Communicating with Communities using Outreach: a Good Practice Guide

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1. Executive Summary

Increasingly, public services are using different forms of communication to engage with – and to get stronger messages over to – communities. Whether it is about accessing opportunities to work, raising awareness and take-up of entitlements, or increasing knowledge and understanding around what to expect from the Criminal Justice System, public services have an interest in ensuring their messages reach all the UK’s diverse communities.

Complementing other media and communications techniques, outreach can be used as a new and different form of communication to engage communities with what public services have to offer. It can help for example to overcome barriers of culture and language which can sometimes make certain ethnic minority groups ‘harder to reach’.

By reaching out to, and directly engaging with, these communities, outreach can help overcome these barriers. In doing so it can help the Government and its partners to achieve better results in changing people’s perceptions of public services, challenging racism and improving the take-up of services to tackle inequalities – all goals to which the Government is highly committed.

This Guide has been prepared for communicators considering how they might use outreach, and is based on the experiences of outreach practitioners across and beyond government. Our primary focus has been on outreach applied to the objectives of increasing race equality and community cohesion.

The techniques of outreach span a wide spectrum from simple field marketing through to community development and participation. Practitioners of these disciplines sometimes prefer to use other terms such as community development or community engagement for the kinds of techniques outreach involves. They emphasise the importance of respecting the priorities of local communities and supporting their capacity to address issues for themselves.

Based on our conversations with those involved in outreach-style activities, we have defined it here as ‘an active process of engaging a target community around an issue of concern, through personal relationships, credible information, trusted networks and feedback’.

Where other forms of marketing typically aim to raise awareness or influence attitudes through frequent, shallow or ‘broadcast’ means, outreach is much more targeted and localised, using powerful personal interaction to create dialogue, overcome barriers and change minds.
It is used for a variety of purposes, including to form contacts, change community attitudes or behaviour, improve access to services, increase ‘voice’ or correct under-representation – such as in the ethnic profile of a workforce, influence people at risk of harm, and create opportunities for contact between communities. It can help form a bridge between the community and the organisation, addressing myths or wrongly-held perceptions through conversation and first-hand experience.

Sometimes, outreach may be the only way to overcome the cultural, language or physical barriers which prevent individuals and communities from accessing services or information. But it also offers great scope to create credible advocates, increase trust and empathy, demonstrate the organisation’s commitment to the community and target effort with great accuracy. Through good planning, lateral thinking and open and honest approach, it can tap into community networks and culture and stimulate interest around issues of concern.

Of course, outreach is by definition small-scale and can be expensive per person reached. The value it creates through strong relationships is inherently fragile – at risk of insensitive treatment by another part of the organisation, or the departure of a pivotal outreach worker. To work well, it also demands relaxed, devolved supervision where local teams are empowered to adapt their approach if necessary to meet the desired objective.

Clear and challenging objectives are vital both in selecting appropriate techniques and devising a fair evaluation. Practical considerations are important too, from how messages are tailored to the needs of the community, to how the activity is delivered, and by whom. Outreach works well as part of an integrated campaign, for example where awareness-raising media such as TV or local radio or press generate a foundation on which to build events or stunts. Outreach can offer depth, precision, feedback and impact amongst those communities involved helping to reinforce messages, or overcome remaining barriers to accessing services.

It is hard to show the return on investment in outreach, but also impossible to deny its value, as testified by the passion and enthusiasm of outreach workers and the stories they tell. This exposes the difficulty of measuring or evaluating this complex set of relationships, which often have long term impacts on hearts and minds. This Guide offers examples and tools for delivering effective outreach, and undertaking thorough and meaningful evaluation. As long as this is in place, we believe there is a strong case to be made for using outreach to address the needs of hard to reach audiences.
2. Background to Good Practice Guide

Why was this Guide produced?
People often talk about outreach in the context of getting messages to hard to reach audiences, or increasing take-up of a service. But what does it really involve? What does good outreach look like? How can it help as part of a wider campaign? And what exactly does it mean anyway?

Much has been said about the results that outreach can achieve, although until now we have had limited knowledge of its potential to help deliver race equality and community cohesion objectives. This guide has therefore been produced on behalf of the Race Equality Unit of the Department for Communities and Local Government by the Inclusivity Unit at the Central Office of Information. Our aim is to provide a better understanding of what outreach is and provide inspiration and guidance through some examples of how it has been used successfully. We have particularly focussed in our case studies on examples of how outreach has been used to promote race equality and community cohesion. However, we think much of the guidance here may be applicable to outreach with other objectives.

Who is this Guide for?
This guide has been written primarily for communications and marketing specialists working in central government, by whom outreach might be used as a strand in a campaign to raise awareness of an issue, change attitudes or influence behaviour. However, some of our case studies are from a service delivery context, where outreach is used to connect specific communities with public services, so we hope it is also of value to a wider audience.

How did we compile this Guide?
We have interviewed a wide range of individuals in organisations involved in outreach-style activities – though some use other terms to describe their work – from those commissioning outreach, to individual outreach workers. We have also tried to identify and review published evaluations of outreach schemes to help in preparing guidelines on how and when to use outreach.

Who can I contact about this Guide?
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Acknowledgements
We would like to thank all the organisations and individuals involved in commissioning, delivering and evaluating outreach who helped us in compiling this Guide.
3. Defining Outreach in Context
Outreach is not an easy concept to define. The practitioners we spoke to in preparing this Guide used the following terms in describing it:

“reaching groups not accessible to or in contact with other agencies due to religious, cultural or language barriers. It’s about knowing where to sit, what to say, and what to wear”
? Outreach worker

“evidence based, two-way, collaborative, tailored to local needs, sustainable and long term”
? Organisation which commissions outreach

“forming a connection with a specific objective, such as bridging a gap where evidence suggests the organisation is disconnected from an audience it wants to be connected with”
? Agency which uses outreach

“getting out there, making face to face contact”
? Outreach worker, sports club

“communication, sharing information, building awareness, raising skills”
? Organisation which commissions outreach

“empowerment – not doing things to people, but responding to people asking for support from government”
? Organisation which commissions outreach

“the first beginnings of understanding”
? Organisation which commissions outreach

“creating a space in which the audience is thinking… going out and having conversations”
? Agency which uses outreach

“sowing seeds, dispelling suspicion”
? Organisation which commissions outreach

“reaching those perceived to be harder to reach or harder to help”
? Researcher
From the examples of outreach we have identified in the course of preparing this guide, the key characteristics – and differences from other forms of marketing – might be summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Other forms of marketing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• often involves communicating a specific message</td>
<td>• about communicating messages, but may be more general (e.g. brand or issue awareness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• designed to address under-representation or perceived barriers to conventional channels of communication in relation to a minority group</td>
<td>• designed to increase awareness and change perceptions through repeated exposure to small elements e.g. advertisements. Behaviour change may take many years of constant reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• designed to have significant impact on an individual, changing attitudes or behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Techniques</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• proactive, making an effort to seek out members of the target audience rather than waiting for enquiries to come in</td>
<td>• ‘broadcast’ – typically one-way dissemination of a standard message, through non-face to face channels. Sometimes uses a standard channel for response (e.g. contact centre or coupon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• involves face to face contact to create dialogue, sometimes alongside other media</td>
<td>• often centrally planned, developed by external agencies, and delivered consistently nationwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• local planning and delivery: through local offices and community groups</td>
<td>• uses familiar brands or celebrities for credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• uses community advocates to build credibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• very small-scale, niche</td>
<td>• typically aimed at a mass market or large and relatively accessible segments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘hard to reach’: usually because of cultural, faith or language barriers</td>
<td>• predominantly in English and using mainstream language/contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘hard to help’: perhaps because of a reluctance to engage with public services, or because of multiple barriers such as crime, deprivation or substance misuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also clear that the term ‘outreach’ is used in different ways by different arms of central government:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives for outreach</strong></td>
<td>Raising awareness, changing attitudes and behaviour</td>
<td>Consulting hard to reach audiences, ensuring policy meets community needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approaches adopted</strong></td>
<td>Engage specialist ethnic marketing agencies, e.g. via COI, or cascade materials to regional teams</td>
<td>Establish stakeholder groups, cascade funding through regional and local umbrella organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of outreach (described later in this Guide)</td>
<td>Street marketing, community events</td>
<td>Active citizenship or participation, community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacts</td>
<td>COI, specialist agencies, regional marketing teams</td>
<td>Traditionally larger stakeholder representatives, umbrella organisations, government region offices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While this Guide addresses all of these to some extent, we have emphasised outreach in communications and delivery settings.

**Issues with terminology**

From our conversations with practitioners of outreach approaches, it is clear that the term also has some negative or limiting connotations:

- **implies a passive audience**: where the hard to access audiences ‘reached out’ to are provided with services or information ‘for their own good’ as determined by a statutory agency. In fact, the most effective approaches often support communities in taking action themselves to address priorities they identify.

- **suggests a single issue, ‘professional’ model**: where the outreach is conducted by a professional specialist in a particular issue, such as drugs or social work. In fact, many forms of outreach used a devolved network of people to make contact with the audiences, including peers and community leaders rather than specialist professionals from outside the community.

- **doesn’t reflect deeper aspects of networking and engagement**: where outreach is an extension of conventional one-way marketing, conducted as a one-off visit. In fact, winning the trust and respect of audiences is a major condition of effective outreach, and this can involve building a deep-rooted network of relationships based on mutual respect, communication and credibility. The best examples include feedback too, where service delivery agencies modify their services to better meet the needs of audiences they are in touch with.
Consequently, many practitioners describe their work using other terms:

- **Community Development**: a field of work based on the premise that outside agencies should be facilitators in building the capacity of communities to identify and address their issues themselves.

- **Participation**: the devolution of power and autonomy in decision-making to communities through a range of means, from enhanced consultation with statutory agencies, through to setting priorities for and directing service delivery themselves or through direct representatives.

- **Engagement/Involvement**: a variety of approaches to stimulating awareness and motivation amongst communities through building relationships and creating opportunities for dialogue and learning.

- **Networking**: making personal contacts in communities through community groups and stakeholders of different kinds, to help communicate messages and provide information or feedback to service delivery agencies.

Still, ‘outreach’ is a term which has currency for most communicators, and can potentially be useful shorthand for a range of effective approaches to communication.

In preparing this Good Practice Guide, we have devised a working definition of ‘outreach’ with a scope somewhere between one-way face-to-face marketing of the conventional kind, and the kind of community empowerment designed to stimulate communities to tackle specific issues for themselves:

**Our definition of outreach:**

Outreach is an active process of engaging a target community around an issue of concern, through personal relationships, credible information, trusted networks and feedback.
4. The Role and Purpose of Outreach

How outreach is used
Outreach offers a way of overcoming barriers (see Barriers and Enablers in this section) to a range of communications, policy and delivery challenges. While it is hard to categorise, the projects we have come across in preparing this Guide had the following types of aims:

**Forming contacts and understanding community issues**
Projects which are designed to use face to face contact as a way of building relationships with groups and individuals in a community, so those relationships can be used to get personal feedback on current issues for the community. For example, the Metropolitan Police are creating a team of non-uniformed outreach workers based in London’s ethnic minority communities to help improve the two-way flow of information between Police and particular groups – alongside existing, uniformed Safer Neighbourhood Teams in each ward.

