

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT



*Working with local
people to create
successful community
football projects*



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WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT?

This toolkit is designed to help you engage local people in creating football facilities and activities that meet the needs of your community.

Why is Community Engagement important?

Community projects designed and delivered in partnership with local people are more likely to be successful in driving participation because they've been created with their needs in mind. So the better your Community Engagement, the better your results!

Community Engagement doesn't have to be complicated. It's just about speaking, listening and working with people to understand their needs and showing them their feedback is making a difference.



Who could I engage with?

This depends on the make-up of your community, because the facility or activity should be designed to meet their needs.

To grow the numbers getting active through football, we need to target people from one of the four main groups who are less likely to be playing:

- ▶ Lower socio-economic groups (LSEG)
- ▶ Women and girls
- ▶ Disabled people
- ▶ Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities

These groups make up a large proportion of our population. It's important to speak to, and work with, people from these groups to understand what they really want from local football projects and encourage more of them to play.





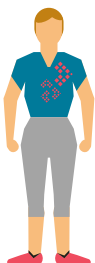
Where can I start?

This toolkit provides a simple step-by-step guide, supporting Factsheets and a planning template. It will help you plan and deliver each stage of your Community Engagement activity.

Community Engagement works best when it's an ongoing process that's focused on building relationships and trust that strengthen over time.

This means you may need to repeat some of the steps you've planned several times during the design and delivery of your project.

The steps suggested here are intended as a guide. You can always get more creative and ambitious with your activities in ways that work for your community.



How to use this toolkit

Step 1

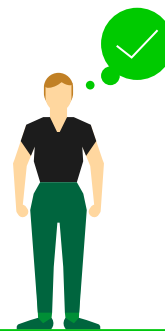
Define your objectives

First you need to be clear why you're undertaking Community Engagement and what outcomes you want for your project.

For example, you may be designing football activities for disabled players or ensuring the programming of a new 3rd generation (3G) artificial grass pitch meets the needs of the local community.

Think about engagement objectives that will help change the way people think, feel or act in the context of what you are seeking to achieve with your project.

Look for examples of other successful engagement activities in your community that might be similar. Think about what measures you will use to check how successful you've been in achieving your objectives. Once you've developed some initial thoughts on objectives, test them with people you trust to see how clear and practical they are.



Step 2

Identify your audiences

Good Community Engagement campaigns have a clearly identified set of target audiences.

Sometimes they distinguish between primary targets (e.g. the people you want to play) and secondary targets (i.e. the people who influence those you want to play).

Here are some questions that will help identify your target audiences:

- ▶ Who are you designing your project for?

- ▶ Which members of your local community would you like to target?
- ▶ Who are the people they respect that can influence them?
- ▶ How can your project encourage people to play football, particularly from the four main underrepresented groups?



Factsheet A

Step 3

Learn more about your audiences and who can help you reach them

Knowing more about your target audiences will ensure your Community Engagement is designed to work effectively.

It's possible that the information you need to help you better understand your audience already exists. Start by talking to local partners or do some online research.

There are often local community groups and charities that can help you understand and reach your audience.

Factsheet A

Factsheet B



Step 4

Planning how to reach your audiences

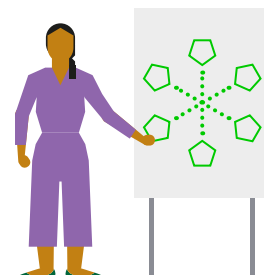
You will need a clear engagement plan that sets out 'where, what, when and who' to ensure your engagement campaign runs smoothly and achieves your objectives.

Here are some questions that can help you plan:

- ▶ Who is going to carry out the engagement?
- ▶ Where are the best places to speak to your audiences?
- ▶ When is the best time?

- ▶ What are you going to ask them?
- ▶ What resources do you need to help make the engagement successful?
- ▶ Which groups and charities could help you to reach and engage with your audiences?

