



Citizens' Jury

What is ... a Citizen's Jury

A Citizens Jury is an event designed to explore the views of a sample of the public on a particular issue.

It is usually made up of 12-50 people (who may be paid for their time) who are called together to hear evidence and make a judgement on issues that are of a complex nature. Typically, a Jury process lasts between 1 and 5 days.

They are provided with background briefing material prior to the event, and during the process have an opportunity to question relevant "expert" witnesses. These could be local authority officers/members, professional experts, representatives of pressure groups and/or members of the community.

They will then undertake group work, analyse the information provided by the witnesses, discuss the issues raised and, ultimately reports on its findings, including a series of recommendations.


When should you use it?

When you are:

- Looking for qualitative feedback on proposals
- Generating new ideas
- Identifying issues for larger consultation practices
- Tracking perceptions of issues
- Seeking to understand behaviour and motivation
- Generating detailed information
- Exploring sensitive and difficult issues
- Requiring visible public view

Why use this technique?

A Citizens' Jury allows participants to thoroughly explore a particular issue. The process is often used to clarify and identify issues prior to



policy implementation. It can help to increase understanding of people's motives and behaviour. Jury Members can feel empowered and valued in the process of making a decision and gain personally from the experience.


What type of information does it produce?

Juries reaching a decision will provide a quantitative outcome with much qualitative data being generated during the process.

What are the advantages?

- All participants are volunteers
- The process can attract volunteers who do not usually get involved in decision making processes
- Participants are able to make informed judgements
- The process empowers, informs, enables and may involve Councillors_
- It can be used for very complex subjects e.g., travellers' sites, drug rehabilitation hostels
- The formalised setting means participants can be made fully aware of all the issues.
- It is dynamic, interactive and powerful
- It provides detailed analysis of a particular issue
- It can help to shape policy and practice
- It provides a "citizens" perspective
- It benefits from the input of subject experts

What are the disadvantages?

- Juries may be unrepresentative (due to small sample size / make-up).
 - It can prove difficult to recruit (particularly from hard to reach groups).
 - The limited numbers directly involved may reduce larger public ownership of the results.
 - Juries can prove costly to establish (e.g. it can be expensive if you have to pay fees and expenses).
 - Older people/people who don't work may dominate as they have more free time
 - They are not statistically reliable and unlikely to be representative of wider population
 - It requires trained facilitators and observers
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- You may have to hire equipment and venue and pay incentives
- Participants may require a certain level of ability to participate
- It is time-consuming and resource-intensive

What are the costs?

- Trained facilitators and observers may have to be hired in.
- You may require venue hire and refreshments.
- may have to pay incentives for people to attend (perhaps to cover travel costs)
- Equipment and stationery.

What are the practicalities?

- Must be clear about the purpose of the exercise and know who should make up the target group
- Ensure that juries and panels have the right skills to engage fully in the process – this may require some form of capacity building training.
- Make sure information is available before the event and on the day.
- Issues could be defined by the members of the reference / steering group in consultation with their organisations or the Jury itself could shape the agenda for the event through surveys, pre-meetings or one-to-one interviews
- Ensure venues are accessible in terms of physical access and location
- Clear objectives for the session are necessary and must be understood by all
- Ensure information is in appropriate formats; that translators/advocates are available
- Organising a Jury takes up a considerable amount of time and it is essential that sufficient administrative support is built into the project plan
- It is essential that the outcomes of the Jury are fed back effectively to both the Jury members and relevant service providers
- Fair and independent recruitment is essential to ensure that the Jury reflects, as far as possible, a variety of socio-economic criteria such as gender, age, ethnicity and geographical location
- It is important that independent facilitators, who help in turn to maintain the independence of the Jury, facilitate the Jury process
- The Citizens' Panel database contains a list of potential jury members

EXAMPLES

(The following information comes from Leicestershire County Council)

Citizens' Jury on Rural Services

A three-day Citizens Jury on Rural Services was organised by the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) in May 2001. The Jury consisted of 15 jurors aged between 19 and 60+. The issues considered included:


