actual participation is prioritised. Avoid cutting question time or workshops because speakers run over.



Give feedback and address concerns and arguments, even if response will be negative. Be clear about when feedback will be given and who is responsible. Make sure that feedback includes what action will take place.