**Changing community attitudes and behaviour**
Projects which seek to raise awareness of harmful or risky behaviours and attitudes which affect particular groups or to raise awareness of opportunities available. For example, the Department of Health ran a campaign aimed at South Asian smokers or tobacco *paan* chewers which involved a multi-lingual team touring *melas* and community events around the country distributing cards featuring ‘top tips’.

**Improving access to services**
Projects which aim to overcome barriers to accessing services, through using proactive, face-to-face techniques to take services out into the community. For example, Southwark Works! aims to engage people not currently involved with Jobcentre Plus to access employment advice and support, through placing advisers within other services they may access such as GP surgeries, hospitals or social services teams.

**Increasing ‘voice’ and representation**
Projects which are designed to increase not just access to services or information, but participation in decision-making and the democratic process. For example, The Electoral Commission used outreach to engage young ethnic minority voters in a pilot area of the West Midlands to encourage them to ‘use their voice’ and register to vote.
Correcting under-representation in a workforce
Projects which use outreach with a recruitment objective to increase the proportion of applicants coming from an under-represented group. For example, the armed forces sponsor local sports events to engage with young ethnic minority groups and give them positive experiences of the armed forces and armed forces personnel.

Influencing people at risk (of drugs, crime etc)
Projects which use outreach to influence disadvantaged and potentially vulnerable people who are at risk of harm or becoming involved in crime – sometimes seen as the classic model of the ‘outreach worker’. For example, several Positive Futures schemes use sport and face-to-face contact with young people in deprived areas to engage them in constructive activities.

Increasing contact between communities
Projects which use face-to-face contact and activities to bring together people from different communities, to help improve mutual understanding and respect. For example, amongst other schemes, Charlton Athletic Football Club run training sessions on match days which deliberately mix local White and Somali young people to give them the experience of playing together.

Case Study: Kirklees Community Cohesion Strategy
Kirklees Council has a specific strategy in place to address community cohesion issues - including a dedicated outreach programme supporting communities and local services. This includes ‘cohesion proofing’ service delivery through providing training and awareness-raising to those designing and delivering services and organising a number of cross-community events and activities programmes. These help to combat myths and suspicion through encouraging communities to share common experiences, such as through food or festival celebrations.

"People are more willing to cross boundaries than you think," says Rachel Wild of Kirklees Council, "they just need a route to do it without being embarrassed about making mistakes about other cultures." Events have included a ‘Women Together’ programme of discussions and workshops to bring women from different communities together and provide a place for them to talk about issues they wouldn't normally discuss and share real life stories.

Website: http://www.kirklees.gov.uk
Strengths of outreach approaches

To generalise across the range of outreach approaches described in this Guide, the key strengths of these techniques are:

• **Reach**: often outreach is the only way to reach non-English speakers who can’t easily access material in other formats or other less accessible groups (e.g. some disabled people, Gypsies and Travellers). It also provides a means of overcoming multiple barriers such as lack of access to channels or media combined with problems of substance misuse or domestic violence.

• Scope to build a **network of advocates** in the community, through investment in strong relationships. The advocates can then be vocal, credible supporters of the campaign, arranging introductions and offering access to people and resources (e.g. venues for meetings).

• **Increased familiarity with and trust in the organisation** amongst members of the community, through individual human contact with representatives – putting a human face on large organisations and helping to bust myths, making support more acceptable (e.g. help to find work).

• **Increased empathy** – both of the community with the organisation, and of the organisation with the community. Contact and relationships help to develop an appreciation of the issues and concerns of both sides. Importantly, outreach usually has an element of **feedback** built in, to allow the organisation to learn from the audience and how the outreach could be made more effective.

• Visible, tangible **commitment to addressing specific needs of the community**. For example, tailored materials and visits to festivals or community groups demonstrates commitment to the community and an interest in them and their issues. Forming on-going relationships with community organisations and developing community capacity through training show that the organisation is ‘giving something back’ in relation for help and effort from the community.

• Opportunity to **discuss the message in more detail**, providing members of the target audience with information relevant to them as individuals and answering their questions face to face. It can also help provide ‘**qualified leads**’ for example at recruitment events, where a quick conversation can
check aptitude and qualifications for a post, before entering the formal process.

• **Strong impact**, sometimes with the power to change minds through explanation and discussion (for example, overcoming cultural barriers to complex issues such as organ donation). The **authenticity** and **credibility** of the information is often stronger than in other forms of marketing, because outreach typically draws on real stories and personal testimony.

• **Allows for highly targeted** communication with little ‘waste’, ensuring outreach teams spend their time with members of the target community. For example, in large cities where a wide range of languages are each spoken by small numbers of people. Through conversation and questioning, teams can help to gauge interest and suitability and improve efficiency e.g. for recruitment.

• **Scope to take measured risks** in the course of activity since it often ‘flies below the radar’, saying what needs to be said but is difficult to say with an official voice. Sometimes outreach is given freedom to take a more holistic view of the client, and is under less pressure to show immediate hard outcomes – with more effective long-term outcomes for people with multiple or complex barriers to be overcome.

**Limitations of outreach approaches**

Outreach:

• **Often relies on charismatic, multi-skilled individuals and long-term personal relationships.** If these people prove hard to recruit, or if they move on, there can be gap which is difficult to plug. Since much depends on relationships and goodwill, outreach can be damaged by external events or insensitive treatment of someone in the community by another part of the organisation.

• **Can take a long time to develop trust** to the level needed in order to be able to access the community. For example, some groups may be suspicious of authority or require months of patient work before opening their networks to an outsider.

• **Can be difficult to set up and maintain without specialist help,** particularly in how to implement large scale outreach campaigns. COI has
a roster of ethnic marketing agencies and lots of experience in co-ordinating effective outreach to address communications objectives – see the Links section for more details.

- Tends to be relatively small scale, and can be relatively expensive when measured by person reached. However, feedback suggests those individual contacts are more powerful than reach by other media.

- Can be hard to measure (see later section on Evaluation), as the impacts are generally localised, long term and qualitative.

- May need messages and propositions to be adjusted to suit outreach. Though outreach interactions can be sophisticated, the message to be conveyed through outreach often needs to be reduced to its essence to give focus for street teams or outreach workers. See the section on Audiences, Messages and Channels for further advice on effective communications to ethnic minority audiences.

- Though not necessarily an obstacle, outreach is not as amenable to tight control as other forms of marketing. Outreach work is most effective when left open to interpretation by teams on the ground. In some cases, this means the message or brand may not be conveyed in a consistent way, so it demands flexibility in how the campaign objectives are met.

Making the case for using Outreach

The challenge of making a business case for outreach

In preparing this Guide, we sought input from outreach practitioners and commissioners on how we might make the business case for outreach, or demonstrate its return on investment. We found virtually no examples of this having been done formally, for some of the following reasons:

- Outreach is considered to be self-evidently valuable: a common view from outreach practitioners is that the value of outreach is obvious to those on the ground, who see individuals’ attitudes or behaviour changed by the interaction. A return on investment calculation, it is argued, is less valuable than this type of evidence.

- It is hard to measure: many outreach projects collect feedback or conduct qualitative evaluation, but few collect the type of data needed to calculate a return on investment, or compare the impact of outreach with
marketing through other channels – often because they feel this is unnecessary.

- **Outreach is sometimes introduced without a clear purpose or aims:**
  in a few cases, outreach approaches are adopted without a clear rationale, perhaps for internal political purposes or because the activity is seen as exploratory or too small scale to set objectives for. Trying to calculate a return is virtually impossible in these cases.

Our conclusion is that a strong case for outreach can be made in addressing some communications, policy or delivery objectives, in the context of the strengths and limitations of the approaches described earlier. In preparing the case and demonstrating the value of outreach, it is vital to:

- **Set clear objectives**, which outreach can fairly be expected to deliver on, and which can be evaluated. These should not represent ‘evaluation cop out’ (Source 10: Sutton, Perry et al, 2005) in the sense of claiming to merely raise awareness, where the real purpose is behaviour change
- Consider the role for outreach in an integrated campaign, including why it is being used instead or as well as other channels, how it can support and be supported by other media
- Follow good practice in how the outreach is planned and delivered
- Ensure that a valid approach to evaluation is in place (see section on Evaluation) which incorporates a range of measures, ideally including both response data and attitudinal research amongst participants and practitioners

The evaluation of The Electoral Commission ethnic minority voter registration campaign concludes by making a strong case for outreach, but in doing so, demonstrates the challenge of attempting to measure the complex ways in which it works:

“Street team activity is more likely to be effective in challenging attitudes than other creative materials because it can overcome the difficulties they face through interaction. Street team members can confront the public with the issue and refuse to take simple, deflective answers. They can also represent a public face for the issue that is identifiable, credible and, to some at least, surprising. Street teams can also use ‘unofficial’ arguments for registration which are often more compelling, concerning the practical benefits (such as the effects of
registration on credit checks). On this evidence, it is clear that street teams are essential in getting the message across, coming up with counterarguments to the most common defences and presenting a credible, ‘normal’ face to the campaign. In the long term they are likely to prove effective in reporting back on the obstacles and latest ‘stock’ answers they encounter to inform and develop further stages of the campaign."
Source 9: Evaluation of Electoral Commission ethnic minority campaign 2006

A review by the Department for Work and Pensions comes to a similar conclusion:

“Evidence from the literature review and from project managers and stakeholders, suggests that outreach is effective at attracting non-traditional customers into welfare-to-work services. Many projects assert that they are achieving job outcomes for these harder-to-help customers over and above their targets. Moreover, these customers are making gains in soft outcomes all the time, for example, improving their confidence and motivation.”
Source 17: Maximising the role of outreach in client engagement, 2005

Similarly, a review of the Positive Futures scheme, which uses sport to engage young people at risk of drugs or crime, found that outreach approaches are an effective first step in the engagement process of the hardest to reach young people:

“Projects which successfully engage those young people do so in a pragmatic fashion making use of informal relationships with loose networks of partners and active relationship building in street and community based settings. The establishment of referral procedures can then follow from the establishment of these work patterns. “
Source 11: ‘Getting to know you’, First interim national Positive Futures case study report, 2005

**Barriers to access and the enablers outreach can employ**

Outreach is often seen as a way to overcome barriers to information, services or participation by ethnic minority groups. These take various forms:
Barriers to access:

- **Access to channels**: research suggests that some members of ethnic minority groups do not consume mainstream media such as regular commercial television, radio or press and hence are not reached by advertising in these media.

- **Language**: one reason for not accessing mainstream media can be that the individual does not speak English, particularly in the case of recent immigrants. In some cases (e.g. some older Pakistani and Bangladeshi people, or Somali immigrants), they may not be readers of their own language, so may not be able to access media in written translation.

