



Working together with communities



Easy read version July 2009

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(01609) 532978



deborah.hugill@northyorks.gov.uk

Who has written this document?

Service providers in North Yorkshire, for example all the Councils, the Police, Fire and Rescue, and the Health Service. We are working together to try to improve how we talk to people and involve people in our services. A full list of the services involved is at the end of the document.

Many thanks to Hambleton and Richmondshire Learning Disability Partnership Board for their help in writing this document.

Why have we written this document?



We want North Yorkshire to be an even better place for everyone to live, work or visit.



Community services in North Yorkshire, for example the Police, local councils and Health Service, have agreed that this is what we all want. One way to make this happen is to make sure that our services are right for the people who use them.



We think that talking and working with the people who use our services is the best way to do this. This is because we want to find out what people who use our services think about them.

We also want to involve people in helping us when we plan new services or when we make changes to services.

We have written this document to help us all agree what we mean by this and to explain what we are going to do to make it happen.

Some things are happening already and we have included some examples in the document. There are still things we need to do, however, and these are in a plan at the back of the document.

What do we want to happen?



We want people to know how they can get involved



We want people to be able to help us make services better.



We want to help people to make their own decisions which will affect their lives.



We want to make sure all services become better at talking to people and finding out what they need.



We want to make sure services work together. We want to make sure people don't repeat questions. We may share information where you tell us it is ok to do this.



We want services to agree on how they will talk to people.



We want to make sure that we include everybody.

Getting information and being involved

There are lots of different ways that you can be involved in the services you use. It will not always be the same way for all

services. We will make sure we use the best way for that service and the group of people involved.

The ways will include:



Telling people - We will tell you about our services in a way that suits you. This might be a leaflet, a newsletter, a cassette tape or on a website.

Local examples:

- Every year North Yorkshire County Council writes a booklet to tell people where to buy locally produced food. This information is also on their website.
- Craven District Council writes a newsletter each year and sends it to each house in the area.



Asking people - We will ask you what you think about our services and how you think we can improve. We might ask you to fill in a form, or speak to you face to face.

Local examples:

- Ryedale District Council sends out a form every three years to everybody who lives in their area. It asks questions about what people think about the services the council provides for them.
- Richmondshire District Council asked people about whether they were able to get to hospital easily using buses and trains.
- You can fill in a form on Selby District Council's website and answer questions about their services.



Involving people - We will meet with you and find out what you need to make sure that services suit you. We might ask you to come to a special meeting or we might ask if we can come to a meeting you already go to.

Local examples:

- **Trading standards officers have helped people set up what are called No Cold Calling Zones in their areas. This tells people who come to your door without you asking them and try to sell you things, that they are not welcome. It helps you say 'No'. There are over 200 of these Zones in North Yorkshire at the moment.**
- **North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service have been talking to people at Parish Council meetings about speeding problems. People have told them where the worst problems are and they have improved the signs in these places.**



Working with people - We will work with you to decide what needs to be changed about a service. Together we will decide what is the best thing to do. You will have an equal say.

Local examples:

- **Services in Ryedale have worked with parish councils to decide what needs improving in their areas. They made a plan about how everyone can help this to happen.**
- **Local people are being involved in the group who are planning and managing the new Harrogate Library.**



Giving people power - We will give you the power to decide for yourself. For example you can vote for who your councillor will be. Another example is people deciding which projects in their area will be funded.

Local examples:

- **In Eastfield, near Scarborough, a recent event gave local people the chance to decide which projects to give money to in their area. 8 projects were given money. Some things the projects will do include picking up litter, removing graffiti, and activities for children.**
- **There is a Youth Council in Richmondshire. Young people aged between 12 and 19 can be part of this Council. They have money to give to clubs and organisations involving young people, and tell services what young people need.**

Sometimes people can be involved by working with services, like the police and councils, in their local area. This means meeting and talking about what is happening in a small area such as a village or housing estate. Everyone will agree what each of them can do to make things better. They will keep meeting to report back what they have done.

Where this happens, the following things may help:

Sharing information



If all services share information it is easier to make good decisions. We can also give people better information about our services.

Personal information will not be shared, unless the law says it must be.

Local example:

- In York services share information about graffiti so that they can remove it more quickly or stop it happening altogether.

Meeting together with local people



Regular meetings make sure everyone knows what is happening.

Finding out why problems are happening and deciding how to stop them



If we know why some thing is going wrong it is easier to make it go right.

Local examples:

- **There are meetings in Tadcaster to look at problems which people have told them about. They then think about how to solve them. Everyone is told afterwards what will be done to help.**
- **Problem solving groups have been set up in the Hambleton district. People have complained about problems on the streets, like litter. They work together to make things better.**

Working from the same office



Sometimes it is easier for local people if staff from different services share an office or building.

Local example:

- North Yorkshire Police have meetings in local schools in the Hambleton district where people can come and talk to them. The school advertises this to parents.

Sharing money and people



Services may agree to put money together or to share staff costs to do work in a local area.