Factsheet C



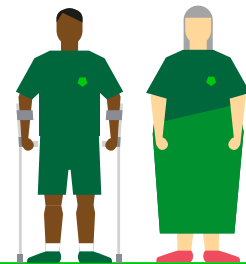
Step 5

Running your Community Engagement campaign

This is the stage where you put your plan into action by going out to have conversations with people about your project.

This might be speaking to parents or carers who are watching their kids play football on a Saturday morning, or visiting a community centre on a weekday afternoon. You need to find the places and times that will work best for your target audience. The better they work for your audience, the more effective your engagement will be. The best way to engage is by having conversations, based on the questions you have planned.

Try to be natural, flexible and open in your conversations, rather than following a rigid script. Take an interest and try to get to know your audience so that you can expand conversations and begin building relationships. The people you engage with will be the future users, and possibly volunteers or workers, in your project.



Factsheet D

Step 6

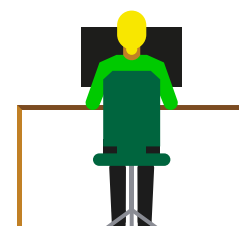
Assessing results, gaining feedback and ongoing engagement

Make sure that you plan how to record and store all the feedback from your engagement process to make the most out of it.

As you begin to collect the results, think about the steps you'll take to evaluate what you're learning and how this compares to your objectives. It's a good idea to have check-ins during your engagement campaign to look at results and adjust your plans to see how you can work even more effectively.

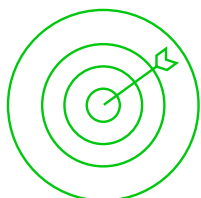
Also, think about how you will keep people updated with your plans. Look for people who can get involved in developing or running the project.

You can ask them how they'd like to be kept up to date or more involved in the project during your conversations.



TOP TIPS

Now that you're ready to kick off Community Engagement, here are a few practical tips to keep in mind.



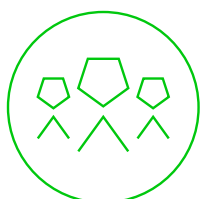
Start with clear objectives

What do you want to get from your Community Engagement? Who are your target audiences?



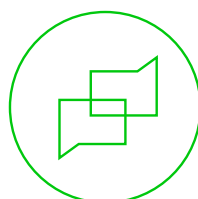
Be open-minded

Don't go in with set ideas and make sure you listen to people's opinions. Don't make assumptions about what people might need or want. And don't assume they will have heard about your project before.



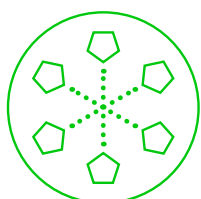
Get to know your audience

Find out about their lives and not just their views on football. People will want to get involved in different ways so think of a range of techniques to engage them. Make sure you're aware of any outside factors that may influence people in your community and how they engage with the project.



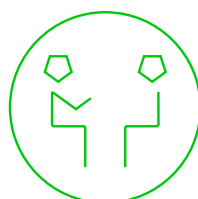
Have conversations

Use simple open ended questions that give people a chance to say what they think. Avoid jargon and technical language people may be unfamiliar with.



Go to them

To engage you have to go to the places your target audience spend their time when it is most likely to suit them.



Keep talking

Make sure you keep people updated so they feel involved and that their opinions are valued.







Understanding your audience

Kicking off your Community Engagement by building a clear understanding of your audience will start you off on the path to success.





PROGRESS TRACKER

-  **Understanding your local area**
-  Understanding your audience
-  Working with local groups
-  Tips & insights



You should be able to find these by searching online, but if you need help then contact your Local Authority, County FA or Active Partnership for your area.

[Click here to view your Local Football Facilities Plan](#)

Understanding your local area

Your project will bring much wider benefits to your audience if you have an understanding of their local area. This can help you to build a picture of some of the issues and opportunities in an area and avoid duplicating or competing with other providers.