- **Culture, faith and family**: though it is important not to stereotype, some characteristics – such as paid employment – are less prevalent in some communities, and this may present a barrier to reaching these groups outside the home using conventional marketing or service delivery channels.

- **Exclusion from a service**: it may be hard to reach individuals with a particular message if they are excluded from or do not use a service (e.g. people who are economically inactive but not regularly visiting Jobcentre Plus to claim Jobseekers’ Allowance).

- **Multiple problems**: some individuals may experience combinations of barriers which prevent them from accessing or participation, for example problems with mental health, drugs ___ involvement with the criminal justice system.
Enablers:

In response to these, outreach can draw on a set of enablers:

- **Community networks**: where individuals are members of active formal (e.g. associations, faith groups) or informal (e.g. barber shops) community groups, these provide valuable channels for outreach workers to access concentrated clusters of people from the target audience. They are often interlinked through umbrella groups, which provide a useful route for making further contacts, or providing funding to groups on a more equitable, stable and accountable basis.

- **Issues of concern**: outreach can be particularly effective when it can be positioned as clearly relating to an issue of concern, such as fire prevention, community safety or health issues among others. This can help outreach workers develop a compelling message and get access to strong communications channels within the community. For example, Northamptonshire Fire Service was able to broadcast messages about fire safety to worshippers at a local mosque via the azan (call to prayer) network of speakers in muslim households.

- **Culture, faith and family**: though at times these can be barriers to communications through conventional means, strong family and faith networks in many ethnic minority groups also offer opportunities to spread messages by word of mouth, or access communities at festival times through places of worship.

- **Contact with any service**: exclusion from a particular service may be a barrier, but outreach is well placed to take a holistic view of an individual's needs and join up different agencies. For example, The Pension Service ‘Local Service’ scheme involves home visits by outreach workers who are equipped to deal with a range of personal and financial issues, not just pension benefits.
Case Study: Southwark Works!

The Local Strategic Partnership in Southwark developed Southwark Works! to help bring employment advice and support to people not currently engaged with mainstream services such as Jobcentre Plus.

The scheme employs specialist employment advisers in community outreach settings such as hospitals, GP surgeries, social services or mental health trusts to provide an easy point of referral for practitioners and clients. Advisers help their clients to address a range of barriers to work - over a period of months in some cases. Once ready to enter employment, they work with counterpart employer liaison advisers in employment agencies to help connect clients with suitable job opportunities. The team then provide ongoing support, training and if necessary, mentoring, to help clients settle into, and remain in work.

Given the particular needs of refugee communities, there are two specialist Refugee advisers who take on referrals from local community groups. The team also includes an adviser working with the Drug & Alcohol Action Team (Drug Intervention Programme); three advisers based at the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust; six advisers based in GP surgeries and 3 advisers based with day services for adults with learning and physical disabilities.

Website: [http://www.southwark.gov.uk](http://www.southwark.gov.uk)
5. Forms of Outreach Activity

Street Marketing & Stunts

What is it?
Street marketing involves a team of staff making generally quite brief face to face contact with customers or citizens, for example at an event such as a roadshow or by offering free product samples from a stall in a shopping mall. One form of street marketing can be high profile stunts designed to raise awareness and generate publicity through unusual or arresting displays, costumes or activities in a public place.

Good for:
Can have a deeper impact than advertising or direct marketing, perhaps to help launch a brand, generate media interest or raise awareness of a simple message. It can also start to broaden the reach of a campaign cost effectively, if people exposed to the stunt or marketing go on to tell their friends or family.

Not so good when:
The audience are hard to reach and/or identify in a mainstream public space, or when the message to be conveyed is challenging or requires elaboration – for example, a campaign around the issue of forced marriage (which adopted an approach using conference discussions instead).

Case Study: DEFRA, Personal Food Imports

DEFRA used street marketing techniques to raise awareness of legislation around personal imports of food among a broad range of 1st and 2nd generation ethnic minority communities, including non-English speakers.

The campaign involved an interactive, branded mobile exhibition unit staffed by a multi-lingual promotional team, which toured 40 locations with high concentrations of the target audiences. The staff - who were selected to match the language and ethnic profile of each area talked to the target audience about the legislation, used a searchable database to highlight restrictions on certain food products and offered bilingual information leaflets to help get the message across.
It was set up in various high street locations and a smaller exhibition unit was used at a number of cultural and lifestyle events.

The outreach was part of a wider campaign involving press and radio advertising in ethnic minority media as well as PR activity, it contributed to a 20 percentage point increase in awareness of legislation amongst the target audiences and extensive PR coverage.

Website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/illegali/

Peer Education, Street Teams or Referral Marketing

What is it?

This involves recruiting members of a target audience, briefing them to a greater or lesser extent, and getting them to engage others in the community. The technique is used extensively in music marketing amongst young people, but social marketing can employ similar approaches to improve awareness, change attitudes or behaviour of a group. The rationale is that ‘peers’ have greater credibility, understanding of the audience and access to them. Peer education uses a similar approach but takes briefing further, so the ‘educators’ are trained and equipped with information to impart to their friends or colleagues. The peer educators/communicators are often supported by a professional and are closely monitored. By taking part in generally quite lively and fun experiences, they learn new skills, build self-esteem, receive official support or a reference to help them in future, and feel they are making a difference to their communities or are setting a trend. Incentives for team members are generally quite small if offered at all– perhaps vouchers, special events or credit-based schemes.

Good for:

Messages which need to be conveyed in a sensitive and credible way, particularly to youth audiences – for example, around drugs or sexual health. Also effective at targeting activity where the audience are especially hard to reach, as peers are likely to know how, where and when to make contact.

Not so good when:

Skilled professionals are needed to have direct contact with the target audience, or complex messages need to be communicated precisely. Introducing peer educators/communicators adds a link in the chain, and - to an extent - weakens control over how the message is delivered.
Case Study: Home Office, FRANK
Under the banner of the FRANK campaign, the Home Office used street marketing in 30 of the most deprived areas of the country to increase the drug information campaign's credibility with vulnerable young people.
Through agency partners, The Forster Company and Kikass, the campaign recruited and trained teams of credible young people from youth services in the local area to organise 'conversations' in their neighbourhoods. Team members received £50 in vouchers and a reference in recognition of their work. In many areas, these 'street teams' used FRANK-branded sofas in unusual settings such as shopping centres or on council estates as a way of grabbing the attention of passers-by and engaging them with the campaign.
"The teams felt part of something bigger," says Amanda Duffy of the Forster Company, "It was amazing to see it in action: the young people's confidence grew through the street marketing training, so a 15 year old girl had no problem going up to a group of 16 year old boys and talking to them about FRANK".
Website: http://www.talktofrank.com

Sponsorship
What is it?
Sponsoring a community event or service is a conventional way of raising awareness of a brand. But it can also work hand in hand with outreach, by using sponsorship as a way to initiate a relationship supported by face-to-face contact, for example by having a stall or marketing team at a sponsored event, to help convey the message with greater impact, answer questions and even capture responses (sign ups, application forms) on the spot.

Good for:
Generally larger, established community events seeking sponsors, and willing to give sponsors access the event – for example, melas, sports tournaments or large festivals. Ideally, there should be a strong connection between the event and the sponsor's message – for example, sport and an active career in
the Armed Forces. Effective for more straightforward messages, such as around recruitment, training or safety which can be communicated quickly within a short face-to-face interaction.

Not so good when:
Communities are more dispersed or don’t tend to be concentrated at events or in groups, or where events are so heavily commercialised that the message risks getting overwhelmed by other brands. More complex messages which depend on building long term relationships may not be suitable, though sponsorship may help increase awareness.

Case Study: RAF recruitment
The Royal Air Force has been set targets for the proportion of recruits from ethnic minorities that it is required to achieve. The RAF uses a range of outreach techniques including street marketing (stalls at carnivals and melas) tours of its bases, and sponsorship of a number of different sports. For over five years, it has been a leading sponsor of the English Basketball Association. This has increased its brand awareness and improved perceptions of life within the RAF through demonstrating support for local and national basketball teams and providing opportunities for RAF staff to meet potential recruits at tournaments. Research indicates that basketball players recognise the connection between the sporting values of teamwork and fitness and an RAF career, and that the sponsorship has increased interest and enquiries about RAF careers.

Website: [http://www.rafcareers.com](http://www.rafcareers.com)

Active Service Delivery
What is it?
Perhaps the classic model of outreach, we have used the term ‘active service delivery’ as a way of describing outreach work which makes use of specialist professionals making proactive visits to individuals (and sometimes groups) in order to help them to access services, overcoming barriers of language, mobility or culture. It can involve home visits and ongoing support, or form part of community networking where the outreach worker talks to groups of people. Holistic approaches are becoming more popular, in which the outreach visitor is able to address a number of issues, making referrals to a variety of other agencies if necessary to ensure an individual’s needs are considered in the round.
Good for:
Services to which there are practical barriers such as the need to visit an office, understand written information or make a formal application. Given the cost per person, it probably works best when the services are essential or as a way of ‘joining up’ to overcome the same barriers to accessing several services in one visit. Potentially an effective way of achieving targets for take-up of entitlements amongst under-represented groups.
It can also help overcome psychological or social barriers to accessing help, for example in relation to domestic violence:

“Evaluation of outreach projects found:
• support is most often needed outside of standard office hours;
• immediate support (usually within 24 hours) was cited by service users as important in increasing safety and accelerating change;
• outreach and advocacy combined with proactive responses can reduce repeat victimisation through more effective use of the legal system; and
• all outreach and advocacy interventions should be accompanied with safety planning.”

Not so good when:
Large numbers of people are involved – this approach can be expensive to offer. Requires well-tuned service delivery channels which can be joined up and cases referred between agencies.

Case Study: The Pension Service, Local Service
The Pension Service runs a Local Service scheme which offers face to face information and advice for people across a range of benefits managed by the Department for Work and Pensions. The scheme includes home visits, appointment based surgeries, and talks in accessible locations aimed at raising pensioners’ awareness of their entitlements and increasing take-up of benefits. Local Service teams take a holistic view of the individual’s situation, and are trained and equipped to help resolve a number of benefit-related issues, helping to co-ordinate the work of other agencies if required.
Recent DWP research, looking at service delivery needs and experiences of disabled older people found:

“Local Service staff scored especially well on personal service. They work face-to-face and spend longer with people, sometimes in their homes. They were often able to establish relationships that made an important impression on customers, who often referred to them familiarly by their first names. Sometimes they had given direct line telephone numbers for follow-up contacts which fosters a valuable sense of continuity that a call centre cannot easily match.”

Source 23: ‘Understanding the service needs of vulnerable pensioners: Disability, ill-health and access to The Pension Service’, 2005, DWP Research Report 263

Website: [http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk)

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**Community Networking & Events**

**What is it?**

One of the most common approaches, community networking involves making contact and building relationships with groups and individuals within the target audience with the aim of using their credibility and access to audiences in order to convey a message. This can involve building up rapport with leaders of welfare associations or faith groups, or other trusted individuals with knowledge of and influence within the community (e.g. shopkeepers, journalists, teachers and health professionals). These relationships demand flexibility and can take time to develop, as trust and credibility needs to be established in each case: hence an introduction or endorsement by a member of the group can be very useful. In some cases, individuals can be recruited as high profile advocates who can share their passion for the issue and communicate credibly with their community.