- current initiatives in relation to the provision of rural services
- consulting and communicating with members of the public
- potential new initiatives concerning the provision of rural services

Key messages from the Jury included:

- be more responsive to the needs of those living in rural areas
- use a variety of techniques to engage with the public
- engage as early as possible and look for community-led solutions
- feed consultation results back consistently – don't "lose" the results
- develop cross-Departmental and cross-Agency approaches to identifying, resourcing and implementing projects
- be more strategic, and avoid piecemeal implementation of rural services
- promote projects effectively amongst target user groups

Practical responses to these initiatives include the establishment of a cross-agency group to look at access to services across the county and a strategic assessment of the key service delivery issues for more than sixty agencies and local authority departments across the county (the first of two priorities identified by the Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership LLSP Board in 2004/05).

The County Council has developed a consultation toolkit and database, which will be available for use by partner organisations in February 2004, and the LLSP has established a consultation forum, which is currently developing a consultation protocol. The aim of this is to ensure that those who are not traditionally involved in consultation activities are given the opportunity to participate and that the results of consultation activities are widely disseminated and used effectively.



The LRP has continued to pro-actively support both community consultation (through funding for the Rural Community Council to support Village Appraisals and Parish Plans) and village services such as post offices and village shops through grants, advice and training.


Young Persons Citizens' Jury


The second Citizens Jury organised by the LRP was held in November 2002 and focussed upon the needs of young people in Leicestershire. The Jury was held over two days and involved 14 young people aged between 14 and 18. The topics covered by the Jury included key priorities, health and health awareness, safety issues, leisure time, path to independence and engagement.

Key messages from the Jury included:

- young people are often unaware of the services that are available to them – better promotion is needed
- young people need to be involved in the design of services for young people
- processes for allocating and spending money need to be more transparent
- decision makers (including Parish Councils) need to encourage the active involvement of young people
- public transport and the information about it is poor, complicated and expensive
- young people are too often seen as the cause, rather than victims, of crime
- a county-wide portal website would improve the flow of information about services and facilities for young people
- schools and colleges have a key role to play in information provision to young people

Responses to the Jury findings included dedicating a chapter in the Leicestershire Community Strategy to the needs and development of young people in the County. The Leicestershire LSP has identified two priority actions out of the 149 in the strategy and one of these incorporates the development of a web site for young people (currently being developed by the LGOL partnership), producing a “State of Young People in Leicestershire” report on what facilities are already in place, enhancing transport for young people to access leisure activities and looking at way of preventing young people from being involved in crime.





The findings in relation to transport have been fed into the Post-I6 Transport Group and have resulted in changes in the allocation of travel passes. Young people have been actively involved in the development of the new community facility in Barwell via a series of focus groups.

Disabled Persons Citizens Jury

The third Citizens Jury was organised by 'Leicestershire Together', the new Local Strategic Partnership for Leicestershire. The need for this jury was identified in the Leicestershire Community Strategy 2003 – 2008, which includes an action to "Continue to liaise and consult with local disability groups, using appropriate methods, to improve local services for disabled people".

This Jury was held on 5th July 2004 and focussed on accessing services for disabled people. The jury was held over one day, with focus groups being held two weeks previous to the day to discuss and prioritise issues for discussion. The Jury involved 13 people with a range of different disabilities. The focus groups included more than 20 further people.

The topics covered by the jury included Education, Employment & Training; Transport & High Street Services and Health & Social Care.

Key messages from the jury included:

- Some organisations seemed less open to people coming to talk to them than others. Those making the decisions need to all make it clear that people can go and talk to them and see them anytime.
- communication and access to information is a big issue "if we don't get it, it doesn't matter what they do, or what they put forward"
- Appropriate training for people in schools, colleges, particularly in the places working with the general public, to remove the biggest barrier, fear of disabled people.
- Awareness of disabilities is lacking and people need training to communicate with disabled people effectively.

The report of the Citizens Jury will be published shortly. This will outline the key recommendations made by the Jury, together with all the information discussed at the focus groups. An action plan will then be drawn up to address the issues raised. A follow up event is planned for December 2005 where feedback will be given to Jury members and others involved on progress against their recommendations.