There are a range of local documents that can help you find out more about the specific priorities for your area. These include:

► **Local Football Facilities Plan**



► **Sport and Physical Activity Strategy**



► **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**



► **Health and Wellbeing Strategy**



► **Playing Pitch Strategy**



► **County FA Development Plan**







► **Sport England's Active Lives Survey**





PROGRESS TRACKER

-  Understanding your local area
-  **Understanding your audience**
-  Working with local groups
-  Tips & insights

Understanding your audience

Start by defining exactly who you are planning to target with your project. Be as specific as possible and remember to think about the under-represented groups; people on lower incomes or living in deprived areas, women and girls, disabled people, BAME communities.

Things to consider include:

- ▶ **Demographics**
Age, ethnicity and socio-economic groups
- ▶ **Life-stage**
Examples: student, parent, teenager, retired
- ▶ **Location**
Where do they live, where else might they be (e.g. school, work, community group)?
- ▶ **Behaviour**
What behaviour do you want to change? Inactive, active but don't play football, used to play football, currently playing football?
- ▶ **Attitudes**
What insight already exists about their attitude to getting active and playing sport?
- ▶ **Situation**
What are their life priorities, motivations and challenges?
- ▶ **Social media engagement**
What online social media or forums do they use?

To help you define your audience, find out what insight already exists about them. This research will help you to better understand them so that you can meet their needs and involve them in the development of your project. Take a look at *Factsheet B – Understanding Lower Socio-Economic Groups* for useful information on reaching under-represented audiences.





PROGRESS TRACKER

-  Understanding your local area
-  Understanding your audience
-  **Working with local groups**
-  Tips & insights

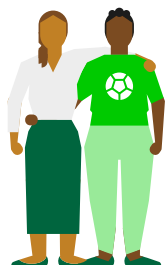
Working with local groups

Local community groups and organisations can be a great source of information both on local priorities in your area and your audiences. Start by mapping the area in which you want to develop your project. This will help you to identify groups and organisations that are active in your area and will be able to help.

These may include local charities, councils, faith groups, disability youth projects, other sports clubs or organisations or anyone who supports the community, such as food banks.

Not only will these organisations have a good understanding of your audience but they will have a high level of trust and can help you to engage with them. Here are some ideas of partners to get you started.

- ▶ Active Partnership
- ▶ Local Authority Health and Wellbeing Board
- ▶ Local Authority Sport and Leisure and Parks Services
- ▶ Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE)
- ▶ Universities (HE) and Colleges (FE)
- ▶ Schools
- ▶ Housing Associations
- ▶ Local businesses
- ▶ Faith groups and organisations
- ▶ BAME groups and organisations
- ▶ Community based organisations and charities
- ▶ Friends of the Park groups
- ▶ County FA Inclusion Advisory Group





PROGRESS TRACKER

-  Understanding your local area
-  Understanding your audience
-  Working with local groups
-  **Tips & insights**

Tips and insights

Here are some links to other sources that can help you engage with under-represented groups. Combine this insight with your local insight.


General

-  [Sport England Active Lives Surveys](#)
A unique and comprehensive insight into how adults and children are getting active.
-  [Local Insight](#)
Local Insight gives you the latest data and analysis for your communities and services.

Lower Socio-Economic Groups

-  [Sport England Active Lives Survey](#)
A spotlight on encouraging activity amongst lower socio-economic groups.
-  [Sport England - lower-socio economic groups](#)
Further information on what we know about these target audiences.

Disabled People

-  [The Activity Alliance](#)
A range of resources to help you engage with disabled people.

BAME Communities

-  [Sport for All](#)
A report from Sport England on why ethnicity and culture matters in sport and activity.

Women and Girls

-  [Understanding Women's Lives](#)
Insight into women's lives in modern Britain and what's important to them.
-  [What Sways Women to Play Sport](#)
Insight into the motivators and influencers for getting more women and girls participating.
-  [Go Where Women Are](#)
Sport England's research about engaging women in sport and exercise.
-  [Helping Women and Girls to Get Active](#)
A guide to getting more women and girls active in your local area.