Events offer a golden opportunity to reach a large number of the target group in one place, to give a presentation about the issue, field questions and distribute materials.

**Good for:**

Communities with established formal and informal group structures, willing to engage with public services for the benefit of their members. Can be applied in virtually all situations, as a means of targeting effort efficiently and securing buy-in from community leaders and representatives.

**Not so good when:**
The rare occasions when communities do not have established community groups (e.g. some newly arrived refugee communities), or when there is limited scope to be flexible in how the campaign is delivered.

**Case Study: Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service ethnic minority outreach**

Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service has chosen to address the specific fire safety awareness needs of its ethnic minority communities through creating a dedicated outreach worker post, currently Ravi Sharma. There is evidence that ethnic minority households are less likely to have smoke alarms or fire prevention equipment, and some festivals or customs which involve naked flames or hot oil put these communities at particularly high risk. Firefighters within the service are overwhelmingly white and male, so there was a role for someone with the language skills and cultural awareness to build bridges with a range of local ethnic minority groups.

Ravi’s work involves identifying and arranging visits to local community groups, giving presentations – in one of seven languages or dialects – at community meetings, and making home visits to fit smoke alarms. Word of mouth is a key tool, particularly among close-knit communities, where one individual’s experience can lead to referrals and interest from friends and family.

As a result, 14% of home fire safety checks are now in ethnic minority households – many of them non-English speaking – compared with a county ethnic minority population of under 5%.

**Website:** [http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Safety/Fire/fire_home.htm](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Safety/Fire/fire_home.htm)

**Community Development**

*What is it?*

Community Development approaches emphasise the importance of involving and empowering members of the target audience in taking action themselves, in response to issues they have identified themselves. For example, this can mean facilitating local neighbourhood groups to meet and agree priorities for action, and helping them build capacity to address the problem for themselves.
or access the agencies they need to effect change – but not imposing solutions or priorities from outside.

**Good for:**
Communities which are motivated to take action about a complex set of issues but lack the support, skills or co-ordination to seize the initiative. Commonly used in regeneration work where local communities need ownership of the solutions adopted in order to buy into them, but have a strong incentive to do so. Useful in situations where local or even individual needs may be difficult for central or remote agencies to respond to appropriately.

**Not so good when:**
There is a simple message to be conveyed or consistency with a central campaign or brand is needed. Empowering communities takes time and commitment to devolve power and responsibility, so is typically used more for policy and delivery objectives than for communications campaigns.

**Case Study: Department of Health, Community Development Workers**
As part of its strategy for delivering greater equality in mental health services *Delivering Race Equality*, the Department of Health launched a scheme to create 500 Community Development Workers within Primary Care Trusts by the end of 2006. These outreach workers are tasked with building bridges between statutory agencies and voluntary sector service providers, within which there is a great deal of good practice in supporting ethnic minority mental health. Though only a few of the 500 are in post so far, the intention is that they will act as change agents, facilitators and links and fulfil the roles of:

- **Change agent:** identifying concerns and gaps in services, increasing communication between community and statutory services
- **Service developer:** Advising on training, developing joint working
- **Access facilitator:** Directing people to community resources, addressing language and other barriers to services
- **Capacity builder:** Helping to establish community leadership and develop organisations, and develop socially inclusive communities

It is expected that some CDWs will come from existing PCT teams, whereas others may be drawn from voluntary organisations.
Participation & Active Citizenship

What is it?
The participation organisation Involve, defines it as: “everything that enables people to influence decisions and get involved in the actions that affect their lives”. It involves a variety of techniques from simple consultation through to citizens’ juries or community conferences designed to put responsibility for certain types of decision-making directly into the hands of (informed or interested) citizens. While this objective marks a difference from most outreach schemes, the techniques themselves can share a common form, based on authentic dialogue in community settings – but regarding decision-making, rather than information provision or service delivery.

Good for:
Decision-making where community ownership is required over the decision-making process, not just the solution.

Not so good when:
The task involves simple communication or relates to practicalities of service delivery. Participation often requires commitment on the part of the commissioning organisation to be bound by the agendas and decisions of the community, so may not be suitable where this is not a viable option.

Case Study: Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust
In the primary health sector, community engagement applies not just to how services are accessed, but also in the decision-making process around how they are planned, delivered and evaluated.

In Brent tPCT, Patient and Public Involvement programmes seek to involve community representatives through on-going forums and groups which discuss aspects of service delivery aimed at different communities. These include 'hard to reach' communities such as drugs and alcoholic service users, people with physical and learning disabilities, faith communities, refugees and black and minority ethnic communities.

Among the approaches used, Brent tPCT supports a 'Facilitated Forum' of around 50 statutory, voluntary and community organisations, as well as individuals, which meets bi-monthly to discuss issues around race, health and social care. The sessions are chaired by a community representative, and the Forum itself sets the agenda and acts as an advisory body to statutory agencies in the borough. Alongside other forums, they provide an opportunity for different groups of service providers, users and carers to share knowledge, better understand community priorities and improve accountability through on-going, minuted dialogue in formal meetings.
6. Audiences, Messages & Channels for Outreach

Identifying audiences for outreach
Outreach activity can be appropriate for many different types of audience, such as people who are much less likely to use conventional media channels or have access to mainstream public services. These might include:

- Non English speakers
- New arrivals (migrants, asylum seekers etc)
- Socially excluded, e.g. vulnerable young people, isolated lone parents, Gypsies and Travellers
- Older people
- People with disabilities

Audiences for outreach can be segmented much as any other audience for communication – not everyone within a given community is likely to be equally hard to reach. For example, street marketing or stunts may raise awareness among younger, mobile members of the community, whereas home visits or talks at community centres may be a more effective way of reaching the elderly.

Targeting audiences should be based on knowledge of their socio-economic profile, culture, behaviour and attitudes – ethnic minority communities are markedly different from each other, and like any community often have internal divisions too. For example, in Leicester, different outreach and support approaches are used to address three types of ethnic minority community:

- the newly-arrived (who may have limited English and few established social networks)
- those with high levels of dependency on support from statutory agencies, but who have developed community welfare and support networks
- those who are well established and largely self-sufficient, but may still experience prejudice.

Tailoring messages for outreach
It is important the message and any materials used in any outreach activity are appropriate to the particular target audience. The message needs to be simple and clear and should aim to illustrate the specific benefits to the particular target audience. A clear call to action is important - outreach activity can often take people quickly from being unaware of an issue to wanting to sign up immediately. Whereas conventional social marketing
approaches may emphasise knowledge, and to some extent, attitudes, outreach is well-placed to help people develop strategies for action – i.e. tailored, practical steps they can take.

**Case Study: Charlton Athletic Football Club community schemes**

Charlton Athletic runs a large community scheme which positions the club as a ‘community hub’. Much of the activity is delivered in the form of partnerships, such as with the local council or community groups. Over 250 staff are employed full or part time to deliver schemes to support education, and anti-racism objectives linked to sport – of which only 50% directly involve a ball. Virtually all of the staff are recruited locally so have the knowledge and credibility to relate well to young people in the area.

Over the course of some schemes – which can run over a number of weeks – there are plenty of opportunities to build personal relationships and skills. Messages can be introduced in a positive, subtle way: “they don’t even know you’re educating them”, says Ben Tegg, Community Liaison Manager. Issues of diet, exercise and teamwork emerge naturally from a desire to follow role models and take part in the activities themselves.

For example, one scheme involves coaching days with young kids, drawn equally from the local White and ethnic minority communities. They train together in the morning, watch a match in the afternoon and end up making friends and swapping phone numbers to set up their own matches.

**Website:** [http://www.cafc.co.uk/main_community.ink](http://www.cafc.co.uk/main_community.ink)

Using the message (and materials) from a mainstream campaign to target ethnic minorities often does not work, so it is advisable to conduct small scale qualitative research among the target audience prior to developing themes and messages for the outreach activity, to check they are interpreted as intended.

**Example: Black organ donation**

**Q:** Why should people from my community register on the organ donor register?

**A:** Because within the Black Caribbean Community there are high levels of diabetes and hypertension which can lead to renal failure whereby a kidney transplant is the best treatment. In order to get the best tissue match,
Similarly, any creative material, such as leaflets and posters etc, which is designed to target people from ethnic minority communities, needs to be sensitive to cultural and religious ways of life, particularly if it is targeted at older people. There are certain guidelines, which have been developed by COI Inclusivity Unit, which are outlined briefly below. There are certain key issues which need to be considered prior to the development of such creative work in order to avoid making mistakes. At best some mistakes may cause the material to be overlooked or ignored by the target audience and at worst some mistakes may cause offence.

**Target Audience**

- For older audiences, particularly people from ethnic minority communities, it is probably best to stick to explicit, clear messages which are unambiguous and direct
- Younger generation are more advertising/marketing literate and have higher expectations than the older generations. Multi-culturalism within creative executions is seen as the norm in advertising by young people, particularly in youth based media.

**Cultural Decorum/Images**

It is important that any images which appear on leaflets targeted at people from ethnic minority communities, e.g. photographs of people or use of other design symbols, should be culturally appropriate. For example:

- Images used on the cover or in the body of the text must be compatible with the community language used
- Publicity material aimed at Muslims, e.g. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, Somalis, should take into account the fact that Islam requires men and women to be dressed modestly in all contexts
- Use of religious symbolism should be avoided; e.g.
  - Quotes from the Koran
  - Images of Hindu gods

**Involving the audience**

Several outreach practitioners recommend involving members of the audience or members of a street team in developing as well as delivering the message. By definition, they are closer to the issues, audiences and language within their community (though they may need briefing on the technical aspects if
necessary). Involving them in the message development process helps to keep things ‘rooted in their world view’.

**Something-for-something**
Outreach practitioners talk of the importance of ensuring the message and proposition includes something of value to offer to the audience – a ‘gift’ or a useful service of some sort (e.g. home fire safety checks, free lanyards etc). Where community groups help deliver the campaign, it is important not to abuse this goodwill – for example you might offer to pay for catering at an event they are hosting on your behalf.

**Key channels for outreach**
In terms of outreach used as a communication tool, it is often best used in tandem with a well targeted above or below the line campaign. Posters in relevant outlets, locations etc and PR features in local media will help raise awareness of the issue in advance of the outreach work.

**Intermediaries**
Intermediaries are often used by organisations to deliver outreach activity. It is important to be able to select the most relevant and appropriate intermediaries dependent on the target audience. In this respect it is essential to distinguish between community workers and community leaders as both fulfil different functions.

**Community organisations v community leaders**
National and local organisations often have self-appointed leaders with their own specific agendas, and therefore care should be taken in relying exclusively on their views.

Imams (priests) etc might represent the community on religious matters, but may only give a partial picture in relation to the perspective of young people. However, they are often very influential with elders and are able to communicate messages that require a religious interpretation, e.g. organ or blood donation.