Local example:

- In Eastfield, near Scarborough, services are working with local people to make it cleaner and safer.

Who do we want to talk to and involve?

We have used the word 'community' to describe groups of people we want to involve. People may belong to the following groups:



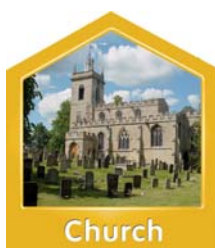
People who work or live in a particular place

We may need to talk to people who live or work in a particular place, such as a town, village or housing estate.



People who use a service

We may need to talk to people who use the same service, for example library users or pupils of a school.



People who have something in common

We may need to talk to people who see themselves as belonging to a group, for example young people or religious groups.

People can, of course, see themselves as belonging to more than one group. We must make sure we understand this.



We should also remember that each person has their own views. These may not be the same as those of a group. We need to understand these views too.

Local examples:

- **Craven and Harrogate Self Advocacy Consultation Group** is run for and by people with learning disabilities with support from a voluntary organisation. It helps people become more confident about speaking up for themselves and making service providers aware of their needs. It is part of the Craven and Harrogate Learning Disabilities Partnership Board.
- **The Voice, Influence and Participation (VIP) Group** helps children and young people speak for themselves. There will soon be a group for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

We have agreed the following ways in which we think we can improve.

Together, all Services will:



Work with people to find out their needs. They will do this at the start, not after they have started or finished the work.



Work with people locally to find out what they think of our services. We will include them in deciding how to improve.



Have meetings where people can speak with lots of service providers in one place.



Make sure that we help people understand how they can get involved and improve the skills they need.



Work closely with community organisations who can help us involve people.



Work closely with councillors and other people who speak for the community.



Agree on what groups we should talk to and involve.



Share information about these groups and where they are.



Work with groups of people to try to sort out the problems they tell us about.



Tell people what we have done.



Tell people who is responsible for making our plans happen. Tell people their names, where they work and how you can get in touch with them.



All work from the same place if this will help to improve the services there



Share the ways we store and use information, particularly on computers.



Make sure we all agree to work together.



Check how well we are doing and check if we can do it better.



Share money and people if this helps.

We are doing some of these things already. Where things are working well we will continue with them.

Local example:

- **In Scarborough area there are meetings which all services go to and speak to the people who live in the area. People tell them what they feel is good and bad about services or places. They work together to try and improve things. These meetings are called Area Forums.**

When we ask you for your views, then we will:

- be clear about what we are asking you, and why
- be clear about what can be changed and what can't
- plan our questions carefully
- look to see if the information we need is already available. We may then not have to ask again.
- give you enough time to tell us what you think
- make sure our staff are properly trained to do this work
- work together and not ask you the same questions lots of times
- work with voluntary groups who can help us ask the right people
- always be open and honest when we share information
- make sure we include everyone who wants to be included
- provide different ways of getting involved to suit as many people's needs as possible
- tell you what we did as a result of what you said. If we could not do what you wanted, we will tell you why
- check how we are doing and improve things which are not working well

Glossary

County Council - This council works across the whole county. The things it looks after include schools, old people's homes, libraries, roads trading standards and waste disposal.

District Council - These councils each work in one part of the county. The things they look after include planning, leisure centres, housing and council tax.

Parish Council - A small council which organises very local services such as grass cutting.

Service provider - An organisation which provides a service to local people, for example the police or local councils.

Trading standards - Trading standards officers make sure that people who sell something or provide a service do not break the law.

Youth Council - A group of young people who get involved in the decisions made by service providers.

Member organisations - NYSP Partnership

North Yorkshire County Council

Craven District Council

Hambleton District Council

Harrogate Borough Council

Richmondshire District Council

Ryedale District Council

Scarborough Borough Council

Selby District Council

North Yorkshire Police Authority

North Yorkshire Police

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
NHS North Yorkshire and York
Environment Agency
Yorkshire Forward
Jobcentre Plus
Learning and Skills Council
Probation Service
Youth Offending Team
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
North York Moors National Park Authority
NHS Foundation Trusts
NHS Health Trusts
Natural England
Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
Arts Council
Health and Safety Executive
Highways Agency
Craven Strategic Partnership
Harrogate District Strategic Partnership
Hambleton Strategic Partnership
Richmondshire Strategic Partnership
Ryedale Strategic Partnership
North Yorkshire Coast Community Partnership
Selby District Strategic Partnership
Country Land and Business Association
Federation of Small Businesses
Yorkshire Local Councils Association
National Farmers Union
North Yorkshire Forum for Voluntary Organisations
Rural Action Yorkshire
Additional VCS representation (up to four in total)
York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
Ministry of Defence
Sport England
English Heritage

If you would like more information please ask:



Deborah Hugill
Senior Policy and Partnerships Officer
North Yorkshire County Council



01609 532978



deborah.hugill@northyorks.gov.uk



Deborah Hugill
North Yorkshire County Council
Policy and Partnerships Unit
County Hall
Racecourse Lane
Northallerton
DL7 8AD