1
Find out what your audiences are into: their priorities, behaviours, what makes them tick

2
Discover where they are hanging out: in the real world and online

3
Understand what they feel and think: their perceptions, attitudes, motivations and needs

4
Find out about the local groups that can help you understand them and reach them directly

5
Always try to put yourself in their shoes: kicking a football might be as alien to them as learning Russian!




Understanding lower socio-economic groups

These audiences are less likely to play football than people from other socio-economic groups. This is why it's important to think about how you'll encourage more people from these groups to get involved when planning an activity or new facility.





PROGRESS TRACKER

-  **What do we know about LSEG?**
-  Key insights
-  Engaging with target audiences

What do we know about LSEG?

Lower socio-economic groups (LSEG), include individuals who may have few or no qualifications, be on a low income, live in areas often described as deprived (rural and urban) or having limited social mobility. These individuals have multiple barriers to participating in sport or physical activity.




Around 12 million people – nearly a third of the adult population in England – fall within our broad definition of LSEG. This large group of people is not limited to those facing greater economic disadvantage.

These circumstances can make it less appealing or more difficult for them to participate in sport or physical activity. However, with the right opportunities in their local area, people from these target audiences can gain great benefits from playing football. It can get them active, help improve their mental health, gives them a positive focus, grows their confidence and help them build stronger relationships.





PROGRESS TRACKER

-  What do we know about LSEG?
-  **Key insights**
-  Engaging with target audiences

Key insights

Football ranks higher in terms of 'team sports' for people from LSEG, yet participation in football is still greater overall for higher socio-economic groups.

These audiences are more likely to play outside and for free, walk to activities and play with family members.

These audiences are more likely to want to play small-sided football in a local park, rec or green space. They prefer to play in the afternoon or at weekends, on an informal basis.




We know that there are a number of barriers that can prevent people from these audiences playing football:

- ▶ To many, sport feels less relevant to their everyday life and less of a priority.
- ▶ Formal or organised football venues, coaches, branding and structured football sessions can feel intimidating.
- ▶ They can find it harder to develop resilient habits due to social and financial instability.
- ▶ Ability to participate regularly is more likely to be affected by personal factors, such as lack of childcare, language barriers and disability.
- ▶ It can be harder to recruit sport volunteers from lower socio-economic groups.
- ▶ They are generally less receptive to traditional promotional media (leaflets etc.).
- ▶ Cost is often prohibitive, for transport, equipment and facilities.
- ▶ Spaces where they might play football can sometimes be intimidating due to issues such as anti-social behaviour.





PROGRESS TRACKER

-  What do we know about LSEG?
-  Key insights
-  **Engaging with target audiences**



For more insight into encouraging activities within our target audiences, please take a look at [Sport England Active Lives Survey](#)



Further information on what we know about these target audiences, visit [Sport England - lower-socio-economic groups](#)

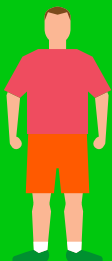
Engaging with target audiences

- ▶ Try to present football as being fun with inclusive, social sessions.
- ▶ Go to places where your audience will be, don't expect them to come to you.
- ▶ Develop communications that reflects their interests.
- ▶ Use social media channels they are already using to engage and start a conversation.
- ▶ Use session leaders who come from your target audiences – and if you don't have any, offer a local training scheme.
- ▶ Work with partners from within your target audiences who work with lower socio-economic groups.
- ▶ Encourage a sense of community ownership and involvement during your consultation.
- ▶ Offer activities at the right price (free or low cost) and try to start conversations about the price they would like to pay.



Planning and delivering Community Engagement

Reaching people that you regularly talk to is easy. You already know where and when to find them. It can be more challenging to reach people you don't know and haven't spoken to before.





PROGRESS TRACKER

-  **Planning engagement**
-  Working with partners + Promoting your engagement
-  Capturing & sharing feedback + Delivering your engagement plan
-  Top tips

Planning engagement

You should start with setting clear objectives for your Community Engagement and gaining a good understanding of your target audience. The next step is to form a clear plan of how you will engage them.

Here are three key areas to focus on:

Where and when?

Remember your target audience might not be attracted by your current offer so they're very unlikely to come to you. Find out where they go and what they do. This might mean attending a local event to engage with them. If you're thinking of running your own event, consider holding it at a venue or on an occasion that is already well attended by your audience at that time.