Many outreach campaigns make much use of community centres or organisations as part of the distribution and local marketing strategy. These organisations are mainly voluntary organisations which provide advice, information and advocacy. They are a vital source of support for non-English speaker, and have high levels of trust and contact with the community.
Many are pleased to work with government in order to provide up-to-date advice and information to their community. Often they will host special sessions at the community centre with the workers acting as interpreters. However, it is important to consider working in partnership with the organisation from the start and not just to use them solely as a distribution channel. They have a wealth of experience that public sector communicators can tap into and can advise on the best way to communicate the initiative to community. For example, The Pension Service Local Service works with these organisations to reach elderly people in order to provide access to Pension Credit and other benefits.

Community centres should be seen as a key target audience as well as a distribution channel, though clearly there is a need to distinguish information targeted at the workers from information aimed at the end user.

**Developing integrated campaigns incorporating outreach**

Because it is localised and small-scale, outreach often works best as part of an integrated campaign, where other media such as advertising can create initial awareness and interest. For example, the outreach work for FRANK benefited from the brand awareness and materials created as part of the mainstream campaign.

Local and regional media are very important to access ethnic minority communities. In developing integrated campaigns aimed at ethnic minority audiences, you might consider:

- Working in partnership with local press and radio to generate editorial interest as well as placing advertising
- Developing targeted campaigns around cultural and religious celebrations, hobbies and pastimes specific to ethnic sub-groups
- Making creative use of local shops or services for distribution and publicity. These could include hairdressing salons for black women, record shops for black young men, betting shops for older Caribbean men, and mosques for Bangladeshi and Pakistani men
- That many ethnic minorities, particularly British-born members, have a dual identity and will often consume mainstream media such as magazines instead of or alongside ethnic titles.
7. Delivering Outreach

Who can ‘do’ outreach?

Fundamentally, outreach techniques depend on trust, credibility and personal interaction.

Some practitioners believe that outreach activity works best when the outreach worker is drawn from the target community, or at least shares their faith or race. Other practitioners feel this is not necessarily important for some issues, where other aspects of the work – such as the individual’s personality or the suitability of the supporting materials and proposition – are right. In fact, in some situations, an outreach worker from outside the community can benefit from a degree of independence and neutrality, which can help when facilitating community cohesion or where communities are segregated by tribal or language divisions.

Case Study: Electoral Commission Ethnic Minority Voter Registration Campaign

The Electoral Commission ran a campaign in the West Midlands in 2006 designed to increase voter registration amongst young ethnic minority groups. Alongside radio advertising and posters provided to local community organisations, field marketing was used. Street teams and an 'ad wagon' (a vehicle with blacked out windows and a large plasma screen) was used to engage the audience, explain the need to register to vote, help people to complete registration forms and return them to the local Council office. The support of local councils was of vital importance to help identify key target areas and ensure the registration forms could be processed effectively.

Evaluation of the campaign found that having Black outreach workers did help to engage the audience because they were able to discuss the issues that mattered to young people and thus explain why registration is important:

‘Street teams also reported that the presence of a Black public information team provoked considerable public interest not only because it was unusual and intriguing but also because young ethnic minority audiences were likely to communicate with them.’

Source 9: Evaluation of Electoral Commission ethnic minority voter registration campaign, 2006

The street team achieved almost 900 registrations in a three week period and the Commission is currently considering rolling out the activity.
On balance, the most important considerations seem to be:

- Whether the people involved in delivering outreach have **cultural awareness and sensitivity**, based either on willingness to research cultures and customs, listen and learn – or from their own experience
- Having **language skills or access to help** in communicating with non-English speakers
- The **objective or message** concerned: **straightforward** factual messages – for example around health – can be credibly delivered by experts regardless of their background. But more **complex** messages around discrimination or cultural pressure carry more weight when delivered by a peer or someone who shares a similar background to the target community.
- But perhaps most important are the **personality and confidence** of the outreach team, in terms of having integrity and honesty in how they deal with the community, persistence in forming and developing networks and contacts, and skills to make proactive contact with individuals and groups.

**Models for delivering outreach**

The examples presented in this Guide showcase some of the different ways of implementing outreach approaches in practice. These include:

- Training existing in-house teams
- Recruiting specialist outreach teams
- Commissioning specialist agencies
- Community development/empowerment

*Training existing in-house teams*

This approach, perhaps most relevant where the organisation already has staff engaged in face-to-face customer contact, involves developing these teams in some of the specialist aspects of conducting outreach work, but building on their existing skills and contacts.

**Case Study: Army recruitment**

The Army has a regional network of recruiting offices involving over 1,000 soldiers in recruitment. To help meet targets for the proportion of ethnic minority applicants to the Armed Forces, these existing teams have invested heavily in a wide variety of outreach approaches from small scale ‘street corner’ recruitment sessions through to major events involving thousands of
young people organised through schools. The Army engaged an ethnic minority marketing agency to advise on forming relationships at local level between Army recruiting teams and local community groups.

Individuals have made their own efforts to better understand the communities they want to recruit from: one Recruiting Officer in the Midlands worked with a local inter-faith network to set up a weekend stay with a local Asian family to learn more about their culture. Using willing volunteers from the existing network to undertake outreach can both increase their understanding of the communities being targeted, and enable people from the community to have direct contact with and testimony from people within the organisation, without going through intermediaries.

As a result of its all its activities aimed at these audiences – including advertising and outreach – the Army has achieved 3.6% of enlistments from ethnic minorities.

Website: [http://www.armyjobs.mod.uk/Army+Jobs.htm](http://www.armyjobs.mod.uk/Army+Jobs.htm)

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**Case Study: Department for Work and Pensions**

Research for the Department and Work and Pensions summarised the approaches taken to outreach in relation to work and benefits:

“The type of services provided on an outreach basis include: regular one-to-one meetings with key workers or personal advisers; advice on in-work benefits and tax credits; overcoming barriers to work; referrals to other agencies; help with jobsearch and CV preparation; helping with the costs of childcare and transport; and ongoing, in-work support. Outreach provision is able to offer a full advisory service to customers in similar ways to Jobcentre Plus, the main differences being:

- services are provided closer to home;
- they are usually voluntary and customers are not mandated to participate and encounter no sanctions if they opt not to do so;
- outreach providers may be different to mainstream (Jobcentre Plus) providers. Outreach may be delivered in different ways. They may be delivered in a specific, separate site (the satellite model), for example, a high street shop or they may use another organisation’s premises (the peripatetic model), such as a room in a community centre. Outreach staff may go out into the community and engage with customers outside any organisational settings (the detached outreach model), for example, in shopping centres or mosques, or they may visit people in their own homes (the domiciliary model).”

Source 17: Maximising the role of outreach in client engagement, 2006
Recruiting specialist outreach teams
To develop community networks quickly where these are not currently in place, some organisations recruit specialist outreach workers or teams from the communities concerned, or who have knowledge of them. These are often based in the community, in outreach offices or community centres. Unless they are already service providers or subject specialists, they will need support and training, and frequent communication to prevent them becoming isolated or detached from the organisation.

Case Study: Southampton Community Outreach Team
To address racially-motivated prejudice and a number of violent incidents, Southampton City Council formed a Community Outreach Team. The team was designed to act as an interface between new and established communities, police and the local authority. Team members were recruited on the basis of their knowledge of and links with the city’s communities, and had specific language skills and cultural understanding which helped them form a wide range of contacts. Over the two year period the team was in place, its membership changed, reflecting staff turnover and the changing shape of Southampton’s ethnic communities – for example, a worker with links to the Iraqi Kurd community joined the team as increasing numbers of Kurds started to arrive in the city. Though initially the work of the team was concentrated on reducing tension and forming contacts, over time it became more sophisticated in creating positive opportunities for community cohesion.

Ultimately, the team helped the council develop an ‘early warning system’ and become forewarned and equipped to deal with potential conflicts, as well as providing council staff with a greater appreciation of community needs and perceptions, and diffusing community tensions.


Commissioning specialist agencies
Large scale outreach campaigns commissioned through COI draw on a roster of specialist ethnic marketing agencies, many of which put together integrated campaigns with outreach used alongside other media such as community radio or posters. The techniques used can vary, but these agencies often:

- **identify influential organisations or individuals** in the community, sometimes through their own networks of community consultants with strong roots in the area
• **build relationships** with these community figures, and sometimes arrange an introduction for the client organisation
• **develop most appropriate marketing approach** at local level
• **maintain the relationship** and try to **expand** it into further networks and opportunities – such as through PR opportunities

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**Case Study: Dept for Communities & Local Government, Fire Safety**

Fire and Rescue Services around the country do a lot of active outreach work in their communities to increase awareness of fire safety issues. In particular, there are specific fire safety issues affecting some ethnic minorities which use fire as part of celebrations such as Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year and Chinese Lantern Festival. Through COI, the department engaged a specialist ethnic marketing agency, Media Moguls, to deliver training to Fire Safety Officers to help them approach and inform local ethnic minority communities about these specific fire safety issues.

The training involved regional briefings incorporating a tailored analysis of the profile of, and likely issues affecting, local ethnic minority populations, as well as guidance on how to engage groups effectively and support materials to help with this. A number of local teams took up the offer of further specialist training to give them the knowledge, skills and tools to take their outreach work further into these communities. The Commission for Racial Equality highlighted the campaign as an example of good practice regarding engagement with ethnic minority communities in its evidence to the (then) ODPM Select Committee on Fire.

Community development/empowerment
With a community development objective, outreach is not so much ‘delivered’ as facilitated – “we’re not just organisers of other people’s agendas” says one community development specialist. The commissioning or supporting organisation will try to identify community figures, but rather than designing the marketing approach directly, will work with the group to build their capacity (such as through training workshops) and provide on-going support as the group take the activity forward. This might involve giving a grant, providing specialist help on evaluation or contacts in relevant statutory agencies.

Case Study: University of Central Lancashire, Centre for Ethnicity & Health
The Centre for Ethnicity and Health has taken a community engagement approach to delivering a recent research project into the health needs and priorities of ethnic minorities. Rather than conduct the research directly, they form a relationship with an establish ‘host’ organisation in the community, help them to recruit a team of researchers from the community and provide six days of training workshops in research and analysis techniques. They then offer advice and quality assurance in a mentoring role, but leave decisions over the research method to the community research team, overseen by a local steering group of community and agency representatives. This approach enables research to be conducted on a much larger scale and according to community priorities, with the central team focusing on quality assurance and management, rather than direct implementation.

What are the practicalities to consider when planning outreach?
Cascading to local organisations
Effective outreach planning requires a deep understanding of local needs. Many centrally-funded outreach projects are delivered via a ‘cascade’ from central statutory agencies, through regional agencies or national representative organisations (e.g. Hindu Forum, Muslim Council of Britain), to umbrella bodies at local level. These are then well placed to co-ordinate, identify and support local community groups and faith organisations with the networks and facilities (e.g. venues, events) to support outreach. Broadly speaking, they are also more likely than individual groups on the ground to have the capacity to manage a relationship with central government, prepare funding bids and undertake robust evaluation.
Supporting individual outreach workers

Many of the outreach techniques described here depend heavily on the skills and continuity of a individual outreach worker – though as with any employee, outreach staff move on. In addition, working as an outreach worker in the community can also carry the risk of isolation if the individual has limited contact with their manager or team.

