













When deciding on consultation methods, you should take into consideration the following:

- What are the types of questions you need answered? This will determine what consultation method you use.
- What methods will best suit your target audience? You may need to consider more than one method (for example consultation event and survey).
- What resources are available to you? In terms of budget, resource and services that might help.
- Are you ensuring people can be included – especially those who are seldom heard?

Before choosing your method, you should consider if there are any key barriers preventing people from taking part, for example:

- Physical inaccessibility (e.g. disability, older or frail people)
- Language (e.g. immigrants and asylum seekers)
- Cultural views and traditions (e.g. ethnic minorities)
- Geographic remoteness
- Poor or no IT facility

On the following pages, you will find a list of consultation methods. We've listed the pros and cons for each to help you decide what's best for your target group and how to get the information you need.









Now that you've



Now that you've decided how and who you're going to consult, you need to plan the delivery of your consultation.

From the number of consultations we've undertaken, we've learned a lot of lessons. Here are some of the





Produce consultation material:

- Do you need input from [Communications Team](#)?
- Do you need materials produced



Analysing and interpreting the statistical data requires varying levels of expertise depending upon the complexity of the research. You must be confident that you have, or have access to, the skills required to do this. If in doubt, seek help from the [Insight and Research Officer](#).

For relatively simple consultations, qualitative data can be gathered together under broad headings which will help analysis later on.

Analysing and interpreting quantitative information requires a good level of knowledge upon the complexity of the research. You must be confident that you have, or have access to, the skills required to do this. If in doubt, seek help from the [Insight and Research Officer](#).

The next steps are to acknowledge and draw attention to areas of agreement and disagreement, using the results of the consultation. You should consider them carefully, together with other evidence and considerations, before decisions are made.

To do this you should identify key messages. One way of doing this is to think about the following questions:

- What are the main findings?
- Are people satisfied/ dissatisfied?
- What are the areas on which there is a majority consensus?
- Where do views and opinions differ?
- Are there patterns of response in relation to the responders? For example, because of their protected characteristics; their geographies?

Others questions to think about:

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- How are we doing on each of these?
  - What can we do to meet these?
  - How can we improve?
  - What can we do little about?
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- Can we show improvement against our own past performance?
  - Can we benchmark against other local authorities?



- What results did we expect?
- Which results were a surprise?
  
- Can we identify any trends – either upwards, downwards or have results stayed the same?
- Can we compare results with others who have asked the same question/used the same method?
- Are we moving in the same direction as national trends?

When producing the results think about:

- Which things can we change in the short term? Identify "quick wins", especially those that can be done within existing budgets or timescales. This demonstrates that you can and will act on the outcomes of consultation.
- Which things can we not change in the short term? How do we tell people? Popular recommendations that cannot be taken forward require an explanation as part of your feedback.
- Which findings do not require action?
- Which findings highlight the need for action?
- What are the next steps? Who needs to know? Does funding need to be identified? Is further consultation needed? When can decisions be taken?
- Which results highlight the need for more communication? What is the issue? How we will communicate it, to whom and where?

This always takes longer that you think so allow plenty of time.



## Providing feedback and evaluating your consultation

It is important that once you have analysed the results of your consultation, you share the results with everyone who has given up their time to take part. If stakeholders see nothing happening as a result of their involvement, they will be less willing to take part in other council consultation exercises.

Here is a simple guide to follow for