Who will carry out the engagement?

Think about which members of your team have the right skills and experience to effectively engage with your target audience. What are the qualities over and above their sport qualification that they need to engage?

If your team doesn't possess the right skills and qualities, are there partners that can provide training or help? If you have a team member who is part a target audience, this can really help with the engagement.

Who will you engage?

What methods will you use to engage with people? How can you use social media? What visual aids or written materials can you use? Who can produce these for you cost effectively? Try to be creative and think about how your target audience would like to receive information, be consulted and get involved.

What other equipment will you need for the engagement activities? How do you plan to get it there and how much will this cost?





PROGRESS TRACKER

- Planning engagement
- **Working with partners + Promoting your engagement**
- Capturing & sharing feedback + Delivering your engagement plan
- Top tips

Working with partners

There will be groups and organisations in the community that work and engage with your target audience every day.

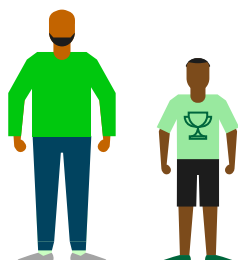
They will already have a deep understanding of your target group and be trusted by them. These can be a valuable source of insight into the lives, behaviours, needs and attitudes of your audience. They can also provide valuable help, advice and expertise in how to engage.

Perhaps ask if you can attend one off or regular events or meetings that these community groups and organisations run? Remember that many community organisations are charities, so in return for their help, make sure you offer to cover costs, make a donation or ask what you can do for them in return.

You can also consider sharing engagement activities with other organisations. Communities can suffer from 'consultation overload'. Check first if anyone else has asked similar questions and can share insight with you. Also check if anyone else is planning to carry out Community Engagement and see if you can join forces to work together.



Promoting your engagement



Even if your engagement activities happen in places where your audiences go regularly, it's still a good idea to try to promote them in advance to attract more people.

Social media may be a good way of reaching target audiences. Community groups and charities may be able to help you publicise them via their newsletters, websites or social media channels. Digital communication is increasingly important, but don't forget tried and tested means such as posters and leaflets too.



PROGRESS TRACKER

- Planning engagement
- Working with partners + Promoting your engagement
- **Capturing & sharing feedback + Delivering your engagement plan**
- Top tips

Capturing and sharing feedback

Think carefully about how you plan to capture feedback. Will you use paper questionnaires or discussion guides? Could you use a computer to record the information digitally? Do you have a plan in place to share the results of your engagement with your own team, your partners and stakeholders and your target community?



Delivering your engagement plan

With a well-developed plan, your engagement is far more likely to run smoothly and achieve your objectives. The most important thing to remember is to aim for conversations in which you are able to convey information but also listen carefully to feedback.

You're not just there to tell them about your project but to hear their views and ideas on how your project could help their community.

Remember that some people in your target groups may not be used to engagement exercises. So it's important to put them at ease and earn their trust. That's when they'll open up and tell you what they really think.

Have conversations, keep it light and avoid jargon or technical terms. Take a look at *Factsheet D – Having Conversations* for more tips on this.



PROGRESS TRACKER

- ◻ Planning engagement
- ◻ Working with partners + Promoting your engagement
- ◻ Capturing & sharing feedback + Delivering your engagement plan
- ◼ **Top tips**

Top tips

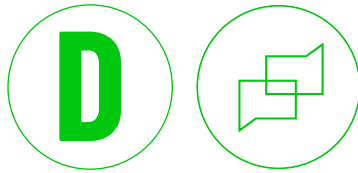
- ▶ *Know where the best places are to reach your audience; and when.*
- ▶ *Have a clear view of what you are going to ask them but keep the conversation open.*
- ▶ *Agree who's going to carry out the engagement and what support or resources they need.*
- ▶ *Find out which community groups and charities you could work with to reach your audience.*
- ▶ *Focus on having conversations in which you listen to concerns and ideas. This feedback will help you improve your plans.*





Having conversations

*You'll get the most out of
Community Engagement by having
conversations with people, rather
than simply asking questions.*





PROGRESS TRACKER

 **Conversations are key**
 Ideas to get you started

Conversations are key

Having conversations is a way you can build relationships, make meaningful connections and encourage people to tell you what they really think.