Making outreach more resilient might involve establishing formal relationships between agencies to supplement personal contacts, or creating an outreach team who can provide mutual support. For example, in Northamptonshire, the Fire & Rescue Service outreach programme has expanded from a single worker to include additional sessional workers trained to conduct fire safety checks in Gujurati-speaking and Muslim households.

Forming partnerships

Many of the examples of outreach we found were formed of partnerships, typically between statutory agencies (sometimes at both central, and regional or local level) and the voluntary sector, with funding and governance arrangements in place to formalise the relationship. As well as achieving business goals more efficiently, these partnerships can also help improve stakeholder relationships, demonstrating that central and local government respects and trusts the voluntary sector, and that there is something useful to offer community groups. The Department for Work and Pensions found:

“...many reported that outreach offered a way to work in much greater partnership with local services and agencies, and to raise the profile of their services and organisations more generally. In the case of Jobcentre Plus, one project manager stated that they were able ‘to put something on the table’ in relation to local regeneration which improved relationships with other local stakeholders significantly.”
Source 17: Maximising the role of outreach in client engagement, 2006

Data capture

Though it is easy to overlook, capturing accurate and consistent data from marketing activity – including outreach – is important if you want to evaluate its impact. For example, this may involve ensuring that contact centres record source of awareness or the ethnicity of the caller, so you can monitor how many participants in outreach or members of the target audience follow up an outreach contact.
Case Study: Army recruitment

To help assess the effectiveness of the many different recruiting activities conducted nationwide, the Army has introduced a single, standardised data capture coupon to be used at all its recruiting activities.

This coupon is completed by the enquirer who has expressed an interest in an Army career, it is then scanned electronically into a database and the enquirer receives a recruiting brochure and DVD. Maintenance of the database helps to ensure a consistent set of details are captured for each enquirer, and also identifies the source of the enquiry, enabling more sophisticated future analysis of which recruiting channels and activities have been particularly effective.

Central and local co-ordination

Relative to other forms of marketing, management of outreach is often highly devolved. The examples of effective outreach presented in this guide suggest that allowing flexibility for local or regional offices is valuable, so they can tailor their activity to local needs, communities and opportunities. But when central teams are involved in commissioning outreach activity themselves, the result can be awkward – such as booking two separate stalls at a community event.

This underlines the need for central and local teams to work closely together and communicate clearly about what kind of outreach activity is planned. As well as avoiding the risk of duplication, this can help to ensure messages and targeting are consistent. It also helps the organisation as a whole be ready to deal with potential enquiries or issues arising from outreach – to avoid the risk of a positive experience of outreach contact being followed up by an insensitive experience of dealing with the rest of the organisation.

Consulting internally about outreach – dubbed ‘in-reach’ by one outreach worker we spoke to – can be a valuable way to collect knowledge from around the organisation. This may comprise personal contacts, introductions, information about the scheme or message to be communicated – and may just help to clarify the objectives for the outreach that the organisation has.
Developing colleagues

Outreach can provide a lot of value in developing colleagues within the organisation, to increase their awareness of and empathy with the communities they serve, and the potential impact on them of services or campaigns.

Cultural visits and exchanges – where individuals or teams tour a community facility or place of worship – are one technique for connecting the community with others in the organisation. Some organisations run internal training in cultural awareness or community cohesion. Making colleagues part of the feedback loop is important, so that issues which emerge from outreach workers on the ground are communicated to those responsible for the policy, service or campaign.

Case Study: Leicester City Football Club

As part of its extensive community work, Leicester City FC organises cultural visits for its executives and customer-facing staff to local places of worship such as mandirs (Hindu), gurdwaras (Sikh), and mosques (Muslim) for a tour and explanation of the faith, through question and answer sessions. There are reciprocal ‘behind the scenes’ tours for faith leaders at the Leicester City stadium.

Funding streams

Several of the practitioners we spoke to mentioned that funding for outreach is sometimes a hurdle in itself. Consistency can be an issue, with short term funding running out before outreach has a change to take root, leading to relationships being cut short.

‘Postcode funding’ was also mentioned, where funders try to target activity with pinpoint accuracy to areas of statistically high deprivation. “Most funders are only interested in what ethnicity and postcode they are from” says one outreach worker, frustrated at this bureaucratic hurdle to delivering outreach to groups they know fit the real profile of the target audience.

Case Study: Calderdale Early Years Childcare and Development Partnership

The Early Years Childcare and Development Partnership is tasked with increasing and improving the representativeness of childcarers in the area.
For some ethnic minority residents, one barrier is the need for prospective recruits to achieve a vocational qualification in childcare, which typically involves attending a course at a local college, which can seem unfamiliar and intimidating. “For them even to cross the threshold of an educational establishment was a barrier” says Lynda Ball of the EYCDP.

Following on from a national campaign led by DfES, Calderdale created a series of short ‘stepping stone’ courses to help bridge the gap between initial orientation sessions and the vocational course. The EYCDP formed a relationship with a local association for Asian women, which opened up its centre to run the sessions, and helped to promote them. The courses themselves are delivered by established childcare tutors and provide more information and build participants’ confidence, in a familiar setting. They also offer extra support in the form of interpreters and careers advisers on-hand, and a crèche for participants’ use. This style of inter-agency working at local level has been picked up by other organisations, and is being formalised to help ensure the scheme is able to withstand changes in funding or personnel.

Website: [http://mailhost.calderdale.gov.uk/learning/early-years/](http://mailhost.calderdale.gov.uk/learning/early-years/)

**Use of brands**

To what extent outreach activity draws on established brands depends on the relationship the audience have with the brand, and its role in providing awareness for outreach without carrying negative perceptions. For example, the FRANK campaign branded its outreach clearly as linked to a well-known but arms-length government brand. By contrast, the Department for Work and Pensions found:

> “Many respondents thought it was absolutely crucial not to use Jobcentre Plus livery, staff badges, etc. in order to build trust with non-traditional customer groups who were often suspicious of government organisations. This is not to say that customers were deliberately misled about the fact that Jobcentre Plus was funding or delivering the provision, but rather that this type of information was played down, and not deemed to be of any import, especially early on in the intervention. Essentially, customers have to be won over in the first instance and distancing outreach provision from statutory services was often seen as facilitating this.”

Source 12: Maximising the role of outreach in client engagement, 2006
Summary: an outreach worker’s ‘tools of the trade’

The outreach workers we spoke to described a number of techniques and skills they practice as part of their networking role:

- ‘mapping’ of communities and issues in the area, so they have an overview of the communities they serve, the groups within these, and the needs and issues that affect them
- language skills or access to support for translation/interpreting
- cultural and faith understanding – through their own personal research
- listening skills
- ‘black book’ of contacts, with individuals and groups
- flexibility and adaptability (of style, dress etc)
- something to offer, to demonstrate respect for time and effort made
- professional outlook and objective, to provide a clear rationale for involvement and dispel suspicion about motives
- contact with umbrella groups – a more stable point of contact than individuals or small community associations as a channel for funding, service delivery etc
- senior level trust, support and patience, able to create breathing space for outreach to develop over a period of months or years
- personality:
  - courage/confidence (including talking to large groups)
  - persistence & patience (one outreach worker told us: “In the best of all worlds, you’re a broker; in the worst of all words, everybody hates you”)
8. Measuring and evaluating the impact of outreach

Amongst those using outreach, evaluation is seen as a challenge. It is perceived to be important in order to justify investment and effort expended – but not always particularly meaningful. In many cases, evaluation is an afterthought, comprising a quick feedback form or a report of the number or ethnic profile of participants in outreach activities. But it can be really valuable as a way of checking that the activity is going to plan, and ensuring that the views and needs of the community are properly reflected.

Fundamentally, **evaluation should be about measuring performance objectively in order to make improvements:**

- **measuring:** involves a process for collecting, recording and sharing data, perhaps from a number of sources, or of different types
- **performance:** how successful the activity has been, which means how well it met its objectives, budget and timeframe – including unintended outcomes or side-effects
- **objectively:** trying to overcome natural personal and psychological inclinations to look on the bright side, remember ‘peaks’ or anecdotes, and try to consider every aspect of the activity fairly and in proportion
- **in order to make improvements:** not just evaluating for its own sake, but with the aim of making it better in future, through refining techniques or developing individuals

According to this understanding of evaluation, it makes sense to evaluate any and every outreach project – however small. Evaluation which is merely about justification or collecting meaningless data may indeed be pointless, but properly measuring its success and using that to identify learnings for the future definitely isn’t.

This section aims to provide you with some techniques and principles to consider when evaluating outreach, to make it useful and meaningful.

**The challenge of measuring and evaluating outreach**

Evaluating outreach successfully means overcoming the following barriers:

- The fact that outreach is generally **small-scale**, involving relatively small numbers of people, so drawing a sample for conventional research may be difficult
• Outreach is sometimes about ‘earning the right to talk’ to the community, who can be hard to reach. It can be hard therefore to measure a baseline or benchmark, until outreach has helped to develop those relationships. It may be difficult to recontact people touched by outreach to see the long term impact it has had on them.

• Outreach projects may have poorly-defined or changing aims (reach, awareness, response, behaviour change, corporate reputation?), which make it hard to identify what kind of change in performance constitutes ‘success’

• The full impact of outreach may take a long or unpredictable timescale before it becomes apparent, as contact can be the start of a process of changing hearts and minds which eventually leads to an action. Despite this, outreach is often under pressure to show quick results, which leads to measures of less meaningful factors like the number of activities undertaken or the immediate outputs

• The impacts of outreach are notoriously difficult to measure – for example, community cohesion, capacity building or race equality are high level concepts to which any individual outreach activity can only contribute a small part

• The relative influence of outreach is difficult to capture and awareness may be misattributed by people to other, more visual media such as a TV commercial where this is also on-air as part of an integrated campaign. Measuring prompted recognition of an advert is much more straightforward – although even in this case, attributing cause and effect is hard.

The national evaluation of the Positive Futures scheme found similar problems, and frustration that the difficulty of fairly evaluating outreach is overlooked:

“For some organisations, or, more specifically, for some front line workers, ‘success’ may be much more qualitatively focused, even at odds with the simplistic and difficult to quantify ‘reduction/increase’ measures of success which are sometimes used by statutory service providers. A senior Youth Service worker bemoaned the fact that some of the ‘softer work’ - precisely because it is harder to monitor/represent - is under valued by funders and partners, adding that youth work exists in an atmosphere of performance indicators, which actually obstruct and reduce the value of more intensive, outreach style work.”

Source 12: ‘In the boot room’, second interim national positive futures case study, 2006
Principles for evaluating outreach

Outreach practitioners have employed a number of approaches to meaningfully evaluating their work which overcome these challenges:

- Ensure the **objectives are clearly defined**, along with the desired outcomes and any assumptions. Make the ultimate aim explicit and specific – but also challenging (i.e. probably not just about raising awareness) but manageable (i.e. playing a specific part in delivering better community cohesion). It is hard to establish what to measure unless these objectives and assumptions have been set out.

