



## Maximising your Response Rate

A consultation will not necessarily fail because of a low response rate because sometimes quality is more important than quantity. However, this is not to say that it isn't important – it is!!!

A high response rate will make the results of your consultation more reliable and valid – allowing you to say with some confidence that if the survey had been carried out amongst the whole population, the results would have been the same. *(for more information see Top Tips – Sampling).*

A crucial aspect of maximising response rates is to know your audience. Below are some of the things that you can do to try and maximise your response rate:

### **Consultation Techniques**

Use techniques that are most appropriate for your audience.

Use as many techniques as necessary – using only one technique can limit the people who can respond.

### **Designing your Questions**

Use plain English – avoid jargon

Avoid leading and ambiguous questions.

### **Manage Expectations**

Make it clear why you are consulting.

Show the people you are consulting with what they will get out of the exercise.

Explain clearly what you will do with the results (and how long it will take)



## **Marketing your Consultation**

Make sure people know it is happening – advertise as widely as possible and make sure that no one is excluded (see Hard to Reach Toolkit for more information).

Back check some of your consultees to make sure they have received the information you have sent out.

Clearly communicate the information from the Managing Expectations section above.

## **Carrying out your Consultation**

Be sensitive to cultural, religious and social needs of your Consultees (e.g. appropriate times, days, venues, food & drink)

Make any special arrangements e.g. interpreters, hearing loops etc.

Ensure consultees can take part – e.g.) provide transport to venues, do the consultation online.

Make it clear how the results will be fed back to your consultees.

Ensure your consultees that their anonymity will be respected.

Make it clear who they can contact if they are unhappy about the consultation.

## **Feedback**

Provide information to consultees on what has been done with the information they have given. If a consultee thinks their participation has made a difference, they will be more willing to take part in future consultations.