Here are some tips to make the most of your conversations:

- ▶ **Create a list of topics you want to discuss during your Community Engagement.** This will help you think through all the areas you need to explore.
- ▶ **Chat about your topic list with your team to see if they have anything to add.** Maybe even ask any community partners you plan to work with for a view?
- ▶ **You can then use this list to develop a questionnaire or survey;** put an agenda together for a meeting; help shape a conversation or social media posts.
- ▶ **Be flexible** – when you start talking to people, they may raise issues you have not considered. Regularly review and update your topic list as your engagement activity develops.
- ▶ **Ask simple, open questions** that give people the chance to express themselves. And remember to ask them if there is anything else they would like to add.





PROGRESS TRACKER

 Conversations are key
Ideas to get you started

Ideas to get you started

Every project's unique, but here are some topic ideas to get you started on engaging with people who play limited or no football.

What kind of physical activity are you involved or interested in – what do you do, where do you go, why do you do it?

CURRENT ACTIVITY

What facilities are important to help you take part or get involved?

eg. female changing, toilets, a café, crèche facilities or a space where they can hold social activities.

FACILITIES

Other than physical activity, what do you currently get up to in your spare time?

This will help you design your project so that it's relevant to your audience.

CURRENT LIFESTYLE

Would you like to be involved in helping design and deliver the activity we're going to offer?

PROJECT INVOLVEMENT

What support would encourage you to take part? Who could provide this?

e.g. attending with a family member or friend, a session led by a qualified coach etc.

SUPPORT

What else could be done to encourage people from your community to take part?

Is there anything that would discourage them?
e.g. kit requirements, session time, type of facility etc.

COMMUNITY

What type of football might you like to play and what would help you to start playing?

e.g. formal 11-a-side, informal five-a-side, walking football, etc.

FOOTBALL INTEREST

Extra tips

- Explain clearly why you are talking to them, what your project is about and why their views are important to you.
- Give people the chance to respond to suggestions and make their own. If you're hosting a meeting, encourage people to write down their ideas so everyone gets the chance to have their say.
- Provide some inspiration. Encourage people to think beyond traditional 11-a-side football – show them examples of all the different ways they could play. For example you could show images of projects to bring ideas to life and help people tell you what they feel about your proposed project.

Action plan template

Whether you're planning a new football activity or applying for funding for new facilities, this template will help your engagement planning.

Use the template alongside the guidance in the Community Engagement Toolkit and Factsheets to outline your plan.

Time for kick-off. Good luck!



Step 1 – Set your objectives

What are you trying to achieve? Be as specific as possible and ask other members of your team for their input. Refer to the Community Engagement Toolkit.



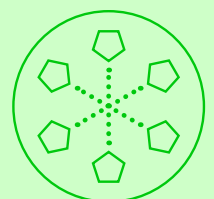
Step 2 – Identify your target audiences

Who are your most important target audiences? Be as specific as possible, thinking particularly of groups under-represented in football. Refer to Factsheet A.



Step 3 – Understand your target audiences

What information about your target audience is out there? Which groups in the community can help you find out more about your audiences and area? Refer to Factsheet A and Factsheet B.



Step 4 – Define your action plan

Where and when can you talk to your target audience?
Who will carry out the engagement? What resources and equipment will they need? Refer to Factsheet C.



Step 5 – Implementing your plan

What topics are going to be covered?
Have you prepared a clear conversation guide?
Refer to Factsheet D.



Step 6 – Assessing results, feedback and planning ongoing engagement

How do you plan to capture feedback from your target audiences?
How do you plan to share your findings with your own team, partners and stakeholders? How will you then update your target audiences and keep them involved? Refer to Community Engagement Toolkit.



This toolkit will help you engage local people and design football facilities and activities that meet the need of your community.