- Use **multiple, meaningful sources**: including a representative range of participants wherever possible, but not forgetting the feedback from people involved in delivering the outreach, such as outreach workers, street teams, front line staff who handle enquiries etc. “Count everything”, says one agency involved in community development: “You need to evaluate in 10 different ways”.

- Adopt **multiple, meaningful measures**: the measures selected should address the activity as a whole, including the amount of activity (numbers attended etc) but also perceptions of the outputs, and data about response or long term change. In the case of outreach, simply collecting the number of contacts tells you nothing about the quality of those contacts, or the barriers which individuals have to overcome in order for the desired outcome to be achieved.

- So, keep in mind that **data doesn’t have to mean numbers**: qualitative data, or loosely-structured feedback from people about their experiences and perceptions provides depth and detail, and is no less valuable than percentages from surveys or operational statistics. In fact, where the numbers of people involved are very small, statistical data may be inconclusive (and will usually need expert help to interpret) so qualitative data from people involved is essential to properly measuring performance. “You really see the difference from little interactions,” says one grass roots outreach worker “Showing that you’re interested in them makes them happier”. Charlton Athletic estimate that around 20% of community schemes do not work effectively at launch, and are quickly revised or cancelled as a result of informal feedback from frontline staff.

What to measure

The ideal set of measures for evaluating outreach would be able to provide answers across the lifecycle of the project:
Inputs:  How much resource was invested in the project?
Activities:  What happened in the course of the project?
Outputs:  What did the activities produce, and how much/many?  Who took part?
Outcomes:  What happened as a result?  What direct response was there?
Impact:  What changed in the community following the activity?  How much is attributable to the outreach?

Sometimes, it may not be possible to gather data on each of these, but aiming for lots of different meaningful measures, from lots of different sources should help to build a rounded picture of performance, identify at what point things have gone unexpectedly well or poorly, and help you suggest opportunities for improvement to the activity. This will often involve evaluating and getting feedback from the outreach practitioner or stakeholder, as well as the target audience:

- **Involvement**: Who?
  - Age, gender, ethnic profile etc
- **Awareness**: What did they find out?
  - Awareness of outreach activity, awareness of issues/opportunities/support
- **Attitudes**: What did they think & feel?
  - Change in perceptions, skills and confidence
- **Response & Behaviour change**: What did they do?
  - Direct response to outreach activity, medium and long term changes to behaviour

For example, the projects described in this guide measured:

| Involvement | • Number of people at each outreach event, and their ethnic and socio-demographic profile  
|            | • Ethnic profile of staff/supporters |
| Awareness  | • Whether people’s knowledge of sources of help increased |
### Attitudes
- Whether participants became more confident
- Whether street team members detected a change in attitudes amongst the people they spoke to
- Whether ‘capacity’ increased, as measured by subsequent employment using the skills developed
- Change in ‘emotional intelligence’ of the members of the street teams

### Response & behaviour change
- Progress against centrally-defined targets for recruitment
- Numbers of inspections in ethnic minority households
- Introduction of new formal structures to co-ordinate multi-agency partnerships
- Registrations on the donor register
- Calls to the ethnic minority language advice helpline
- Changes in local Performance Indicator targets for community cohesion
- Long-term ‘progress’ towards employment in terms of overcoming barriers to work

## Approaches to evaluation

*Pre and Post tracking or benchmarking (quantitative)*

**What does it involve?**
Conducting two similar surveys amongst a sample of the target audience, one before any activity starts, and one after the activity has completed or is well underway. The surveys measure awareness of the activity, attitudes to the issues and reported behaviour or responses. By comparing responses amongst the same type of people to the same questions at different points in time, you can measure the change that has occurred in awareness, attitudes and behaviour.

**What are the advantages?**
If a sufficiently large, representative sample is used, pre-post surveys can provide robust measurement of change, and help distinguish between different levels of awareness or action.
What are the drawbacks?
Pre-post surveys are often expensive to administer, and sometimes require the help of research specialists. Hard to reach groups are also generally hard to sample for research purposes, and specialist or bilingual interviewers may be needed. These surveys can fail to take account of the causes of the change, and you may not be able to isolate the effect of the outreach activity unless the issue is very specific and the outreach activity recognisably distinct.

Test and Control, Pilot or Experimental Design
What does it involve?
The most rigorous kind of experiment aims to keep other variables constant while changing just one element of the environment, so the link between cause and effect, stimulus and response is made clearer. Applied to outreach, this might mean introducing outreach techniques in a small area or specific community, and monitoring the impact it has in comparison with the same measures monitored in a similar community or area not exposed to outreach. The pilot approach is slightly less rigorous, looking instead at the impact that a variation in technique can have by comparison with the mainstream approach. For example, this might involve applying a community development approach to a regeneration project, rather than conventional consultation and planning approaches, and comparing the impact on community satisfaction.

What are the advantages?
Can be very robust and produce firm evidence of impact, as long as other variables are tightly controlled. Piloting offers the opportunity to test new approaches on a small scale. Potentially, this kind of approach allows projects to move at different speeds, allowing some to demonstrate early results without putting undue pressure on the mainstream.

What are the drawbacks?
Outreach in real-world environments is difficult to control so precisely, and it may be hard to justify limiting outreach to a particular area or community purely for the sake of rigorous evaluation. Potentially heavy commitment in terms of measurement or research.
Outcomes model

What does it involve?

An outcomes model (sometimes known as a ‘logic model’, developed by the WK Kellogg Foundation) involves establishing at the outset how the activity is designed to achieve its objectives, and collecting data on performance at different stages of the process, to see how well these have worked individually and in conjunction.


Applied to outreach activity, the elements of the logic model might be:

What resources were used in the outreach activity?
10 full-time staff, £150k budget

What form did the outreach take? ‘How much’ was there?
A community meeting with 300 attendees, 5,000 leaflets distributed, a database of 500 organisations was compiled

What did the outreach deliver?
200 people signed up, the website had 5,000 visits, feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive

What were the benefits achieved by the outreach?
The proportion of ethnic minority recruits rose by 5%, there were no racist attacks for 6 months, colleagues started to ask how they can improve service delivery to groups

What long term changes were there as a result?
Community cohesion improved, perceptions of discrimination fell
At one level, this is little more than common sense – but by applying a framework to the evaluation and looking at whether each step has had the intended outcome, it is easier to spot unexpected problems objectively and avoid using trivial or unfair measures.

**What are the advantages?**
By using a range of different measures, these can be made more appropriate to the basic purpose of the activity, and provide better diagnostic feedback. This can help to make evaluation of complex or long-term outcomes more valid, for example by considering qualitative feedback as well as ‘hard’ response data.

**What are the drawbacks?**
The building of the model is a subjective process, so there is a danger that the evaluation can be undermined if the measures established are not sufficiently objective. Outreach activity may take unexpected forms and have unintended consequences – both positive and negative – so it is important that the model reflects this in some way, and assess why and what impact the change in plan had on the intended outcomes.

**Qualitative techniques**
**What does it involve?**
To understand why people behave in a particular way – rather than just how many people have taken action, or hold a particular opinion – you should consider using qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews or group discussions.

**What are the advantages?**
Moderated carefully (ideally by a trained professional) they can provide rich detail and stories, some of which only come out in the course of discussion or debate. In the case of outreach, qualitative evaluation can tap into the change in attitudes or perceptions which may have occurred, which is harder to detect in quantitative survey results. In some situations, trying to conduct a robust survey can be difficult or prohibitively expensive, whereas convening some discussion groups (with an interpreter if necessary), may be easier and more revealing. It can also be an effective approach at the start of a project, to explore issues within the community to inform subsequent outreach, as well as creating a qualitative baseline from which to compare later.
What are the drawbacks?
Qualitative research is not designed to provide statistics on the extent of changes to perceptions or awareness, so may not convince hardened sceptics that outreach approaches deliver genuine shifts in attitudes. It is crucial that qualitative conclusions are based on a valid sample and methodology, which means that participants in the groups must accurately reflect the audience for the outreach and discussion process must not introduce bias.

**Case Study: Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Ethnic Minority Outreach**

The Policy Studies Institute evaluated the impact of the Jobcentre Plus Ethnic Minority Outreach (EMO) pilot. The evaluation included 148 initial depth interviews with two cohorts of EMO clients. The research had a longitudinal dimension which included two or three follow-up interviews with a sub-sample of clients over an eighteen month period.

The researchers explored the participants' work history, barriers to work, perceptions of employment prospects and support offered by the EMO providers. The longitudinal strand provided an opportunity to compare the clients’ positions, soon after their initial contact and then at roughly six month intervals. Given the diversity of the outreach techniques used across the locations involved in the scheme, and the wide range of participants, the evaluation approach mainly consisted of qualitative interviews, though quantitative measures were also used to compare provider outcomes.

The detailed report highlighted the role that outreach played in bringing some segments of the target audience 'closer to the labour market' and was able to discuss which interventions had commonly had significant positive impacts on individuals.

It also demonstrated the importance of using multiple measures in evaluation. One key operational target was to increase the number of Jobcentre Plus registrations amongst the target audience. However, the evaluation found that many of those involved in outreach were in fact registered, but had not been making effective use of these employment support services. For some clients, contact with outreach workers and subsequently other members of provider staff had facilitated enhanced levels of engagement with mainstream Jobcentre Plus services. A simple measure of registrations would not have captured this important finding, nor revealed the reasons why services were not being taken up.

Source 7: Ethnic Minority Outreach: An evaluation (Research Report 229)
**Observation**

**What does it involve?**
Since outreach can take so many forms – including ones not originally planned for – it can be useful simply to observe the approaches taken from the point of view of evaluating the dynamics of the interactions. For example, a community engagement project in the East Midlands involved evaluators sitting in on three different community consultants as they facilitated different types of group sessions or workshops. The evaluators noted the group behaviour, the facilitator’s work, and followed the outputs and outcomes from the sessions, and combined these with feedback from participants to derive conclusions about which of the approaches were most effective.

As a contrasting example, an agency which runs a street team of young people uses their affinity with technology to help monitor the activity on the ground. It equips them with digital cameras or camera phones and asks them to take pictures of the locations they go to when working for the team, and where they put up posters. This helps not only to verify that the activity has taken place, but also provides insights into the kinds of areas where the target audience – in this case, peers of the street team members – are to be found.

**What are the advantages?**
Observation can provide lively first-hand or visual testimony about the outreach, which brings evaluation to life. It also introduces an objective assessment of outreach activities such as events, which the outreach worker and participants may not be able to offer.

**What are the drawbacks?**
Observation is by definition an ‘outsider’ activity, so does not provide feedback from the point of view of the target audience – the activity may look good, but did it achieve its objectives? It also demands that the evaluators make a strong effort to remain objective, and not be unduly influenced by the participants or by isolated examples they later remember. Observation can also be very intrusive – introducing a third party observer to some outreach situations which demand trust and relationship building may be impossible.

**Feedback**

**What does it involve?**
One of the most common approaches, feedback typically uses a standard form to collect participants’ views on the activity shortly afterwards. It differs
from surveys in that those who respond are self-selecting, i.e. there is no specific effort made to ensure the source of the data collected represents the profile of everyone involved. In the course of a face to face interaction, there is a golden opportunity to collect feedback, even without a form: simply asking a question or two of visitors - and recording their answers - can provide information about perceptions or reactions.

What are the advantages?
Feedback can be easy to collect, and relatively straightforward to analyse – it can simply involve distributing a simple form and adding up the responses. It is also a quick way of collecting views with a view to checking the activity meets its objective. For example, one agency collected feedback from visitors to a stand in a shopping centre about the location of the stall, and found that people recommended they move to the other side of the centre in order to reach a wider audience.

What are the drawbacks?
Because it is self-selecting, feedback may not represent the opinion of everyone involved in the activity. Often, people who give feedback have stronger views than average, or perhaps have more time or inclination (including literacy, importantly) to complete a form. Since feedback is often given directly to or collected by the outreach workers, people may be less willing to be frank.
9. Applying Outreach Effectively: Some Tools

Tool 1: Selecting outreach techniques

Your decision of which outreach technique – if any – to adopt will be guided by many practical factors such as timescale, budget, personnel or networks available. However, whether outreach is successful depends heavily on the four factors below:

**Objectives**: how complex or deep-seated the change is that you want to effect

**Depth of engagement**: how deep a relationship you want to form with members of the target audience

**Barriers**: which types of barriers exist preventing you from communicating with the community, and what form of interaction or additional support (e.g. language skills) are needed

**Community infrastructure**: how strong the community infrastructure is can influence whether or not you are able to use existing networks to reach members of the audience directly

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**Outreach options you might try:**

| A. Street marketing and stunts |
| B. Peer education, street teams or referral marketing |
| C. Sponsorship |
| D. Active service delivery |
| E. Community networking & events |
| F. Community development |
| G. Active citizenship & participation |

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**Objectives**

- Raise awareness? (e.g. help available)
- Get a response? (e.g. sign up)
- Convey a message?
- Deliver a service?
- Change behaviour? (e.g. stop risky activity)
- Build community capacity?
- Get community ownership of the issue? (e.g. regenerating the area)

**Depth of Engagement**

- Physical? (e.g. housebound)
- Attitudinal or cultural?
- Language?
- Strong community organisations?
- Weak community organisations?

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## Tool 2: Outreach dos and don’ts

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<tr>
<th>Do...</th>
<th>Don’t...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• set clear, challenging objectives against which outreach can deliver and be evaluated</td>
<td>• try to micromanage - give local teams scope to meet the objectives in different ways</td>
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<tr>
<td>• put in place effective monitoring and data capture to gauge the impact outreach has had</td>
<td>• expect immediate results – relationships take time to build</td>
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<tr>
<td>• have a clear call to action and a straightforward message that the audience can grasp and outreach staff can work with</td>
<td>• rely on a single, hard measure of success – outreach works in a number of ways and needs to be evaluated in the round</td>
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<tr>
<td>• think carefully about the outreach technique you adopt – there are lots of possible approaches</td>
<td>• forget to collect feedback from participants and outreach teams – be prepared to act on it and adapt your approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>• try to keep the team and focus consistent as much as possible, to give relationships time to form</td>
<td>• make assumptions about communities – they are complex, sometimes fragmented, and can present both surprising barriers and enablers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• co-ordinate activity with colleagues and partner organisations so they know what is going on</td>
<td>• miss out on opportunities to use outreach to build understanding and empathy within your organisation, through visits, tours or talks with community figures</td>
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<td>• invest effort in understanding the community, through mapping and researching their profile and culture</td>
<td>• become entirely reliant on an individual – try to build resilience into your outreach through involving more people or formalising relationships with community groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>• respect the community’s help – have something to offer them in return</td>
<td>• overlook the contact points the target audience has with the rest of your organisation, to ensure a positive relationship – once established – is not put at risk</td>
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<td>• integrate outreach with awareness-raising media such as radio or local press – to give outreach ‘a foot in the door’</td>
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### Tool 3: Outreach planner

Based on the ‘lessons learned’ by the outreach practitioners we spoke to in preparing this guide, we have put together the following checklist or outline planner which sets out the key stages and questions to address in planning effective outreach. Clearly, there are lots of intermediate steps and questions to answer, so this planner should be used in conjunction with the rest of this guide.

| Objectives | What **change** is the campaign designed to achieve?  
| Which **groups** are you targeting, and why?  
| **Proposition** | What **impact** is outreach intended to have?  
| **Audiences** | What **profile**, what do they **do**, how do they **think and feel**?  
| **Format** | What is the **message** you want to convey using outreach?  
| **Integration** | What are you **offering** to communities to engage or interest them?  
| **Evaluation** | How is the activity **linked** to what is going on locally/centrally?  
| **other channels**, e.g. advertising?  
| What information are you collecting to help **measure change** due to outreach?  
| How will **feedback** be used to improve the effectiveness of the outreach activity?  

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<th>Audiences</th>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td><strong>Audiences</strong></td>
<td><strong>Proposition</strong></td>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What <strong>change</strong> is the campaign designed to achieve?</td>
<td>What <strong>impact</strong> is outreach intended to have?</td>
<td>What <strong>profile</strong>, what do they <strong>do</strong>, how do they <strong>think and feel</strong>?</td>
<td>What will <strong>deliver</strong> the outreach? Specialist agency, in-house team, new recruits?</td>
<td>What information are you collecting to help <strong>measure change</strong> due to outreach?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which <strong>groups</strong> are you targeting, and why?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Which <strong>techniques</strong> will be most effective in reaching/engaging the audience?</td>
<td>How will feedback be used to improve the effectiveness of the outreach activity?</td>
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**Tool 4: Sample evaluation questionnaires**

**Sample Community Activity Evaluation Form**

Date:  
Venue:  

1. How helpful or unhelpful did you find each of the following:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>Fairly helpful</th>
<th>Not very helpful</th>
<th>Not at all helpful</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
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<td>Leaflets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff you spoke to</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

2. Do you have any other comments about [THE ACTIVITY]?

........................................................................................................................................................................................................

3. Have you heard or noticed any other elements of the campaign in the following media?
   - Newspapers
   - Radio
   - TV
   - Posters

4. How suitable was the location of [THE ACTIVITY]?
   - Very suitable
   - Fairly suitable
   - Not very suitable
   - Not all suitable
   
   If you feel the location was unsuitable, please tell us why: .................................

5. How much, if anything, did you learn about [ISSUE] as a result of [THE ACTIVITY]?
   - I learned a lot about [ISSUE]
   - I learned a little about [ISSUE]
   - I didn’t learn anything at all about [ISSUE]
   
   If you feel the that you didn’t learn anything, please tell us why: ............................

*Thank you for your time.*
Sample Evaluation Questionnaire for Street Team Members

Thank you all for your work on the <CAMPAIGN> campaign. Now that the campaign activity is complete we would like to ask for your feedback for use in the evaluation of the campaign.

It is really important for us to know how the street marketing campaigns went – so your views are really valuable.

1 Your details:
Name: ________________________  Team: __________________
Area: ________________________

2 Roughly how many of the young people you met had heard of <CAMPAIGN> before?
   • All of them
   • Most of them
   • A lot of them
   • About half of them
   • Some of them
   • Not many at all
   • None of them

3 When people heard it was a <CAMPAIGN> campaign what was the most common reaction you got?
   • They thought <CAMPAIGN> was cool
   • They were interested in <CAMPAIGN>
   • They didn’t react because they didn’t know what <CAMPAIGN> was
   • They thought <CAMPAIGN> was naff

4 How did the scratch cards go down with most of the young people you handed them to?
   • They liked them and played the quiz
   • They liked them at first, but then didn’t bother with the quiz
   • They didn’t do the quiz but said they’d keep the cards to enter the prize draw
   • They thought it was naff

5 How did the dog-tags go down with most of the young people you handed them to?
   • They really liked them
   • They thought they were OK
   • They didn’t seem too keen to have one
   • They thought they were naff
6 How did you think the <STUNT> went down?
   • They generated a buzz – people got talking about them
   • They were ignored
   • People thought they were naff

7 Did many people ask questions about the scratch cards?
   • Yes
   • No

8 Did many people ask questions about other issues?
   • Yes
   • No

9 Did you have any problems at all? If you did, do you want to tell us what they were?

10 Is there anything you think we should do differently next time?

11 Do you want to add anything else?

12 Are you interested in working on future campaigns like this?
   • Yes
   • No

13 Are you interested in coming to an event in April (at the end of all the street marketing campaigns) where all the teams get together to celebrate?
   • Yes
   • No

Thank you for all your work on <CAMPAIGN> – we couldn’t have done it without you!
Links & Contacts

Central Office of Information (COI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patricia Macauley</th>
<th>Christine Roberts</th>
<th>Ross James</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Minority Campaign Manager</td>
<td>COI Inclusivity Unit</td>
<td>Head of Inclusivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Patricia.Macauley@coi.gsi.gov.uk">Patricia.Macauley@coi.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Christine.Roberts@coi.gsi.gov.uk">Christine.Roberts@coi.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Ross.James@coi.gsi.gov.uk">Ross.James@coi.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>020 7261 8215</td>
<td>020 7261 8849</td>
<td>020 7261 8852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Development Foundation
http://www.cdf.org.uk
Non-departmental public body which supports the community development sector, and is involved in administering the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Community Engagement in Policing
http://www.communityengagement.police.uk
Website of practical approaches to and examples of community engagement designed for those working in community safety.

Crime Reduction – Active Communities
http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/activecommunities74.htm
Section within the Crime Reduction website offering advice on planning and delivering effective community involvement, and links to formal reviews of what techniques are effective at local area level.

Evaluating participatory, deliberative and co-operative ways of working
(by Diane Warburton, Shared Practice)
Useful paper outlining the value of evaluation and some approaches you can use in evaluating participatory techniques including outreach.

Interfaith Network for the UK
http://www.interfaith.org.uk
Organisation which promotes understanding and respect between faiths.
Involvement
http://www.involving.org
A new organisation ‘focused on the practical issues of making public participation work’, and authors of the ‘People & Participation’ report.

Neighbourhood Statistics
http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk
Local area profiles based on census and other data from the Office for National Statistics. Includes breakdown of wards by ethnicity and faith.

Renewal.net
http://www.renewal.net/
Resources for practitioners in the field of neighbourhood renewal including tools and case studies for how involvement techniques have been employed.

Southwark Alliance
http://www.southwarkalliance.org.uk
Non-statutory group set up to improve quality of life and community cohesion in Southwark. Has published a How To guide of community cohesion ideas and principles.

Together We Can
http://www.togetherwecan.info
Supports active citizenship and participation in local decision-making. Contains reports and guides to techniques for empowering local communities.
Bibliography